

1. Environment Auditors

The Environment Ministry has authorised the creation of a new class of independent Environment Auditors under the Environment Audit Rules, 2025, to strengthen compliance monitoring and supplement the work of State PCBs.

About the Initiative

Independent Auditors as a New Mechanism – Private agencies can now apply to become accredited and licensed environmental auditors, in a manner similar to how chartered accountants are certified, thereby creating a parallel professional stream for environmental compliance.

Role of Environmental Auditors – These auditors will be responsible for evaluating projects' adherence to environmental laws and standards, particularly in the areas of pollution prevention, control, and abatement.

Addressing Institutional Gaps – The initiative is designed as a gap-filling measure to compensate for the lack of manpower and limited infrastructure within the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Regional Offices of MoEFCC, and State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs).

Key Features of the Initiative

Accreditation System – Private entities may seek accreditation and licences to act as authorised environmental auditors, ensuring a structured and regulated entry into compliance monitoring.

Scope of Audits – Their mandate is broad and includes undertaking Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies, which would subsequently be reviewed by designated expert appraisal committees.

Transparency & Accountability – By involving independent auditors, the initiative aims to instil greater transparency in compliance verification, build public trust, and strengthen sustainable environmental governance.

Implementation Mechanism

Applicable Rules and Legislations – The audits conducted by these agencies will be valid for compliance monitoring under a wide range of regulatory frameworks, including –

1. Green Credit Rules.
2. Ecomark Rules, 2024.
3. E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022.
4. Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016.
5. Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022.
6. Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980.
7. Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and associated regulations.

Integration with Governance Systems – The mechanism ensures that private audit outcomes are formally recognised within the existing compliance and enforcement framework of environmental law.

About Environment Audit Rules, 2025

Objective – The primary aim is to address compliance monitoring gaps caused by the shortage of human resources and technical infrastructure within CPCB, SPCBs, and regional offices.

Scope of Application – The rules extend to major environmental legislations including the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980; Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; Green Credit Rules, 2023; and other related legal instruments.

Approach Adopted – The rules formally introduce independent, certified, and registered Environment Auditors (EAs), whose role is to provide reliable, third-party compliance verification.

Key Features of the Rules

Certification & Registration – Auditors will be certified by a central body known as the Environment Audit Designated Agency (EADA). Certification can be obtained through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) pathways or by clearing the National Certification Examination (NCE). Only those auditors registered as

Registered Environment Auditors (REAs) will be legally authorised to conduct audits.

Role of REAs – Their responsibilities include compliance evaluation, environmental sampling and analysis, and calculation of compensation in cases of environmental damage. They will verify compliance under specific frameworks such as the Green Credit Rules and waste management laws. REAs may also scrutinise and verify self-compliance reports submitted by industries and project proponents, adding an extra layer of accountability.

Random Assignment of Auditors – To prevent conflict of interest and bias, REAs will be allocated to projects through a randomised system managed by the regulatory authority.

Capacity Building & Oversight – The EADA will maintain an online register of REAs, track their performance, and conduct periodic training and capacity-building programmes. EADA will also have powers to impose disciplinary action against auditors found guilty of negligence or malpractice.

Oversight by Steering Committee – A Steering Committee, chaired by an Additional Secretary of MoEFCC and comprising representatives from regulatory bodies, will oversee the functioning of this system. Its functions include monitoring implementation progress, resolving operational challenges, and recommending future reforms.

Significance of the Rule

Stronger Compliance Framework – By introducing independent third-party audits, the rules ensure that compliance reports are credible, impartial, and enforceable, reducing chances of manipulation.

Enhanced Institutional Capacity – The system creates a professional pool of trained auditors, thereby freeing government regulators to focus on high-risk enforcement and policy oversight instead of routine inspections.

Data-Driven Environmental Governance – Regular, standardised, and digitised audit reports will create a repository of verifiable data, enabling evidence-based policymaking and regulatory decisions.

Improved Risk Management – Independent audits will help detect potential non-compliance early, allowing for timely corrective action and reducing risks of large-scale environmental harm.

Source – <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/centre-forms-environment-auditing-framework-101756928837810.html>

