



**Project Sammaan**

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NEWSLETTER : AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2014

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Sammaan is an urban sanitation initiative dedicated to redesigning and improving facilities for slum communities across India. The initiative is being piloted in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack with the aim to replicate it in other cities, if successful.

The objective is to rethink the current models of sanitation facilities and design a new programmatic infrastructure and physical structure that instills a sense of dignity while addressing issues affecting sanitation practices in India and encouraging community members to stop defecating in the open.

Over 100 of the re-imagined facilities will be built and a dedicated research team will analyze the qualitative and quantitative impact they have on the communities in which they're built. The results of this intensive research will be shared in an open-sourced toolkit that will allow for replication in cities across India and beyond.

Project Sammaan was born out of the research conducted for the Potty Project, an in-depth design research study focused on all aspects of the current sanitation models employed in urban slum communities throughout India.

## FEATURE: A NEED FOR CLARITY AND ACCESS

The possibility of National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) being awarded the contracts for constructing the Sammaan facilities on a nomination basis was greeted with great excitement, support, and an overwhelming sense of relief; after a year-and-a-half of false starts and setbacks, it was beginning to look like the tendering process was finally over. That positive outlook has been tempered quite a bit over the past two months as the decision on NBCC's nomination remains pending, leaving the team in an extended state of limbo and uncertain as to what steps can be taken to expedite the review.

Much of this uncertainty lies in the lack of clarity regarding what is entailed in the review process currently under way with various representatives at the H&UD, Finance, and Public Health Departments. We simply don't know what the protocols are, who is responsible for each step, and what the timelines associated with each are. Ultimately, the team finds itself in a position of having to be reactive, to wait for requests from the various government departments and then respond accordingly.

In an effort to mitigate the stress and confusion of this, and in the hopes of offsetting the impact further delays has on the viability of the project, the team has made a concerted effort to stay in constant communication with the officials acting as nodal officers for the review process at the various departments. This is done through every means available to us: phone calls, emails, letters, and face-to-face meetings whenever possible.



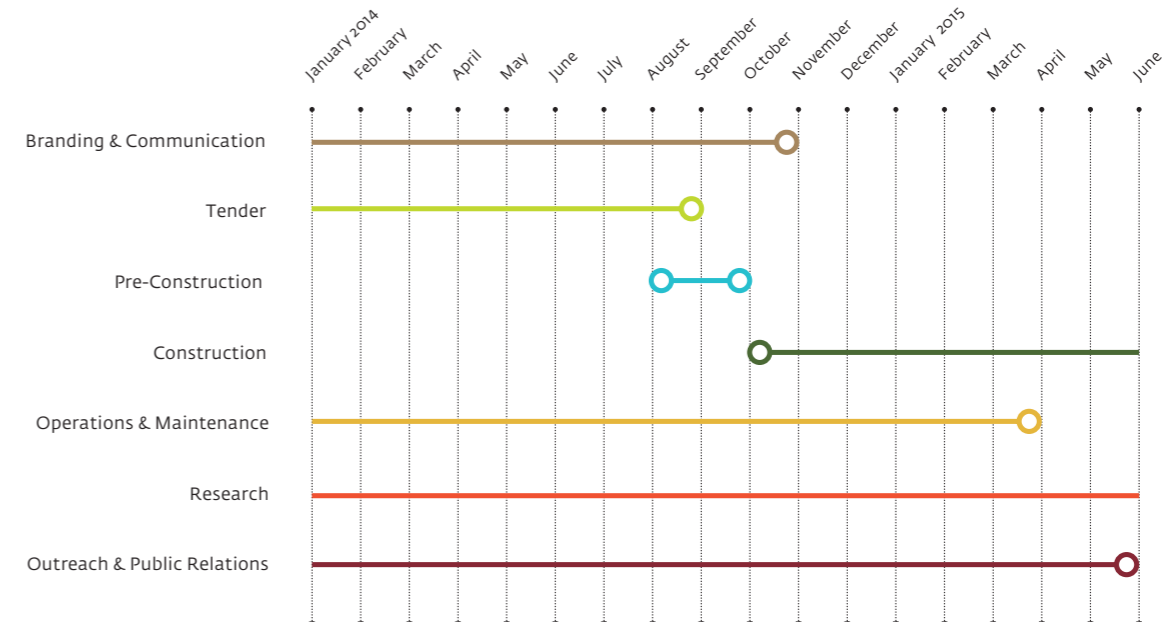
This last point is particularly challenging as, above and beyond simply finding time in the busy schedules of these senior officials, gaining entry to the Secretariat building in which many offices are located is not easy. Unlike the municipal corporation buildings that are relatively open to the public, gaining entry to the Secretariat building requires security passes and, consequently, pre-approved

meeting times. With the municipal corporations, the team has had success in expediting matters by paying courtesy calls or fitting in meetings by waiting outside offices. This level of flexibility is afforded by accessibility that is just not possible at the offices of the senior state officials. Attempts at securing monthly passes to facilitate this access to the Secretariat have been woefully unsuccessful.



Clarity and access is what the project team needs to ensure that everything that can be done to expedite matters with Sammaan is being done. In order to accomplish the former, a process map with associated timelines and clearly defined responsible parties for each step would be the greatest asset; to gain the latter, efforts would have to be made by senior officials working on the project, and with the project team, to facilitate easier entry to the Secretariat offices. Unfortunately, until either or both of these "asks" are accommodated, the project team remains in the dark as to the nature of the NBCC review, and when a final decision can be expected. Until then, the only option is to keep pushing forward with the full array of communications efforts.

## TIME LINE



## MILESTONE OVERVIEW

### To date

- Tenders for Bhubaneswar's Public Toilets and Cuttack's Community Toilets released
- Site lists finalized and land approvals granted

### Upcoming

- Decision on NBCC as contractor for all remaining facilities
- Baseline survey and pre-construction dialogue activities in communities to commence
- Pre-construction dialogues with communities in Cuttack to commence
- O&M Tendering

### September calendar of events

- Moving forward with nominating a PSU for construction or re-tendering
- Interactions with communities to prepare them for construction
- Commencement of site clearances in both Bhubaneswar and Cuttack

# BLOG HIGHLIGHT: “THE GRADUAL MANIFESTATION OF A DISTANT DREAM”

BY BABITHA GEORGE



artist’s impressions of our designs. Seeing these have only made the wait tougher and we are anxious to see some of these elements manifest on the ground during actual construction. We are confident that they will resonate with the beneficiary communities and help instil a sense of pride, dignity and hygiene.

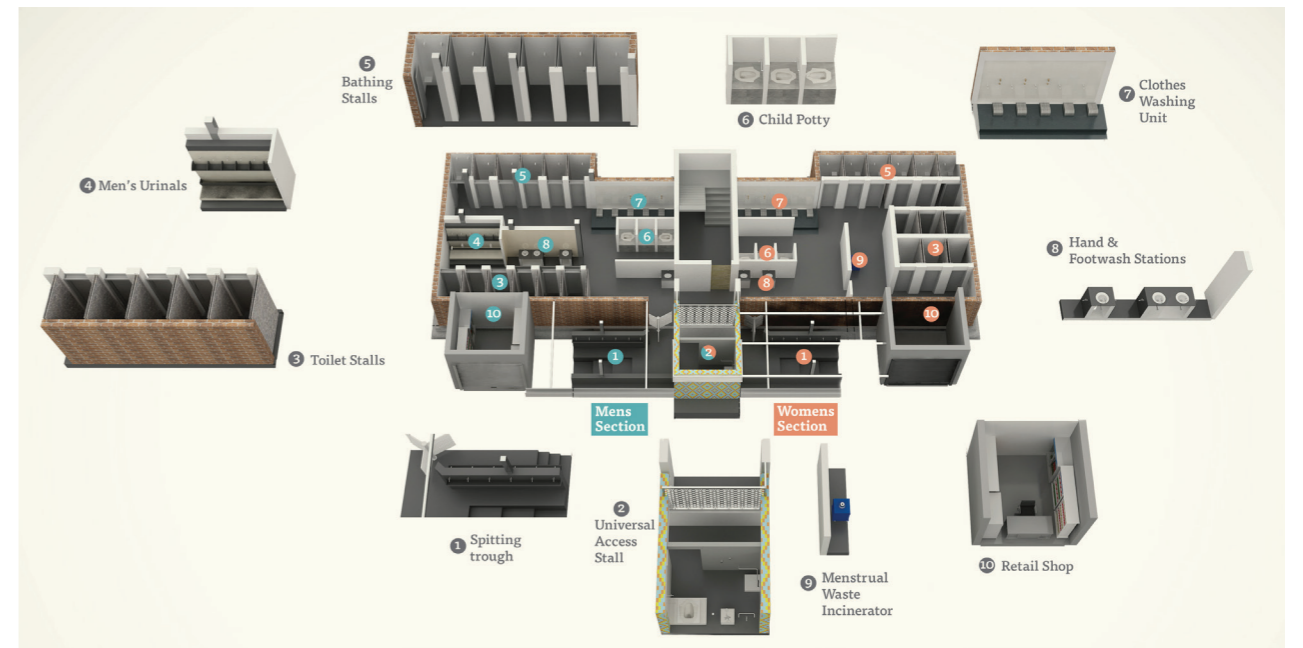
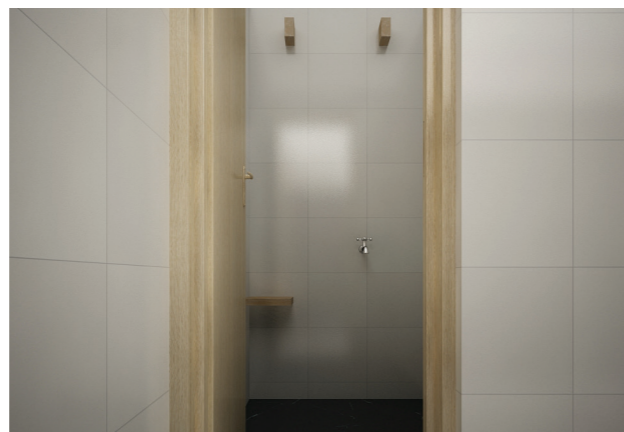
Here are a few renders from the 12-seater enhanced facility that we intend to build in a few sites:

My colleague Kevin has posted recent updates on the current status of nominating a construction agency for building the toilet facilities in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. As mentioned, we are waiting on final approvals from the government and are hopeful that we will soon have a contractor confirmed, following which we can start pre-construction activities at the sites. As such, we are hopeful that we will soon break ground and see the beginning of construction.

This has come after several months of tendering activity. The design team that has worked on the various sorts of toilet facilities, have long completed all the requisite work to begin construction. However the challenges faced on the tendering and approval fronts have meant that there has been a long period of subdued activity on the design front. In the meanwhile, we have been working on version 1 of the toolkit for Project Sammaan with Shreya Chakravarty, who is currently pursuing her Postgraduate Diploma in Graphic Design at NID. This version will focus on the work-streams that Quicksand is anchoring- namely the hardware aspects of the project, including converting user insights from the Potty Project to design principles and product features, as well as learnings gleaned from interactions with the government and experts, particularly during the hardware tendering process.

We will soon be able to share glimpses of this version of the toolkit. In the meanwhile, Shreya along with the Quicksand & Anagram teams worked quite extensively with a 3D animator to visualise the design features of our proposed toilet facilities. This involved identifying all the key innovations on hardware, including design elements and materials used.

While these renders make evident the several design innovations that we are attempting to incorporate into the toilet facilities, do keep in mind that these are an



# WORKSTREAMS

## A. Liaising & Capacity Building

The month of August was spent facilitating meetings and interactions between the project team and the senior officials working on the review of the nomination of NBCC as contractor, delivering correspondences related to the same, and working with several government agencies to ensure that all necessary paperwork is gathered to complete the files for review. Given the pending nature of this review process, September is likely to be more of the same. The concern amongst the interface management team looking forward is that, should the NBCC review not be completed in September, the government's bandwidth for such work will be very limited come October with Durga Puja celebrations which will inevitably consume a lot of people's time. Efforts to keep the flow of communication open and constant between the government and the project partners is paramount.

*Activities in September include:*

- Liaising with BMC, CMC and other government officials to expedite review process of NBCC
- Facilitating interactions between government and non-government partners

## B. Research/Operations & Maintenance

The research team spent the past month preparing for the commencement of the baseline survey, which can only begin once a contractor is named and MoUs with such signed. The team worked with the community engagement specialists to ensure that timelines for pre-construction dialogue efforts are in-line with those of the baseline study, thereby allowing all necessary pre-construction activities to be completed as quickly as possible. The challenge remaining, as with the rest of the project team, is the uncertainty as to when these efforts can begin. Meanwhile, work on the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the O&M continues and is expected to be submitted to the municipal corporations for their review in the near future.

*Activities in September include:*

- Conducting baseline research in the communities receiving Sammaan facilities

## C. Tender & Construction

All activities related to construction and tendering are tied to the decision on awarding NBCC the contracts to build the Sammaan facilities on a nomination basis.

*Activities in September include:*

- Potentially finalizing the agreement to bring on NBCC as contractor

## D. Architecture & Design

All of the drawings for both the Community Toilets and Public Toilets for both cities have been completed. The review process of these drawings is under way to address any minor changes that need to be made to ensure the facilities are of the highest quality possible. Site surveys of the facilities with G+1 (i.e., ground floor plus housing unit) are being finalized to spot check soil bearing capacity data to ensure that no tweaks to the structural designs are needed.

*Activities in August include:*

- Review and amend architectural drawings, if needed

## E. Outreach & Public Relations

With little progress to report as the team awaits a decision on NBCC's nomination as contractor, the outreach and dissemination efforts for Sammaan were minimal in August, limited to adding content to the project's blog, updating social media channels, and creating the monthly newsletter. The initial draft version of the project's toolkit was finalized, though, requiring a great deal of information-sharing and writing. The exercise allowed for a great deal of reflection on the truly special nature of Project Sammaan, though, which in and of itself provided much-needed buoyancy.

*Activities in August include:*

- Updating blog and social media channels
- Documenting pre-construction field activities

## F. Branding & Communications

An illustrator is being brought on-board to finalize the family of characters that will communicate messaging to end-users on facility signage; this individual will work closely with the Quicksand and Codesign teams for this. The Quicksand team is working to complete the nomenclature for these signs, which will be presented in both English and Oriya within the facilities.

*Activities in August include:*

- Hiring an illustrator to complete work on the family of characters





The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) is a network of 70 affiliated professors around the world who are united by their use of Randomized Evaluations (REs) to answer questions critical to poverty alleviation. J-PAL's mission is to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is based on scientific evidence.

J-PAL is the primary grantee and the project's principal investigators and are designing and conducting the monitoring and evaluation for the facilities:

- » Business model development
- » Operations and Maintenance modelling
- » Project evaluation



A multi-disciplinary innovation consultancy that places user-centered design principles at the core of every innovation effort. The studio has successfully delivered on several new services, products, brands and developmental strategies, creating both measurable social and business impact.

Quicksand is responsible for project management as well as anchoring the hardware design process for the project:

- » User-experience research and corresponding hardware design
- » Design, branding and communication project management
- » Project toolkit and website development



CTRAN Consulting Manages large, complex development projects, providing the right mix of program management and technical assistance.

They are the one-point contact for interfacing with various government agencies:

- » Establish a Project Management Office within the two municipal corporations to ensure continued, and future, use and grievance redressal of the facilities
- » Facilitate meetings with government representatives
- » Assist in land approval process
- » Set up and operate the help line that ensures proper functioning of the facilities



An award-winning consultancy internationally recognized as amongst the top emerging practices in the world with a commitment towards delivering innovative, context specific designs that encourage sustainable lifestyles. Anagram Architects is a full spectrum spatial design consultancy firm that offers expertise in urbanism, architecture, interior design, and research.

They are leading the architectural design of the 119 facilities:

- » Provide site-specific architectural designs
- » Consult on waste management issues
- » Oversee facility construction



The municipal corporations of the pilot cities Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. These entities are tasked with providing services in sectors such as Health & Sanitation, Slum Development, Urban Planning, and Waste Management to improve the quality of life of their respective citizenries.

The local municipal corporations are key partners in the project and aid in the facilitation of its various components:

- » Provide funding for construction and infrastructure
- » Site selection assistance
- » Identify contractors for construction
- » Ensure regular water, electricity, and sewerage facilities for the toilets
- » Manage sewerage and waste treatment systems
- » Oversee functioning of facilities through a PMO until capacity-building with the BMC is complete
- » Provision of temporary sanitation facilities
- » Ensuring long-term sustainability of the project



The Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR) is an Indian organization committed to working and partnering with marginal communities. It has expertise in conducting research, process documentation, capacity building and strengthening advocacy by leveraging media and networking to shape and impact policy issues related to urban poor.

CFAR is actively involved in facilitating community interactions in the field:

- » Social mapping of each slum
- » Community engagement and dialogue during design and construction phases
- » Facility management training for community members

## CODESIGN

A brand and communication design studio whose expertise lies in bridging the gap between product and service offerings and what end-users really care about, with communication that is meaningful and relevant.

Codesign is the communication and brand consultant for Project Sammaan.

- » Ensure facility related branding and communication is contextually relevant and encourages behaviour change and adoption
- » Develop the facility identity and corresponding collateral that promotes larger goals of sanitation and health for better life
- » Creating facility signage that is functional and facilitates access and experience

## CONCLUSION



The "wait and see" period Sammaan has found itself in continues unabated, much to the chagrin and frustration of the project team. It is with eager anticipation that the consortium collectively waits for the final decision to be made on whether or not the National Buildings Construction Corporation can be awarded the contracts for construction. Should this nomination be approved, three years' worth of efforts by dozens of dedicated partners will come to fruition and construction can finally commence; should it be denied, the tendering process will be forced to continue, and the future of Sammaan will become uncertain. The stress and anxiety that comes with this waiting period is only made more challenging with the knowledge that there is little more that the consortium can do to but keep asking for updates and proactively attempt to expedite the review.



