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Service Level Benchmarking: An Initiative of the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India

SANJEEV RANJAN

INDIA'S RAPID economic growth in the last two decades has been accompanied by increased levels of urbanization. Our cities, which are engines of growth, are under great strain to meet the growing demands and aspirations of their people.

Recognizing the growing importance of improving efficiency in delivery of basic services in our cities, Government of India has launched a series of initiatives aimed at enabling urban local bodies to meet the unprecedented challenges that they face today. These include schemes such as the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns, Capacity Building for Urban Local Bodies, National Urban Transport Policy, National Urban Sanitation Policy, National Mission Mode Project on E-governance and Credit Rating of Select Municipal Bodies.

As part of the ongoing endeavour to facilitate critical reforms in the urban sector, the Ministry of Urban Development has now adopted National Benchmarks in four key sectors – Water Supply, Sewerage, Solid Waste Management and Storm Water Drainage. Investments in urban infrastructure have, however, not always resulted in corresponding improvements in levels of service delivery. There is, therefore, a need for a shift in focus towards service delivery. This is especially the case in water supply and sanitation (WSS). It is hoped that the Handbook of Service Level Benchmarks developed by Ministry of Urban Development through consultative process shall provide a standardized framework for performance monitoring in respect of water supply, sewerage, solid waste management services and storm water drainage and would enable state level agencies and local level service providers to initiate a process of performance monitoring and evaluation against agreed targets, finally resulting in achievement of service level benchmarks identified in the Handbook.

This Handbook is result of work done over a period of about two years and is designed to enable systematic and sustained

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monitoring of services using standardized indicators against agreed targets and benchmarks. It will help effect performance improvements in the identified service sectors by : (i) helping local decision-makers identify gaps, plan and prioritize improvement measures; (ii) enabling identification and transfer of best practices; (iii) enhancing accountability to customers for service delivery levels; (iv) providing a framework that can underlie contracts/agreements with service providers, and (v) making it possible to link decision-making on financial allocations to service outcomes.

It is expected that state governments and cities would adopt this performance monitoring framework at the ULB/parastatal level, and undertake to regularly collate and analyse the performance data to improve quality of decision -making process in the sectors identified in this Handbook. Its adoption by all the States shall facilitate uniform measurements and reporting systems which will be of immense help to the management of the service utilities in making the right comparisons aimed at improving efficiency of infrastructure. It shall also be of great help in shifting the focus from infrastructure to service delivery.

Benchmarking involves measuring and monitoring of service provider performance on a systematic and continuous basis. Benchmarking can help service providers identify performance gaps and initiate performance improvements through the sharing of information and best practices, ultimately resulting in better services.

Recognizing its potential for improving service delivery, the Ministry of Urban Development undertook an exercise to develop a benchmarking framework for four service areas–water supply, wastewater management, storm water drainage, and solid waste management. A core group was constituted in 2006 for this purpose, under the chairmanship of the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Urban Development. A culmination of two years of deliberation and consultation was the finalization of a Handbook on Service Level Benchmarking (SLB), which was disseminated to all states in September 2008. The Handbook identifies a minimum set of standard performance parameters for the water and sanitation sector that are commonly understood and used by all stakeholders across the country. It also defines a common minimum framework for monitoring and reporting on water and sanitation service level indicators and sets out guidelines on how to operationalise this framework in a phased manner.

In order to facilitate better understanding of the benchmarking framework at cutting edge level, the Ministry of Urban Development

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(MoUD) is implementing a Service Level Benchmarking Pilot project which was launched at a national workshop on February 6, 2009. The pilot initiative covers 27 cities spread across 14 states and one UT, including 16 Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) cities. These consist of a diverse mix of cities, ranging from small towns under one lakh population to mega-cities of 15 million, cities located in plain as well as hills regions, with varied climatic conditions and institutional arrangements for service delivery. The pilot initiative is therefore expected to effectively demonstrate the usefulness of the Service Level Benchmarking framework for performance management under widely different working environments.

The Service Level Benchmarking initiative is being implemented under a unique partnership arrangement with six development agencies, i.e. Water Sanitation Programme – South Asia (WSP-SA), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, Department for International Development (DFID), Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Public Record of Operations and Finance (PROOF). Implementation work in pilot cities is being done with the involvement of agencies such as Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), Center for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT), Urban Management Centre (UMC), All India Institute of Local Self Government (AIILSG), ICLEI, CRISIL, and SENES.

The overall objective of the Service Level Benchmarking initiative is to move from concept to practice ("From reading & talking to doing…") and serve as a demonstration ("If that town can implement it, we too can do it…"). It also seems to promote learning by doing ("There are consultants or staff members who know how to implement this framework…"). It is hoped that it will encourage adoption of benchmarking framework by state governments ("Can we roll out benchmarking on a state-wide basis…?"). State Government of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka have already initiated steps in this direction. Benchmarking is being advocated not just as a reporting mechanism or for doing cross-city comparisons, but also as a tool for undertaking objective performance analysis by ULBs to improve their own operations. Accordingly, as part of the Service Level Benchmarking Pilot Initiative, cities are working towards providing the following outputs. There are three key deliverables identified for the first year after pilot project, there are collation of performance data using the indicators and methodologies outlined in the Service Level Benchmarking Handbook

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and preparation of SLB Data Book, preparation of Information System Improvement Plan (ISIP) to improve quality of information development and implementation of Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) based on the above performance data generated.

In addition, state governments are displaying interest in developing strategies for scaling up benchmarking across other cities in their state.

The entire exercise involves working closely with utility/municipal engineers, public health workers, planners and policy makers in the pilot cities so that the data meaningfully identifies performance gaps and improvement plans, and the exercise is institutionalized so that it does not remain a standalone initiative.

Since the launch of the initiative in February 2009, the pilot city representatives, state nodal officers and consultants have undergone detailed orientation sessions to ensure that the programme is implemented in a uniform manner across all cities. These covered the Service Level Benchmarking framework including methodological issues, the questionnaires developed for each of the service areas and the implementation steps and support arrangements provided for the same. The orientation was undertaken through a series of technical workshops in New Delhi, Hyderabad and Bhopal.

Even as data collection work is underway towards preparation of the first Service Level Benchmarking Databook, the programme is steadily gaining momentum and demonstrating how benchmarking can inform and drive performance improvement. For instance the city of Raipur proposes to address the problem of water supply connections to the poor. The "poor" were mostly missing from their database due to the one-time connection fee policy that made access to water supply connections unaffordable. The state government is now proposing to simplify the procedures and documentation required to apply for a water supply connection and reduce the connection fee, drawing upon the experience of Bangalore and other cities. Similarly, Bhubaneswar is also looking at formulating a policy for providing water connections to its poor settlements. It is also considering adoption of flow meters at all storage reservoirs to improve tracking of water availability and losses. While reviewing its solid waste sector, Raipur also realized that its waste collection system yielded dismal revenues. It is now keen on designing bulk charges for SWM collection, based on its peer-learning exercise with Guntur.

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The Service Level Benchmarking Initiative comes as part of the urban reform agenda for enhancing accountability for service delivery through the various centrally sponsored schemes like JNNURM and the UIDSSMT. The reform agenda envisages a shift in focus from infrastructure creation to delivery of service outcomes and benchmarking is now being considered an important mechanism for introducing accountability in service delivery. Accordingly, going forward the Ministry plans to align the Service Level Benchmarking framework to funding provided under centrally sponsored schemes.

MoUD has organised National Consultations Workshop on Service Level Benchmarking for 28 Pilot Cities in New Delhi on 14-15 December, 2009. Shri Arun Maira, Member Planning Commission, Government of India was the chief guest of the workshop. He chaired the opening session: Introducing Service Level Benchmarking in the Indian context. Other Panel members were Dr. M. Ramachandran – Secretary MoUD, Shri Arun Kumar Mehta – Joint Secretary MoUD, Shri Nabaroon Bhattacharjee – Water Sanitation Programme –South Asia (WSP –SA).

Shri Arun Kumar Mehta – Joint Secretary MoUD made a PowerPoint presentation on GOI's SLB initiative and its linkage with Performance improvement planning and other urban reform agenda. Shri Nabaroon Bhattacharjee from Water Sanitation Programme – South Asia presented key data findings from the SLB pilot initiatives. State Secretary from Madhya Pradesh and Municipal Commissioners of Bhubaneshwar, Chandigarh and Kolhapur shared their views related to SLB and benefit of it. It came out clearly that the service levels need to be reported by municipalities/ service providers at least annually and such other frequency as may be appropriate. Similarly, infrastructure projects related to basic municipal services must clearly bring out service levels before and after a project so that outcomes are clearly defined and reported. Where the benchmarks can not be attained immediately, intermediate targets can be adopted while continuing to strive for improving performance and attainment of the benchmarks.

Shri Arun Maira, Member Planning Commission, Government of India distributed mementos to the participants followed by his closing remarks. He said that state governments and cities should adopt this performance monitoring framework at the ULB/parastatal levels, and undertake to regularly collate and analyze the performance data to improve quality of decision-making process in the sectors identified. Its adoption by all the states shall facilitate uniform

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measurements and reporting systems which will be of immense help to the management of the service utilities and in making the right comparisons aimed at improving efficiency of infrastructure.

List of SLB Pilot Cities

State	No. of Cities	Cities	Partner
Maharashtra	3	Nasik	CEPT (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation)
		Pimpri-Chinchwad	
		Kolhapur	
Gujarat	2	Surat	GTZ
		Ahmedabad	CEPT (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation)
Orissa	2	Bhubaneshwar	WSP
		Berhampur	
Madhya Pradesh	3	Bhopal	DFID
		Indore	
		Ujjain	
Union Territory	1	Chandigarh	WSP
Andhra Pradesh	2	Hyderabad	JICA
		Guntur	
Kerala	2	Trivandrum	JICA
		Calicut	
Punjab	2	Amritsar	JICA
		Jallandhar	
Tamil Nadu	2	Trichy	GTZ
		Ooty	
Delhi	1	Delhi	JICA
Manipur	1	Imphal	GTZ
Karnataka	1	Bangalore	JICA
Himachal Pradesh	3	Shimla	GTZ
		Palampur	
		Dharamshala	
Jharkhand	2	Bokaro	GTZ
		Chas	
Chhattisgarh	1	Raipur	ASCI

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SUMMARY OF SLB INDICATORS - WATER SUPPLY

City	Coverage		Per capita supply		NRW		Consumption metering		Continuity		Complaint referral		Quality of supply		Cost recovery		Collection efficiency	
	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG
Ahmedabad	85.4	B	121	D	33.0	D	Nil		2	B	99.2	B	94.8	B	53.9	A	60.3	A
Amritsar	66.4	D	104	D	57.0	C	8.5	B	11	D	99.3	B	80.0	A	61.9	B	60.7	B
Bangalore	50.8	B	88	A	51	A	97.6	A	3	B	96.7	C	82.7	A	92.2	B	97.1	A
Berhampur	29.2	D	81	C	34.0	C	Nil		1	B	73.3	D	100.0	A	49.1	D	50.8	B
Bhopal	34.8	B	126	D	30	D	1.4	B	0.5	D	90.1	D	90	A	53.1	B	68.2	B
Bhubaneswar	45.0	B	92	B	69.5	D	0.8	B	2	B	99.4	D	100.0	A	32.1	B	93.9	B
Bokaro	99.5	D	298	B	2.5	B	63.6	A	1.5	D	No data		100.0	B	No data	No	No data	76
Chandigarh	87.0	B	158	B	33.0	B	73	B	17.5	A	100.0	B	100.0	A	84	B	99.0	B
Chas	9.3	D	37.3	D	42.5	D	Nil		Interm	D	100	B	Nil	NA	61.4	D	25	D
Delhi	71.5	B	144	C	52.4	B	55.1	A	3	B	73.0	C	99.5	A	41.6	B	86.3	B
Dharamshala	97.3	B	198	B	6.0	D	39.7	B	1.5	D	100.0	C	100.0	A	42.2	D	97.8	B
Guntur	50	B	109	D	52.7	D	2.4	B	1.0	D	99.3	B	99.3	C	144.9	B	46.3	A
Hyderabad	66.0	B	122	B	38	B	63.0	A	0.3-2	B	52.0	A	99.4	C	69.0	D	77.1	A
Imphal	47.1	B	110	D	73.0	D	Nil		2	B	82.4	B	100.0	C	16.6	D	42.8	B
Indore	38	D	73	C	59	D	0.04	D	0.75	D	82	B	90	C	34.3	D	61.7	B
Jalandhar	69.9	B	165	D	52.8	D	2.9	C	12	D	98.7	C	72.1	B	60.9	B	44.9	B
Kolhapur	83.5	B	133	B	45.8	C	100	A	3	D	82	A	99	B	34.2	B	95.6	B
Kozhikode	38.5	A	197	C	45.9	C	83.7	A	7	B	79	B	100	A	105	A	86	A
Nashik	99.5	A	91	D	57.8	B	96.7	B	5	B	99.3	A	99.7	A	77.5	B	92.4	A
Palanpur	93.2	B	175.8	B	59.5	D	0	C	12	D	100	B	100	B	16.1	A	61.9	B
Pimpri-Chichwad	81	B	246	A	24.3	B	96.9	B	6	D	No data	Nil	99	A	41.2	A	48.3	A
Raipur	20.0	No data	No data	No	No data	No data	Nil	No	1.5	Pri B	No data	Pri B	97.8	No data	25.8	No data	No data	No data
Shimla	97.8	B	76.7	B	23.1	D	59.8	B	1.5	D	100.0	B	100	B	97.9	B	82.6	B
Surat	94.8	B	74.5	B	20.4	B	0.4	B	3	B	94.8	B	100.0	B	92.3	A	94.0	A
Tiruchirapalli	41.7	B	79	D	37.1	B	37.6	B	2	B	100.0	B	100.0	A	197.4	B	57.6	B
Trivandrum	68.3	A	124	B	38.2	D	81.4	A	18	A	100	B	77	A	22.3	B	38.1	A
Udhagamandalam	51.5	B	71	D	44.1	D	87.2	D	4	D	70.3	D	100.0	C	27.5	D	77.6	A
Ujjain	50	B	95	C	50	C	4.3	C	1	B	100	B	100	B	28	D	60.5	B

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SUMMARY OF SLB INDICATORS - SEWERAGE

City	Toilet coverage		Sewerage Coverage		WW collection efficiency		WW treatment adequacy		Quality of WW treatment		Reuse & Recycling		Cost recovery		Complaints redressal		Collection efficiency	
	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG
Ahmedabad	83.7	B	65.8	B	64.9	D	94.5	D	75.0	B	0.0	No data	98.5	A	94.7	A	58.7	A
Amritsar	100.0	C	74.8	C	Nil		Nil		No data		No data	A	66.6	B	100.0	B	40.7	B
Bangalore	100.0	D	38.0	B	53.0	A	106.0	A	100	A	36	A	100	B	97	C	97	A
Berhampur	Nil		Nil		Nil		Nil		Nil		No data		9.4	B	No data	No data	NA	
Bhopal	95.2	A	4.2	D	11.4	D	26.5	D	Nil	B	0	D	Nil	B	92.9	B	45	
Bhubaneswar	76	D	17	D	1	D	2.9	D	100.0	D	0.0	D	24.0	B	100.0	D	67.0	B
Bokaro	100	B	100	B	63.88	D	Nil		100.0	B	0.0		Nil	B	100.0	C	Nil	
Chandigarh	100	B	Nil	B	93.1	B	93.1	B	100.0	A	24.2	NA	93.1	B	100.0	B	93.0	B
Chas	No data	C	Nil		Nil		NA		Nil	A	Nil	NA	No data	B	No data		No data	
Delhi	78.0	B	56	D	63	A	91	A	94.6	A	27.4	A	39.0	B	59.0	B	63.0	B
Dharamshala	81.5	B	63.5	C	72.1	C	124.5	B	100.0	D	Nil	D	5.7	B	100.0	B	66.0	B
Guntur	79.3	B	13.3	B	Nil		Nil		NA		NA		62.5	B	40	B	74.2	B
Hyderabad	99.0	B	46.3	B	76.6	A	55.5	A	99.0	B	2.3	B	68.5	B	86.1	A	77.1	B
Imphal	99.0	B	Nil		NA		NA		NA		NA		No data	B	No data		No data	
Indore	93.7	A	98	B	53.1	C	59.9	B	100.0	B	1.2	B	17	B	100.0	B	82	B
Jalandhar	89.6	C	58.9	B	98.1	C	95.5	D	99.0	B	Nil	D	93.1	B	100.0	C	50.6	B
Kolhapur	91	B	42.2	B	60.4	C	60.4	C	53.3	A	34.5	D	43.8	B	96.2	B	74.9	B
Kozhikode	91.6	B	Nil		NA		NA		No data		No data		NA		NA		NA	
Nashik	100	B	98.1	C	98.1	B	98.1	B	98.9	A	Nil	D	47.8	B	99.3	B	71.8	B
Palanpur	98.4	A	81.1	B	35.5	D	42.9	B	100.0	B	Nil	B	28.2	B	100.0	C	78.4	B
Pimpri-Chichwad	100	A	71.1	B	71.7	B	94.6	B	100.0	B	3.2	D	42.0	A	100.0	A	80.1	A
Raipur	18.8	No data	16.8	No data	No data	C	Nil	Pri data	Nil	No data	Nil	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Shimla	100	B	76.7	B	18.4	D	278.9	D	100.0	B	Nil		59.8	B	100.0	B	82.6	B
Surat	94.8	B	74.5	B	91.5	B	108.5	B	99.0	A	0.6	B	37.1	B	99.5	B	78.7	A
Tiruchirapalli	87.0	B	22.1	B	67.4	C	Nil		NA		0.0	B	No data	No data	100.0	B	No data	
Trivandrum	95.4	B	65.7	A	Nil		Nil		No data		No data		No data	No data	No data	A	No data	
Udhagamandalam	100	C	81.4	C	81.0	D	Nil	B	No data		Nil		4.1	B	100.0	B	18.5	B
Ujjain	92.9	C	0	A	NA		87.5	D	100.0	D	Nil	D	Nil				NA	

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SUMMARY OF SLB INDICATORS - STORM WATER DRAINAGE

City	Coverage		Incidence of water logging	
	Value	RG	Value	RG
Ahmedabad	69.6	A	214	A
Amritsar	5.5	B	No data	-
Bangalore	5.0	C	135	B
Berhampur	126.6	B	62	B
Bhopal	7	A	No data	B
Bhubaneswar	47.4	B	51	B
Bokaro	No data	No data	Nil	
Chandigarh	100.0	B	Nil	
Chas	57.9	C	Nil	
Delhi	5.4	No data	206	A
Dharamshala	100.0	B	Nil	A
Guntur	10.8	B	No data	B
Hyderabad	17.8	C	18	B
Imphal	1.53	C	No data	No data
Indore	20	C	40-50	D
Jalandhar	1.5	C	No data	B
Kolhapur	24.9	B	47	B
Kozhikode	12.0	B	32	B
Nashik	4.1	B	12	B
Palampur	60.5	B	Nil	A
Pimpri-Chichwad	12.4	A	16	B
Raipur	No data		No data	
Shimla	29.4	C	Nil	
Surat	44.1	B	239	B
Tiruchirapalli	12.0	B	175	B

Colour Coding

A	
B	
C	
D	
No Data	

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SUMMARY OF SLB INDICATORS – SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

City	HH coverage		Collection Efficiency		Segregation of MSW		MSW Recovery		Scientific Disposal		Cost Recovery		Collection Efficiency		Complaints Redressal	
	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG	Val	RG
Ahmedabad	75.7	A	72.9	B	2.7	D	17.5	B	Nil		26.2	A	58.6	A	100.0	D
Amritsar	24.8	C	86.2	D	Nil		Nil	No data	Nil	No data	0.4	C	99.7	No data	100.0	D
Bangalore	74.5	D	54.0	B	30.0	B	73.5	B	57.6	B	Nil		NA		80.0	D
Berhampur	2.6	A	81.6	B	Nil		Nil		Nil		Nil		NA		96.1	C
Bhopal	5.6	C	96.8	D	Nil		Nil	76.5	Nil	NA	6.5	D	66.4	B	100	B
Bhubaneswar	28.2	A	74.5	D	Nil		Nil		Nil		0.1	B	Nil	B	99.6	C
Bokaro	100.0	A	52.0	D	3.9	B	3.9	D	Nil		Nil		NA		100.0	C
Chandigarh	96.2	C	75.3	B	18	B	97.1	A	Nil		0.1	B	100.0	B	62.5	B
Chas	38.8	C	45.5	D	No data		Nil		Nil		1.2	D	Nil	B	90.0	A
Delhi	4.2	B	80.8	B	31.6	A	31.6	A	Nil		Nil		Nil		100.0	D
Dharamshala	21.1	C	100.0	D	5.6	D	5.6	D	Nil		1.2	B	NA		75	C
Guntur	84.9	D	84.7	B	Nil		Nil		Nil		7.4	B	65.1	B	73.0	B
Hyderabad	70.6	C	78.1	B	12.5	B	12.5	B	Nil		12.8	B	65.0	B	No data	
Imphal	33.4	C	74.0	D	Nil		Nil		Nil		NA		NA		100.0	B
Indore	28.3	C	75.8	B	Nil		Nil		Nil		160		50.0	C	70.0	B
Jalandhar	Nil		93.2	B	Nil		Nil		Nil		Nil		NA		70.0	B
Kolhapur	90	C	95.6	B	20	B	100	B	Nil	636	21.3	A	79.8	B	85	A
Kozhikode	24.2	A	43.2	D	50.6	B	50.6	B	Nil		1.2	A	72.5	B	100.0	C
Nashik	86.9	A	87.0	B	34.5	B	100.0	B	Nil		33.2	B	35	D	100.0	C
Palampur	Nil		100.0	D	13.0	D	13.0	D	Nil	D	Nil		NA		100.0	A
Pimpri-Chichwad	65.2	D	99.7	B	13.4	B	16.6	B	0		4	D	70.2	A	100	C
Raipur	16.4	D	82.7	D	Nil		Nil		Nil		No data	No data	No data	No data	82.9	A
Shimla	26.0	A	61.5	D	32.5	D	73.0	C	Nil	A	83.0	B	85.2	B	100.0	A
Surat	90.3	A	87.6	B	13.1	D	19.4	B	0.8		0.1	B	NA		96.2	A
Tiruchirapalli	83.0	B	94.6	B	Nil		Nil	D	Nil		Nil		NA		100.0	D
Trivandrum	42.9	C	54.4	B	84.9	B	10.1	D	Nil		1.9	D	No data	No data	100.0	B
Ulhasnagar	22.0	A	89.6	D	Nil		Nil		Nil		Nil		NA		100.0	D
Ujjain	6.0	D	72.0	D	Nil		Nil		Nil		18		10.0	B	100.0	C