

Star-Rating System for Environmental Clearances Made Inoperative by Environment Ministry

April 5, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



What's in Today's Article?

- Star-Rating System for Environmental Clearances Latest News
- Introduction of the Star-Rating System
- Details of the Star-Rating System
- Technology Integration – PARIVESH Portal
- Legal Challenges and Withdrawal of the Star-Rating System
- Conclusion
- Star-Rating System for Environmental Clearances FAQs

Star-Rating System for Environmental Clearances Latest News

- The MoEF&CC has **officially withdrawn** the January 2022 Office Memorandum (OM) that introduced a **star-rating system for evaluating State Environmental Impact Assessment Authorities (SEIAAs)**.

- This was done by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) **following a legal challenge and intervention by the National Green Tribunal (NGT).**

Introduction of the Star-Rating System

- **Introduced on:** January 17, 2022
- **Purpose:** To incentivise SEIAAs to grant timely environmental clearances under the **2006 Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification.**
- **Objective:** Promote ease of doing business by ranking states based on efficiency in clearance processes.
- **Origin:** Decision followed a November 2021 meeting chaired by the then Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba.

Details of the Star-Rating System

- **Criteria for rating:**
 - Time taken to process and grant environmental clearances.
 - Adherence to stipulated timelines.
 - Performance in pre-approval and approval stages.
 - Scores ranged from 0 to 7 stars.
- **Targeted bodies:**
 - SEIAAs responsible for Category B projects.
 - Category A projects continued to be appraised by the MoEF&CC at the central level.

Technology Integration - PARIVESH Portal

- The star-rating system was integrated with **PARIVESH 1.0**, a single-window platform for environmental clearance processes.
- The ministry had planned to migrate and revise the rating criteria for **PARIVESH 2.0**, but this is now on hold due to the withdrawal.

Legal Challenges and Withdrawal of the Star-Rating System

- **Petition filed by:** Meenava Thantai, a Tamil Nadu-based fishermen's association.
- **Grounds of challenge:**
 - The system was arbitrary.
 - Allegedly weakened environmental scrutiny and diluted the EIA process.
- **NGT proceedings and order:**
 - The OM dated 17.01.2022 is declared inoperative on March 27, 2025.
 - **MoEF&CC stated** that a new set of criteria may be developed in the future.

Conclusion

- The case highlights following **issues in environmental governance** –
 - Balance between development and environmental regulation.

- Role of NGT in environmental jurisprudence.
- Ease of doing business vs. environmental safeguards.
- The withdrawal of the star-rating system **reflects a step back in promoting administrative efficiency through ratings.**
- The Centre now acknowledges the **need for review and revision** of criteria to ensure that **environmental integrity** is not compromised.

Star-Rating System for Environmental Clearances FAQs

Q1. What was the objective behind the introduction of the star-rating system by the MoEF&CC in 2022?

Ans. The star-rating system aimed to evaluate and incentivise State Environment Impact Assessment Authorities (SEIAAs) for their efficiency and timeliness in granting environmental clearances.

Q2. Why did the National Green Tribunal (NGT) declare the star-rating system inoperative?

Ans. The NGT declared it inoperative after the MoEF&CC informed the tribunal that it had withdrawn the January 2022 Office Memorandum and intended to revise the criteria in future.

Q3. What was the primary concern raised by the petitioners against the star-rating system?

Ans. The petitioners argued that the system was arbitrary and risked diluting the scrutiny of development projects under the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification of 2006.

Q4. What is the significance of the PARIVESH portal in the environmental clearance process?

Ans. PARIVESH is an online single-window platform developed to streamline, monitor, and manage the environmental clearance process for various projects.

Q5. Distinguish between Category A and Category B projects under the EIA Notification, 2006.

Ans. Category A projects are appraised by the central MoEF&CC, whereas Category B projects fall under the jurisdiction of SEIAAs at the state level.

Source: [IE](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/star-rating-system-for-environmental-clearances-made-inoperative-by-environment-ministry/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.