

Creating Jobs while Managing Air Quality

Highlights a new report released by iFOREST

Delhi, September 7, 2022: On the occasion of the third **International Day of Clean Air for blue skies**, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), in collaboration with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the International Forum for Environment, Sustainability and Technology (iFOREST), hosted an event to highlight the importance of building capacity in India for air quality management. The event also focussed on the progress that India has made so far, while highlighting future needs and opportunities.

At the event, a report titled **‘Jobs for Clean Air: National Programme for Capacity Development for Air Quality Management’** was also released. The report, prepared by iFOREST with the support of the World Bank Group, highlights the need of a national-level programme to develop the capacity of all stakeholders – cities, state and central government agencies, private sector, NGOs and media -- to effectively tackle the air pollution problem.

“Our report shows that we need to train at least 1 million people over the next five years for air quality management. This will also create tens of thousands of new jobs in the public and private sector to plan, monitor, mitigate, and control air pollutants”, said Chandra Bhushan, the CEO of iFOREST and the lead author of the report.

Highlights of the report

- The report has mapped the Air Quality Management (AQM) sector, which includes government agencies/organizations and industries. This is the first attempt of its kind to map an environmental sector in the country.
- The agencies, organisations and industries working in the AQM sector, which the report covers include, ministries and departments of the government, state pollution control boards, urban local bodies, air polluting industries, and air pollution control industries.
- The report found that there are at least 2.8 lakh organizations and industries across the country that require personnel for AQM.
- It has identified 42 specific job roles that is required to control air pollution in the country. These include a wide range, from municipal workers involved in dust control and Construction and Demolition waste management, to specialists in transport planning, air quality modelling and forecasting.
- In total 2.2 million jobs are required to manage air pollution in the country. A large number these jobs, about 1.6 million, already exists. However, many of them have never been trained to manage air quality, such as the municipal workers and PUC operators, who can be at the frontline.
- There is further need to employ thousands of people to meet the requirements of growing number of industries, ULBs, consultancy and government. The report estimates that AQM sector requires at least 50,000 new jobs, ranging from researchers and analysts to air quality supervisors in ULBs and regulators in pollution control boards.

- The report found that there is no structured capacity building programme in AQM sector. It has recommended a National Programme for Capacity Development for Air Quality management to train about 1.0 million workers, operators and professionals over the next five years.

“A major challenge in the AQM sector in India is that the people presently working in the sector have not been trained and a large number of jobs that are required do not exist”, said Chandra Bhushan.

“Air pollution is an environmental issue, but we must also see its management as an opportunity to create new jobs and build a green economy. While a lot of the existing jobs lead to the destruction of the environment, we now have to start creating jobs to protect the environment. Our report shows the vast opportunity that exists in developing the environment sector as a vibrant economic sector” emphasized Bhushan.