

Minutes of the 31st meeting of the Project Appraisal and Approval Committee (PAAC-EPC)

31st meeting of the Project Appraisal and Approval Committee (PAAC-EPC) for utilization of EPC funds, was held on 07 July 2025, under the chairpersonship of Chairman, CPCB, in hybrid mode. List of participants is enclosed at Annexure-I.

02. AQM division briefed the committee about the status of EPC funds. Rs. 527.91 crore has been accrued in the EPC fund account as on 18.06.2025, out of which Rs. 173 crores have been disbursed as on 04.07.2025, and Rs. 222.83 is committed for sanctioned projects/activities. Out of the remaining funds amounting to Rs. 132 crores, Rs. 54 crores have been earmarked as performance grants for F.Y. 2025-26 under CPCB guidelines for providing gap funding support to 19 NCR cities, leaving Rs. 78 crores available for utilization.

03. MS-CPCB expressed that actions have already been initiated for utilization of the remaining available EPC funds, and MCD is expected to shortly submit a proposal seeking funding for development of model road stretches, in line with CAQM guidelines.

04. AQM division informed about the status of proposals received for consideration under EPC funds. A total of 162 proposals have been received so far, and 140 proposals have been examined and decided. Out of these 140 proposals, 39 proposals have been sanctioned while 101 proposals have been rejected. The remaining 22 proposals are under consideration at various stages, with 07 proposals to be considered in today's meeting.

05. Subsequently, AQM division apprised the committee about the agenda of the meeting, involving post-facto approval on 05 proposals, briefing the committee on status of 01 proposal, and taking decision on 07 proposals. Further, one project where work has been completed is to be closed. The agenda-wise observations and decisions of the committee are summarized below:

A. Proposals requiring post-facto approval

i. Proposal for retrofitment of DG sets in Haryana

AQM division informed that a proposal was received from Haryana seeking funding for retrofitment/upgradation of DG sets in government hospitals in Haryana, under CPCB guidelines for providing one-time financial assistance to Government Hospitals of Delhi-NCR for installation of emission control system or dual fuel kits in diesel generator sets and purchase of gas based generator sets. Visits were conducted by CPCB teams in around 100 hospitals/health centers to ascertain operational status and retrofitment requirements and out of these, 20 DG sets



in 17 hospitals were found eligible for funding for installation of RECD as per CPCB guidelines. Accordingly, these were sanctioned by CPCB at a cost of Rs. 63,37,354/-.

PAAC accorded post-facto approval for sanction of Rs. 63,37,354 to Haryana for installation of RECDs in 20 DG sets in 17 hospitals in Haryana.

ii. Proposal for retrofitment of DG sets and procurement of new gas based gensets in AIIMS and its associated institutes

AQM division informed that a proposal was received from AIIMS seeking funding for retrofitment/upgradation of DG sets in AIIMS, Delhi and its associated institutes in Haryana, under CPCB guidelines for providing one-time financial assistance to Government Hospitals of Delhi-NCR for installation of emission control system or dual fuel kits in diesel generator sets and purchase of gas based generator sets. Visits were conducted by CPCB teams to ascertain operational status and retrofitment requirements and 17 DG sets were found eligible for funding for installation of RECD/dual fuel kits, while 09 DG sets were found eligible for new gas based generator sets, as per CPCB guidelines. Subsequently, installation of RECDs/dual fuel kits and procurement of new gas based gensets was sanctioned by CPCB at a cost of Rs. 1,41,42,358/- and Rs. 30,12,667/- respectively.

PAAC accorded post-facto approval for sanction of Rs. 1.72 crores to AIIMS for installation of RECDs/dual fuel kits and procurement of new gas based gensets in AIIMS and its associated institutes, as described above.

Chairman, CPCB expressed that only a small number of DG sets have been supported so far under the guidelines. AQM division expressed that when the guidelines were issued, RECDs were only available for a short range of capacities, but are now available for 18.85 kW-799 kW. Further, funding for gas based gensets was also limited to 250 kVA capacity as the same were reported to be non-available beyond this capacity. PAAC expressed that the guidelines may be revised in view of latest developments, and proposals may again be sought for retrofitment/upgradation of DG sets in government hospitals in Delhi-NCR.

iii. Proposal for revised cost of 1 Mechanical Road Sweeping Machine (MRSM), procured by Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation (GMC)

PAAC was apprised that it had sanctioned procurement of 05 Anti-Smog Guns (ASGs) and 01 Mechanical Road Sweeping Machine (MRSM) at a total cost of Rs. 4.25 crore (Rs. 2.25 crore for 05 ASG and Rs. 2 crore for 1 MRSM) in its 27th meeting held on 03.01.2024. Subsequently, GMC requested CPCB for procurement of MRSM of higher suction capacity at revised cost of

 

Rs 2.78 crore and accordingly sought sanction of additional amount of Rs 78 lakhs. CPCB had agreed to the request of GMC.

PAAC accorded post-facto approval for sanction of additional amount of Rs. 78 lakhs to GMC for procurement of MRSM.

iv. Operation and Maintenance (O&M) extension (May 2024 - June 2025) of Smog tower

PAAC was apprised that a pilot smog tower was commissioned at Anand Vihar in September 2021 in compliance of the Hon'ble Supreme Court orders in Writ Petition (Civil): MC Mehta v/s Union of India & Ors. A work agreement for O&M of smog tower was signed between CPCB, TPL SBG services and NBCC (project management consultant) for an initial period of 02 years from 06 September 2021 and extendable upto 04 years.

A technical committee was constituted by CPCB in 2023 for assessing overall feasibility of the smog tower, and the committee did not recommend further tower operation, in view of limited effectiveness. The report of the committee was also placed before the PAAC in its 28th meeting held on 26.04.2024 and PAAC had also recommended that the tower should be kept in operational condition. PAAC had further suggested that the report may be shared with MoEF&CC for consideration and based on the guidance received, further decision may be taken on fate of the smog tower. The report was shared with MoEF&CC, and MoEF&CC had accepted the report and had further submitted the report to the Hon'ble Supreme Court for further decision.

In view of the above and considering that a decision on fate of the smog tower is still awaited, extension for keeping the tower in operational condition has been granted to TPL and NBCC since September 2023, with the last extension granted up to June 2025.

Accordingly, post-facto approval of PAAC was sought for expenses of Rs. 1,95,25,613/- towards O&M of the tower for the period May 2024 - June 2025, and of Rs. 70,19,060/- towards electricity bill for the same period.

PAAC accorded post-facto approval for expenses made towards O&M of the smog tower and electricity charges, as described above.

v. Procurement of 2 nos. Beta Ray Attenuation (BAM) analysers for ITO CAAQMS, Precision Pressure Controller used for calibrating CAAQMS and Temperature & humidity sensor by Air Laboratory, CPCB

 

PAAC was apprised that it had sanctioned Rs. 2.61 Crores in its 3rd meeting held on 11.09.2017 under the project titled "Strengthening of Lab Infrastructure in Delhi-NCR" to Air Laboratory, for upgradation of Air Laboratory. Under the project, Real-time Ambient Air Quality Analysers for CAAQM Station at ITO, Portable Van & Calibration Lab, Mobile Van (Mobile CAAQMS), Calibration gases (Pure gases) and & Compressor were procured at a cost of Rs. 1,41,83,330/-.

Further, Air Laboratory, CPCB during FY 2025-26 has also procured Precision pressure controller at a cost of Rs. 19,07,254/-, Temperature & humidity sensor at a cost of Rs. 1,84,078/- and BAM PM2.5 and PM10 Analyser at a cost of Rs. 23,49,000/- using the remaining EPC funds sanctioned for the project.

Post-facto approval of PAAC was sought for the expense of Rs. 44,40,332/- made for the aforementioned items. Further, approval of PAAC was also sought for utilising balance amount of Rs. 74, 81,338/- for upgradation of Air Laboratory for capital works.

PAAC accorded post-facto approval for expenses made for procurement of Precision pressure controller, Temperature & humidity sensor and BAM PM2.5 and PM10 Analysers, as described above. Further, PAAC also authorized MS-CPCB to approve capital works for upgradation of Air Lab, CPCB from the remaining EPC funds sanctioned for the said project.

B. Proposals for apprising PAAC

i. CPCB guidelines for gap funding support for implementation of clean air city action plan in 19 NCR cities (not covered under NCAP or XVFC)

CPCB in 2024 had come out with guidelines for providing gap funding support to 19 NCR cities for implementation of clean air city action plans. The guidelines were approved by PAAC in its 29th meeting, and were also approved by the Steering Committee. While initially 18 cities were proposed under the guidelines, Bhiwadi was later added and a total of 19 cities are supported under the guidelines at present.

City action plans, duly approved by the respective State Air Quality Monitoring Committee, along with annual action plans/proposals for FY 2024-25 were submitted by the respective ULBs. As decided in the 29th PAAC meeting, an appraisal committee has been constituted at CPCB, chaired by MS, CPCB and having members from SPCBs, CAQM and CPCB to examine proposals and make recommendation for release of funds. The committee has held two meetings and has sanctioned proposals of 16 cities of Rs. 114 crore. As per the guidelines, 50% of sanctioned amount i.e. Rs. 57 crore is to be released on approval of action plan and submission



of required documents and balance 50% on completion of works. As part of the first instalment, Rs. 38 crore have been released for 09 cities and release of Rs. 19 crore to 07 cities is under process.

PAAC expressed that the implementation of the approved annual action plans should be actively monitored, and that the impact on ambient air quality due to implementation of the plan should be assessed. Further, 40 CPCB teams which are assisting CAQM for conducting incognito inspections in Delhi-NCR may be deputed for verifying on-ground implementation of the action plan.

C. Proposals to be decided

i. Study on prescribing emission standards in a graded manner, requirement of APCDs/Fume Extraction System (FES) and cost implication, for Textile, Food processing and Metal industry in Delhi-NCR

PAAC was apprised that CPCB, with concurrence of MoEF&CC, has submitted an action plan to NITI Aayog, in compliance to the discussions held at PMO and NITI Aayog, regarding targeted interventions to reduce PM2.5 levels in Delhi-NCR.

As per the action plan, a study is to be carried out on prescribing revised emission standards in a graded manner, requirement of APCDs/ fume extraction system, cost implication etc. in Textile, Food processing and Metal sectors, and proposals have been sought from expert institutes/agencies, which are to be evaluated, so that the study is initiated by 05.08.2025.

The study is proposed to be carried out from EPC funds and the final proposal based on technical and financial evaluation would be placed before PAAC for approval.

PAAC accorded in-principle approval for taking up the study from EPC funds.

ii. O&M extension for Smog tower beyond June 2025

PAAC was apprised that the Report of Technical Committee indicating limited effectiveness of smog tower was submitted to Hon'ble Supreme Court to decide fate of the tower, however, decision is awaited from the Hon'ble Supreme Court. Considering the same, extension of O&M services of TPL and NBCC, to keep the tower in operational condition, was sought for the period of July-August 2025, at the same cost as agreed earlier.

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MS-CPCB expressed that while a letter to MoEF&CC requesting them to request for an urgent hearing in the matter is being issued, the smog tower O&M may be further extended till the next winter season i.e. February 2026, or till the orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, whichever is earlier.

PAAC accorded approval for O&M extension of smog tower, to keep the tower in operational condition, till 28 February 2026, at a monthly cost of Rs.10,27,772/- excluding NBCC PMC charges, GST and applicable taxes and electricity charges.

AQM division further informed that life of the existing set of filters installed in the smog tower has exhausted, and one set of spare filters is available with CPCB. Since the tower is to be kept in operational condition, pending decision of Hon'ble Supreme Court, it was proposed that the filters may be replaced in the smog tower.

PAAC agreed to the proposal and suggested that the replacement may be done before winter season.

iii. Additional corpus of ₹30 crores under CPCB pelletisation guidelines

PAAC was briefed that in the 24th meeting, it had approved guidelines for providing one-time financial assistance for setting up of paddy straw based pelletisation and torrefaction plants. A corpus of Rs. 50 crores was earmarked from EPC funds with Rs. 40 crore to be utilized for pelletisation units and Rs. 10 crore for torrefaction units.

Regarding the status of applications, 23 applications have been sanctioned so far at a cost of Rs 22.28 crore. Further, 26 more applications are under consideration and if all these applications are found eligible for sanction, the total cost implication would exceed Rs 50 crore. Accordingly, it was proposed to allocate additional corpus of Rs 30 crores for utilisation under the guidelines.

PAAC expressed that the existing corpus of Rs. 50 crore should be utilized first, and sanction of additional corpus may be considered once the current corpus is exhausted. In the meanwhile, CPCB may continue to receive and process the new applications as per existing procedure.

iv. O&M of 6 CAAQMS, Mobile Van, and 07 Manual stations in Delhi and related expenses (SODAR, AWS)

PAAC was apprised that CPCB is operating 07 Manual Air Quality Monitoring Stations (AQMS) and 06 Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring (CAAQM) stations in Delhi, with the O&M contract of these stations valid till 2026. Since 2021, fund for O&M has been sanctioned from

 

CoP scheme, however, due to paucity of funds in CoP scheme, expenditure was incurred from Self-Generated Fund of CPCB during F.Y. 2024-25.

In view of the non-availability of funds from CoP scheme, Air Laboratory, CPCB has sought funding from EPC funds for meeting the O&M expenses of 07 Manual AQMS and 06 CAAQMS and their related expenses, at a total cost of Rs. 2,05,00,000.

AQM division informed that infrastructure enhancement, and Monitoring of environmental pollutants (ambient air & noise) are two of the thrust areas for utilization of EPC funds, and PAAC in the past has also sanctioned projects for establishment of CAAQMS in Delhi-NCR, including their capital and O&M cost. However, apart from these projects, PAAC has not funded any other CAAQMS or their O&M so far. Further, PAAC in recent meetings has also emphasized that EPC funds should be used for gap funding or funding demonstration projects, with the overall purpose of benefiting people at large, and even in the CPCB gap funding guidelines, only capital infrastructure is funded and not O&M.

PAAC expressed that since these monitoring stations were not set up using EPC funds, and further that O&M has not been specifically funded so far under EPC funds, EPC funds may not be utilized for this purpose.

v. Recommendations of Technical Group on 03 new proposals:

03 proposals were considered by the TG in its 10th meeting held on 23.09.2024. TG had made specific observations on each proposal and had recommended to reject these proposals. PAAC accepted the recommendations of TG and rejected the following proposals:

- a. 'Development of micro level policy framework for air pollution control over Delhi-NCR using Blimp based monitoring', submitted by SCMS School of Engineering & Technology Karukutty, Kochi
- b. 'Controlling Methane emissions from CNG filling stations in Delhi-NCR', submitted by Hindu College, Delhi
- c. 'Proposal for vegan (faux) leather project utilising rice straw', submitted by GreenSapio Tech Pvt. Ltd., Gurgaon

PAAC expressed that specific observations of TG may also be communicated to the proponents.



D. Projects to be closed

i. Construction of 08 roads in Ghaziabad, by Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation (GMC)

PAAC was apprised that the project was sanctioned to GMC at an estimated cost of Rs. 15.7 crore in the 24th PAAC meeting held on 06.10.2022. Work was later awarded by GMC at a cost of Rs 13.37 crores, following due tender process. Construction works on all 08 road stretches have been completed by GMC, and 100% funds have been released by CPCB, in line with the sanction conditions.

Noting that visible improvement in the air quality can be seen in the before and after images of the road stretches submitted by GMC, PAAC recommended closure of the project.

06. PAAC emphasized the need to monitor projects sanctioned to ULBs, relating to management of road dust, especially road construction works, where the quality of works is also critical. It was further highlighted that such infrastructure works should be considered for funding only as gap funding rather than budgetary support. Additionally, monitoring of air quality, before and after works, should also be undertaken for these projects, to facilitate impact assessment of these projects. PAAC also expressed that a defined timeframe for fund utilization should also be established to ensure timely and effective utilization of funds, so as to avoid parking of funds.

Meeting ended with thanks to and from the chair.



List of PAAC Members:

1. Sh. Vir Vikram Yadav, Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC and Chairman, CPCB
2. Sh. Bharat Kumar Sharma, Member Secretary, CPCB
3. Sh. R.K. Agarwal, Director (Technical), CAQM (through VC)
4. Sh. Manoj Kumar Madoilia, Director, MHI
5. Sh. Deepak Srivastava, Director, MoPNG
6. Sh. Prasoon Tripathi, Under Secretary, MoEF&CC (CP Division)
7. Sh. Mahesh Shingade, Scientist B, MoRTH
8. Dr. Jayshree Kala, SSO, RSPCB (through VC)
9. Sh. Vishal, AEE, HSPCB
10. Sh. Avdhesh Kumar Mahaular, AEE, DPCC
11. Sh. Ajay Malik, JEE, DPCC
12. Dr. Rashid Hasan, Senior Advisor, SIAM

CPCB Officials:

1. Sh. Pankaj Agarwal, Scientist F & Head, AQM Division
2. Sh. Ankush Tewani, Scientist E, AQM Division
3. Sh. Gautam Kumar Sharma, Scientist C, AQM Division
4. Smt. Dolly Kulshrestha, Scientist C, Air Lab
5. Sh. Toshesh Bhargava, SRF, AQM Division

