

Ernst & Young to design revenue model, IT solutions for Kashi Vishwanath Dham

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VARANASI: The Kashi Vishwanath Dham (corridor) project is nearing completion and the task of designing and finetuning the model for its smooth operations, revenue generation and upkeep has been entrusted to the London-headquartered MNC Ernst & Young, counted among the Big Four firms.

A team from Ernst & Young, one of the largest professional services networks in the world, made its first presentation before Shri Kashi Vishwanath Special Area Development Board on Sunday.

The firm will also develop IT solutions and software for crowd management in the premises.

The remaining construction and finishing work of over Rs 700 crore Kashi Vishwanath Dham project is in full swing and is likely to be inaugurated by

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in December.

Ernst & Young has been roped in to design the model for revenue generation to assist the operations and maintenance of all the establishments in the corridor except Kashi Vishwanath temple which is looked after by the KV Temple Trust. Talking to TOI on Sunday, the board's chairman and divisional commissioner Deepak Agrawal said, "E&Y was appointed consultant through tender process for preparing a model for operations and maintenance of KV Dham in mid-October. The company gave its first presentation before us today. We have made some suggestions in the proposed model which will be incorporated in the next presentation on November 10. Till then, the process for calling request for proposal (RFP) and expression of interest (EOI) will be completed."

"The trust looks after the affairs of KV Temple through donations that can be used for the temple only. The area of campus has now expanded to 5 lakh square feet in which 23 major buildings, including Mandir Chowk, guest houses, multipurpose hall, clinic and hospice, pilgrim facility centres, 70 shops, Varanasi gallery and museum, cafeteria and toilets are being constructed," said Agrawal.

Once the project is inaugurated and thrown open to public, it would require revenue for daily operations and maintenance, he added.

"We needed a well thought out and designed model for seamless generation of revenue, its channelisation and accounting for meeting the requirements of operations and maintenance," the commissioner said.

In view of the requirements, the Board had decided to engage a top professional consultant for designing and developing the revenue model and finetuning the operations, he added.

"Finding a consultant was no easy task as no company showed interest though we floated the tender thrice. When the tender was floated for the fourth time, only E&Y participated in it and the contract was awarded to it. After a basic study, the company has estimated that about Rs 27 crore would be needed per annum for providing all services, facilities and maintenance of KV Dham," he said.

The company will also develop an IT solution and software for crowd management. "People will not have to stand for hours in queues to enter KVT as a software being developed will issue tokens with half an hour time slots. The pilgrims can visit other facilities in KV Dham instead of standing in queue," Agrawal added.

"The KV Dham will have three entrance points, from the Ganga, Saraswati Phatak and Godowlia Gate, while KVT premises has four entry points. E&Y will also propose a plan for seamless movement inside KV Dham while keeping the security arrangements in view," the commissioner said.