

FINNISH SMART CITY INNOVATORS TO WORK WITH CHHATTISGARH STATE, INDIA

Bridging the gap between the Indian & Finnish startup & innovation ecosystems

Located in the Centre-East of India, Chhattisgarh is emerging as a favoured destination for commerce and industry, given its rapid strides in the Ease of Doing Business, State political environment and open-door policy for investors and entrepreneurs. With a population of 28 million, Chhattisgarh is the 17th-most populated state in the country. It produces 15% of the country's steel and its power sector is effectively developed. Whilst the capital, Raipur, is a fast-developing urban city, 80% of the total State population still live in rural areas with poor access to services.

In close cooperation with India's NITI Aayog, Chhattisgarh State Planning Commission has been supporting cross-country dialogue on Sustainable Development Goals and Innovation R&D for the social and economic sectors. Focus areas being: **Renewable Energy, Technology Enablement, Waste Management and Health Care.**

Together, **GOInternational Finland & Chhattisgarh State** have formally initiated a mutual consultation between Nordic Smart City Innovators and the concerned policymakers, experts, entrepreneurs and think tanks, under the umbrella of the Chhattisgarh State Planning Commission.

The **Indo-Finnish Market Entry Acceleration Programme** (a flagship initiative by GOInternational Finland) is actively driving cross-border collaboration between India & Finland (and the Nordics) on delivering smart cities and villages in India.

To put it into context, every minute approximately 3 Indians are migrating from rural India to urban spaces and this pace is set to continue, thus creating incredible challenges & opportunities for one of the world's largest economies. PM Narendra Modi's \$15 Billion Smart Cities programme is leading the way to transform urban spaces as economic engines that offer excellent quality of life in a new India.

Finnish & Nordic companies can contribute to India's transformation by means of merging **Finnish strengths in disruptive product development** with India's unparalleled skills in **frugal innovation**; and create solutions that can propel inclusive development in India. At the same time, these co-created innovative solutions would be ideally suited for the rest of the developing world; therefore a global market for Nordic solutions.

The objective of the acceleration programme is to facilitate growth through collaboration beyond borders with agile and frugally innovative solutions.

CHHATTISGARH TO ATTEND SLUSH FOR BIZHACK

Setting the challenges for Smart City solution development

GOInternational Finland will be hosting **Smart City Bizhack India**; the first Indian-themed event alongside **Slush (29th November - 1st December)**, which is 100% dedicated to unveiling the vast opportunities in the Indian market for Smart City Innovation. The three day event will offer Series A Start ups and SMEs a bridge to access live marketplace opportunities for conducting business in India.

Chhattisgarh State will be announced as the pilot state and gateway state for Finnish Innovation in India at the Slush Event. A 7-strong delegation from the State of Chhattisgarh will be joining us and laying out the broad contours of the potential opportunities in Chhattisgarh for Finnish Innovation; including the opportunity to co-create & collaborate with Indian partners. **Dr Kamal Preet Singh, Secretary Commerce&Industry**, will be delivering a Keynote address to outline specific challenges.

Winners of **Smart City Bizhack India** will be fast-tracked to the next phase of GOInternational's **Indo-Finnish Market Entry Acceleration Programme** with a visit to India in the new year to take a firmer step towards securing tender.

This marks a convergence of will between GOInternational and Chhattisgarh, indicating a mutual desire to bridge the gap between the Indian & Finnish startup & innovation ecosystems. **At Slush, We are on course to initiate an official Memorandum of Cooperation between Finland and India concerning Smart City Innovation transfer.**

For more info, interview opportunities, event accreditation please contact:

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