



NATIONAL CLEAN AIR PROGRAMME

At a Glance

- Introduction
- National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)
- Objective
- Tenure
- Approach
- Implementation of NCAP
- Financial Arrangement
- Conclusion

Introduction

Air pollution, presently one of the biggest environmental challenges, has become a significant health concern for developing countries like India. Air pollution emission issues are associated with many sectors, which *inter-alia* includes power, transport, industry, construction, and agriculture etc. Air pollution impacts places away from the source also. Thus, there is need for regional-level initiatives through inter-state and inter-city coordination in addition to multi-sectoral synchronization.

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Data generated from National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP) over the years reveal that particulate matters are the major challenge which are found to be exceeding the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) all across the country.¹

National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) -Overview

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India has launched National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in January, 2019 as a long-term, time-bound, national level strategy to tackle the air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner. The NCAP targets to achieve 20% to 30% reduction in concentrations of PM₁₀(particulate matter of diameter between 10 and 2.5 micrometer) and PM_{2.5}(particulate matter of diameter 2.5 micrometer or less) by the year 2024, keeping 2017 as the base year for comparison of concentration.²

Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) identified 94 non-attainment cities (NAC) while circulating the draft NCAP in 2018 that was revised to 102 NAC's in January 2019. Two more were added to the list in 2020, taking the total to 124. The list of cities under NCAP focus now stands at 132 cities in 2021 with a million-plus population. The details of the 132 Non Attainment Cities can be accessed in the following link: https://cpcb.nic.in/uploads/Non-Attainment_Cities.pdf

Non Attainment Cities: *Non-attainment cities (NAC)- Cities are declared non-attainment if over a 5-year period they consistently do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for PM 10 (Particulate matter that is 10 microns or less in diameter) or NO₂ (Nitrogen Dioxide).*

The aims of the NCAP are-

1. To ensure stringent implementation of mitigation measures for prevention, control and abatement of air pollution.
2. To augment and evolve effective and proficient ambient air quality monitoring network across the country for ensuring a comprehensive and reliable database.
3. To augment public awareness and capacity-building measures encompassing data dissemination and public outreach programmes for inclusive public participation and for ensuring trained manpower and infrastructure on air pollution.

NCAP is a mid-term, five-year action plan launched in 2019. However, international experiences and national studies indicate that significant outcome in terms of air pollution initiatives are visible only in the long-term, and hence the programme may be further extended to 20–25 years in the long-term after a mid-term review of the outcomes.¹

Approach

- Collaborative, multi-scale and cross-sectoral coordination between the concerned central ministries, state governments and local bodies.
- Mainstreaming and integrating the existing policies and programmes including the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and other initiatives of Government of India in reference to climate changes.
- With reference to NAPCC, the main focus will be on mainstreaming the initiatives under five national missions of NAPCC viz. National Solar Mission, National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency, National

¹ <https://prana.cpcb.gov.in/#/about>

Mission on Sustainable Habitat, National Mission for a Green India and National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture.

- While many of these policies and programmes are already part of the current actions, they may need a change in direction, enhancement of scope, and effectiveness and an accelerated implementation of time-bound plans.
- Use the smart cities framework to launch the NCAP in the smart cities falling in the list of the non-attainment cities.
- The NCAP will be dynamic and will continue to evolve based on the additional available scientific and technical information as they emerge and in response to international best practices and experiences that are available.

Implementation of NCAP

- ❖ The CPCB shall, in consonance with the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, and in particular with the provision of Section 16(2)(b) of the Act, execute the nation-wide programme for the prevention, control, and abatement of air pollution within the framework of the NCAP.
- ❖ The NCAP will be institutionalized by respective ministries and will be organized through inter-sectoral groups, which include, in addition to the related ministries, the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, NITI Aayog, CPCB, experts from the industry, academia, and civil society.
- ❖ The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways acts as a nodal agency for the implementation of various provisions on control of air pollution from vehicles through Motor Vehicle Act 1988, and Central Motor Vehicle Rules 1989.

- ❖ In addition, various other ministries viz. Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Ministry of Power, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Ministry of Heavy Industry, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture through incorporating pollution in their sectoral policies contribute to air pollution mitigation.

- ❖ Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is implementing National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) with eight missions spreading across various sectors. Five of the missions have direct link with mitigation of air pollution, which can be one of the co-benefit of these ongoing missions.

- ❖ The Apex Committee in the Ministry will periodically review the progress of these Components. Annual performance will be periodically reported upon. Appropriate indicators will be evolved for assessing the emission reduction benefits of the actions.

Finance

Under NCAP, Rs. 443 crores have been released to non-attainment cities in the period from FY 2019-20 to FY 2021-22. These funds are to be utilized for implementation of activities approved under City Action Plans (CAPs), including essential activities identified. In addition, Rs.6425 crores have been released to 42 number of million-plus-cities under 15th Finance Commission Grant in FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22.

City Action Plans of 132 cities are to be implemented by coordinated action of state government and its agencies at state and city level. The funding for

implementation of CAPs is to be mobilised through convergence of resources from various schemes of Central Government such as Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, Smart City Mission, Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation, FAME-II etc. and resources from State/UT Governments and its agencies such as Municipal Corporation, Urban Development authorities and Industrial development authorities etc.²

Conclusion

- It is imperative to find sustainable solutions to reduce the burden and to leave behind a cleaner and a safer planet.
- The solutions need to include all the aspects, including health, the economy, technological advancements, and the feasibility to implement the suggested solutions.

Sources

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² <https://prana.cpcb.gov.in/#/about>