PRESS RELEASE

Stakeholder workshop "INDO-GERMAN COOPERATION ON WATER MANAGEMENT IN SMART CITIES" on July 26, 2018

Nearly 30 participants – amongst them Dr. K. Vijayakarthikeyan, Commissioner, Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation (CCMC) – met on Thursday, July 26th, in Coimbatore to discuss the topic of water management in their city.

"Smart Water Future India", a project coordinated by the Fraunhofer Institute for Interfacial Engineering and Biotechnology IGB and funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety since October 2017, aims to contribute to the development of smart, sustainable water management strategies for Coimbatore and to establish a Water Innovation Hub for long-term cooperation between local stakeholders and German institutes and companies. In the project, experts from the areas of research, planning and business matchmaking are working together: Fraunhofer IGB, ISOE – Institute for Social-Ecological Research, Drees & Sommer and trAIDe. As a leading local NGO promoting sustainable water strategies, Siruthuli has kindly hosted the stakeholder workshop.

The stakeholder workshop on July 26th was the first workshop within the Smart Water Future India project and nearly 30 participants from administration, private companies, universities, and civil society came to discuss the topic of water management in their city. The aim of the workshop was to identify options towards the future development of the water sector in Coimbatore as well as first starting points for a long-term cooperation between Germany and India for integrated water solutions. Already in March 2018 the project partners conducted several interviews with local stakeholders and in April 2018 they discussed potential approaches with German water technology experts.

In her welcome address Ms. Vanitha Mohan, Managing Trustee of Siruthuli, asked the workshop participants what would happen within the next ten years and what the city would leave behind for its children, and concluded: "We need to do something about the sewage as soon as possible." Fraunhofer IGB scientist Dr. Marius Mohr explained the project team's motivation: "How can we as German water experts contribute to improve the water management situation in Coimbatore?" In his special address Dr. K. Vijayakarthikeyan, the Commissioner of the Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation (CCMC), stressed that the workshop would be very important and explained: "The city is seeking for a comprehensive solution." Ms. Anandi Iyer, Director of Fraunhofer Office India, finished the first part of the workshop by reminding everyone that what is done today will be remembered as a starting point for a perfect future of Coimbatore.

The second part started with introducing the motivation and objectives of the "Smart Water Future India" project, followed by the results of the city analysis. Within interactive Q&A sessions the workshop participants' remarks and questions were shared.

Discussing three fields of actions with a multi-stakeholder approach

Before splitting up in working groups three fields of actions deriving from the analysis were presented: Semi-central, integrated municipal wastewater management, improvement of industrial wastewater management, and establishment of water quality monitoring. The underlying problems and options were reviewed and enriched with deeper insights by invited multi-stakeholders from the public, private and civil society sector. The value of a monitoring lab for setting the basis for data-based decision making as well as including the topic of small domestic enterprises for wastewater treatment solutions were just a few outcomes of the workshop.

As next steps, the Smart Water Future India team will finalize the city analysis and work on a strategy plan in collaboration with local stakeholders as well as develop the many good ideas into outlines for projects which provide the starting point for cooperation and concrete action. The team will be back in Coimbatore in November to discuss the approach for the innovation hub.

Nearly 30 participants from administration, private companies, universities, and civil society came to discuss the topic of water management in Coimbatore. (© Siruthuli)

Opening of the stakeholder workshop by Dr. Marius Mohr from Fraunhofer IGB. He is coordinator of the Smart Water Future India project. (© Siruthuli)

Speakers at the stakeholder workshop on July 26, 2018, in Coimbatore. (© Siruthuli)

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100 Smart Cities" and Indo-German cooperation

The Indian Government has launched the ambitious Smart City Initiative, covering 100 Cities in the first phase of the Program. Within the framework of the German-Indian cooperation, Germany is supporting three of these Indian cities, including Coimbatore, in implementing their Smart City plans.

Smart Water Future India project and team

The project "Smart Water Future India" is being funded from October 2017 to March 2019 as part of the Export Initiative "Environmental Technologies" of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety. In addition to Fraunhofer IGB, project partners include the Stuttgart-based consulting and planning company Drees & Sommer Advanced Building Technologies GmbH, the ISOE – Institute for Social-Ecological Research in Frankfurt am Main and the Cologne-based trAIDe GmbH – partners for the initiation of international business contacts.

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