

National Clean Air Program

Why in news?

The National Clean Air Program targets to achieve reductions up to 40% of PM 10 concentrations by 2025-26.

National Clean Air Program

- **Year-** 2019
- **Ministry-** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- **About-** The program is a pollution control initiative, the government committed funds as well as set targets for 131 (non-attainment cities) of India's most polluted cities.
- **Non-attainment cities-** They are called as non-attainment cities as they did not meet the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for the period of 2011-15 under the National Air Quality Monitoring Program (NAMP).
- **Goal-** To meet prescribed annual average ambient air quality standards at all locations in the country in a stipulated timeframe (long-term).
- **Objectives-**
 - Stringent implementation of mitigation measures for prevention, control and abatement of air pollution.
 - Augment public awareness and capacity building measures.
 - Augment and strengthen air quality monitoring network across the country
- **Tenure-**
 - **Mid-term-** *5 years action plan* to begin with keeping 2019 as base year.
 - **Long term-** The program is further extendable to 20-25 years after mid-term review of the outcomes
- **Phase-I** - It proposes a tentative national target of 20%-30% reduction in PM2.5 and PM10 concentrations by 2024, with 2017 as the base year for comparison.
- **Phase-II-** The government set a new target of a 40% reduction in particulate matter concentration, by 2026.
- **Fund-** The program is backed by *15th Finance Commission*.
- **Cities responsibilities-** Cities are required to take measures to improve air quality inter-alia include solid waste management, control of pollution from biomass burning and air pollution from construction & demolition activities.
- **Non-binding-** The program is considered as a scheme rather than legal binding document hence there are no specified penal actions against cities that fail to meet the targets outlined in the program.
- **PRANA-** Portal for Regulation of Air-pollution in Non-Attainment cities, is a portal for monitoring of implementation of National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).
- **Status of air quality-** Out of 131 identified cities, decrease in PM10 Concentration has been observed in 88 cities during 2022-23 as compared to levels during FY 2017-18.

What is the approach of NCAP?

- **Collaborative approach-** The NCAP emphasizes collaborative, multi-scale, and cross-sectoral coordination among relevant central ministries, state governments, and local

bodies, it ensures a comprehensive approach to air quality management.

- **Integration with existing policies-** The program seeks to integrate existing policies and programs, including the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). By mainstreaming [NAPCC](#) initiatives, the focus is on five national missions



- **Enhancing effectiveness-** The NCAP aims to enhance the effectiveness of the policies and programmes that are already in place, this involves adjusting directions, expanding scope, and accelerating implementation within specified time frames.
- **Smart cities framework-** The program leverages the smart cities framework to launch its initiatives. Specifically, it targets the 43 smart cities among the 102 non-attainment cities—areas where air quality standards are not met.
- **Dynamic and evolving-** The program is designed to be dynamic, adapting to new scientific and technical information as it emerges. It remains responsive to international best practices and experiences in air quality management.

How India can make significant impact in NCAP phase-II?

- **Emission inventory database-** NCAP should prioritize the development of an official emission inventory database covering all major cities and sources of pollution, this will ensure accurate reflection of emission trends and facilitate targeted interventions.
- **Transition to PM2.5 monitoring-** PM10 has been the primary focus in the initial phase, transitioning to PM2.5 monitoring is essential due to its more severe health impacts.
- **Holistic sectoral actions-** Parameters under framework like Swacch Vayu Survekshan should be considered to promote initiatives such as reducing biomass burning, industrial emissions compliance, and improving public transportation density.
- **Innovative financing mechanisms-** Urban Local Bodies play a significant role in implementing clean air initiatives hence NCAP should explore innovative mechanisms such as municipal bonds and social impact bonds to empower ULBs and overcome resource shortages.
- **Shift to airshed level planning-** Transitioning from city-level to airshed-level planning will extend NCAP's reach beyond urban centers, encompassing rural areas for a more inclusive impact.
- **Delhi model-** Initiatives like the Commission on Air Quality Management in the [Delhi-NCR region](#) can serve as models for effective governance structure and collaboration mechanisms at the airshed level.

Graded response action plan is a set of measures drafted by the Centre's Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to tackle air pollution in Delhi and NCR region.

What lies ahead?

- NCAP's recognition of the far-reaching impacts of particulate matter pollution on public health and the economy underscores its urgency.

- With a targeted reduction of particulate matter concentration by 40% by 2026, the NCAP signifies a determined push towards tangible improvements.
- The road to cleaner air is challenging, but the NCAP exemplifies India's potential to overcome the odds, fostering a future where breathability and well-being prevail.

References

1. [Business Line- What's next for clean air?](#)
2. [PRANA- About NCAP](#)

