

Rationalization of Consent Administration in West Bengal Pollution Control Board

The West Bengal pollution Control Board administers Consent Management (*consent-for-establishment* and *consent-for-operation*) under the provisions of Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 in respect of industries and other establishments/institutions.

The mechanism of Consent Administration presently in practice in the Board has certain demerits like – obscure transparency, absence of stake holders' participation and a centralized system. Keeping in mind the gaps in the Consent Administration mechanism, the Board recently rationalized its procedure for Consent Administration to put in external technical inputs in the decision making process, involve various stakeholders and also introduce transparency in the process.

The salient features of the new Consent Administration mechanism are –

- Decision making through broad based committees comprising of technical experts, representatives of Chamber of Commerce, representatives of Industry Associations, NGOs, etc. For example, composition of the Technical committee at the Head Quarter is enclosed.
- Decision making process made more decentralized whereby quick decisions can be taken at Regional and Circle Office levels.
- Enabling the industries to file application for *consent-for-establishment* and *consent-for-operation* through web-based Environmental Management Information System.
- Prompt communication of decisions of Committee on *consent-for-establishment* and *consent-for-operation* applications through Board's website.
- Increase in validity period of consent. For example, validity period of *consent-for-establishment* has been increased from one year to five years.

This new procedure for Consent Administration will come into force from 1st September, 2005. Detailed information is available at the Board's website [<http://wbpcb.gov.in>].