

EVENT SNAPSHOT

Joint Webinar: Harnessing Digital and Space Technologies for Improved Resilience in West Bengal, India



EVENT DETAILS

Harnessing Digital and Space Technologies for Improved Resilience in Urban, Water, and Disaster Management in West Bengal

Joint webinar from SARD, SDCC-USG, SDCC-WSG, and SDCC-DT

Tuesday, 09 June 2020. Microsoft Teams

MODERATOR:

- **Norio Saito**, Director, SAUW, SARD

SPEAKERS:

- **G.K. Bhat**, Chairman, TARU Leading Edge Pvt Ltd.
- **Christophe Sannier**, Scientific Director, Systèmes d'Information à Référence Spatiale (SIRS)
- **Kalpana Viswanath**, Co-Founder and CEO, Safetipin
- **Hans G. Enggrob**, Team Leader for TA 9573, DHI India

DIGITAL AND SPACE TECHNOLOGIES FOR IMPROVED RESILIENCE

The joint webinar presented how ADB has been supporting the State of West Bengal to make its urban and water services more disaster resilient and smarter particularly through use of digital and space technologies.

SAUW Director, Norio Saito, moderated the webinar. Sourav Majumder (Senior Project Officer (Urban), INRM) and Neeta Pokhrel (Unit Head, Project Administration, SARD) made an introduction of the two on-going ADB projects in West Bengal (Capital city: Kolkata). Four technical presentations followed. Sector chiefs from SDCC-USG (Manoj Sharma), SDCC-WSG (Thomas Panella) and SDCC-DT (Paolo Manunta representing Thomas Abell) made remarks on ADB wide initiatives on the topic. The webinar was attended by more than 100 participants from Operations departments and SDCC.

Speakers are the team leaders from expert groups currently assisting Kolkata city and the State of West Bengal, through ADB funded TAs and grants. They presented innovative key features of their work, including the FFEWS's integration in the city's disaster management system;

geospatial products and services to support 3D flood modelling; Safetipin application that supports assessment of accessibility and safety of the city through geo-tagged maps; and smart water management for bulk and distribution supply for small towns and rural districts in the West Bengal State. The presentations and the following discussion also highlighted lessons from the super Cyclone Amphan which hit the State last May causing significant destruction.

Starting from digitizing and modernizing Kolkata Municipal Council's paper-based accounting and financial management systems in early 2000, to lately utilizing state of art tools, such as space observation, GIS, sensors, internet of things, ADB has come a long way and is still on this journey.

UCCRTF supports ADB's effort to harness digital and space technologies as they can help solve climate challenges and accelerate resilience actions. For Kolkata and West Bengal, UCCRTF provides grants (\$5m) to Kolkata Environment Improvement Investment Project (KEIIP) (TA9157 and TA9561) and West Bengal Drinking Water Sector Improvement Project (TA 9573).

URBAN CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE LESSONS

Digital and space technologies can provide accurate, reliable, and timely information most needed by local governments and communities to support pro-active interventions in essential services including urban and water infrastructure, amidst climate risks. As learned following Cyclone Amphan, they can help to anticipate disaster impacts and inform decision-making for post-disaster recovery.

As demonstrated by the Kolkata FFEWS and the Safetipin application for public safety audits, **effective harnessing of tools and technologies toward resilience requires a people-centered and inclusive approach** – that which empowers communities and stakeholders, especially the most vulnerable groups including women and poor sector.

Strong local government ownership and institutional strengthening is a must to ensure effective utilization of new technologies. ADB continues discussions with KMC and West Bengal government to support its capacity to sustain initiatives and integrate technologies into the city's urban management system.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Sourav Majumder, Senior Project Officer (Urban), South Asia Department (SARD) | smajumder@adb.org
- Neeta Pokhrel, Unit Head, Project Administration, South Asia Department (SARD) | npokhrel@adb.org

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