Our Neighbourhood is Your Neighbourhood Too

A Participatory Planning Approach for Improvement of Low-Income Settlements in Puducherry

PSCDL

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BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

PROJECT BACKGROUND

'Our Neighbourhood is Your Neighbourhood Too - A Participatory Planning Approach for Improvement of Low-Income Settlements in Puducherry,' was selected from Puducherry UT in the CITIIS (City Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain)program launched by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in July 2018, with supported from Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the European Union (EU), and anchored by the Program Management Unit (PMU) at the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) in New Delhi.The Project envisages making Puducherry a Smart and Sustainable City through a combination of interventions aiming at enhancing the physical, social and financial inclusion of low-income settlements in the city.

The vision of the project as evolved during the Maturation phase is to provide Affordable & Livable housing and neighbourhood for urban poor in which they collectively partner, take pride and own it up; and enhance livelihood opportunities for urban poor to improve their socio-economic well-being. The project will benefit 10,258 households with population of 42,673 from low-income settlements living in Puducherry.

PSCDL is the project owner of CITIIS project in Puducherry. Under the CITIIS project, PSCDL is extensively engaging with the residents of low-income communities, who are the primary stakeholders of the project. Additionally, PSCDL is working in collaboration with the primary stakeholder departments such as Puducherry Slum Clearance Board (PSCB), Pondicherry Municipality and Oulgaret Municipality along with allied departments- Public Works Department (PWD), Electricity Departmentand other departments in Government of Puducherry.

The Project secured a funding of INR 114.60Crores as grant [from a 50%:50% loan commitment by the Government of India and the Government of Puducherry], and with a commitment of a counterpart funding of INR 34.60 Crores by the Puducherry Smart City Development Limited (PSCDL). However, during the feasibility study, the scale of the project was reduced to overall cost of INR.99.71 Crores.

INTRODUCTION TO CITIIS

CITIIS program provided a unique opportunity to develop and implement the project in Puducherry improve the physical, social and economic condition of the low-income neighbourhoods, centered on community engagement. CITIIS program is conceptualized to assist Indian cities in implementing urban infrastructure projects that are integrated, innovation driven and sustainable. The program combines financial assistance through loans and grants and technical assistance through Mentorship Programme to the selected cities. This assistance focuses on strengthening institutions by committing resources to systematic planning during the maturation phase with the support of Mentor and Domestic Expert, by developing results-based monitoring frameworks and by adopting technology for program monitoring.

The projects under CITIIS fall under 4themes: a) Sustainable Mobility; b) Public Open Spaces; c) Urban E-Governance and ICT; and d)Social and Organisational Innovation in Low-Income Settlements. Twelve projects have been selected across twelve smart cities under the program through a challenge process. 'Our Neighbourhood is Your Neighbourhood Too - A Participatory Planning Approach for Improvement of Low-Income Settlements in Puducherry,' falls under the theme of Social and Organizational Innovation in Low Income Settlements. The core values of the CITIIS program of Sustainability, Innovation and Participation underpin the maturation, development and implementation of Puducherry project.

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Our Neighbourhood is Your Neighbourhood Too - A Participatory Planning Approach for Improvement of Low-Income Settlements in Puducherry,' intends to provide solutions oriented towards development and up-gradation of housing, improvement of access to basic service and infrastructure, enhancement of livelihood development and employment opportunities in low-income settlements, though intensive citizen engagement and outreach programme. All the solutions are based on community need assessment, evidence based data generation and participatory planning with multiple stakeholders that will form the Knowledge Hub for the city. The key pillars of the project are:

The illustration highlights the project components

The Project includes Area based Components & Non-Area Based Components

PROJECT RATIONALE

URBAN POOR IN PUDUCHERRY- THE CONTEXT

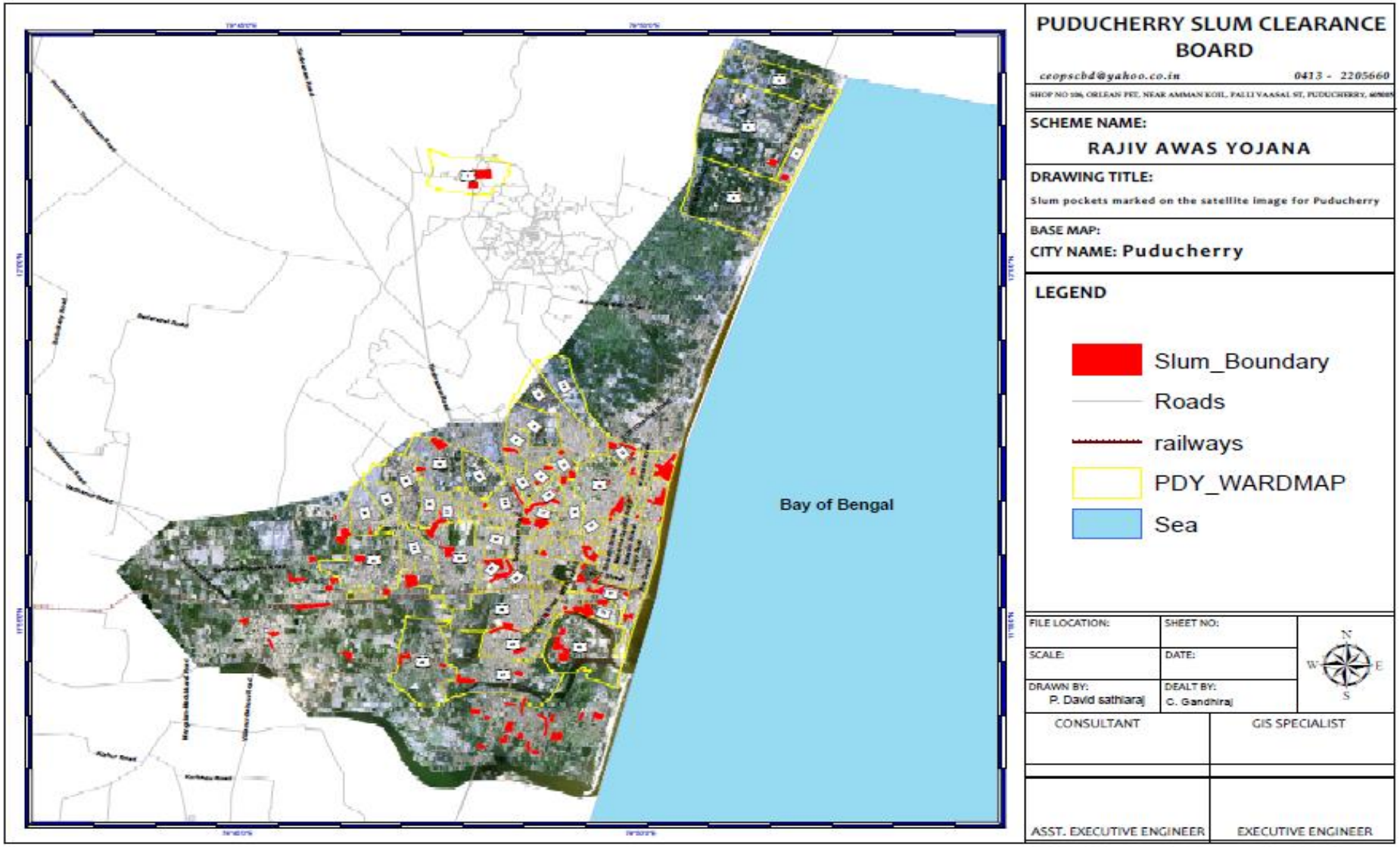
There are 182 slums in the city with a population of 81463. Slums and low-income settlements in Puducherry region are specifically characterized by people who migrated from the neighboring state of Tamil Nadu in two distinctive phases. The first wave of migrants came to the city immediately after the years following the de facto transfer of powers from the French Colonial Government to the Government of India in 1954 and UT of Puducherry became part of the Republic of India. The sudden inflow of migrants was a result of removal of restrictions on the movement of people from Tamil Nadu to Puducherry that prevailed during the French colonial rule which paved the way for migrants to settle down in Puducherry. The second wave of migrants settled in Puducherry between 1970 to 2000 with the promotion of industrial development with attractive policies by Government of Puducherry that mobilized the labour groups from TamilNadu.

Puducherry region today presents a wide range of activities in Institutional, Commercial and Tourism sectors. Growth in such activities, possibilities of absorption in various service sectors and scope of employment in trade and business activities, etc. have additionally attracted more rural population to the urban center. This increase in the population of the city due to migration created a demand for urban housing that did not keep pace with the government housing provision in Puducherry. Moreover, due to their economic conditions, these sections of the population are unable to own a house within their limited

income. It resulted in settlements in and around the main work centers in the city that led to the creation of slums as a consequence of the demand-supply gap in the affordable urban housing market. They occupy vacant/hazardous zones wherever available and live in unhygienic and unsafe living conditions. These habitations in due course proliferate exponentially further due to rapid urbanization and natural growth of population.

Slum-Dwellers are often forced to live in environmentally unsafe areas-coastal zone, flood plains, polluted sites near solid waste dumps, open drains and sewers. On one hand, the poor environmental conditions increase their vulnerability and leads to poor health that aggravates poverty due to loss of income owing to sickness, disease, and increased spending on health care, resulting in depletion of household savings. On the other hand, urban poor suffer disproportionately from access to basic services like inadequate water, sanitation facilities and air pollution. On the other hand, additionally due to low level of literacy and skills they lack employment opportunities. Unemployment leads to regular quarrel, clash and fight in these settlements, making these as well as nearby neighborhoods unsafe for women, school children and office workers. Besides, many of the residents are involved in prostitution, drug trafficking, hijacking, smuggling etc. These activities threaten the social and cultural environment of the city.

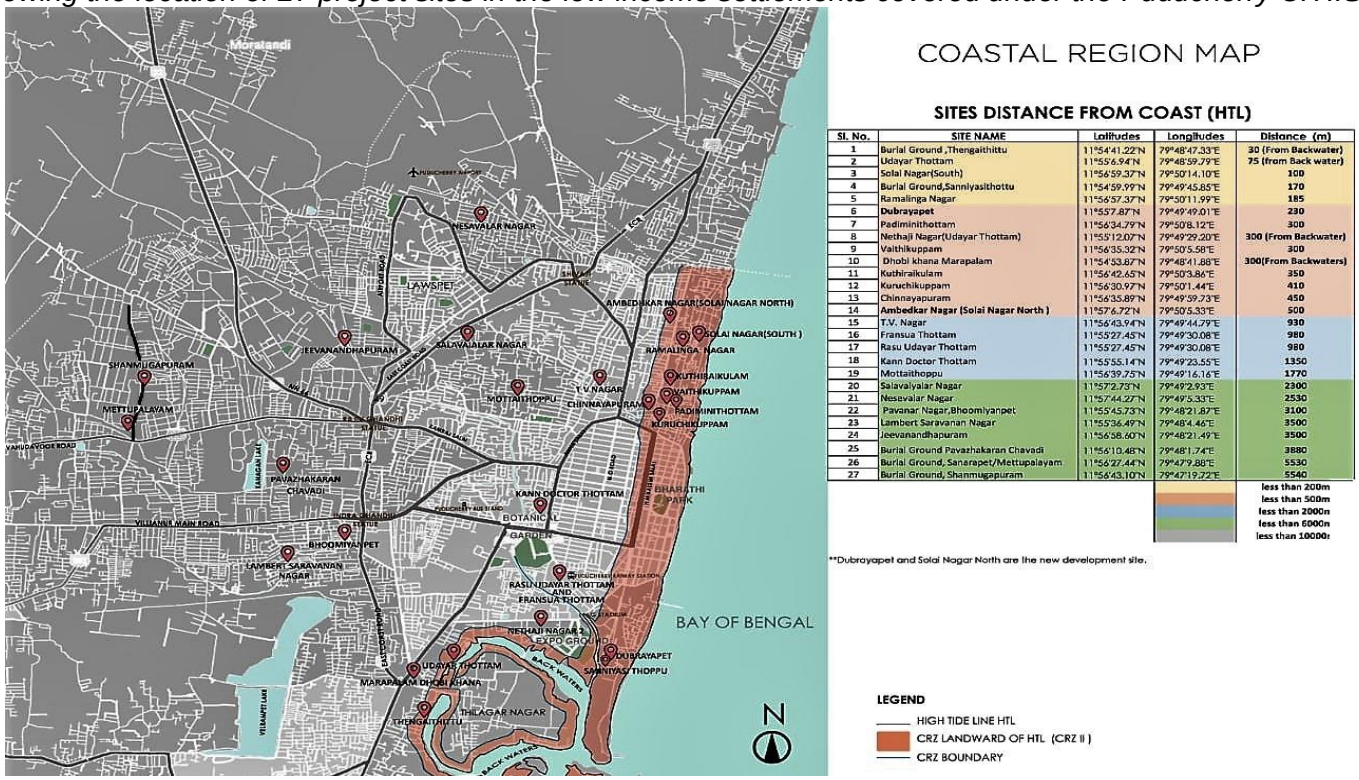
Map showing the location of slums in the Urban limits of Puducherry



SNAPSHOT OF LOW INCOME SETTLEMENTS

Puducherry Slum Clearance Board has identified a total 315 slums within the Puducherry Union Territory. Out of which, in Puducherry region 182 slums were enlisted by PSCB under planning area for development under 'Housing for All' program. 81 of these slums are marked as notified slums* and 101 are marked as identified slums**. The total slum population as per the census 2011 is 82,374 and with 20,054 households.

Map showing the location of 27 project sites in the low income settlements covered under the Puducherry CITIIS Project



Sl. No.	SITE NAME	Latitudes	Longitudes	Distance (m)
1	Burial Ground ,Thengaithittu	11°54'41.22"N	79°48'47.33"E	30 (From Backwater)
2	Udayar Thottam	11°55'6.94"N	79°48'59.79"E	75 (from Back water)
3	Solai Nagar(South)	11°56'59.37"N	79°50'14.10"E	100
4	Burial Ground,Sanniyasithottu	11°54'59.99"N	79°49'45.85"E	170
5	Ramalinga Nagar	11°56'57.37"N	79°50'11.99"E	185
6	Dubrayapet	11°55'7.87"N	79°49'49.01"E	230
7	Padiminithottam	11°56'34.79"N	79°50'8.12"E	300
8	Nethaji Nagar(Udayar Thottam)	11°55'12.07"N	79°49'29.20"E	300 (From Backwater)
9	Vaithikuppam	11°56'35.32"N	79°50'5.58"E	300
10	Dhobi khana Marapalam	11°54'53.87"N	79°48'41.88"E	300(From Backwaters)
11	Kuthiraikulam	11°56'42.65"N	79°50'3.86"E	350
12	Kuruchikuppam	11°56'30.97"N	79°50'1.44"E	410
13	Chinnayapuram	11°56'35.89"N	79°49'59.73"E	450
14	Ambedkar Nagar (Solai Nagar North)	11°57'6.72"N	79°50'5.33"E	500
15	T.V. Nagar	11°56'43.94"N	79°49'44.79"E	930
16	Fransua Thottam	11°55'27.45"N	79°49'30.08"E	980
17	Rasu Udayar Thottam	11°55'27.45"N	79°49'30.08"E	980
18	Kann Doctor Thottam	11°55'55.14"N	79°49'23.55"E	1350
19	Mottaithoppu	11°56'39.75"N	79°49'16.16"E	1770
20	Salavaiyalar Nagar	11°57'2.73"N	79°49'2.93"E	2300
21	Nesevalar Nagar	11°57'44.27"N	79°49'5.33"E	2530
22	Pavanar Nagar,Bhoomiyanpet	11°55'45.73"N	79°48'21.87"E	3100
23	Lambert Saravanan Nagar	11°55'36.49"N	79°48'4.46"E	3500
24	Jeevanandhapuram	11°56'58.60"N	79°48'21.49"E	3500
25	Burial Ground Pavazhakaran Chavadi	11°56'10.48"N	79°48'1.74"E	3880
26	Burial Ground, Sanarapet/Mettupalayam	11°55'27.44"N	79°47'9.80"E	5530
27	Burial Ground, Shanmugapuram	11°56'43.10"N	79°47'19.72"E	5540

less than 200m
less than 500m
less than 2000m
less than 5000m
less than 10000m

Notified Slums: As per Census 2011, all notified areas in a town or city notified as 'Slum' by State, UT Administration or Local Government under any Act including a 'Slum Act'.

****Identified Slums**:* As per Census 2011, a compact area of at least 300 population or about 60-70 households of poorly built congested tenements, in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities.

KEY ISSUES

Based on the analysis of the socio-economic sample survey, consultation with the residents of low-income settlements and stakeholder departments and need assessment following issues were identified highlighting the shortfalls in current levels of housing, infrastructure and livelihoods.

1. Lack of adequate housing

- Paucity of public land in Puducherry due to the geographical constrains.
- Government provision of housing not able to keep pace with the migration trends.
- Low affordability of these income groups to own housing provided by the government.
- Encroachment on public and private land with temporary and semi-permanent housing.

2. Poor quality of housing

- PSCB rental housing provided to the slum dwellers has highly dilapidated interiors and exteriors due to lack maintenance, thus creating a poor living environment for these residents and reducing the life of the building blocks.
- The maintenance of the building blocks is a mandate of PSCB, cost of the maintenance should be met through beneficiary contribution/ rent collected from the tenants, however due to the political stress PSCB is unable to collect rent / beneficiary contribution.
- The size of the existing dwelling units in these tenement blocks is insufficient to fulfill the needs of the households.

3. Lack of access to basic infrastructure and services

- Many of the settlements lack basic infrastructure- roads, drainage, sewerage with household connections, streetlights etc.
- Few of the sites lack access to potable drinking water, as the quality is very poor.
- The community toilets are in a dilapidated condition at 9 project sites due to lack of maintenance. Additionally, they are not in compliance with the sanitation standards in the country. The ratio of toilet seats to the population is inadequate.
- The road infrastructure at 6 project sites are in a very poor condition, the roads are found with potholes, cracks, top layer completed eroded and in many of these sites storm water/ sullage is found stagnant in road causing health hazard.
- A major drain at one of the project site is in highly damaged condition, the revetment wall and retaining wall were weakened and found in dilapidated state, the storm water from the canal inundates into the low lying habitation areas causing health hazard.
- Poor solid waste management in settlements. Though the waste is collected regularly by municipality, the residents are not bothered about managing the waste.

4. Poorly maintained and inadequate community infrastructure

- Anganwadi centre at one of the project sites is in a dilapidated state, hampering the regular functioning of the Anganwadi.

- The multipurpose community hall at 4 sites are in a dilapidated state and 3 of them are completely defunct due to the poor condition of the building.

- In 5 settlements, the open spaces have been encroached and become a dumping ground. At few of the project sites, people were reluctant in paying electricity bills for the common utilities which hampers the maintenance of public utilities such as motor pumps and other electrical equipments due to lack of funds.

- In 5 settlements, trespassing of anti social elements in the public open spaces is identified and concerns were raised about safety and security.

- The graveyards at 5 project sites were found in a shabby condition, 4 of these sites were also accommodating cremation activities, and the firewood burning in the cremation ground is causing air pollution. Due the Covid19 pandemic, the number corpses being disposed are raising at an alarming rate, due to continuous burning of corpses smoke emission is visible in the surrounding residential areas which is causing health hazard as well as conflicts between the public and graveyard workmen.

5. Lack of opportunities for livelihoods

- At 3 nos. of project sites the livelihood of people is affected due to poor infrastructure.

- Due to the Covid19 pandemic the income generation activities were highly affected among the slum dwellers, they are looking forward to find alternative income generation options and financial security; many of them are willing to learn an additional skill.

- At one of the project site, the roadside fish vendors are being driven out by the enforcement agencies, as they are occupying the roadside and hindering the traffic, they are working in poor work conditions and facing threat of losing their livelihood.

- In many of the low income settlements women are involved in cooked food, vegetable and fruits vending activities in the road spaces in front of their houses they are mostly dependent on high interest loans from local money lenders for procurement of raw materials, major portion of their income is spent on interests.

6. Gender Inclusion

- At many of the settlements gender safety is a major issue, particularly at the community toilets, there is no adequate privacy and needs of women were not addressed in the existing design and arrangements at the toilets.

- At public open spaces, as they are poorly designed and badly maintained, they remain an unsafe space for women and there is no facility provided for elderly, pregnant women and lactating mothers in the existing design of the park spaces.

- The women street vendors at few of the settlements and gentrified slums are not having adequate facilities and they are working in unsafe condition as there is no traffic calm measures and the women vendors are seen as a hindrance to the traffic and lacking security of livelihood.

NEED OF THE PROJECT

The project aims to address the following concerns being faced by the city:

Physical Environments in low-income settlements

- Need for new low-cost housing to meet the need for re-housing slum communities.
- Poor quality housing.
- Existing social and physical infrastructure is of poor quality.

Economy and Employment

- Exclusion, especially of low-income groups from economic opportunities.
- Low financial literacy.

Challenge identified in Citizen Participation

- Absence of direct and effective communication between various stakeholders.
- Lack of ownership towards community assets due to unequal citizen representation.

Capacity of Delivery Agencies and Beneficiaries

- Inadequate human resources within Puducherry Slum Clearance Board (PSCB) to address intersectional nature of slum improvement projects.

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVE

The project '**Our Neighbourhood is Your Neighbourhood Too - A Participatory Planning Approach for Improvement of Low-Income Settlements in Puducherry**,' has been divided into Area-based components and Non-Area based components. Area-based components focus on infrastructure developments under the project and non-area based focus on soft components of the project. The project covers 21 low-income settlements spread in two municipalities of Puducherry.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

Given below are the Project components along with respective sites under the CITIIS project for Area based and Non-Area components.

Project components – Area based and Non-Area based projects

S. No	Name of the Component	Sites	Interventions
Area based Components			
1.	**Housing Build**	208 dwelling units at 2 sites • LS Nagar- 128 DU • Dubrayapet- 80 DU	Construction of new dwelling units adopting climate responsive design, area not less than 30 sq. mt and with community amenities (water supply, UG drainage, internal roads, street lighting, and green open spaces)
2.	**Housing Fix**	1108 Dwelling units at 4 housing complex built by PSCB • Kann Doctor Thottam- 416 DU • Pavanar Nagar, Boomianpet- 510 DU • Kuruchikuppam-168 DU • Mottaithoppu- 40 DU	Retrofitting of the façades, replacement of broken doors/windows, damp-proofing of the wet areas and terraces, plaster & painting, provision of in-house toilets etc.
3	**Community Fix**	• 20 low-income settlements in Puducherry and Oulgaret Municipalities - LS Nagar, Solai Nagar(South), Vaithikuppam, TV Nagar, Kann Doctor Thottam, Padminithottam, Chinnaiyapuram, Kuthiraikulam (Livelihood development centre) Rassu Udayar Thottam, Ambedkar Nagar(Solai Nagar), Fransuva Thottam, Udayar Thottam, Nesavalar nagar (Lawspet), Jeevanandhapuram (Lawspet), Pavanar Nagar (Boomianpet), Burial Ground-Pavazhakaranchavady, Burial Ground-Mettupalayam, Burial Ground - Shanmugapuram, Burial Ground-Sanyasithoppu, Burial Ground-Mudaliarpet.	Development & upgrading of physical infrastructure, social infrastructure in these low-income communities based on infrastructure gap assessment and community needs.

Non- Area Based Components			
1.	**Livelihood Development**	Livelihood Development will be overall 21 slums- • **Group 1**-Ramalinga nagar (DobhiKhana), Salavaiyalar nagar, Lawspet, Marapalam (DobhiKhana), Nethaji Nagar II (Fish Market), **Group 2**-All the above sites	• Group 1-5 sites will include livelihood linked Infrastructure &equipment development, capacity buildings and market linkages. • Group 2- 21 sites will include skill development training programme to improve employability and entrepreneurship among residents of these low-income settlements
2.	**Our Neighbourhood is your neighbourhood too Outreach Programme**	All the above sites	Community mobilization, organization, awareness and advocacy for sustainable management of assets created under CITIIS Project.
3.	**Urban Pondy Lab**	All the above sites	Data collection, storage and management (Surveys, Drawings, Maps, Technical assessments etc.)

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- **Amplifying Community Voices -** Innovating how unheard community stakeholders can be better-empowered voice their needs, supporting and multiplying community debate and urban sociability, and hence help utilize funds where they are needed the most.

- **Catalyzing Community Resources** - Innovating an integrated financing mechanism to streamline deployment of multiple funding streams strategically and effectively towards social housing, community initiatives and projects.

- **Leveraging Community Environments** - Improving shared community assets such as physical and social infrastructure and public open spaces - and co-creating new assets where they are needed the most.

- **Capacity Building - Bottom up + Top down** - Augmenting the existing technological and social capacity, and inter-departmental coordination of lead delivery agencies such as the PSCDL, PSCB and other government departments to improve their effectiveness in achieving their goal of a Slum Free Pondicherry. Simultaneously, building the capacity of beneficiaries to monitor receipt and smarter utilization of funds.

OVERALL METHODOLOGY

A combination of development, retrofit, in-situ upgradation and redevelopment model has been conceived for housing, community infrastructure and livelihood projects within the CITIIS program. This has been unpinned based on the baseline studies, assessment of the community needs, consultation with the various stakeholders and detailed technical investigations.

New housing Built: Development Considerations

1. To create livable and durable social housing facility where the dwelling unit having a minimum of 30 sq.m size providing optimum utilities for a EWS family i.e a bedroom, a kitchen, a multipurpose space, a separate toilet and a bathroom. The design of the housing units will not compromise the functional aspects.
2. To provide basic infrastructure and allied amenities in the proposed housing sites which makes sure the livelihood is not disturbed and the people don’t have to travel a long distance for these basic amenities.
3. To create community interaction spaces, open green spaces, parking facility, ensure safety, make it universally accessible and sustainability features etc.,
4. Increase community ownership- Change of housing tenure from rental to owned, ensure community contribution and formation of resident welfare association.

Integrating the above considerations multi-storey housing units have been proposed at two new project sites.

Photographs presenting the site conditions at New House Build project locations

Housing Fix: Retrofit Considerations

1. Improve the living condition in the existing dwelling units
2. Increase the utilization of existing space by providing minimum modification without compromising on structural stability.
3. Preserve and increase the durability of the structure
4. Community Management System for maintenance

Retrofitting will introduce modifications in the existing built-up housing units to achieve the objectives- improve livability, effective space utilization, structural stability and increase the life of the structure.

Prevailing conditions of damaged external structure of a housing block at Kann Doctor Thottam site

Prevailing conditions of dilapidated structure of a housing block at Kann Doctor Thottam site

Prevailing conditions of house fix sites

- Sites with building blocks which are in a dilapidated conditions such as lack of structural stability, lack of efficiency in usable space within the house, less efficient toilets, damaged plumbing system, etc. have been identified and proposed for house fix.
- Retrofitting to be done to improve the structural stability, face upliftment and to repair the damaged portions of the blocks to improve the livability factor of the community.

Prevailing conditions of damaged structure of parapet wall in a housing block at Bhoomiyanpet site

Prevailing poor internal conditions of a house due to lack of efficient usable space within the house in a building block at Bhoomiyanpet site

Photographs presenting the site conditions at Housing Fix project locations

Community Fix: IN-SITU UPGRADATION

1. Improve access to basic infrastructure and services, wherever missing.
2. Improve the usability of public utility spaces
3. Create accessible and safe public spaces for all, taking into account of women, children, and elderly needs and desires..
4. Increase community ownership of assets

In-situ upgradation will effect a minimum replacement of the existing built-up environment or part of it and enable co-creation of a new layout with enhanced infrastructure. In-situ upgradation models have been utilized in a few community fix project sites. Depending on the existing level of infrastructure services in the identified project sites, the needs and aspirations of stakeholders and gap assessment, the existing under - utilized / defunct facilities were demolished and upgraded facilities added.

Stagnated water from the septic tanks at the back lanes of the blocks at Lambert Saravanan Nagar site

Prevailing poor conditions of defunct school where the people of the community started throwing garbage at Attupatti site

Community toilet in dilapidated state at Dhobi Khana Complex, Ramalinga Nagar

Dilapidated condition of roof of the storage shed and lack of space for ironing & storing the clothes in Dhobi Khana complex, Ramalinga Nagar

Wood fire fuel pyre in the cremation ground causing air pollution at the graveyard at Pavazhakaran Chavadi

Children playing on streets found with pot holes all around due to lack of designated play area, which causes safety issues at Nesavalar Nagar

Prevailing conditions of the streets of Solai Nagar where the roads are being blocked by the raised manhole in the road.

Photographs presenting the site conditions at Community Fix project locations

PROJECT INTENDED OUTCOMES

1. **Improved access to adequate and affordable housing units**
   208 new dwelling units are proposed to be built and 1108 existing dwellings units to be retrofitted under the project. These will improve access to housing and enhance the living condition of 1316 families.

2. **Improved health & well-being- Add how community fix will lead to improvement of health and well-being of the community- See M&E for reference** the proposed anganwadi, multipurpose halls, drinking water provision, parks and open spaces, LPG crematoriums will benefit a larger population in the urban area.

3. **Improved Socio-economic condition of the urban poor**
   About 1046 families will be directly benefited from the livelihood infrastructure projects proposed; about 2760 families will be benefited from the skill training program and entrepreneurship development program proposed under the project.

4. **Improved community sense of pride and ownership of assets**
   30 nos. of Residents welfare association / neighborhood welfare association will be formed and empowered to maintain the assets created under the project in a sustainable manner and their capacity will be improved by training, peer learning and exposure to good practices. 30 neighborhoods / communities will have an improved sense of pride about their living environment and the communities will take ownership in sustainable maintenance of the assets.

5. **Gender inclusion**
   Projects are conceived in consultation with the members from all the sections of the society with fair gender representation, the voices of the vulnerable sections of the society is heard while planning the project, women and transgender were involved while designing the project, livelihood infrastructure (Women and child friendly workspaces) to create more job opportunities and training opportunities, anganwadi centers with counseling cells, gender inclusive library space, feeding rooms in park spaces, community halls, gender specific community toilets ensuring gender safety and privacy are all considered in the proposed projects. In the RWA / NWA equal representation of women is mandated for ensuring women participation in decision making and good governance. About 68,000 women will be benefitted by the overall projects.

6. **Environmental Sustainability**
   Proposed projects focuses on environmental sustainability, options for rain water harvesting, residual water recycling were explored and proposed at feasible locations. 6 nos. of burial grounds are proposed to be improved under the project. In 5 nos. of burial ground sites, the cremation ground is proposed to be modernized with provision of gasified crematoriums in order to reduce the air pollution and to facilitate the mourning families with proper infrastructure for conducting the funeral rituals. During the Covid19 pandemic, exposure to the smoke emitted out of cremation is widely frightening the public residing in a proximity to the burial ground and often there are conflicts reported between the public and the burial ground workmen. The gasified crematoriums are expected to arrest the harmful smoke to a larger extend and the modernized crematorium is expected to benefit 3,00,000 populations in the urban area.

CONCLUSION

The Puducherry CITIIS Project is expected to improve the living conditions of the slum dwellers and urban poor through creation of new housing, improvements to the existing tenements, creation of new community infrastructure, upgrading the existing infrastructure, provision of better and standard basic amenities, improved livelihood infrastructure and creation of livelihood opportunities etc., most importantly the urban poor in Puducherry will feel the ownership and take up a new pride with the improved environment in their neighborhoods with their sustained participation in good governance.