

Guideline for Certification of Environment Auditors

through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Mode

Under Environment Audit Rules, 2025

1. Purpose

This guideline is issued for the certification of Environment Auditors through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mode, in accordance with Clause 7(i) of the Environment Audit Rules, 2025.

These guidelines specify the categories of audits, minimum eligibility criteria, steps for the selection of Environmental Auditors through RPL mode, period of validity, capacity-building requirements, and provisions for continuous learning.

2. Categories of Environment Audits for Certification

Applicants seeking certification as Certified Environmental Auditors (CEAs) may submit applications under one or more of the prescribed Environment Audit categories:

| Category | Governing Act(s) | Applicable Audit / Verification Rules & Regulations |
|---|---|--|
| Category 1 Compliance or Verification Audit | The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and amendments Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 | Environment Protection Rules; EIA Notification 2006 (Principal rules) and amendments Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules; E-Waste Rules; Solid Waste Management Rules; Bio-medical Waste Management Rules; Plastic Waste Management Rules; Battery Waste Management Rules; Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules; Greenhouse Gases Emission Intensity Target Rules, 2025 and any other rules issued by MoEF&CC from time to time Eco-mark Rules, 2024 Coastal Zone Regulation Notification 2019 The Green Credit Rules, 2023 |
| Category 2 Verification or Assessment Audits | Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992 | Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting under SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 |
| Category 3 Compliance or Verification Audits under Forest | The Forest Conservation Act, 1980 | Van Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan Adhiniyam, 1980 |

| Category | Governing Act(s) | Applicable Audit / Verification Rules & Regulations |
|--|--|---|
| Conservation Act | | |
| Category 4 Compliance or Verification Audits under Wildlife Protection Act | The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 (amended in 2022) | Rules notified under the Act for the purposes of Section 49M vide Gazette Notification dated 28th February 2024 |

3. Eligibility Criteria

3.1 Citizenship

The applicant must be an Indian citizen.

3.2 Educational Qualification

Applicants must hold a Bachelor's, Master's, or Ph.D. degree (or an equivalent qualification) from a UGC/AICTE-recognised institution in one of the following disciplines:

Category 1 and 2

- Environmental Sciences, Environmental Engineering, Civil Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Production or Manufacturing Engineering, Metallurgical Engineering, Mining Engineering, Agricultural Engineering, Architecture, Town and Country Planning, Urban and Regional Planning, Biotechnology, Life Sciences, Earth Sciences, Marine Sciences, Oceanography, Coastal Sciences, *Geology, *Hydrology, Environmental Management, Sustainability Studies, *Agricultural Sciences, *Botany, *Microbiology, Toxicology, Climate Science, Atmospheric Sciences, Waste Management, Renewable Energy, and related technical or sustainability disciplines.

** Applicable for Master's or Ph.D. degrees only.*

Category 3

- Forestry, Natural Resource Management, Wetland Management, and related disciplines.

Category 4

- Zoology, Botany, Wildlife Sciences, Ecology, Biodiversity, and related disciplines.

3.3 Professional Experience (post-qualification)

Applicants shall be required to possess a minimum number of years of professional experience (post-qualification) in subject areas corresponding to the applicable category, as specified below:

| Qualification | Minimum Experience | Notes |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Bachelor's Degree | 12 years | In relevant subject areas |
| Master's Degree | 10 years | In relevant subject areas |

| Qualification | Minimum Experience | Notes |
|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.) | 8 years | In relevant subject areas |

The indicative list of subject areas of experience for each category is provided in Annexure 1.

3.4 Age

The applicant shall not have attained the age of 70 years as on the closing date of the application.

4. Documents Required

All applicants shall submit self-attested copies of the following documents. All documents will be subject to verification:

- Government-issued photo identity card
- Degree certificates and mark sheet of the last year/semester (optional) in support of educational qualifications
- Experience certificates
- Proof of trainings, certifications, publications, awards & recognitions
- A mandatory self-declaration affirming the authenticity and correctness of all documents submitted

5. Steps for Certification of CEAs through RPL

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Step 1 | <p>Mobilisation of Applicants</p> <p>Mobilisation shall be initiated through the issuance of a public notice inviting eligible candidates to submit applications on the designated online platform of the Environment Audit Designated Agency (EADA). The notice shall be published on the websites of MoEF&CC and EADA.</p> <p>The online application portal shall remain open until 12:00 midnight on the last date for submission of applications.</p> <p>All applicants shall pay a mandatory, non-refundable certification fee per category in accordance with guidelines issued by EADA.</p> |
| Step 2 | <p>Screening of Applications</p> <p>Applications shall be screened against the documents specified in Section 4. Any application found to be incomplete shall be summarily rejected, and no correspondence in this regard shall be entertained.</p> <p>Only applicants who have submitted a complete application with all requisite documents shall be considered for further processing.</p> |
| Step 3 | <p>Orientation Programme</p> |

Selected applicants shall undergo an orientation programme comprising e-learning modules, recorded video sessions, or online interactive sessions over a period of three to five days, depending on the audit category.

The programme shall cover: the requirements of the EA Rules, 2025; the roles and responsibilities of Certified Environmental Auditors; and updates on applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines relevant to each category. The curriculum shall be formulated by EADA and shall be subject to periodic review and revision to ensure continued alignment with prevailing environmental legislation, industry practices, and sustainability standards.

Step 4

Self-Assessment

Following the orientation programme, applicants shall undergo a self-assessment of one to two hours in duration, depending on the number of categories applied for. The assessment shall consist of multiple-choice questions covering subject areas relevant to the respective categories.

Step 5

Verification

Verification shall be conducted individually or in a group by EADA to assess each applicant's credentials, communication skills, clarity of expression, professional demeanour, and overall competence to discharge the functions of a Certified Environmental Auditor.

Step 6

Certification

Upon successful completion of both the self-assessment and verification, EADA shall award the applicant a category-specific Certified Environmental Auditor (CEA) certificate.

NOTE: Each applicant shall, at the time of application, select the category or categories of audit (as specified in Section 2) for which certification is sought.

6. Validity of CEA Certificate

Pursuant to Clause 9 of the Environment Audit Rules, 2025, the CEA certificate shall be valid for a period of **five (5) years** from the date of issuance, and shall be eligible for renewal in accordance with the provisions prescribed under those Rules.

7. Renewal of Certification of CEA

Separate guidelines for renewal of certification shall be issued in accordance with Clause 9 of the EA Rules, 2025.

8. Registration of CEAs and Functioning of CEAs and REAs

Separate guidelines shall be issued for the registration of Certified Environmental Auditors (CEAs) as Registered Environment Auditors (REAs), in accordance with Clause 8 of the Environment Audit Rules, 2025, and for the regulation of the functioning of CEAs and REAs under the said Rules.

ANNEXURE 1

Category-wise Indicative Experience Areas

Category 1 and 2 — EP Act, Water Act, Air Act

Applicants should have experience in one or more of the following: conducting environmental audits, compliance monitoring and verification; preparation and appraisal of EIA and EMP reports; baseline data collection and impact assessment studies; environmental monitoring and analysis; hazardous, biomedical, e-waste, plastic, battery, construction and demolition, and other waste management projects, including facility audits, treatment and disposal system evaluation, and waste minimisation studies; EPR audits, eco-labelling, product lifecycle analysis, sustainability studies, ESG and BRSR reporting; preparation and compliance monitoring of CRZ clearance applications; coastal and marine ecology assessments; shoreline and wetland conservation under the CRZ Notification; design and verification of green credit activities, water conservation, waste management, and renewable energy projects; GHG accounting and verification, ISO 14064, energy efficiency, and Environment Management Systems (ISO 14001); environmental performance evaluation; preparation of design and detailed project reports; and climate change projects.

Category 3 — Forest Conservation

Experience in forest land diversion proposals and compliance under the Forest (Conservation) Act, preparation of forest clearance applications and compliance reports, assessment of compensatory afforestation and forest regeneration programmes, evaluation of impacts of mining, infrastructure, and linear projects in forest areas, preparation and monitoring of catchment area treatment plans, soil and moisture conservation measures, and integration of forest and natural resource management practices into environmental audits.

Category 4 — Wildlife Protection

Experience in biodiversity surveys, wildlife habitat assessments, ecological impact studies, conservation planning, wetland and mangrove ecosystem management, evaluation of projects in proximity to protected areas, eco-sensitive zones and wildlife corridors, preparation of wildlife conservation and mitigation plans, compliance verification under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, and integration of biodiversity safeguards into environmental management systems.