

# UP's aspirational cities prog may go national

## Centre Is Examining The Concept

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**Lucknow:** UP's aspirational urban local bodies programme could be replicated by other states. In a meeting of senior officials from the central government and the urban development department (UDD) recently, the aspirational cities programme initiated by the UP government was discussed in detail.

The government through NITI Aayog could ask other states to introduce a scheme on similar lines in order to improve the standards of services being provided within the neglected urban areas.

Addressing stakeholders on Thursday, UDD principal secretary Amrit Abhijat said that the central government could introduce the scheme on the national level during the



Principal secretary Amrit Abhijat at urban development department meeting in Lucknow

next financial year. "Our concept is being examined and is expected to be taken up in some time. We are also seeking guidance from experts from NITI Aayog and ministry of housing and urban development to sharpen our strategy," said Abhijat.

Executives from Tata Trusts, UN Habitat, HDFC foundation, Adani foundation, ICICI foundation, SEEDS India, Mantra4Change, ICLEI, Centre for Innovation, CIPSC, C40 among others had gathered to identify focus areas. The UP government on September 12 decided to launch the aspirational cities programme under which the 100 most backward urban local bodies out of

the total 762 ones would be provided funds and resources to improve people's living standards. Thursday's session was aimed at preparing city specific action plans, design and planning of projects and infrastructure, incentive based ranking system, satellite mapping of localities, policy interventions, improving education and health services and upgrading infrastructure.

Deputy director CIPSC (centre for innovation, policy and social change) Naveen Kumar said, "Protection of water bodies, waste management and women's health and sanitation are some key areas where immediate work can be done within 100 aspirational ULBs."

Abhijat said besides improving the overall urban services, focus is also on improving economic activity and creating opportunities. "We will get in touch with the directorate of economics and statistics to find out the estimated GDP of each ULB. The situation will be reviewed after a year," said Abhijat.