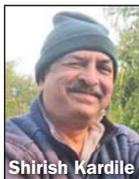


From the Board

ACE16 Delights Delegates



Shirish Kardile

AWWA's successful 2016 Annual Conference and Exposition (ACE16), held in Chicago June 19-22, was a resounding success for AWWAIndia, too.

An Indian delegation, comprised of more than 40 representatives, was the largest ever to attend the event, which attracted about 12,000 attendees.

On June 19, a few Indian delegates attended the AWWA Board of Directors luncheon. Speakers included myself; Hemant Landge, president, Indian Water Works Association (IWWA); and Malini Shankar, principal secretary, Government of Maharashtra. Various aspects of India's drinking water situation were discussed, and the speakers stressed the need to address engineering and management concerns.

The conference's Opening General Session was attended by all the Indian delegates, who enjoyed the grand ceremony with more than 2,000 water professionals. Later in the day at the International Council meeting, Indian representatives addressed topics ranging from operator training to cooperation between AWWA and IWWA.

For the first time, an Indian professional session was held on June 21. For details, see ACE Professional Session Spotlights India Water Issues, page 3. Also, on June 22, AWWAIndia's board members and executive manager met with AWWA officials to coordinate ways to bolster AWWAIndia operations.

In all, it was an exhilarating experience. One Indian delegate aptly asked, "How do they manage to put on such a gigantic and exciting show year after year with such clocklike precision?"

—Shirish Kardile,
AWWAIndia Strategic Board Chair

Tapping In

WATER INDUSTRY NEWS, AWARDS, AND TRAINING

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Report Delves Into Indian State and Local Reforms Needed for Smart City Development

A recent report from the World Economic Forum, *Reforms to Accelerate the Development of India's Smart Cities*, offers recommendations and reforms at state and local governmental levels and in various sectors toward modernizing and financing urban development projects, including water-related infrastructure. Emphasizing an urban approach, the report sets forth broad reforms required across India to implement smart cities technologies to

further the country's advancement. The report's executive summary states, "Cities in India have become a center of focus for business and are a means to enhance livelihoods. India must rejuvenate its cities promptly to address the increasing aspirations of urban dwellers and attract the investment that will further drive growth and development."

Among the report's recommendations are institutional, business-environment, and sector-specific reforms to enhance public-private collaboration in Indian urban development programs. After the Indian government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, announced earlier this year that 20 cities will receive funding to implement smart-city urban development projects, the report's release continues the momentum by laying a groundwork for building India's future with integrated technology systems for communications, information, infrastructure, public services, utilities, and other assets.

Central to the smart cities vision is public-private collaboration and identifying challenges limiting private-sector participation in urban development projects.

"While cities in India plan to embed technology in the delivery of urban infrastructure and services, they should also plan to bridge the demand-supply gap in the provision of core urban services such as water, waste management, and sanitation," said the forum's Alice Charles. "A holistic approach where equal importance is given to infrastructure, technology, and governance is required to improve the quality of life in urban India."

The report acknowledges the Indian government has already introduced reforms, and the business environment has improved, reflected in India's rising ranking in the forum's *Global Competitiveness Report*. However, the smart cities report states that more must be done to propel India's global standing, particularly regarding land acquisition, dispute resolution, permitting processes, information availability, and procurement processes.

With India's urban population set to reach 814 million by 2050, the report argues for a business-friendly approach to ensure adequate private-sector participation. India needs to develop world-class cities to compete at a global scale, the report contends, and urban rejuvenation programs joined with fundamental reform will speed India's growth in such cities. Read the full report at <http://bit.ly/29mkTQb>.



Reforms in state and local governments may shift India's smart city development more rapidly to full implementation.