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Government of the Punjab
Environmental Protection Agency
Dated, Lahore the 17th June, 2020

No. 31/ES-III/EPA/2020: To standardize and regulate the function of Environmental Protection Agency Punjab envisaged in clause (o) of subsection (1) of Section 6 of the Punjab Environmental Protection Act, 1997, the Director General issues the following Guidelines:

1. Short Title and Commencement:

- (1) These Guidelines may be called **Guidelines for Regulation of Disclosure of Environmental Information and Citizen Engagement, 2020**.
- (2) These shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette of the Punjab Government.

2. Definitions.

- (1) In these guidelines, unless there is anything repugnant to the subject or context:
 - a) "**Act**" means the Punjab Environmental Protection Act, 1997 (XXXIV of 1997);
 - b) "**Agency**" means the Provincial Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established under the Act and as defined under section 2 (xxxvii) of the Act;
 - c) "**Attached Agency**" means attached institutions of EPD (EPA, Punjab Environmental Tribunal (PET), Environmental Monitoring Center (EMC), Institute of Environmental Technology & Training (IETT), Strategic Planning & Implementation Unit (SP&IU), and any other institutions subsequently created by EPD);
 - d) "**Citizen**" means citizen of Pakistan;
 - e) "**Department**" means Environment Protection Department (EPD), Government of the Punjab;
 - f) "**Director General**" means Director General of the Agency, Government of the Punjab;
 - g) "**Environmental Information Officer**" means the Assistant Director (Environment)/Deputy Director (Environment)/District In-charge, or any other officer designated by the Director General for the purposes of these guidelines;
 - h) "**Environmental Information**", *inter alia*, means:
 - i. Laws, rules, regulations, policies, notifications, and circulars promulgated and/or issued for the purposes of environmental protection and sustainable development in the province and for the purposes of interaction with the Federal and other Provincial Governments;
 - ii. Procedures followed in decision making including channel of supervision and accountability;

- iii. Standard forms, documents, etc. designed for submission of information, applications, complaints, and gathering and preserving environmental data in the Province;
- iv. The directory of establishments of the Agency including, inter alia, record of its offices, officers, and staff with their publicly publishable particulars;
- v. Details of major industrial installations (point sources of pollution) within the province, especially with reference to their environmental impact assessment reports, environmental clearance records, environmental pollution loads, level and method of pollution treatment, and their environmental monitoring and inspection records;
- vi. Details of cities, and major town (non-point sources of pollution) within the province especially with reference to their environmental pollution loads, level and method of pollution treatment, and environmental quality monitoring information and assessment results;
- vii. IEE, EIA Reports and decisions of both construction and operational phase of projects and business establishments along with all required (monthly, quarterly, bi-annually, annually, as the case may be) environmental monitoring and compliance reports.
- viii. Complaints of environmental pollution defined under the Act and/or their current status.
- ix. Applications for issuance of environmental permits received, decision taken (or being taken) on them in accordance with applicable criteria;
- x. Record of public hearing proceedings carried out in compliance with mandatory provisions of the Act;
- xi. Details for allocation and expenditure for both current and development budgets with actual expenditures for every Attached Agency/ institutions of EPD;
- xii. Revenue generated from fines, fees, and testing charges carried out under the provisions of the Act;
- xiii. Details of Environmental Laboratories Certified by EPA along with their individual capacities, tests performed, evaluation made by reference laboratory of EPA/EPD;
- xiv. Testing facilities available with different laboratories of the Agency;
- xv. Results of tests carried out by EPA laboratories and EPA Certified Environmental Laboratories;
- xvi. Online monitoring data of selected criteria air quality pollutants (hourly) and selected water quality pollutants (hourly) provided by the continuous air and water quality monitoring stations through EPA/EPD's website and any other means.
- xvii. Yearly reports with reference to special campaigns carried out by the Agency, e.g. smog campaign, vehicular pollution control, hospital waste management, shopping bags, and dengue control surveillance etc.;
- xviii. For every campaign, day to day matters and ancillary activities, and standard operating procedures;
- xix. Technology transfer initiatives successfully or otherwise implemented;
- xx. Documents related to outcome of R&D conducted by EPA and approved technologies/engineering designs;
- xxi. List and details of EPA approved treatment facilities installed at various industrial units, resource recovery facilities, treatment facilities at commercial level and their monitoring/compliance reports;
- xxii. Summary information of cases processed by Punjab Environmental Tribunal and other courts pertaining to environmental matters, including their status;
- xxiii. Details of environmental information prepared and disseminated periodically;
- xxiv. Annual State of Environment Reports of the province;

- xxv. Details of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) working in the field of environment along with their expertise and specialization;
 - xxvi. Any other environmental information included in this list by the Director General with the permission of Secretary; and
 - xxvii. All other words and expressions used in these guidelines but not defined shall have the same meanings as defined in the Act.
 - i) "Government" means Government of the Punjab;
 - j) "Person" has the same meaning as defined under section 2 (xxxii) of the Act;
 - k) "Project" has the same meaning as defined under section 2 (xxxv) of the Act;
 - l) "Province" means the Province of Punjab;
 - m) "Secretary" means Secretary, Government of the Punjab, Environment Protection Department.
3. **Documentation:** Each activity, campaign, etc. shall be documented and will be placed on official website of EPA/EPD and in its Library both in paper and in electronic form.

Part - I [Public Disclosure]

4. Arrangement for Public Disclosure of Environmental Information:

- (1) Director General shall create an Environmental Information Disclosure Section within six months of notification of these guidelines which shall be appropriately manned with requisite qualifications and accessories for disclosure of environmental information primarily through official website of EPA/EPD.
- (2) The section created at 4(1) shall have full and unhindered access to environmental information defined, *inter alia*, at 2(1)(f) and managed, gathered, collated, by every attached Agencies of EPD (EPA, PET, IETT, EMC, SP&IU, etc.).
- (3) The section created at 4(1) shall also collect and provide the environmental information of any project on the request of any person.
- (4) The Agency shall, within one year of notification of these guidelines, establish Format and Protocols for collecting and/or gathering, storing and dissemination of environmental information after conducting public consultations and obtaining approval from EPD.
- (5) The Format and Protocols shall be made public, both in printed form and on the official website of EPA/EPD.
- (6) The section created at 4(1) shall disclose requested information through electronic means, or in print form upon receipt of payment to cover the cost of photocopy or printing.
- (7) The Environmental Information Disclosure Section shall devise a mechanism within one hundred and eighty (180) days of commencement of these guidelines for regularly collecting and disseminating environmental information in electronic form enabling public to access and retrieve it directly.

5. Nomination of Environmental Information Officers:

- (1) Director General shall within sixty days of the commencement of these guidelines designate and notify officers (not below the rank of BS-17) as Environmental Information Officer in all its independent offices as may be necessary.

- (2) Environmental Information Officer shall provide environmental information to an applicant within seven (7) days.
- (3) Subject to the provisions of these guidelines, an Environmental Information Officer shall guide the applicant desirous of obtaining environmental information from the Section created at 4(1), if the same is not available with him/her.

6. Maintenance of record in indexed form:

- (1) The responsibility for maintenance of record in designated Format and required Protocol shall lie with each Attached Agency.
- (2) Environmental Information Disclosure Section shall bring all information in designated Format and Protocol within one year of notification of these guidelines.
- (3) Each Attached Agency of EPD shall take all necessary measures for data protection and devise and implement disaster recovery plan to ensure that all information remains secure and unaltered in the event of any untoward incident.

Part - II [Citizen Engagement]

7. Citizen Engagement:

- a) The Director General within six months of commencement of these guidelines shall make all necessary arrangements for engaging citizens in the province from every sort of establishments, e.g., schools, colleges, universities, business communities like chambers of commerce and industries, industrial associations, housing colonies and concerned citizens at each district level.
- b) **Citizen Engagement Activities:** Citizen engagement shall be through policy dialogue, dissemination workshops, awareness raising events, projects, and advisory services aimed at providing public a stake in decision-making with the objective of improving the intermediate and final development outcomes of all environmental interventions:
 - (1) For citizen engagement, all environmental commemorative days - World Water Day, Earth Hour, Earth Day, and Environment Day - will be celebrated according to their theme of the year by each Attached Agency.
 - (2) Associate at least five persons during the site visits other than the complainant and affected ones in a particular case, especially the ordinary persons residing in the vicinity, to sensitize them about the environmental issues;
 - (3) Scientifically access grass roots levels of the society and engage them;
 - (4) Prepare separate mechanism of citizen engagement for both rural and urban centers;
 - (5) Institutionalize public hearing proceedings during Environmental Approval processes;
 - (6) Encourage citizens to come together, deliberate, and take action on problems or issues that they themselves have defined as "Environmentally Important";
 - (7) Nominate a focal person in each establishment where more than 50 people works, e.g., schools, colleges, hospitals, factories, industrial units, etc. who will disseminate environmental information which will be regularly provided by the Environmental Information Officer through social media or conventional methods;

- (8) Be responsive to citizens' needs and take all necessary measures to translate these needs and concerns into policy and then to implementation plans;
- (9) Publish report on citizen engagement activities with key outcomes by the 31st January of every year pertaining to preceding year;
- (10) Ensure provision of fora for public/students' debate/discussions on International Reports (i.e. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), State of the Environment Reports).
- (11) Establish a five-member Environmental Club/Committee to raise awareness as well as local environmental issues at Union Council/Town level;
- (12) Ensure public participation/consultation by project proponents/ consultants during preparation of EIA/IEE studies.
- (13) Formulation and recruitment of lower-tier staff for citizen's engagement to serve the purpose of these guidelines.

8. Grievance Redressal Mechanism:

- (1) The Agency shall evolve a redressal grievance mechanism at every tier.
- (2) An online platform will be deployed to allow concerned citizen or person to register their grievance electronically and status of all registered grievance shall be regularly updated.
- (3) Summary of registered grievances shall be reported in the annual Report on State of Environment of Punjab.

9. Amendment:

- (1) These guidelines shall be amended regularly based on requests of concerned citizens and institutions as well as lessons learned from their actual implementation.
- (2) The amendment process shall be carried out through broad stakeholder consultations.
- (3) These Guidelines shall be upgraded as Regulations by providing enabling clauses in the Act at the time of next amendment therein.

**Director General
Environmental Protection Agency
Government of the Punjab**