



# PULSE

The Year So Far





# Dear NFSSM Alliance Community,

We hope this message finds you well. It's been a while since our last update, and we are thrilled to reconnect with you. During our brief pause in communication, owing to the model code of conduct, we've been hard at work behind the scenes, actively planning, structuring, and setting the stage for the next phase of our mission, ensuring our continued impact in the urban sanitation sector.

As part of this process, we have finalised our new priorities: **institutionalising inclusive sanitation, promoting reuse and circularity for urban expansion, and creating an enabling environment for innovation and technology**. These priorities will guide our efforts to integrate inclusive sanitation practices into governance, support sustainable urban development, and drive advancements in the sanitation sector.

In addition to refining our strategic focus, this period has seen us actively engage in key global and national platforms. At the **10th World Water Forum, in Bali**, we showcased India's achievements in sanitation and launched knowledge products like the **Disaster Risk Reduction framework** and **Building Back Better: Disaster Resilient Sanitation in South Asia**. These initiatives have underscored our commitment to integrating WSH interventions with broader disaster resilience strategies.

We also played a significant role at the **International Conclave on Urban Transformation in Odisha**, where the groundbreaking **Odisha Inclusive Urban Sanitation Policy 2024** was launched. This conclave not only reinforced our influence in shaping urban sanitation policies but also led to the launch of the **Odisha Urban Academy**, a pioneering centre of excellence dedicated to building human capital and advancing urban service delivery.

Our commitment to cross-learning and diffusion was further strengthened this year through key initiatives like the **Leh Exposure Visit**, organised under the **Parvat Manthan Collaborative**. This event facilitated rich exchanges on inclusive sanitation principles and approaches among government officials from hilly cities. Participants gained valuable insights into practical applications and innovative urban planning approaches, which are now being integrated into sanitation strategies across hilly regions.

As we move forward, we are eager to build on these accomplishments. The upcoming **Alliance Retreat in Goa** will be a pivotal moment for us to come together and develop work plans that will shape the next phase of our journey. We're excited to engage in deep discussions, workshops, and vision-setting sessions that will drive our mission forward.

We are more energised than ever to continue our work, aligned with our renewed priorities and the collective strength of our community. This marks the beginning of our renewed engagement with you.

We look forward to sharing more about our ongoing work, celebrating our successes, and continuing this journey together.

**Warm regards,  
Secretariat,  
NFSSM Alliance**



# Deep Diving into Alliance Priorities

As the NFSSM Alliance evolves, our focus sharpens on key strategic areas that will drive impactful change in urban sanitation across India.

Our renewed priorities reflect the need to institutionalise inclusive sanitation, enhance circularity in urban expansion, and foster innovation and technology adoption at scale. Here's a closer look at our core priorities:



## Institutionalising Inclusive Sanitation

We are committed to embedding the principles of inclusive sanitation into policy frameworks and regulations at the national, state, and municipal levels. This ensures that vulnerable communities are not only included but also prioritised in the design and delivery of sanitation services. By institutionalising these principles, we aim to create systemic change that is sustainable and scalable.

### What This Means for the Sector

#### Policy Integration

Inclusive sanitation principles will be embedded in national and state policies, guiding urban planning and development. This will ensure that all future urban infrastructure projects consider the needs of the most marginalised communities.

#### Community-Centric Services

Increased focus on ensuring that sanitation services reach the most marginalised, fostering community ownership and participation. This approach will empower local communities to have a voice in how sanitation services are delivered and maintained.

#### Sustainability

Long-term impact through the institutionalisation of inclusive practices, ensuring they become standard operating procedures across cities. This will lead to a more resilient and equitable sanitation system that can adapt to future challenges.

## Reuse and Circularity for Urban Expansion

As cities grow, sustainable waste management is critical. Our focus is on creating an enabling environment for circularity and reuse within key stages of the sanitation value chain, empowering cities to adopt practices that support both environmental sustainability and economic resilience.

By promoting reuse and circularity, we are not only addressing waste management but also contributing to broader environmental goals such as resource conservation and climate change mitigation.

## What This Means for the Sector

### Circular Economy

Adoption of circular models in waste management, reducing environmental impact and creating economic opportunities. This will transform waste from a problem into a resource, driving new industries and job creation.

### City-Specific Solutions

Tailored frameworks and toolkits for small, medium, and large cities, enabling scalable and adaptable circular practices. Cities will be able to implement these solutions according to their unique needs, leading to more effective and efficient waste management.

### Resource Optimisation

Enhanced focus on the reuse of resources, turning waste into valuable inputs for other processes. This will reduce the strain on natural resources and promote a more sustainable urban environment.



## Creating an Enabling Environment for Innovation and Technology

Innovation is at the heart of transforming sanitation services. We are facilitating the adoption of cutting-edge technologies and systems that improve efficiency, safety, and inclusivity. By fostering a culture of innovation, we aim to accelerate the deployment of new solutions that can tackle the most pressing challenges in the sanitation sector.



## What This Means for the Sector

### Tech Adoption

Accelerated introduction of advanced sanitation technologies, ensuring wider access to safe and efficient services. This will bridge the gap between current practices and the future needs of urban sanitation, making services more accessible and reliable.

### Private Sector Engagement

Increased collaboration with the private sector to scale innovative solutions through supportive policies and partnerships. This will unlock new funding sources and bring in expertise to drive large-scale implementation of innovative technologies.

### Standardisation

Development of robust standards and guidelines to ensure the quality and scalability of new technologies across different regions. This will provide a consistent framework for cities to adopt new technologies confidently, knowing they meet high standards of quality and performance.

**As we move forward with these priorities, we are confident that they will serve as the foundation for driving transformative change in urban sanitation across India.**

**By focusing on institutionalising inclusive practices, promoting sustainable circularity, and embracing innovation, the NFSSM Alliance is not just addressing the challenges of today but also paving the way for a future where every urban community has access to safe, resilient, and equitable sanitation services.**

# Recap: Learning Instances in 2024

As the NFSSM Alliance continues to drive innovation and impact across the sanitation sector, we are proud to highlight several key learning instances and knowledge-sharing activities that have marked our journey in 2024.

These events and initiatives have not only expanded our collective understanding but have also helped shape the strategies that guide our work.



## Odisha International Conclave on Urban Transformation

The landmark Odisha International Conclave on Urban Transformation, hosted by the Housing and Urban Development Department, Government of Odisha, brought together over 300 urban practitioners and leaders from across 11 countries, in January 2024.

At the conclave, the State released the **Odisha Inclusive Urban Sanitation Policy 2024**. This policy - the first of its kind in the country, was developed with support from the NFSSM Alliance.

The event also saw the launch of the Odisha Urban Academy, a pioneering centre of excellence dedicated to building human capital and advancing urban service delivery. By fostering collaboration and sharing best practices, the Odisha Urban Academy aims to inspire and empower cities across the developing world to achieve sustainable and inclusive urban growth.

The conclave featured dialogues and panel discussions on various aspects of sanitation and urban development, including:

- **Water for All**
- **Inclusive Sanitation**
- **Community-Led Urban Transformation**
- **Regulatory Frameworks in WSH**
- **Digital Public Infrastructure at Scale for Urban Governance**
- **Role of JAGA Mission in Enabling Access to Urban Services**
- **Avenues of Partnership for Transformative Urban Governance**

NFSSM Alliance members participated as speakers and delegates enriching the conclave. The event also brought together participants from the CWISAN (Nepal) and FSM Network (Bangladesh) alliances.

In partnership with the Housing and Urban Development Department, Govt of Odisha, the NFSSM Alliance also developed knowledge products showcasing best practices from Odisha, further contributing to cross-sharing of learnings and strategic partnerships aimed at building safe, healthy, and inclusive cities.





## Global South Academic Conclave (GSAC)

In February 2024, the **Global South Academic Conclave (GSAC)** was held in Ahmedabad, India, **organised by the Center for Water and Sanitation (CWAS) at CRDF in collaboration with the Faculty of Planning at CEPT University and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.**

This event served as a dynamic platform for cross-learning across countries and regions, with a special focus on the intersections of WSH and climate resilience. The GSAC brought together leading academics, practitioners, and policymakers to engage in enriching discussions that are crucial for advancing urban sanitation and addressing climate challenges.

At the conclave, the **Municipal Strengthening for Improved Urban Services report**, developed by the NFSSM Alliance, was launched. Created in collaboration with CWAS, this report underscores the critical need for robust municipal governance, with a particular emphasis on the delivery of essential services such as sanitation and water supply in urban India.

It highlights the challenges faced by ULBs in fulfilling responsibilities due to limited resources, administrative capacity, and slow paced decentralisation, offering a comprehensive analysis of current municipal governance state, focusing on institutional arrangements, financing mechanisms, and formulating inclusive urban planning centering vulnerable communities.



### Key insights from the report include:



#### **Institutional Resilience**

Recommendations for strengthening ULBs to enhance their capacity to deliver essential services effectively and sustainably.



#### **Financial Strategies**

Emphasis on the need for predictable and equitable intergovernmental transfers, along with strategies to increase own-source revenues for ULBs.



#### **Inclusive Urban Planning**

Advocacy for a planning approach that includes marginalised groups, ensuring that urban development benefits all sections of society.

The report serves as a crucial tool for policymakers and stakeholders aiming to improve urban governance in India. Its findings and recommendations have already been shared with key government bodies, including the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the 15th Finance Commission, to drive forward the agenda of municipal strengthening.



# World Water Forum 2024

## Signpost to Bali

As a precursor to the 10th World Water Forum, the Signpost to Bali webinar series aimed to elevate community voices and ensure that the World Water Forum topics are explored thoroughly and inclusively, with diverse perspectives.

### Community Engagement for Safe and Inclusive Sanitation

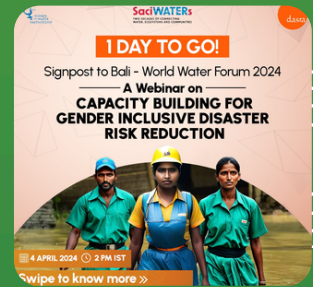


This webinar offered practical frameworks for involving communities in the development and implementation of sanitation services, ensuring they are safe, inclusive, and responsive to local needs.

### Capacity Building for Gender-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)



This webinar focused on integrating gender perspectives into disaster risk reduction strategies, ensuring that all segments of the population are protected and empowered in the face of disasters.



Culminating the webinar series and leading up to the 10th World Water Forum 2024, a Regional Consultation on Strengthening Resilience: Capacity Building for Gender-Inclusive Proactive Disaster Risk Reduction & Management, was conducted to better understand the adverse effects of disasters on marginalised and vulnerable communities in South Asia, along with the role of planning, preparedness, and mitigation frameworks in the ecosystem.

## World Water Forum 2024

The NFSSM Alliance actively participated in the **10th World Water Forum, held in Bali, Indonesia**, in May 2024. This global event brought together leading experts, policymakers, multilateral institutions, academicians, and practitioners to address pressing issues in water and sanitation. Through our participation, we showcased India's remarkable strides in sanitation on the global stage and facilitated key conversations.

**NFSSM Alliance members participated as speakers, contributing valuable insights in various sessions. To name a few:**

### Climate Resilience and Inclusive WSH



Focused on inclusive sanitation management and service delivery for marginalised groups in South Asia.

### Strengthening Resilience



Emphasised capacity building for gender-inclusive proactive disaster risk reduction.

### Finance Delivery Models



Discussed innovative financing models to serve unserved populations.

### Collaborating to build an Enabling Environment for Inclusive Sanitation in India

**THE NFSSM ALLIANCE**

Efficient collaboration among diverse stakeholders, as shown by India's NFSSM Alliance is crucial for addressing challenges in the complex sanitation ecosystem. Formed in 2016, the National Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (NFSSM) Alliance aims to enable universal, equitable sanitation services in all cities in India by 2030. Supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, it unites 354 organizations nationwide to foster inclusivity, strengthen urban local bodies and promote innovation and technology in the sector. The Alliance has prioritized strengthening sanitation infrastructure and service delivery through approaches like faecal sludge management to safeguard human health, dignity, and urban ecosystems.

**WHERE WE ARE TODAY**

India's rapid urbanization is set to surpass 50% urban population by 2030, urging the acceleration of scalable and sustainable solutions for human waste management. India's strides in climate-resilient and inclusive sanitation services for all is an emerging example globally.

<b>35+</b> MEMBERS	<b>10+</b> GOVERNMENT COLLABORATIONS
<b>14+</b> STATES	<b>07+</b> THEMATIC AREAS

**SDG GOALS SUPPORTED**

The Alliance showcased also showcased India’s strides in sanitation at the World Water Forum Exhibition, through the “**Collaborative Action Towards Inclusive Sanitation**” stall, which witnessed the presence of delegates, policymakers, experts, and sector practitioners from diverse backgrounds.

This platform was instrumental in launching and disseminating our **Disaster Risk Reduction framework** and the knowledge product **Building Back Better: Disaster Resilient Sanitation in South Asia**, underscoring the importance of WSH interventions in disaster-prone areas.



## Exposure Visit on Inclusive & Climate Sensitive WSH Practices

In August 2024, the NFSSM Alliance, in collaboration with BORDA, NIUA, ICIMOD, and LEDeG, facilitated a significant **Leh Exposure Visit and Workshop under the Parvat Manthan Collaborative**.

This three-day event brought together senior government officials from the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR), along with representatives from Nepal and Bhutan, to explore inclusive and climate-sensitive water and sanitation practices in the unique terrain of Leh, Ladakh.

The workshop provided a platform for peer-to-peer learning and the exchange of best practices tailored to the distinct challenges faced by hill cities. The visit included site explorations such as the Bombgarh Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant, the decentralised smart wet waste management unit, and the all-weather Gangles 24x7 Water Supply Initiative.





### Key takeaways from the exposure visit include:



#### Focus on Urban Water and Sanitation

Officials from hilly regions emphasised the need for differentiated policies, standards, and costing models that cater specifically to the diverse geography and topography of these areas. Strengthening the focus on urban water and sanitation in these regions was identified as crucial for improving the quality of life for both residents and the growing number of tourists.



#### Standardisation of Processes

Participants explored the potential for standardising processes, documents, and model contracts related to the management of legacy waste in these hilly tourist regions. This approach aims to ensure more consistent and effective management of waste, which is particularly challenging in mountainous terrains.

These visits provided tangible examples of successful, context-specific interventions that can be replicated across other hill cities and towns. By doing so, we aim to create a more consistent and effective framework for managing waste, especially in areas where tourism significantly impacts the environment. The discussions also underscored the need for tailored solutions that address the unique environmental and infrastructural challenges of hill cities and towns.



## Spotlighting Sanitation Champions

We continue to recognise and celebrate individuals who are making significant contributions to the sanitation sector. These champions of change are not only advancing innovative solutions but are also driving meaningful impact in communities across India.

Their dedication and achievements serve as a powerful source of inspiration, motivating all of us within the Alliance and beyond, to push boundaries, share knowledge, and collaborate more effectively. By highlighting their stories, we aim to foster an ecosystem of excellence and encourage others to join us in our mission to create a more inclusive and sustainable future for all.

Discover their unheard stories, uncover their motivations, and delve into the innovative practices and models that have revolutionised sanitation outcomes nationwide.



Do you know any such changemakers?  
Submit their story at [secretariat.nfssmalliance@dasra.org](mailto:secretariat.nfssmalliance@dasra.org).



# Looking Ahead: Alliance Retreat in Goa

As we gear up for the much-anticipated NFSSM Alliance Retreat on the 29th and 30th of this month in Goa, excitement is building throughout the Alliance.

This retreat promises to be a pivotal moment for the Alliance, bringing together partners from across the country to reflect, strategise, and chart the course for the future of urban sanitation in India.

## What to Expect

### Strategic Discussions

Deep dive into the Alliance's evolved strategy, where we will collectively refine our priorities and work plans. This is an opportunity to align on key goals, ensuring that our collective efforts are driving meaningful and lasting change.

### Vision Setting

Together, we will explore new horizons for urban sanitation, envisioning how we can further innovate and expand our impact. This session will be crucial for setting the direction for the Alliance in the coming years.

### Collaborative Sessions

Engage in interactive sessions designed to foster collaboration, and generate actionable ideas. These sessions will be a space for creative problem-solving, drawing on the diverse expertise within our community, and charting our work plans for the year.

### Networking Opportunities

Reconnect with familiar faces and forge new connections within the ecosystem with a shared commitment to inclusive sanitation. The retreat offers a unique chance to strengthen our ecosystem and enhance relationships that will propel us forward.

## Get Ready for an Inspiring Experience

We are excited to come together in such a vibrant and inspiring setting as Goa. Beyond the discussions and workshops, the retreat will also be a time to celebrate our collective achievements, recharge, and reaffirm our shared commitment to transforming sanitation in India.

## Stay Connected

Don't miss out on the latest updates and highlights from the NFSSM Alliance. Follow our social media channels for updates and insights.



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