

Ranking of State Environment Impact Assessment Authorities will bring in efficiency in decision making without diluting any regulatory safeguards

Posted On: 24 JAN 2022 6:06PM by PIB Delhi

- **Rating criteria does not seek to change any process or time-line as already provided in the EIA Notification 2006.**
- **No negative marking proposed for not meeting the criteria for ranking.**

State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAAs) are very important arm of the Ministry for implementation of EIA Notification at the State level and they have been delegated powers to consider and grant environmental clearance (EC) for all proposals under Category B.

The Ministry has taken several initiatives for streamlining the EC process and reduce the undue time taken in grant of clearances inter-alia complete online submission and processing of EC proposal, standard ToR for all expansion proposals, raising all queries at one go and avoiding multiple EDS/ADS, conducting fortnightly EAC meetings, etc.

As a step further new rating of SEIAAs has been introduced for encouraging the efficiency, transparency and accountability in the functioning of SEIAAs. The ranking system is based on the provisions of EIA Notification 2006 and various guidelines issued by Ministry from time to time and designed to encourage the SEIAAs to increase their efficiency in decision making strictly as per provisions of EIA Notification 2006 without diluting any regulatory safeguards. It is pertinent to note that the EIA Notification already provides time-lines for all EC processes

However, there is no negative marking proposed for not meeting the criteria for ranking. In case of deficiency in proposals, SEIAA/ SEAC may very well raise EDS/ ADS and period for which reply of EDS/ ADS is pending with Project Proponent (PP), shall not be counted for calculating the number of days taken by SEIAA/ SEAC. Therefore, SEIAA has complete freedom to do all necessary due diligence before taking decision on project without worrying about the time-line.

The EIA Reports are prepared as per prescribed ToRs and projects are appraised based on the same. Therefore, there is no question of EIA report quality being compromised due to ranking system, rather it would encourage the PP/ consultants to improve the EIA quality fearing the EDS/ ADS or return of proposals.

There are seven criteria on which SEIAA's will be ranked. The criterion and their rationale are explained

Making Corporate India Comply

in detail below:

Sl.No	Criteria	Rationale
1	Average number of days for granting EC	<p>The EIA Notification provides a time period of 105 days for granting EC which includes 60 days for appraisal and 45 days for decision by regulatory authority.</p> <p>This criterion has been introduced to encourage the efficiency of SEIAAs in order to abide the time-line given in EIA Notification.</p> <p>The SEIAAs which follow the timeline provided in the EIA Notification 2006 are granted 1 mark. Even 0.5 mark being given who will take decision between 105 and 120 days.</p> <p>Marks are not reduced for SEIAAs which take decision in more than 120 days but an extra mark granted which take decision between 80-105 days.</p> <p>There is no negative marking proposed for not meeting the criteria.</p>
2	% of disposal of fresh ToR/ ToR amendment proposals awaiting for more than 30 days	<p>Vide Notification dated 17th February, 2020 the Ministry has notified that all new projects or activities shall be referred to the EAC or SEAC by the Regulatory Authority, as the case may be, within 30 days from the date of application, for recommending the specific ToR in addition to the Standard ToR, deemed necessary. In case, the regulatory authority does not refer the matter to the EAC or SEAC, within 30 days of date of application, sector specific Standard ToR shall be issued, online, on 30th day, by the Regulatory Authority.</p> <p>This criterion will only reduce undue delay in taking a decision on a ToR proposal.</p> <p>Again there is no negative marking proposed for not meeting the criteria.</p>
3	% of disposal of fresh EC/ EC amendment proposals awaiting for more than 105 days	<p>Criteria based on the provision of EIA Notification which provides a time period of 105 days for granting EC. In order the encourage the SEIAAs to meet the timeline this criterion was added.</p> <p>The SEIAAs continue to have the liberty to raise ADS or reject proposals also in case of deficiency.</p> <p>There is no negative marking proposed for not meeting the criteria.</p>

Making Corporate India Comply

4	Percentage of cases wherein more than one time EDS were sought by MS	This criterion is based on OM dated 18 th June 2021 issued by Ministry to streamline the essential details sought by the committees. The OM was issued to maintain consistency while examining the proposals and to avoid irrelevant details being sought. There is no negative marking proposed for not meeting the criteria.
5	Average number of days taken for accepting the proposals for ToR/EC	This criterion is to encourage efficient and expeditious scrutiny of the proposal for accepting or raising EDS. The SEIAAs continue to have the liberty to raise EDS or return the proposals within the given time line. This will also encourage PPs/consultants to submit complete proposal in order to avoid EDS/ return of proposal. There is no negative marking proposed for not meeting the criteria.
6	Complaints redressed by SEIAA	This condition has been included to increase the accountability of the Government agency to the common man. The complaints which are raised need to be addressed and not ignored. There is no negative marking proposed for not meeting the criteria.
7	Percentage of cases, out of total cases placed to SEAC, for which site visits were carried out by SEIAA/ SEAC.	The EIA Notification clearly provides that Appraisal means the detailed scrutiny by the EAC or SEAC of the application and other documents like the Final EIA report, outcome of the public consultations including public hearing proceedings, submitted by the applicant for grant of EC. Appraisal of projects which are not required to undergo public consultation shall be based on Form1/ 1A, any other relevant validated information available and the site visit wherever the same is considered as necessary by the EAC/ SEAC. In view of the above, this criterion has been added to discourage unnecessary site visits. However, again there is no negative marking proposed for taking more site visits than prescribed for getting positive marking.