

SMART CITIES PROGRESS TO HINGE ON POWER, INFRASTRUCTURE, FUNDS, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL CAPITAL: CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD

NEW DELHI: A successful development of proposed smart cities across the country will depend on five critical elements such as power, infrastructure, funds, technology and social capital, property consultant Cushman & Wakefield said today. The Centre plans to develop 100 smart cities as satellite towns of larger cities and by modernising the existing mid-sized ones. In the Union Budget last year, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had allocated Rs 7,060 crore in the current fiscal for the scheme. In a report released today, C&W said these five elements "need simultaneous growth to ensure that India is able to create 'smart cities' as per the plan. The consultant noted that smart cities propose a solution to mitigate the problem of urbanisation. These cities would integrate information and communication technology, energy efficiency and sustainability to support future generations.

"India is rapidly urbanising and the urban population in 2031 is expected to increase to 600 million, which will be crucial to the country's economic growth and they will require massive restructuring to support the future population," the report said. Stating that smart cities require clean and continuous supply of power, C&W said that there is a need to develop alternative energy sources to make the cities financially and ecologically viable.



"Both physical and social infrastructure developments will be crucial. In addition to this up gradation and maintenance of the existing infrastructure is necessary," it suggested. The consultant stressed on the need for innovative and viable mechanisms to secure funds for developing smart cities. Strategies to engage multiple stakeholders will be necessary. "Finally, smart cities require technology advancements that can support the overall objective of the initiative. Promoting innovations in technology and providing skilled human capital that can create, engage and sustain the future cities will be an integral element," C&W said. The report further states that irrespective of the categorisation, all smart cities integrate ICT into different components.

These components include, energy, transportation, smart buildings, governance, and social infrastructure. However the scope and extent of this integration and application may greatly vary between cities. "The government plans to develop 100 smart cities over the next 20 years which will require the government to look at New cities, satellite towns near mega cities, upgradation of mid-sized cities as well construction of settlements along industrial corridors will be undertaken," C&W Executive Managing Director South Asia Sanjay Dutt said. Dutt said Smart cities depend on non-renewable resources for generating power and these cities provide seamless integrated public transportation that allows efficient and swift mobility across the city. "While there is a need to address these challenges, there is political will and commitment of the central government to bring in large scale reforms," Dutt added.