



National Urban Learning Platform (NULP)

An Ecosystem Approach to Capacity Building



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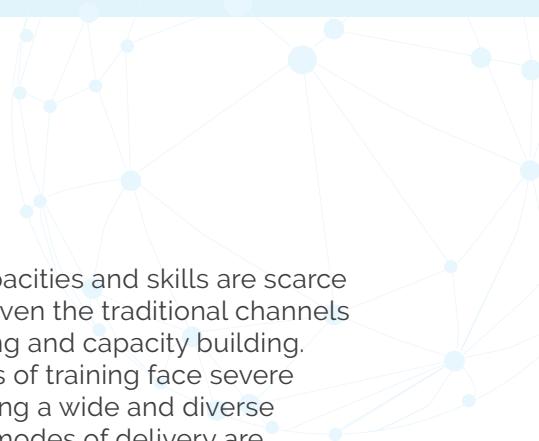


Context

Almost 60% of India's population is living in urban areas, this number is expected to rise to 75% by 2050¹. Urban India is responsible for 63% of the country's GDP² of which cities are responsible for two-thirds of the country's growth

Urban India is characterised by a complex mix of socio-economic factors and other drivers of governance, technologies, policy and business. Managing efficient urbanisation through these drivers is critical for ensuring that India remains on a high growth trajectory and that such growth is sustainable.

Urban governance is an evolving space in India with formal local governments being established at a steady pace. Rapid urbanisation also brings about a host of challenges that cities are often ill-equipped and severely understaffed to deal with. For this, urban India needs a variety of key skills and capacities to be developed speedily in the ecosystem in order to urgently address challenges, improve service delivery and unlock potential of expanding cities.



However, these capacities and skills are scarce in the ecosystem given the traditional channels of education, training and capacity building. Traditional channels of training face severe limitations in reaching a wide and diverse audience. Existing modes of delivery are expensive, inaccessible, and often burdensome to functionaries at civic bodies.

Technology can therefore be leveraged to enable capacity building of urban development practitioners, engage various actors to play a role in upskilling the staff, and curate training for the benefit of individual cities.

For capacity building to be more user-centric, accessible and inclusive, all urban actors need to develop new skills and capacities in a time bound and on-demand manner to meet mission critical goals.

¹United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division(2018) *World Urbanisation Prospects: The 2018 Revision*, Online Edition <https://population.un.org/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2018-Report.pdf>

²Municipal Performance Index Assessment Framework
https://smarthenet.niua.org/eol19/pdf/MPI_Methodology.pdf

Overview

In order to develop these capacities and address urban challenges, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), in collaboration with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), and support from the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the UK Government is operationalising a National Urban Innovation Stack (NUIS) through a National Urban Learning Platform (NULP).

NIUA is appointed as the anchor institute for the development of NULP which will help

facilitate a learning environment through modern techniques of knowledge and skills transfer.

Cities are encouraged to become model lighthouse cities, a group of proactive cities that can create models for local innovation ecosystems, that other cities can emulate showcasing the following impact priorities for the overall initiative:

1

Building the capacity of cities to deliver better citizen outcomes

2

Enable citizen participation and collaboration

3

Catalyse city-level innovation

4

Enable data-driven governance

5

Create a partnership marketplace for collaboration between stakeholders

6

Enable evidence-based policies

7

Engender enhanced trust and accountability in the ecosystem

National Urban Learning Platform (NULP)

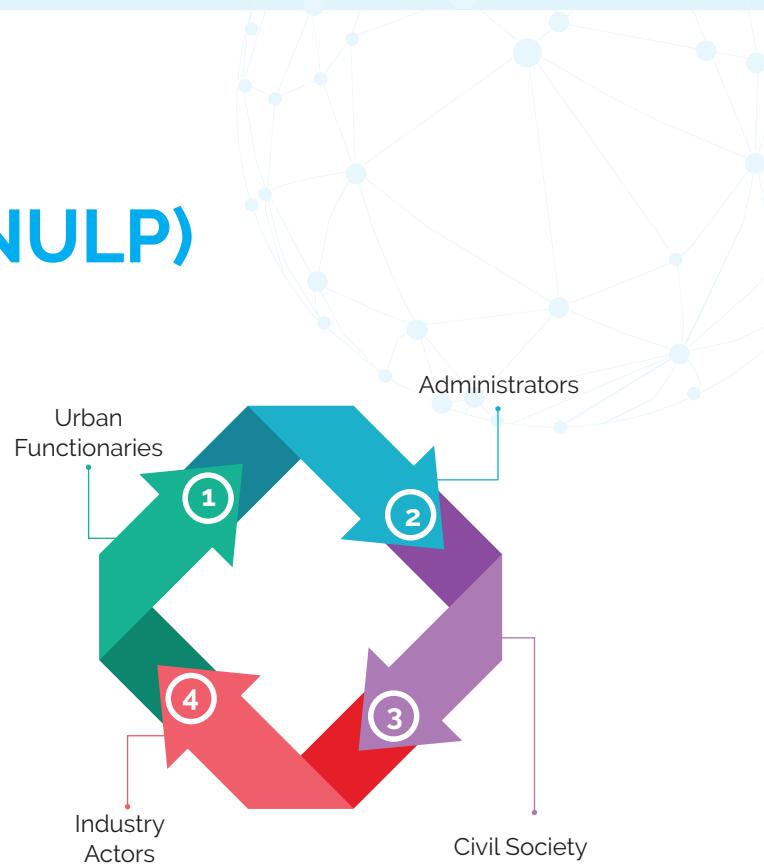
As a component of the NUIS, the National Urban Learning Platform (NULP) is envisioned as a means of digitally consolidating key skills and knowledge required by urban stakeholders and making these available to all actors on a channel of their choice.

The NULP will include tools to enable and streamline content creation, content organisation and management, course building, course management, assessment and certification.

These tools will enable the ecosystem of training institutions, urban experts and academia to rapidly digitise their existing course materials while creating new interactive and engaging types of content as well.

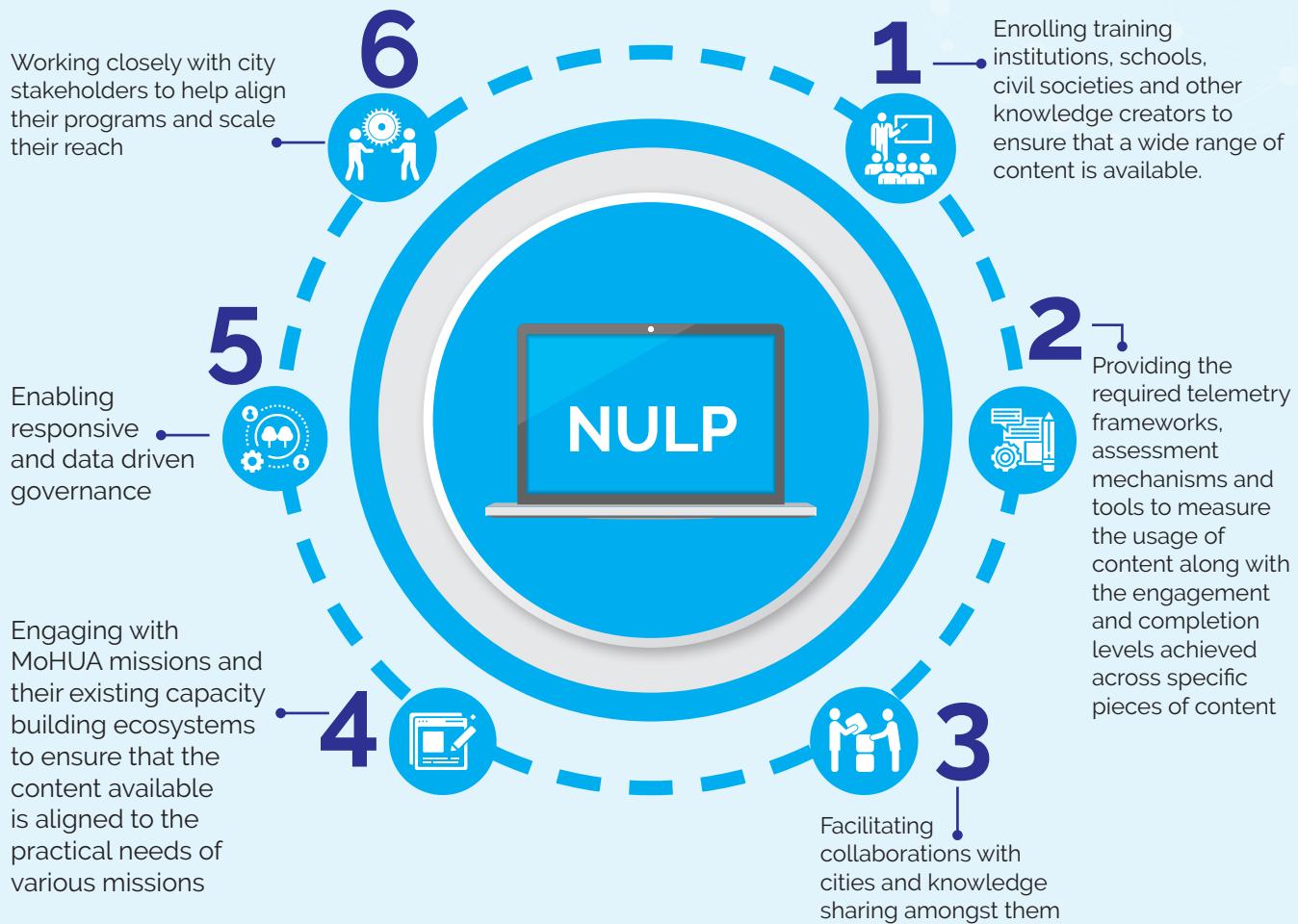
Designing to be a learning and content management system based on an open source and open architecture, NULP will allow flexibility, scalability and collaboration among users.

NULP will be activated across urban local bodies to empower contribution of information and consumption of knowledge between:



By synergising the capacity building institutions empanelled with MoHUA, the NULP will cater to the content needs of a diverse set of stakeholders in urban domain through its minimalistic, modular and evolvable architecture.

How NULP Works?



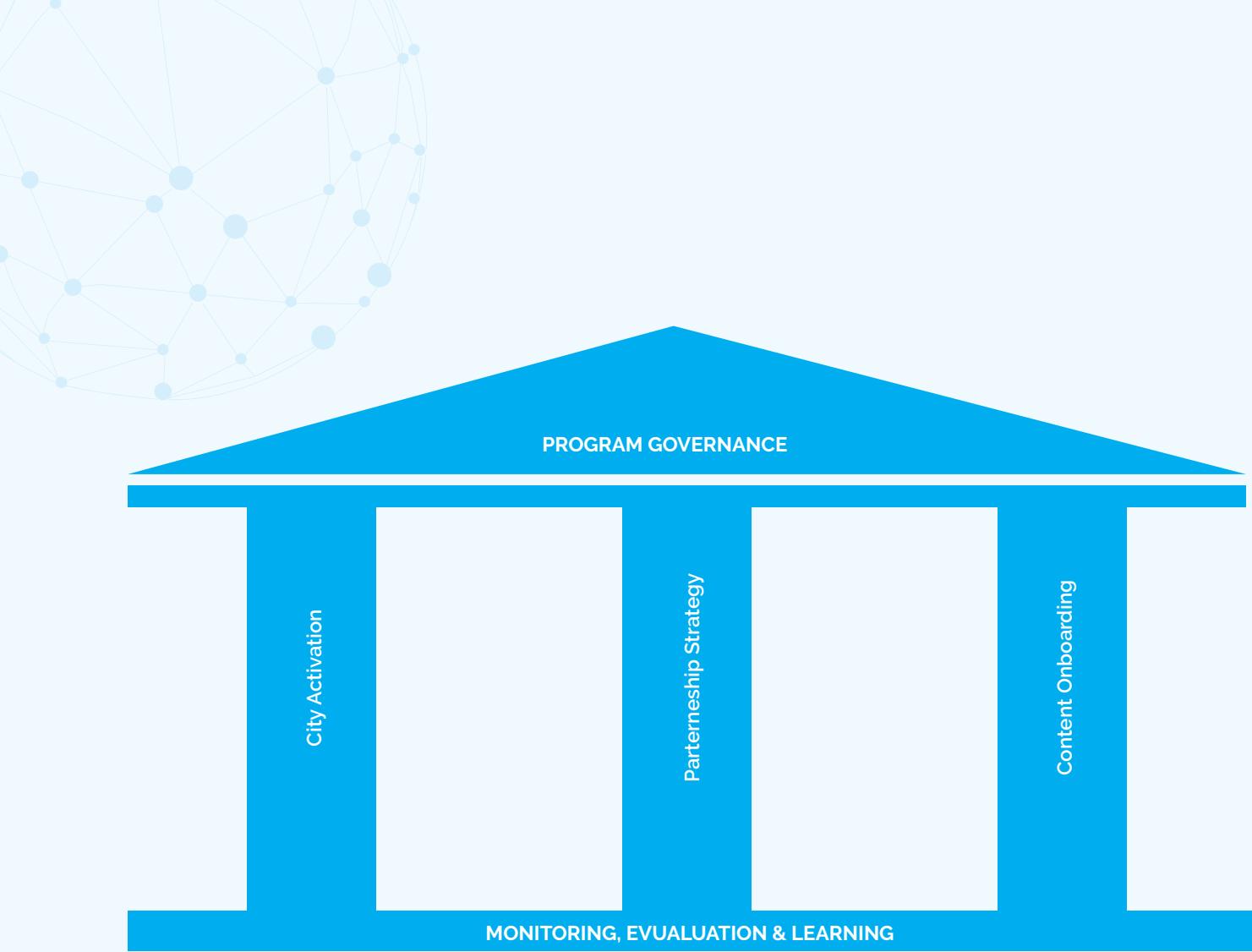
Strategy and Approach

This program encompasses key aspects of a capacity building and leadership development initiative in the city ecosystem at this scale. The primary underlying approach for the program is co-creation through participation from cities and identification of areas where skill building is required.

Through this participatory approach, the program aims to develop a sense of ownership and contribution to the development of their respective cities by enabling avenues of public and peer recognition and empowering officials for leadership development across roles.



- 1 Inform- benefits envisioned from creating learning opportunities and need for continuous upskilling
- 2 Assess- the readiness of participating cities to devise a better suited onboarding plan
- 3 Establish- a governance structure in line with city's development goals
- 4 Source- high-quality resources in the urban domain through partnerships
- 5 Enhance- the platform to improve upon itself and cater to the end users changing needs
- 6 Track- platform-level key performance indicators for inform data-driven decision for the platform
- 7 Drive- participation and adoption among learners through continuous content curation, management, engagement and knowledge exchange



The Program strategy rests on three foundational components - City Activation Strategy, Partnership Strategy and Content Onboarding Strategy.

City Activation Strategy

NULP will place agency and control over training in the hands of the Urban Local Bodies cities and its users by making available a variety of options for self-directed learning and training. This will ensure that users are able to engage in lifelong learning and can access training and knowledge at a time that is most useful and relevant to them.

Sensitising Cities

This approach is primarily based on initiating a connect with the cities to generate awareness

about the NULP portal. Sensitising cities will help States and cities to develop an overall plan with respect to manpower, infrastructure, logistics requirements and ensure smooth execution of NULP program.

Formation of committees for NULP includes setting up and regular convening of committees to ensure smooth implementation of NULP in the city'. At the end of this stage, the cities would have identified users who will be onboarded on the platform and provide support for effective decision-making within city ecosystems.

Approaching Cities

Process of approaching cities



City Outreach to introduce NULP and to assign a nodal person for coordination.



Understanding of City preparedness and City-specific knowledge needs to outline training priorities and a futuristic roadmap for overall program implementation.



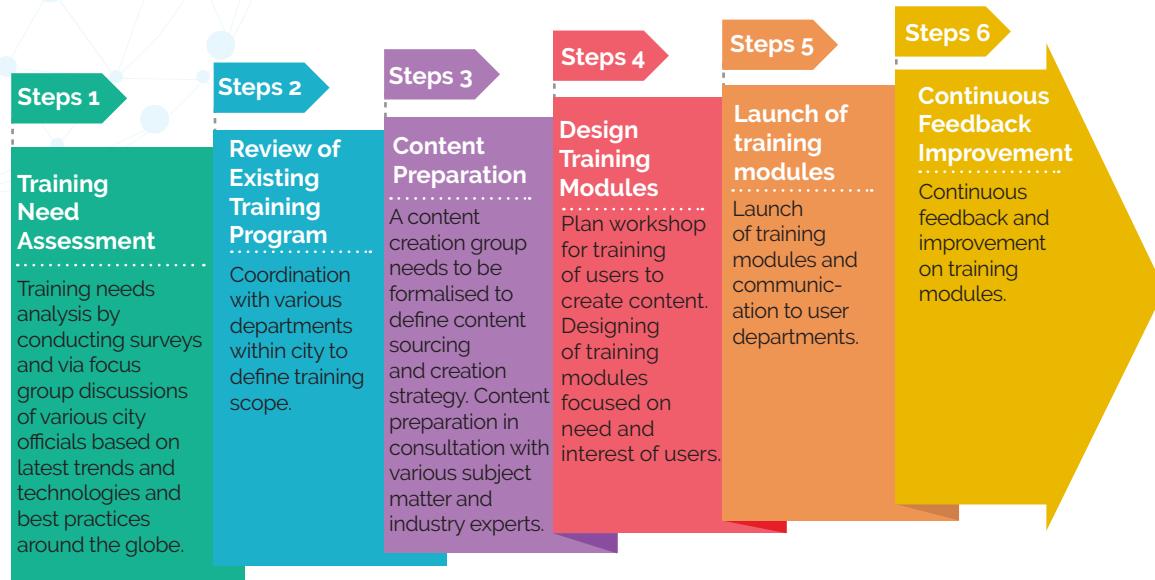
Preparation of Program Implementation roadmap with City Leadership and identification of users to be onboarded for meeting the training requirements.



Onboarding of all identified users through platform registration to enable contribution on the portal.

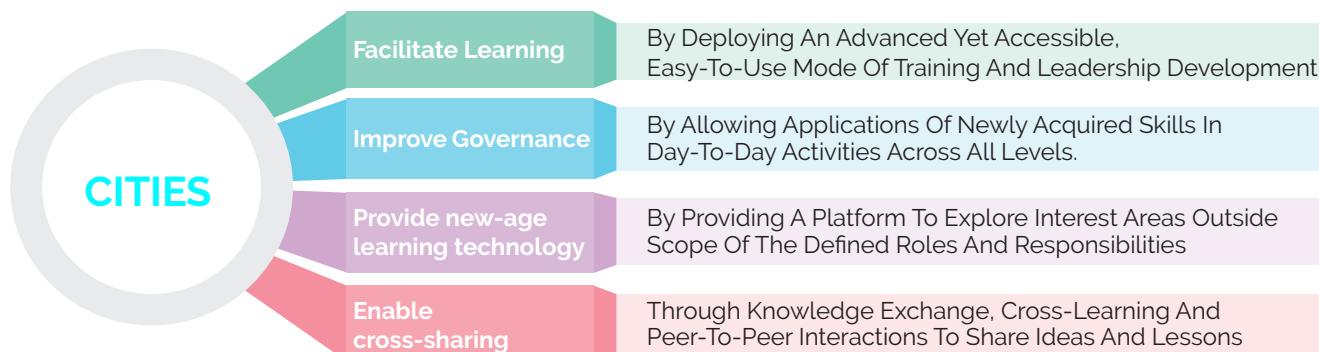
Discover Learning Expectation of Cities

Post onboarding an ongoing process of analysing the learning requirements of the City ecosystem



Nascent stages of implementation will involve close collaboration between city officials and NULP team to ensure local ideas are incorporated and feedback is acted upon on a regular basis.

is enabled through the following process in order to source, curate and create content for the same:



Partnership Strategy



The NULP provides avenues for purpose-based partnerships within city ecosystems to foster holistic and continuous learning initiatives across all actors of the quadruple helix.

Through effective implementation mechanisms, the platform will be modeled to be a robust infrastructure that caters to citizen demands by streamlining knowledge management within departments and eliminating interdepartmental dependencies and duplications.

1 — Partnerships

Building organisational sectoral priorities for Urban Mobility and existing NIUA Programs	Government, Industry
Enabling partner ecosystems and network onboarding	Government, Civil Societies
Exploring city-wide partnerships through existing institutional tie-ups	Government Government

2 Thematic Area Development

Preliminary sectoral consultations with domain leaders	Government, Academia, Industry, Civil Societies
Buy-in from thought leaders to form Core Working Groups	Government, Academia, Industry
Industry showcases and content generation	All actors

3 → City Activation

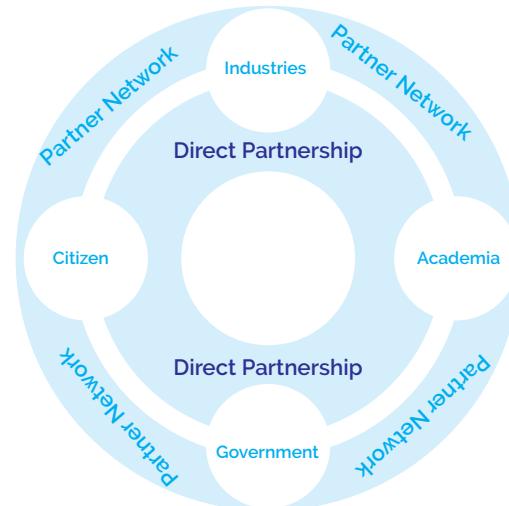
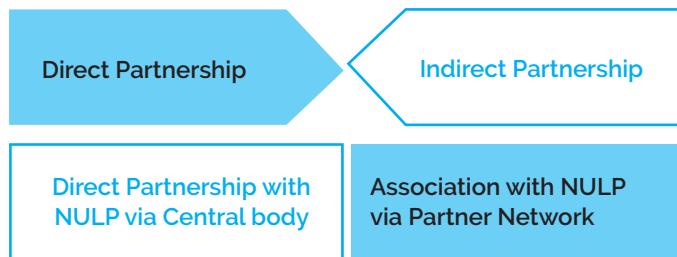
Generating training and development pipeline supported by City Leadership	Government, Academia
Building future scopes for paid courses and advanced employment opportunities	Academia Industry
Embedding innovation and agile methodology in city functioning	Government Industry,Civil Societies



Partnership Ecosystem

NULP will act as a knowledge sharing platform which allows partners to create, upload and curate content. Various stakeholders of the quadruple helix and their partner network are envisaged to be key contributors of the portal basis the nature of the association.

It is Proposed to establish two different partnership models :



A City's leadership/CPMU can create formal/informal tie-ups with various institutional partners on an-individual level to source quality content and/or support content development on the platform. Synergies in these partnerships can be explored basis program priorities at both a city and central level. These type of partnerships will be typically explored to activate thematic areas/sectoral priorities defined for the program. The contribution flow between partners in this model is usually one-to-one with specific outputs defined at the beginning of the engagement.



Designed to support democratisation of content, partnerships in this model can be furthered with institutional partners of the CPMU/City Leadership through many sub-partnerships and associations thereby exploring more avenues for learning and enabling quality content. CPMU/City Leaderships can ignite ecosystem partnerships through their existing partner network, across the quadruple helix, and vice versa. Sub-partnerships within these networks at a local level will feed back into the platform and amplify its intended benefits holistically.

Partner Onboarding Process



Content Onboarding Strategy

What is the content onboarding process?

In order to facilitate the key partnerships it is key for cities to source, create and curate the right content on the platform for continued engagement.

Content Partner Initiation	Introduction about NULP and building alignment to organisational priorities
Content Partner Proposition	Submission of intent and offering for NULP by prospective partners for screening and evaluation
Content Sharing	Migration and uploading of content on NULP for review
Content Review	Review of content by city nominated and Central level reviewing teams
Content Publishing	Publishing of content once it has met the requisite criteria

How do cities create content?

- In-house content creation by cities Content Cell
- Outsourcing content through industry partners, organisations or academicians and who in turn can create and send their content for review.
- Combination of both approaches

How do we assess requirements?

- The city officials will analyse the sectors for which the content is required and the content types for these sectors.

How does NULP source content?

- The city might have some content readily available as a part of the city/ state content repository.
- Through onboarding of various industries, academia's, research institutions and NGOs that are operating in various municipal domains.
- Content crowdsourcing through identified industry partners who are engaged in different sectors of the city and provides tools and technology for functioning of the city
- City can use content crowdsourcing wherein, the content requirement is posted to citizens and academicians and they are asked to create content basis content guidelines floated on the NULP home page.
- NULP also maintains a central repository of content which all the cities can consume (if required).



The key pillars of program strategy are enabled by the cutting-edge tool centered with the development of the digital interface of NULP which is required to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaborative learning at speed and scale.

Platform Design

Features

NULP is a next-generation, societal learning platform designed to enable and streamline content creation, content organisation and management, course building, course management, assessment and certification.

Course Management

Create courses, batches and monitor progress

Content & Related Assessment

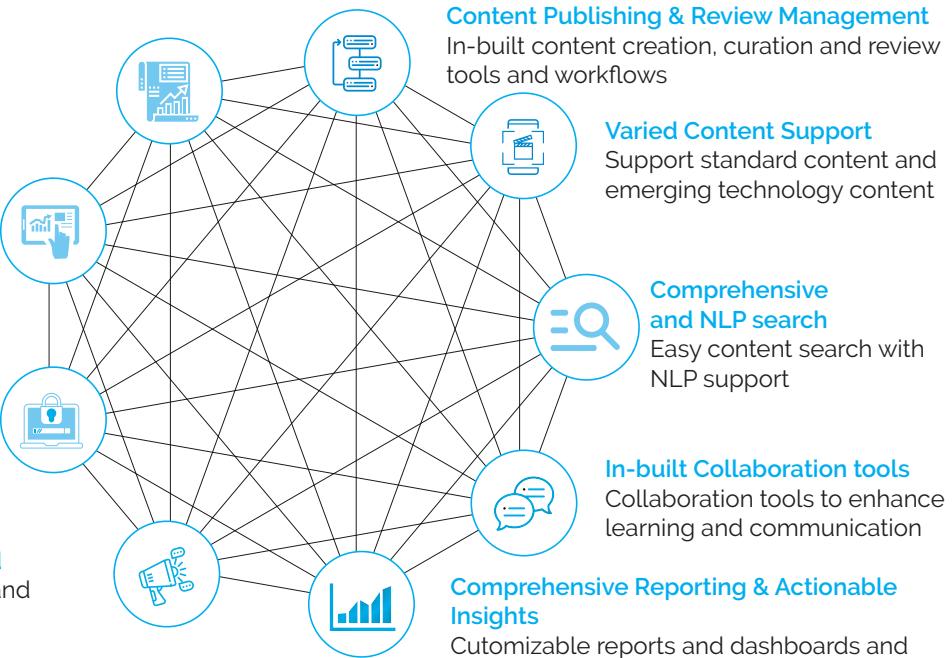
Create & Share lesson plans, assessments and generate reports

Built-in Security & User Management

Cloud security, User rights, roles and support for SSO

Brand integration/ White labelled

Integrates to existing eco-system and brand



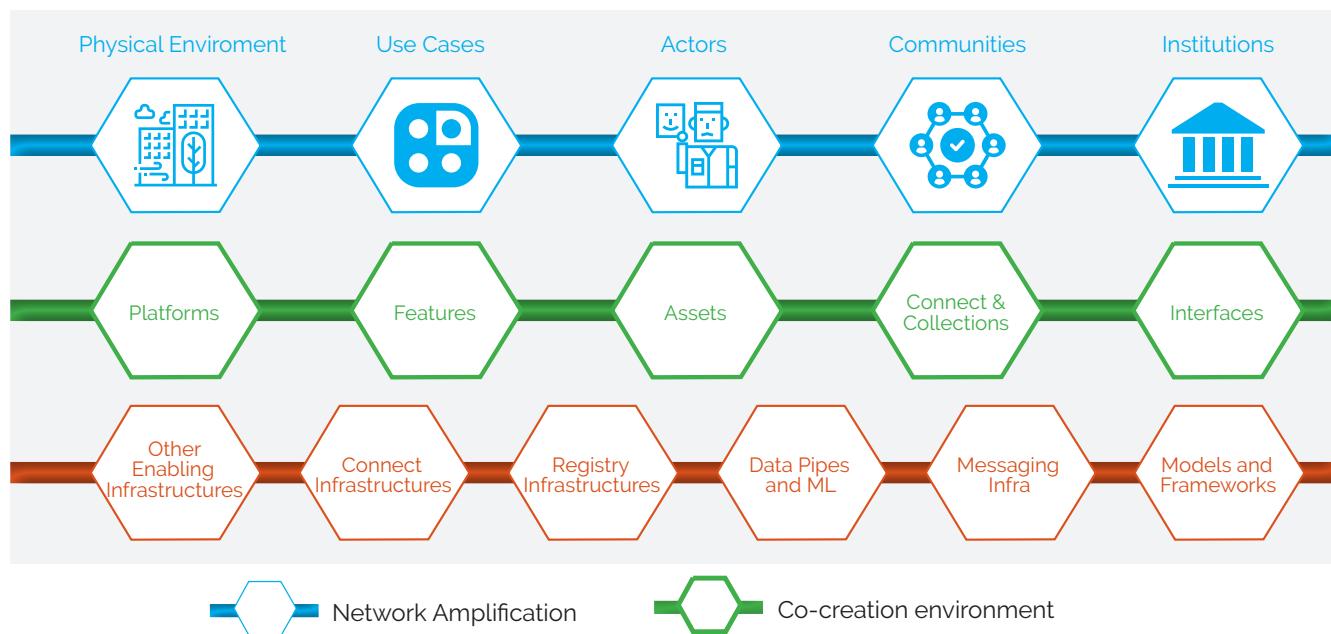
NULP Architecture

With a multi-tenant and robust framework, the NULP architectural design is resilient, flexible and agile. It is an amalgamation of a layered and service-oriented architecture that is open-source and customisable. The key tenet of an open platform like NULP is to empower cities to tailor robust, secure and scalable learning solutions to their individual needs through the introduction of new, innovative and customised components which can be easily plugged in.

Being a web-based platform it can be accessed from anywhere providing seamless connectivity to content via its feature rich mobile app and cross-browser compatibility. Its offline availability allows not only content to be played and seen

offline but the learning media to be downloaded without incurring further costs. Additionally, NULP users can use multiple languages for all content available on the platform.

Designed with users at the core - the architecture allows the user to create, manage and consume content in a well-organised order. Intuitive and interactive inbuilt content editors aid content creation while the other layers in the architecture have state of the art tools and features embedded within to enhance user experience. The underlying technology gives rich user experience and ensures ease of access with anything users are working with.



Planned Enhancements

Developed as an ever-evolving and iterative platform sensitive to user needs and requirements, NULP aims to be a next-generation, societal learning platform built for cloud/mobile native environments and meant to address teaching and learning use cases. Previous iterations and thorough research of understanding the needs of the user community

- Customised Certification
- Platform Accessibility
- Live Classes
- Webinars & Calendars
- Payment Gateway
- Online Assessment

paved the way for the next phase of upgradation of the platform features and functionalities to be made available soon. Architected to host multiple organisations independently and their evolving needs, NULP is well along the journey of continually scaling up its offering and functionality to become a one-stop solution for learning needs across all cities in India

- City Leaderboard
- Survey Features
- Online Proctored Assessment
- Whiteboard
- Gamification
- Blogs

Way Forward

The NULP Technical Assistance and Leadership Development Support Unit (TALD-SU) NULP team instituted at NIUA, in collaboration with partner agencies will support the implementation of different phases of the program.

Key lessons being considered by the NULP team to enhance the functionality include

leveraging existing infrastructure

increasing focus on staff receptiveness planning for sustainability

building ecosystems to enable innovation

developing feedback mechanisms, among other technical takeaways.

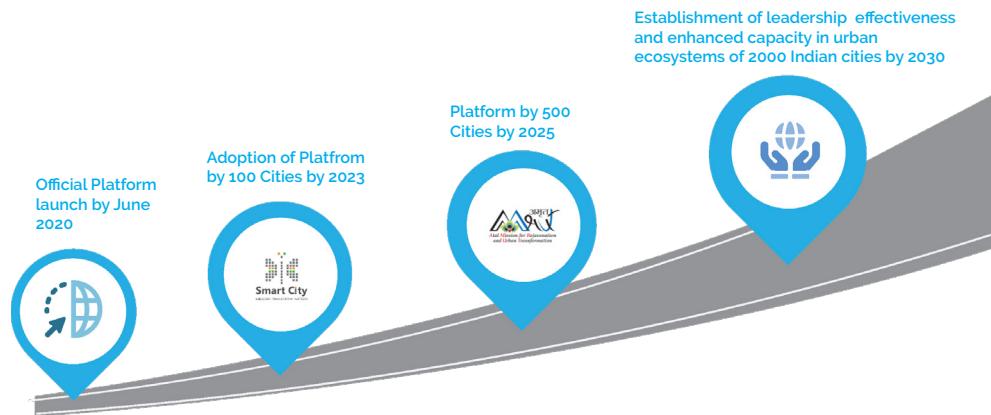
support by a strategic implementation roadmap

key lessons being considered by the NULP team to enhance the functionality include

guiding cities in the onboarding, management and long-term sustainability of the program.

In this regard, 19 cities were shortlisted to be onboarded under Year 1 of the NULP Program. With support from the UK government's FCDO, two pilot cities will act as testing beds for the newer platform through active involvement and contribution to the development of the program. While the remaining 17 cities will form part of a niche group of early adoptive cities showcasing successful models of adoption for other cities in India.

Learnings from the first year of the program through success stories and identified opportunities will pave the way for scalability of the program to other cities, in a phased manner and begin the open-source journey of co-designing an implementation roadmap to a better urban India.



Partners

Donor Agency



In Collaboration With



Technical Assistance and Leadership Development – Support Unit



Technical Development:



Strategy Support:



City Implementation Partner:



Contact us: For any queries, please contact NULP team:
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About NIUA

Established in 1976, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) was tasked to bridge the gap between research and practice on issues related to urbanisation and suggest ways and mechanisms to address urban challenges in the country. For more than 40 years now, NIUA has been the vanguard for contributing to, and at times, building the urban narrative for a fast evolving Urban India. The Institution has been actively working on bringing forth key areas of concern for urban India in order to build the urban discourse at various urban scales.

It has utilised its competencies in research, knowledge management, policy advocacy and capacity building to address urban challenges and continuously striving to develop sustainable, inclusive, and productive urban ecosystems in the country. It has emerged as a thought leader and knowledge hub for urban development in India and is sought out by both Indian and International organisations for collaborations and partnerships in India's urban transforming journey. NIUA is committed towards aligning its efforts towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through all its initiatives and programs.



About FCDO

The 'Department for International Development' to 'Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) leads the UK government's work to improve inclusive growth needed for poverty reduction to make development sustainable in line with the International Development Act (2002), the Gender Equality Act (2014) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UK has expertise in a range of sectors highly relevant to poverty reduction, inclusive growth and economic development including finance and infrastructure. Helping partner countries develop these sectors and improve their business environment will give firms and people greater opportunities to work in a stronger, more productive economy.

By 2030, India will become the most populous nation and third by GDP size (=>USD 5 billion). India's development trajectory in the next decade presents significant opportunities and challenges for global development.

India-UK development partnership is focussed on inclusive economic development through building markets using development capital investment and technical assistance.



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