Swachh Shehar Jodi

A Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 Initiative

1. Background:

As part of the continuous evolution of Swachh Survekshan (SS) under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), a new initiative titled the **Swachh Shehar Jodi** (SSJ) is being launched.

Over successive editions of Swachh Survekshan—the world's largest urban sanitation and waste management survey—several cities have consistently demonstrated exceptional performance, sustained high citizen engagement and positive feedback, and resilient governance processes, even in the face of leadership transitions and operational challenges.

To scale the impact of the proven approaches adopted by India's cleanest cities over the years, the Swachh Shehar Jodi now aims to institutionalise structured mentorship, peer learning, and collaborative action between mentor cities and mentee cities from within the same State.

2. Objectives:

The objective is to support comparitively low performing cities in improving their swachhata performance by drawing on the experience of mentor cities to:

- Replicate tested best practices in sanitation and waste management
- Strengthen processes in mentee cities
- Support the waste processing set up to improve visible cleanliness
- Improve citizen engagement for responsible behaviour change for swachhata

All this with the final outcome of making a real difference across mentee cities by transforming them into visibly cleaner spaces that are citizen-responsive and better equipped to handle swachhata requirements.

It is expected that this 100-day long process will ensure interventions and improvements across Swachh Survekshan rankings in 2026 and beyond.

3. Eight Focus Areas of the Swachh Shehar Jodi:

To ensure targeted and measurable improvement in the mentee cities, each mentor city and mentee city pair will jointly develop an Action Plan. This plan should focus on process replication, field improvement, and citizen engagement aligned to Swachh Survekshan parameters. Eight **thematic focus areas** for the same are as follows:

1. **Visible Cleanliness:** Elimination of Garbage Vulnerable Points (GVPs) and transformation of Cleanliness Target Units (CTUs) for overall maintenance of public spaces to ensure high visual cleanliness. Special focus to be on high footfall public and tourist places/market places and mandis.
2. **Waste Segregation and Transportation**: 100% door-to-door collection, source segregation, and efficient transport of waste.
3. **Solid Waste Management**: Scientific processing of waste, operational MRFs and composting units, and legacy waste remediation. Establishment of scientific sanitary landfill.
4. **Access to Sanitation**: Universal access to clean, functional community and public toilets.
5. **Used Water Management**: Improved greywater and faecal sludge management, especially in non-sewered areas.
6. **Mechanization of Desludging Services & Welfare of Sanitation Workers**: Deployment of mechanised desludging services and safe disposal systems. Focus on safety, dignity, PPE use, insurance, and regular health checks for sanitation staff.
7. **Advocacy for Swachhata:** Intensified Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) campaigns, public outreach, and community engagement for sustained behavioural change. Regular training, dissemination of guidelines and SOPs, and streamlined systems for better planning and execution.
8. **Citizen Feedback and Grievance Redressal:** Improve citizen engagement outcomes by strengthening helplines, apps, and dashboards for responsive service delivery and public feedback.

4. Mentor & Mentee Cities 2025:

For the above, it is envisioned that the mentor cities will be those cities that adhere to the following criteria:

- Top performing cities that have featured across Rank 1, 2 or 3 in Swachh Survekshan (SS) 2022, 2023, and 2024 (i.e. – cities that are part of the Super Swachh League)
- Top three cities that are featured across population categories in SS 2024.
- Promising clean cities that emerge across States/UTs as part of SS 2024.

The mentee city may be selected on the baisis of the following criteria:

- ✓ Featured in the bottom of the State cumulative ranking of the latest SS rankings
- ✓ Geographical proximity of the jodi cities to each other

5. Overall Roles and Responsibilities:

Mentor-Mentee pairs will work together for the following:

1. **As-Is Assessment:** As-Is analysis of the ground read with Swachh Survekshan 2024 & Swachh Certification data to identify the As-Is situation.
2. **Action Plan Preparation:** City Specific Plan of Action is to be created to address key challenges across eight focus areas (as mentioned in section 2), for measurable outcomes.
3. **Implementation Facilitation:** Procurement support in the form of DPR preparation, overall tender management, bid process management etc. Assistance can also be given for technical documentation, vendor engagement etc.
4. **Progress Monitoring & Review:** Regular monitoring of progress and outcome validation is to be ensured by both mentor and mentee cities.
5. **Capacity Building & Knowledge Transfer:** Creation of plan for knowledge sharing and capacity building of mentee cities. This includes exposure visits, deputations, BCC toolkit dissemination, and hands-on learning sessions.

5.1 Role of Mentor and Mentee Cities

Role Area	Role of Mentor City	Role of Mentee City
Nodal Officer	Nominate dedicated Nodal Officers	
Thematic Support	Serve as the knowledge and implementation partner, supporting the mentee city across all eight focus areas	Participate actively in the As-Is analysis process and identify city-specific challenges and priorities
Performance Data Interpretation	Share guidance with mentee cities on how to interpret SS scorecards, Swachh Certification gaps, and overall urban sanitation performance data	Take ownership of the reform journey by actively engaging in all planning and implementation activities
Tool & Practice Sharing	Share proven tools, SOPs, IEC materials, and institutional practices	Deploy relevant teams for cross-learning and field execution
Exposure Visits	Host structured exposure visits to fast-track learning and provide hands-on demonstrations	Depute officers for preferably a period of one week for on-ground peer learning

Technical & Procurement Support	Extend technical support for DPR preparation, tendering processes, and vendor onboarding	Work collaboratively to co-create the action plan
Monitoring & Review	Lead regular monitoring through bi-monthly reviews and field assessments, ensuring timely resolution of challenges	Ensure ground-level implementation of interventions with support from the mentor city
Cross-Sector Collaboration	Plan cross visits of political leadership, technical officers, sanitation teams, and community engagement units (including NGOs, CSO partners etc, if required) to drive holistic swachhata improvements.	Monitor internal progress, document impact stories, and contribute learnings to the wider SBM-U ecosystem

5.2 *Role of State Governments/UT Administration:*

The State Mission will play a key facilitative and supervisory role to ensure smooth implementation and accountability across city pairs. The following key activities are requested:

1. **MoU Facilitation:** Support timely execution of MoUs between city pairs <u>on a date designated by MoHUA</u> and ensure clarity of roles, commitments, and timelines.

2. **Progress Supervision:** Monitor progress of each city pair, verify reporting data, and flag implementation issues to MoHUA where needed.

3. **Fund Management**: All State/UT Governments are requested to incentive the mentor-mentee city pairs by **leveraging the Capacity Building Funds of SBM-U 2.0**.

4. **Escalation & Troubleshooting:** Serve as the first point of contact for both cities to resolve on-ground bottlenecks and if required, resolving issues.

5.3 *Role of MoHUA:*

MoHUA will provide strategic direction, capacity support, and national-level oversight as highlighted below:

1. **Policy Guidance**: MoHUA will provide strategic direction and policy-level support for successful execution of the Swachh Shehar Jodi across States.

2. **Monitoring & Evaluation of Progress:** Track performance across city pairs through quarterly dashboards, field reviews, and independent assessments.

3. **Programme Implementation Support**: Extend any kind of additional technical, managerial and financial support as required to further the outcomes of city partnership.

4. **Replication & Scale-up**: MoHUA will oversee document of outcomes and best practices and develop scalable models for replication across ULBs in subsequent phases.

6. Activities & Timelines:

Process	Action	Timeline
Announcement of Swachh Shehar Jodi		17th July, 2025
Release of guidelines		26th August, 2025
Step 1	Finalization of city pairs by cities and States/UTs	By 5th September, 2025
Step 2	As-Is Joint Assessment & Action Plan	End of September, 2025
Step 3	Signing of MOUs and Roll out of Swachh Shehar Jodi	October, 2025
Step 4	Implementation of Action Plan	100 days
Step 5	Assessment of Progress	Swachh Survekshan 2025-26

Step 1: Finalization of City Pairs by Cities & States

Once announced, the first step is for mentor Cities to identify mentee cities for the creation of a formal city-level partnerships under this initiative.

Mentor cities may choose more than one and up to 5 cities as mentee cities and intimate the same to MoHUA.

In case a mentor city has multuple mentees, it may be noted that the ranking/results of only the best performing mentees will affect the mentor's results during the assessment of progress (Step 5).

In case of some Union Territories, mentee cities will be selected by MOHUA.

Step 2: As-Is Joint Assessment & Action Plan Preparation

Once the SSJs are formalized and communicated to MoHUA, the next step is to conduct a joint situational analysis of the challenges being faced by the mentee city using the SS 2024 and Swachh Certification 2024 results data, along with field visits for on-ground

diagnostics to identify the overall problem areas aligned to the 8 focus areas identified in Part III (pg. 2) of this document.

This assessment will serve as the foundation for all future planning, will identify critical gaps in service delivery and infrastructure, and will enable tailor made action planning.

Once an in-depth analysis has been deduced and MoUs are formalized, the city pairs are to focus on developing a comprehensive Action Plan. These Action Plans are envisioned to be **city-specific, timebound and outcome-oriented** roadmaps that will leverage the expertise, systems, and innovations of mentor cities and help mentee cities to undergo reforms and capacity improvements over a 100 day period.

General guidance relating to key areas that must be reflected in each action plan is highlighted, but not limited, to the following:

A. Key Reform Areas (Short-term & Long-term):
✓ Clearly stated goals and reform milestones for 30, 60, 100 days

B. Technology and Infrastructure Enhancement Proposal:
✓ Identification of infrastructure gaps (e.g., MRFs, CT/PTs, composting units)
✓ Integration of technology platforms (e.g., digital tracking, grievance redressal apps)
✓ Roadmap for O&M improvement of existing infrastructure

C. Knowledge & Resource Sharing:
✓ Mentor city to provide SOPs, RFP templates, IEC content, bylaws, technology demonstrations.
✓ Shared access to training materials and tools already developed
✓ Design of citizen engagement strategies tailored to urban local culture of mentee city, with focus on local language and cultural norms

Step 3: Signing of MOUs and Roll out of Swachh Shehar Jodi

The MoU will be signed between the mentor and mentee cities by **October 2025.** This phase will also see the official rollout of the Swachh Shehar Jodi. This is where plans will translate into action, and the focus will be on implementation of key reforms and initiation of peer learning. The format of the MOU is Annexed.

*Note: All MoUs relating to Swachh Shehar Jodi will be signed **only** on a date desginated by MoHUA*

Step 4: Implementation & Monitoring of Progress

This phase will focus on sustained implementation and milestone-based progress monitoring. mentor cities will:

✓ Regular virtual check-ins and quarterly physical field reviews
✓ Assist in mid-course corrections and troubleshooting
✓ Share learnings through case studies and documentation of best practices

✓ Continue to support behaviour change communication through community-based events and campaigns

Mentee cities will be expected to:

✓ Execute reforms as per their Action Plans
✓ Track and report progress using performance indicators
✓ Showcase visible improvements in cleanliness, sanitation infrastructure usage, waste processing, and citizen satisfaction

7. Progress Reporting:

To ensure consistent performance, transparency, and accountability in the implementation of the Swachh Shehar Jodi, a robust progress reporting platform will be developed by MoHUA to showcase the achievements of the jodis.

8. Incentive Funding Details:

Both mentor and mentee cities may utilize the **Capacity Building (CB) Funds** allocated to each State/UT as part of SBM-U 2.0.

State/UT Governments are encouraged to top up this fund, if required. Cities can also leverage funds from other sources / partner organizations.

9. Permissible Activities:

To ensure effective and outcome-oriented use of the available funding, cities (both mentor and mentee) must restrict expenditure to soft and process-based interventions**.** Permissible activities include the following:

✓ **Capacity Building and Training:**
  - Organizing city-level or joint mentor–mentee workshops on swachhata processes, IEC, grievance redressal, etc.
  - Field-level training of sanitation staff and municipal teams.

✓ **Exposure Visits:**
  - Travel, accommodation, and incidental support for mentee city teams visiting mentor cities for learning.
  - Hosting of exchange visits involving elected representatives and key officials.
  - Deputation of officials-linked expenses (up to 1 week per batch).

✓ **Development of SOPs, Toolkits, and IEC Material:**
  - Customization, printing, and dissemination of IEC materials.
  - Preparation of operating guidelines, SOPs, process flow documents for sanitation and waste processing.

✓ **Community and Stakeholder Engagement:**
  - Hosting Swachh Ward competitions, SwachhTalks at ward level, zero waste awareness events, citizen hackathons or idea competitions.
  - Youth engagement activities in partnership with universities or civil society.
  - Local inter-personal drives promoting behavior change (segregation, CT/PT use, plastic-free drives, etc.).

10. Expected Outcomes:

By March 2026, the initiative is expected to show **measurable improvements** in selected mentee cities across the eight focus areas mentioned in Part 3. Special focus is to be placed on mentee cities achieving the following:

- Visible cleanliness of the city
- Higher order of waste processing
- Positive citizen feedback and increased civic engagement

As a positive effect of the above, it is expected that the mentee city will also see improvements in Swachh Survekshan scores, Garbage Free City Star ratings and ODF+/ODF++ certification status.