

## National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) - UPSC Notes

Government schemes and programmes are very important for the UPSC exam. The National Clean Air Programme or NCAP is an important scheme since it comes under the category of environment. Hence, this topic is important for both polity and environment segments of the [UPSC syllabus](#).

### National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)

The National Clean Air Programme or NCAP is a government programme launched by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change in 2019.

- The programme is a pollution control initiative with a major goal of reducing the concentration of coarse and fine particulate matter in the atmosphere by at least 20% by the year 2024.
- The programme aims:
  - To expand the national air quality monitoring network.
  - To build capacity for air pollution management
  - To raise public awareness about the hazards of air pollution
- The NCAP also aims to have a feasible plan for the prevention, management and control of air pollution.
- At the national level, the implementation of the programme will be done by an apex committee at the Environment Ministry level. At the state level, committees at the Chief Secretary level will oversee the implementation of the scheme.
- The NCAP is a joint collaboration between:
  - Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
  - Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
  - Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
  - Ministry of Heavy Industry
  - Ministry of Health
  - Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
  - Ministry of Agriculture
  - [Central Pollution Control Board](#)
  - NITI Aayog
- The programme also ropes in academia, philanthropic foundations, civil society, etc.
- The [Smart Cities Mission](#) of the Central Government will also be leveraged to start clean air programmes for the 43 smart cities among the 102 cities.

To read more on [air pollutants and air pollution](#), click on the linked article.

### Cities Covered under NCAP

For this initiative, 102 cities from 23 UTs and states have been chosen. Barring Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru and Kolkata, all the cities selected are tier 2 cities. The cities were selected on the basis of the ambient air quality data from the National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP) of 2011 - 2015. Maharashtra has the maximum number of cities chosen for the programme.

### NCAP Initiatives

The initiatives under NCAP are listed below:

1. The National Air Quality Monitoring Network will be augmented.
2. Air Quality Management Plan for the cities chosen.

3. Indoor Air Pollution Monitoring & Management
4. National Emission Inventory - this is an inventory of the quantity of pollutants discharged into the air.
5. Network of Technical Institutions
6. Technology Assessment Cell
7. International cooperation including the sharing of best practices with respect to abatement of air pollution.

## NCAP Evaluation

Experts opine that the progress with respect to achieving the targets under this programme is slow. Even at the time of the programme's launch, there was heavy criticism that the targets set were not legally binding.

In the winter of 2019, central and state governments came under fire for the deterioration of the air quality in Delhi and surrounding areas. Stubble burning was also an issue and the country's apex court also pulled up governments for this issue. Read more on this in [CNA dated Nov 28, 2019](#).

Even though the launch of the NCAP is a step in the right direction, effective implementation of the programme is key to achieving the targets set under it. There has to be good collaboration between all the stakeholders for this and more importantly, there should be strong political will as well.

Air pollution is no longer an unseen enemy, its harmful effects are affecting lives every day and it is seen physically in many cities of the country. Sufficient investment is required in terms of money and effort to curb pollution, as this will go a long way in significantly reducing government spending on public health.

## UPSC Questions related to NCAP

**Which of the following is the base year for the National Clean Air Programme NCAP?**

2017 is the base year for the National Clean Air Programme.

**Is NCAP notified under any existing act?**

No, it is not.

**What is PM 2.5 in air quality?**

PM 2.5 is a fine particulate matter that is a cause of air pollution when its levels are high in the air. They cause serious health concerns. They are basically tiny particles in the air that are two and a half (2.5) microns or less in width.

