

Government of Chhattisgarh



Environmental
Policy

1.0 Preface and Objective

Chhattisgarh lays emphasis on developing the State's rich mineral, forest and other natural resources on a **sustainable basis** to achieve the targets of rapid economic and social growth.

Sustainable development is the delicate balance between the demands of economic development and the need for **protection of the environment** combining elements of economic efficiency along with intergenerational and social equity.

The concept of **sustainable development** is particularly applicable in Chhattisgarh wherein:

- 80% of the State's population is dependant on agriculture for livelihood
- More than 44% of the State's geographical area is under forest cover
- The State's industrial foundation is based on minerals and mining
- A very large proportion of the population belongs to scheduled tribes and scheduled castes

Given the need to balance the benefits of development with the need to maintain and improve the environment, the State has prepared its Environmental Policy that is aimed at:

- **Ensuring sustainable development** with an emphasis on social and intergenerational equity
- **Enhancing environmental performance** as a means of competitive advantage for the State
- **Improving the quality of life** of citizens.

2.0 Strategies

The State's Environmental Policy has been developed within the basic framework of economic and social priorities with the objective of ensuring environmental conservation without impeding any development imperatives.

The Government of Chhattisgarh has decided on three broad strategies:

- ◆ Environmental Resource & Planning;
- ◆ Collaborative Governance Market based Mechanism; and
- ◆ Positive Intervention through Public Participation

Environmental Resource Planning

The government will focus on sustainable management of essential ecological processes and life support systems. This would ensure sustainable and rational utilisation, conservation and integrated environmental management, within all areas viz. land, air, water, forests, bio-diversity, minerals, industry, agriculture, as well as urban planning and transport.

Collaborative Governance & Market based Mechanism

Through collaborative efforts, impact of actions of developmental projects on all affected biophysical and social elements would be considered. As the implementation of the Environmental Policy is the responsibility of various Departments, the requirements of the environmental policy would be integrated with the policies of Water Resources, Forest, Road, Transport, Housing, Industry & Mining departments. Measures will be undertaken wherever reasonable and practical, and with due regard to public interest, to ensure that the costs of environmental degradation are borne by the person(s) responsible for the degradation.

Positive Intervention through Public Participation

Public awareness and participative decision making is essential for effective, long term environmental protection and equitable utilisation of natural resources. The commitment and participation of people to this process and to matters of environment that directly and indirectly concern them would hold the key to sustained prevention of environmental pollution and degradation.

3.1 Environmental Resource Planning

Government recognises that environmental changes and deterioration are driven by many factors across various sectors and therefore need to be addressed by developing an integrated plan for conserving and utilising the natural resources of the State.

The various steps that would be undertaken by the Government to address the environmental issues under these various sectors are discussed below.

Land Use

The steps that would be taken to prevent land degradation include:

- ◆ Surveying and investigating problem areas and undertaking land use zoning to locate industries according to the existing pollution load and carrying capacity of an area.
- ◆ Restricting diversion of land for non-agricultural purposes, unless essential
- ◆ Laying emphasis on low cost vegetative measures for optimum utilisation of wasteland
- ◆ Regulating over grazing and consequent land degradation

Water Resource Management

The Government will develop mechanisms for water resource management. This will include:

- ◆ Conservation of wetlands
- ◆ Development of a methodology for determination of environmental externalities into water pricing
- ◆ Encouragement of optimal use and recycling of waste water
- ◆ Assessment and monitoring of quality of surface and ground water and its optimal utilisation
- ◆ Promoting judicious use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides and implementing measures against their disposal into water bodies
- ◆ Water Conservation through rain water harvesting.

Agriculture

In order to facilitate the ecologically sustainable development of agriculture, the following steps would be taken:

- ◆ Promotion of collective or group approaches to sustainable resources management
- ◆ Promotion of sustainable farming including organic farming, crop rotation
- ◆ Encourage use of bio-fertiliser and bio-pesticides

Industry

The various steps to be taken to pursue integration of environmental concerns in industrial decision making are:

- ◆ Encouraging fuel efficient devices, environmentally benign technology and environment friendly substitutes to reduce pollution
- ◆ Encouraging generation of energy using biomass which is renewable and environment friendly
- ◆ Encouraging industries to adopt clean technologies and processes
- ◆ Encouraging the setting-up of combined facilities for effluent treatment and hazardous wastes.

- ◆ Preparing a Zoning Atlas, including status of the environment at district levels to guide environmentally sound location/siting of industries
- ◆ Setting up environmental cells in industries in close liaison with regulatory agencies
- ◆ Providing incentives and punitive measures to ensure fly ash utilisation
- ◆ Establishing recycling, reduction and reuse targets for waste generated by polluting industries as a performance standard

Mining

The Government would ensure that exploration and mining activities are undertaken in accordance with the underlying objectives of this policy, by:

- ◆ Ensuring that mining sites are rehabilitated according to environmental standards
- ◆ Ensuring Environmental Impact Assessment for all mining projects in environmentally sensitive areas
- ◆ Ensuring regular monitoring of major mining areas
- ◆ Encouraging on-site mineral beneficiation to reduce impact of transportation, processing and utilisation
- ◆ Using suitable abandoned pits for recharge of ground water

Forests and bio-diversity

The Government would focus on achieving the best mix of conservation and commercial uses of native and plantation forests. The key approaches to forest management and promoting bio-diversity would include:

- ◆ Encouraging afforestation of wastelands, other public lands, and private lands.
- ◆ Promoting use of alternate and non-conventional sources of energy such as solar energy, wind and biogas. Encouraging use of gas smokeless chullahs/stoves to decrease wood consumption
- ◆ Using advanced technologies such as remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems for planning, monitoring and evaluating forest cover
- ◆ Ensuring conservation of medicinal and aromatic plants.
- ◆ Mono-culture to be avoided and multi-storied plantation to be promoted
- ◆ Encouraging Eco-Tourism in protected areas
- ◆ Earmarking special areas for conservation of habitat
- ◆ Providing emphasis on regulatory protection of indigenous, threatened and endangered species

Urban and Transport Planning

The policy aims to achieve sustainable use of energy and natural resources, and to improve the safety and aesthetic amenities of urban clusters through:

- ◆ Providing adequate green and open spaces in urban areas
- ◆ Improving mass transportation systems to curtail increasing use of fuel, traffic congestion and pollution.
- ◆ Regulating environmental safety for transportation of hazardous substances
- ◆ Strengthening implementation of emission and effluent standards

3.2 Collaborative Governance & Market based Mechanism

The Government will emphasise on collaborative governance i.e. enhancing the mechanism to promote joint action and transparency among Government, civic society and economic enterprises by which decisions are made and put into practice.

Internalising environmental considerations in planning and policy making

In order to achieve this, the Government will focus on:

- ◆ Decentralising the monitoring of environmental compliance through the empowerment of local committees and the community
- ◆ Encouraging effective co-ordination amongst various Ministries/Institutions regarding integration of environmental concerns from conceptualisation to completion stages of projects.
- ◆ Ensuring consistency of the policy mandate across Government departments within the State

Creating market-based enforcement mechanisms

Introducing market based mechanisms ('Polluter Pays') towards protection of the environment and educating industries and consumers about the cost of using environmental and natural resources. This will include:

- ◆ Cost-benefit analysis and risk assessment for assessing financial, social and environmental costs to facilitate improved decision making on environmental issues
- ◆ Levying of water cess based on the consumption of water and type of industry (polluting) on selected industries and on ULBS to conserve consumption and control pollution of water
- ◆ Levying landfill surcharge taxes

3.3 Positive Intervention through Public Participation

Participation of all levels of Government, business, industry, trade unions, community organisations and NGOs is central to the effective development of and implementation of the environmental policy. Towards this end the Government would:

- ◆ Promote a strong environmental ethic among stakeholders through information campaigns and awards
- ◆ Ensure public awareness of environmental issues and their ability to participate effectively in environmental management through dissemination of meaningful and relevant information
- ◆ Encourage a participatory approach to Environmental Impact Assessment of all development projects through public discussion, joint planning and management
- ◆ Popularise solid waste management technologies such as recycling, reuse, composting, energy generation, etc., through public participation
- ◆ Incorporate environmentally friendly principles and approaches into the curriculum, assessment and teaching programs of schools and higher education
- ◆ Promote the scheme of Eco-labeling, which helps consumers to identify products that are environment friendly
- ◆ Ensure women's participation in all participatory programmes.

4.0 Implementation and Monitoring

To ensure effective implementation of the environmental policy, the Government would introduce monitoring and review at each level. This will include:

- ◆ Development of an action plan by the concerned departments for implementation of the policy
- ◆ Strengthening the State Environment Protection Board with a view to ensure enforcement of legal provisions for the monitoring and control of pollution
- ◆ Installing check posts for monitoring vehicular emission in cities/urban areas
- ◆ Monitoring on a regular basis and at the district level, indices of industrial hazardous waste, water quality in degraded zones, air quality, municipal sewage, etc.
- ◆ Institutionalising participatory management, i.e., involving local communities in all aspects of environment management