

# CPCB introduces 'BLUE' category for essential environmental services

18 February 2025

## Introduction

On 22 January 2025, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) published a report titled '*Classification of Sectors into Red, Orange, Green, White and Blue Categories*'<sup>1</sup> (Report), introducing a new and separate 'blue' category specifically for essential environmental services required for management of waste generated from domestic/ household activities, in addition to the previously introduced red, orange, green and white categories of industries based on the environmental pollution index.

## Industries included in the 'blue' category

The broader category of essential environmental services for abatement of environmental pollution is bifurcated into:

- (a) Category A: essential environmental services for industrial waste such as common effluent treatment plants, common hazardous waste management, storage and disposal facility and common bio-medical waste treatment facility; and
- (b) Category B: essential environmental services for domestic solid waste including nine types of essential environmental services facilities including municipal solid waste management facilities (waste to energy plant, biomining of legacy waste projects etc), construction and demolition waste processing plants and sewage treatment plants.

While Category A essential environmental services are highly polluting and are classified as 'red' category industries as they may generate hazardous waste while undertaking waste management activities, Category B essential environmental services are non-hazardous waste generating but have a high potential for causing littering and are accordingly classified under the 'blue' category.

## Incentives for 'blue' category facilities

- (a) Extended validity of consent to operate: Considering their role in waste management, state pollution control boards/ pollution control centres may grant blue category facilities an additional two year validity period for their consent to operate beyond the time period for which it is typically granted, based on their pollution index.
- (b) Incentive mechanism: As an incentive for better environmental management, the essential environmental services facilities may also be entitled to an additional three year validity period for the consent to operate, subject to meeting eligibility criteria set out in the Report and evaluation of the proposal submitted by the facility, and environmental inspections once in three months conducted at random.

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<sup>1</sup> The report can be accessed [here](#).

- (c) Transition to 'blue' category: Essential environmental services facilities for domestic/ household waste that do not qualify under the 'blue' category due to a higher pollution index score will be eligible to be categorised as a 'blue' category facility, if they reduce their existing pollution index by 25% by implementing improved pollution control measures and meeting the evaluation criteria/ checks outlined in the Report.

### Compliance requirements for 'blue' category facilities:

The pollution index for blue category facilities will be calculated based on CPCB's prescribed methodology, and such facilities must comply with applicable environmental regulations.

### Comments

The establishment of the blue category of industries by the CPCB marks a significant advancement towards fostering sustainable growth and improving waste management practices. The regulatory incentives offered to these facilities are poised to positively contribute to the promotion of environmental sustainability and waste management. Going forward, the effectiveness of this categorisation will depend on strict enforcement of evaluation criteria and continuous monitoring to prevent misuse of compliance norms.

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