

60% of actions under Mumbai's clean air plan fall under multiple agencies: CEEW-Urban Emissions

Mumbai, 30 June 2020: Cross-departmental coordination could be a key hurdle in implementing Mumbai's clean air action plan, according to a new independent analysis by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) and Urban Emissions. Mumbai's clean air plan currently lists 58 measures across 16 different agencies. About 60 per cent of actions fall under multiple agencies, and this could fragment the accountability.

Similarly, an analysis of all city clean air plans in Maharashtra reveals that the state pollution control board is in charge of only 20% of the mitigation activities, while 41% comes under the ambit of municipal corporations and urban local bodies (ULBs) and 22% under the department of transport. The analysis also highlights that the clean air plans of all cities in Maharashtra lack a legal mandate for implementation.

India's National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) directed 102 cities, including 17 in Maharashtra, to create city-specific clean air plans as a primary mitigation measure for reducing particulate concentration by 20% to 30% by 2024. According to CEEW-Urban Emissions analysis, only six of Maharashtra's 17 approved city-specific clean air plans, including Mumbai's, have a budget outlined for the execution of all the proposed air pollution mitigation activities. Besides, over 70 per cent of the plans do not contain crucial information on emission from different polluting sources.

Tanushree Ganguly, Programme Associate at CEEW, said, "The clampdown on all non-essential activities because of the pandemic led to a significant decline in air pollution levels across Maharashtra's cities. To ensure that blue skies become permanent, cities should be certain of their short, medium, and long-term air pollution reduction goals. State and municipal budgets also need to reflect planned expenditure on air pollution mitigation."

Sarath Guttikunda, the founder of Urban Emissions and one of the authors of the study said, "To meet the rising democratic demand for clean air in Maharashtra, Maharashtra state pollution control board and city authorities should collectively scale up air pollution monitors, delineate specific tasks for each action point among participating agencies, fix sectoral emission reduction targets, and create a standard protocol for air pollution reporting progress on actions across sectors."

With 18 cities failing to meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, Maharashtra tops the list of states with most non-attainment cities. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has published the plans of all non-attainment cities in the state except Thane. Despite a large number of non-attainment cities in Maharashtra, the 17 clean air plans in the state are distinct, unlike many other Indian states.

Kurinji Selvaraj, a Research Analyst at CEEW, said, "Mumbai's action plan is among the few plans that contain information on sources and lists financial requirements for implementations. However, the plan fails to highlight any measures to ensure regional coordination even though independent estimates suggest that close to a third of Mumbai's air pollution originates outside city limits. Besides, Mumbai is the city which gets the highest allocation of funds out of the INR 4400 crore for clean air initiatives announced by the Finance Minister in Budget 2020. However, the allocation of

INR 488 crore that Mumbai would receive is equivalent to the amount budgeted for just two action points - regular checking of vehicles and promoting bicycle infrastructure - in the plan.”

Methodology

The CEEW-Urban Emissions study established the key components of a clean air plan based on an extensive review of global literature. It assessed the 102 Indian plans for the presence or absence of elements such as a legal framework, source information, responsibility delineation, and the cost-effectiveness of proposed solutions. Further, descriptive statistics were used to explain and compare the plans across states and analyse the state-level variations in approaches towards clean air planning.

About CEEW

The Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) is one of Asia’s leading not-for-profit policy research institutions. The Council uses data, integrated analysis, and strategic outreach to explain – and change – the use, reuse, and misuse of resources. It prides itself on the independence of its high-quality research, develops partnerships with public and private institutions, and engages with wider public. In 2020, CEEW once again featured extensively across nine categories in the ‘2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report’. The Council has also been consistently ranked among the world’s top climate change think tanks. Follow us on Twitter @CEEWIndia for the latest updates.

About Urban Emissions

Urban Emissions (UEinfo) is an independent research institution that was founded with the vision to be a repository of air pollution-related information, research, and analysis. UEinfo hosts the only India-wide air quality forecasts dissemination platform, including a finer resolution platform specifically for Delhi. UEinfo also anchors the air pollution knowledge assessments (APnA) city programme, showcasing emissions, pollution, and source contribution information for 50 airsheds in India and 10 airsheds in Asia and Africa. Follow us on Twitter @urbanemissions for the latest updates.

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