

Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) was established as a statutory body by the government in August 2021 as an overarching body to carry out air quality management in Delhi NCR. The body has been in the news with the air pollution in Delhi and adjoining areas being a topic in the news frequently. In this article, you can read all about the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) for the [IAS exam](#).

What is Commission for Air Quality Management?

Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)

- Statutory body
- Established in August 2021
- Overarching body to carry out air quality management/monitoring in Delhi NCR
- Replaces the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA)



The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) is a statutory body formed under the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas, Act 2021.

- The Act, which received the presidential assent in August 2021 essentially replaced the Ordinance that was promulgated earlier by the government in April 2021.
- The Commission basically aims at better coordination, research, identification, and resolution of problems related to air quality in NCR and adjoining areas.
 - Adjoining areas refer to areas in the neighbouring states of NCR namely, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.
- The air quality around Delhi-NCR has been monitored and managed by multiple bodies before the CAQM was established. The bodies included the [Central Pollution Control Board \(CPCB\)](#), the state pollution control boards, the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) of NCR, and the various state governments concerned.

- These bodies are further monitored by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change and also the Supreme Court.
- The Act now consolidates all the bodies in that the CAQM is an overarching body that will take decisions and issue orders for protecting and improving the air quality in Delhi and NCR.
- This is to make the management of air quality more efficient and coordinated.
- The Centre also seeks to relieve the [Supreme Court](#) from having to constantly monitor pollution levels through various cases.
- The CAQM has replaced the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) which was appointed by the SC and had been active for 22 years.
- The Centre said that the EPCA had become redundant and ineffective. It also did not have any penal provisions which the CAQM has been accorded.
 - Any non-compliance or contravention with the Commission's orders or directions can attract a prison term of up to five years and/or a fine of up to Rs. 1 crore.
- Only the [National Green Tribunal](#) will have the power to hear cases involving the CAQM, and not the civil courts.

Know more about the [Delhi air pollution](#) problem in the linked article.

Commission for Air Quality Management Powers & Functions

The Commission has been given overarching powers in achieving its mandate. It is a powerful body whose rulings will override anything contained in any other law.

- The Commission will have the power to take measures, issue directions and entertain complaints “for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of air in the National Capital Region”.
- It will also coordinate action taken by states on air pollution and will lay down parameters for air quality and emission or discharge of environmental pollutants.
- It will also have the authority to restrict industries in any area, conduct random inspections of any premises including factories. It may also shut down an industry or cut its water and power supply in case of non-compliance.
- CAQM will also be monitoring the actions taken by the states to prevent [stubble burning](#).

Read about [Smog](#) as a type of intense air pollution to add more value to your answers concerning air pollution.

Commission for Air Quality Management Members

The Commission is chaired by a Chairperson who should be a person with experience of not less than 15 years in the field of environmental protection and pollution control or having administrative experience of not less than 25 years.

- The members will also comprise an official from the Environment Ministry; one full-time member who is or has been a joint secretary; five ex-officio members who are either chief secretaries or secretaries from Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh; three full-time independent technical members who are experts in air pollution; one full-time member who is or has been a joint secretary; one technical member each from

the CPCB and ISRO; one representative of the NITI Aayog; and three members from non-governmental organisations who deal in air pollution.

- The commission will also have three members, comprising stakeholders from sectors like industry, agriculture, transport or construction and also representatives of several ministries, including Power, Road Transport & Highways, Housing & Urban Affairs, Petroleum & Natural Gas, Commerce and Industry and Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- There will also be representatives of any association from the commerce or industry sector.

The CAQM will have a minimum of three sub-committees namely, monitoring and identification, research and development, and safeguarding and enforcement.

Commission for Air Quality Management Concerns

There have been concerns expressed by some quarters regarding certain the establishment of the Commission for Air Quality Management.

- Environmentalists have expressed their reservations about the seeming concentration of power in the central government.
- Also, regarding the membership of the Commission, the concern expressed is that there is only a token representation for environmental bodies and NGOs. There is an overwhelming number of bureaucrats.
- State governments have only one representative each while the central government has a large representation.
- States have expressed problems with the overarching powers vested in the CAQM.
- By dissolving the EPCA, the government has taken the issue of air pollution out of the purview of the judiciary.

Commission for Air Quality Management Latest News

The CAQM has issued directions to the State Governments of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and GNCTD to develop an online mechanism through a web portal for monitoring the compliance of dust mitigation measures by the project proponents. Read more on this development in [PIB dated Oct 1, 2021](#).