

National Ambient Air Quality Standards

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In news

States to get air pollution funds based on meeting performance targets

What are National ambient air quality standards(NAAQS)?

- NAAQS are the standards for ambient air quality set by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) that are applicable nationwide.
- Current National Ambient Air Quality Standards were notified in the year 2009 by CPCB

A brief note on the issue

Recently, the Union government, based on recommendations of 15th Finance Commission, released exactly half –₹ 2200 crore–of allocation to 15 States

The States, in turn, have to release money to local municipal bodies in 42 cities to take steps to monitor and mitigate air pollution.

Activities on which the fund can be used are:

The activities that the money would be spent would include installing and commissioning continuous ambient air quality monitoring systems, creating green buffer zone along the roads, mechanical street sweepers, mobile enforcement units, water sprinklers, public awareness and capacity-building activities.

Non-attainment cities

Non-attainment cities are those which were found to be

consistently violating the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) from 2011-2015.

Pollutants covered under the NAAQS

Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Particulate Matter (size less than 10 µm), Particulate Matter (size less than 2.5 µm), Ozone (O₃), Lead (Pb), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Ammonia (NH₃), Benzene (C₆H₆), Benzo(a)Pyrene (BaP)-particulate phase only, Arsenic(As), Nickel (Ni)

Prior to the November 2009 standards, India had set Air Quality standards on 11 April 1994, and this was later revised on 14 October 1998. The 2009 standards further lowered the maximum permissible limits for pollutants and made the standards uniform across the nation. Earlier, less stringent standards were prescribed for industrial zones as compared to residential areas.

National Air Quality Index

NAQI was launched in October 2014 to disseminate information on air quality in an easily understandable form for the general public. The measurement of air quality is based on eight pollutants, namely, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, NO₂, SO₂, CO, O₃, NH₃, and Pb for which short-term (up to 24-hourly averaging period) National Ambient Air Quality Standards are prescribed and the worst reading in these pollutants represents the AQI for that city.