

# MOHUA-AFD LAUNCH SWACHHATA START-UP CHALLENGE TO NURTURE THE EVOLVING ECOSYSTEM OF INDIAN WASTE MANAGEMENT SECTOR

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

*“Our start-ups are changing the rules of the game...start-ups are going to be the backbone of new India”*

Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India, in partnership with Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and Agence Française de Développement (AFD) today launched the Swachhata Start-Up Challenge to provide an impetus to innovative start-ups to come forward and drive catalytic transformation in the sanitation and waste management sector. In line with Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision for 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Make in India', the Challenge seeks to promote an enabling environment for enterprise development under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0).

Today, the start-up space is evolving rapidly with India leading the world with over 70 unicorns (crossing the valuation of USD 1 billion). With the appetite for risk and spirit of innovation at its core, the start-up space holds immense potential to revolutionize India's waste management sector. This is also aligned to the vision of SBM-U 2.0 launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 1st October 2021, which is focused on encouraging the adoption of locally innovated, implementable solutions and business models in sanitation and waste management. The Swachhata Start-Up Challenge launched today aims to capitalise on the start-up movement by providing opportunities for entrepreneurship to young innovators to create socially impactful and market ready business solutions.

The Challenge was launched by Shri Manoj Joshi, Secretary, MoHUA along with H.E. Emmanuel Lenain, Ambassador of France to India and H.E. Ugo Astuto, Ambassador of the European Union to India and Bhutan, in the presence of Ms Roopa Mishra, Joint Secretary & National Mission Director, SBM-U, Government of India and Bruno Bosle, Country Director, AFD India.

The Challenge, which is open to start-ups registered in India and French actors collaborating with an Indian start-up (as a joint venture), invites solutions across four thematic areas viz. (i) social inclusion, (ii) zero dump (solid waste management), (iii) plastic waste management and (iv) transparency through digital enablement. The Challenge provides a prominent platform to participating enterprises to showcase their innovative products and services along with significant monetary and mentorship incentive – top 10 awardees stand to receive 25 lakhs along with one year of dedicated incubation support from French Tech, the French government's initiative to promote start-ups. Apart from this these, eligible startups will get additional incentives which includes upto 50 Lakhs follow-on investment from Villgro, the implementation partner of the Challenge and upto 100,000 USD worth credits and technology support from technology partner Amazon Web Services, to each winner. Call for online submission of applications start from today through the dedicated micro-site launched at the event ([www.swachhatastartupchallenge.com](http://www.swachhatastartupchallenge.com)) along with a video that details out the key modalities of the Challenge.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Joshi said, “The Swachhata Startup Challenge, launched today, is a step towards ensuring innovation and smart governance in SBM-U 2.0 by incentivizing the startup ecosystem to help realize our vision of ‘Garbage Free Cities’. The Challenge aims to capitalize on the skills and expertise of this space to find implementable ideas and solutions that can be adopted and replicated at scale across urban India. MoHUA and the French Government share a long-standing association for promoting sustainable urban development in India and the launch of the Challenge today is another step towards strengthening this bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the waste management sector with a focus on plastic waste.”

Elaborating on the French Government’s role in promoting innovations in the waste management space in India, Mr. Lenain added, “France and India are committed to taking joint action against plastic pollution, and the AFD-MoHUA Swachhata Startup Challenge is a concrete step in this direction. The French Development Agency will provide seed funding to the tune of 25 lakh rupees and one year of customized support to each of the 10 selected start-ups. This initiative also comes at a time when France and the EU are looking to work closely with India on the international stage to negotiate a global treaty on plastic pollution.

Speaking about the need for concerted efforts in tackling the issue of plastic pollution, Mr. Ugo said, “In a globalised economy, tackling plastics requires a collective and cohesive effort. The international community will soon discuss the need for a Global Agreement on Plastics, like we already have global conventions for climate or biodiversity. We will try to chart a predictable course for businesses and for households to embrace change and adapt.”

A variety of innovations have contributed to the success of the first phase of SBM-U. Taking this spirit forward, SBM-U 2.0 is focused on encouraging cutting-edge solutions from small scale and private entrepreneurs and start-ups, through investments in R&D, technology challenges, and facilitation for inclusion in the Government E-Marketplace (GeM) portal. A step in this direction was taken earlier in December 2021 with the Swachh Technology Challenge, a first-time initiative by SBM-U 2.0 to encourage start-ups, individual entrepreneurs, educational institutions, local businesses, research and development organisations, NGOs, and other citizen groups to help city administration efficiently manage Mission operations through technology driven operations. The Technology Challenge received wholehearted participation from States/ Union Territories and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), with over 2,500 entries received from across urban India. Winning solutions from start-ups under Swachh Technology Challenge which are presently being reviewed, will now get direct entry into the Swachhata Start-Up Challenge launched today by MoHUA.

The virtual event, which was attended by senior government representatives including Principal Secretaries, Mission Directors and Municipal Commissioners from States and cities, also saw a panel discussion on the ‘Role of Technology and Business Innovation to Reinforce Indian Waste Sector’. Participants included senior bureaucrats from Chhattisgarh and Odisha along with representatives from organisations such as Saahas Zero Waste and Green Artha.

Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0, launched on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021, aims to achieve the vision of ‘Garbage Free Cities’ over the next five years through remediation of legacy dumpsites, construction and demolition waste and plastic waste management. Additionally, sustainable sanitation through faecal sludge and used water management will be a key focus under SBM-U 2.0.

Over the years, SBM-U has been encouraging innovations and best practices particularly through Swachh Survekshan, the annual cleanliness survey conducted by MoHUA. This trend has been rising over the years with over 4,000 innovations and best practices having been identified since 2018. Moreover, innovative technological solutions have played a critical role in

achieving the outcomes under SBM-U's journey with several key initiatives such as Swachhata App, SBM Toilets on Google Maps, etc in collaboration with partners such as Janaagraha and Google. The Swachhata Start-Up Challenge is another step towards smart and sustainable urban development by incentivizing the innovations' ecosystem through strategic collaboration thus helping realize the Prime Minister's vision of 'Garbage Free Cities' under SBM-U 2.0

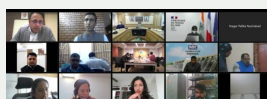
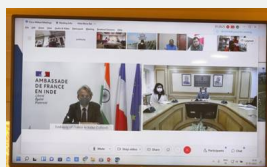
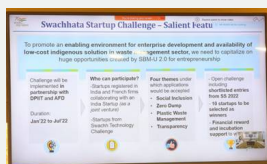
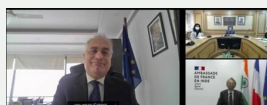
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**For regular updates, please follow the Swachh Bharat Mission's official [website](#) and social media properties:**

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**Photos:**



**YB/BK**

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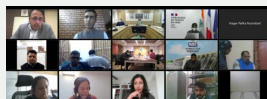
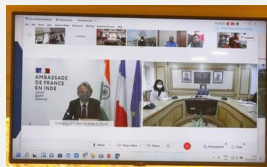
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