

WRI India and Toyota Mobility Foundation launch STAMP Data Innovation Challenge to improve last mile connectivity to Kochi Metro

Kochi, India (January 30, 2019)— WRI India Ross Center for Sustainable cities and Toyota Mobility Foundation (TMF) in collaboration with Kochi Metro Rail Limited (KMRL) jointly launched the Station Access and Mobility Program (STAMP) Data Innovation Challenge on Wednesday. The program is a competition to seek possible innovative solutions and visualizations to improve first- and last-mile connectivity to metro transit in Kochi, India. At the launch, there was a participation from the Government of Kerala, Kochi Metro Rail and other city stakeholders that shed light on the importance of data innovation in public transportation and its role to shape cities in the future.

Objective of the Innovation Challenge

In March of 2018, KMRL became the first metro agency in the country to open its data in a machine-readable format putting India on the global map of progressive agencies committed to make its services more accessible to commuters. Taking this initiative forward, the challenge is making available mobility and non-mobility datasets to enable city commuters in making informed commuting choices, allowing for a more optimized use of their time and other resources.

The challenge seeks to leverage talent across the country and is open to developers, students, urban and transport planners and enterprises to analyze and develop a host of applications that allow an easier understanding of all available information. By having focused teams analyze and develop a host of applications that allow an easier understanding of information, the initiative aims to help bridge the many commuting and accessibility challenges being faced in the city of Kochi.

The Data Innovation Challenge seeks out solutions in two tracks:

- 1) The Technology Challenge:** Where participants will be invited to develop data-driven, technology interventions to improve accessibility to transport services for all demographics of the city or support the agency in increasing ridership or increasing efficiency.
- 2) The Visualization Challenge:** Where participants will be invited to use data points to develop innovative design-based approaches to visualize urban transport in Kochi. These visualizations can help city stakeholders identify gaps in the transportation network.

The two tracks are also set up as a two-step process to ensure quality solutions that can be developed further and integrated with the city and stands to benefit its citizens.

- 1) The Qualifying Hack** will enable participants to innovate under certain boundaries using partial data sets to test their understanding of the city.
- 2) The Final Hack** will allow shortlisted teams to access all data sets to develop prototype solutions and detailed visualizations that can be developed further and implemented in the city.

The STAMP Challenge will offer the winning teams research grants and mentorship with a possible opportunity to develop their solution with the city.

Appreciating the STAMP Data Innovation Challenge initiative, KMRL MD, Mr. APM Mohammed Hanish said, “KMRL recognizes the criticality of transport services in a city in accessing education and economic opportunities and are in constant pursuit of improving our services for the citizens of Kochi. This initiative will only fuel into the constant innovation we are pursuing to make KMRL one of the best metros in the country.”

Kochi serves as a nerve centre to a larger urban agglomeration that reaches beyond the city boundaries. Given the wide city base and economic relationship that it shares with its surrounding areas, commuting distances in the city are significant and often characterised with multiple transfers. KMRL recognizes the importance of transport service integration in the city in accessing education and economic opportunities and are in constant pursuit of improving their services with others for the citizens of Kochi. Through this challenge KMRL hopes to leverage data innovation to help enable seamless and accessible travel in the city.

By launching the first of several initiatives around data driven innovations, Mr. Madhav Pai, Director, WRI India Ross Center observed “Information, which exists with city agencies and new mobility enterprises in one form or another, can play a significant role in how people engage with city transport. Public transport agencies and new mobility enterprises are now starting to recognize the implications open data and open documentation policies can have, to improve city transport access, service quality, and customer information. Our initiative is just the beginning of how data can revolutionize the transportation and mobility sector.”

This is the third edition of the STAMP challenge led by WRI India and Toyota Mobility Foundation, previously working in Bengaluru and Hyderabad in improving access and last mile connectivity to mass transit systems. This year, WRI and TMF will work towards improving accessibility and usage of metro transit in Kochi through a process of leveraging open collaboration using mobility and non-mobility data, research and capacity building.

Vice President, Corporate Planning TDEM, Mr. Pras Ganesh of Toyota Mobility Foundation stated, “Kochi is rapidly being recognized as a perfect city to introduce innovative solutions because of its visionary government, capable young workforce and open and accepting public. Furthering Toyota Mobility Foundation’s principles of Legacy, Innovation and Collaboration, Kochi was ideal to implement the “Data Innovation Challenge” and seek innovative solutions to Metro accessibility. We look forward to identifying and nurturing unique multi-modal approaches to further enhance the first fully integrated Metro system in India which connects rail, road and water transport facilities.”

Mr. Sudeept Maiti, Senior Manager- Integrated Transport, WRI India, added, “The Data Innovation Challenge is the first step to enable data-driven innovations and interventions in the city. The solutions from the challenge will have the potential to create significant impact in the city, on both how commuters move in the city to how transit agencies can increase operational efficiencies.”

Data is the way forward for innovation when it comes to mobility and public transportation. A key piece to solve the integration puzzle is to crowdsource ideas and solutions that can assist in accessible and safe last mile connectivity services and minimize environmental impact.

Commenting on the overall objective of the STAMP program, Mr. Shekar Viswanathan, Vice Chairman and Whole-time Director of Toyota Kirloskar Motor, said “With the first & last mile connectivity concerns, the

quality of life in cities have been compromised to accommodate the busy schedule of daily commuters, thus creating a requirement for smart mobility to ensure a complete public transport system. The STAMP initiative aims to enable such end-to-end mobility in the city with better integrated and multimodal transport systems, thus bridging the gap of last-mile connectivity, making it easier for commuters to use the metro which indeed has emerged as one of the most popular forms of transportation.

The STAMP program provides innovative solution with on-ground pilot operations through collaboration with different stakeholders. This initiative promises higher quality of living with an optimal work life balance and secured transport connectivity. We are delighted to witness the rapid success of the STAMP in the cities of Bengaluru and Hyderabad, now further expanding to Kochi.

About WRI India Ross Center

WRI India Ross Center is part of WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities. WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities works to make urban sustainability a reality. Global research and on-the-ground experience in Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Turkey and the United States combine to spur action that improves life for millions of people.

About the Toyota Mobility Foundation

The Toyota Mobility Foundation was established in August 2014 to support the development of a more mobile society. The Foundation aims to support strong mobility systems while eliminating disparities in mobility. It utilizes Toyota's expertise in technology, safety, and the environment, working in partnership with universities, government, non-profit organizations, research institutions and other organizations to address mobility issues around the world. Programs include resolving urban transportation problems, expanding the utilization of personal mobility, and developing solutions for next generation mobility.

Challenge Link: <https://wricitieshub.org/STAMP/>

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