

Initiatives during 2009-10 National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA)

The Central Government has given Ganga the status of a 'National River' and has constituted a 'National Ganga River Basin Authority' (NGRBA) on 20.02.2009. The NGRBA has been set up as an empowered planning, financing, monitoring and coordinating authority for the conservation of Ganga River with a holistic approach under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

The Authority is chaired by the Prime Minister and has as its members, the Chief Ministers of the States through which Ganga flows, viz., Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. The Union Ministers of Environment & Forests, Finance, Urban Development, Water Resources, Power, Science & Technology, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission are also the members of the Authority. Upto 10 experts in the fields of environmental engineering, hydrology, river conservation, social mobilization, etc can be co-opted as members. The Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests is the Member Secretary of the Authority. The Ministry of Environment & Forests is the nodal Ministry for the Authority and would provide the administrative and technical support. The Authority has both regulatory and developmental functions. The Authority will take measures for effective abatement of pollution and conservation of the river Ganga in keeping with sustainable development needs.

The Notification also provides for constitution of a State River Conservation Authorities by the State Governments concerned to be setup under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister, for coordinating and implementing the river conservation activities at the State level.

This model could be adapted for other rivers in the country, based on the experience gained. Besides setting up of the NGRBA, it is proposed to strengthen the ongoing National River Conservation Programme (NRCP) for tackling polluted stretches for other major rivers in the country. The river basin approach for planning, the attention to adequate flows in the river and improved institutional and implementation mechanism as discussed in the succeeding paragraphs are being adopted for the National River Conservation Programme by the Central and State Governments.