

POLICY BRIEF

POLICY INPUTS TO PROMOTE TEXTILE WASTEWATER REUSE AND POLLUTION PREVENTION IN MAHARASHTRA

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INTRODUCTION

Maharashtra is India's foremost state in industrialization. It accounts for about 14% of India's GDP. The state is also a leading producer of horticulture products and cash crops such as sugarcane and cotton.

Maharashtra was faced with a water crisis at the turn of the century when it decided to initiate a program to remedy the situation. Water sector reforms, as underlined in the State Water Policy (2003) took shape, followed by formation of Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority (MWRRA) in 2005¹. The goal was to adopt a multi-sector approach to better manage water, with the river basin as the unit of development. It involved stakeholders and water users from multiple industrial sectors as well as the agriculture sector, in determining prices, water allocation, etc.

In 2019, the state government stepped up on its commitment to promote wastewater reuse in Maharashtra. A new regulation that mandates reuse of treated wastewater in industrial processes such as cooling in thermal power plants, heavy machinery, and other non-potable purposes was brought in. This was aimed at reducing freshwater use by industry. The regulation created provisions for

Water Entitlement Transfer (WET) and issuing Wastewater Reuse Certificates (WRC)². Further, industries situated within Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation's (MIDC) areas are required to recycle upto 50% of their water consumption.

Despite the above measures, several problems persist, such as pollution of water bodies from dyeing units in textile clusters. Further, water scarcity has been increasing in several districts in Maharashtra owing to erratic monsoons and falling water tables. The textile industry, one of the major water consumers, must act to alleviate the situation.

Several stakeholder consultations and meetings were organized in Maharashtra (virtually) by Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) with support from The Refashion Hub to gauge awareness on water reuse and wastewater treatment. Inputs were sought from stakeholders in the Maharashtra government and industry, on the current scenario of wastewater reuse in the textile industry and what policies and incentives can bring a transformation. These can help promote textile wastewater reuse and overall water stewardship in the state.

¹ Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority. <https://mwrro.org/about-mwrro-2/>

²WET and WRC, 2019. <https://mwrro.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/WRC-Regulation-draft.pdf>



The following points emerged from these discussions:

EVIDENCE-BASED SELECTION AND SUPPORT FOR WATER-SAVING TECHNOLOGY

Cluster profiles should be created for water use and wastewater management. Facilitate demand aggregation (for technology and other services) from clusters based on need for wastewater management. Create best-practices compendium for industry that looks at water sustainability in a holistic manner, and announce incentives linked to adoption of such technologies and practices. Best practices and techniques can be supported by schemes such as IPDS (Integrated Processing Development Scheme, IPDS)

Policy hook: Maharashtra State Textile Policy (2018-2023)³ enumerates several objectives, including setting up a pollution-free/Eco Friendly dyeing and processing industry.



PRODUCT VALUE-BASED INCENTIVES

Industries producing low-value products are unable to meet water treatment/pollution prevention equipment and operating costs, as profit margins are low. A higher capital subsidy may be considered for such industries. Also, to encourage industries to produce high-value products, a separate scheme may be considered. e.g., PLI Scheme

Policy hook: Maharashtra Industrial Policy (2019)⁴ has a provision for “Green Industrial Assistance”, under which water conservation and wastewater treatment are among the priority areas. The policy lists assistance in setting up ETPs, STPs as well as water harvesting units. This

³ Maharashtra State Textile Policy (2018-2023) <https://mahatextile.maharashtra.gov.in/GR/English%20GR%202018-2023.pdf>

⁴ Maharashtra Industrial Policy 2019. <https://www.midcindia.org/documents/20181/24988/Industrial+Policy+2019/e33f5970-7811-4c89-b2f5-9a6f2854848d>



policy can be tweaked to incorporate the differences in the capacities of industries to implement sustainability measures.

COLLECT DATA FOCUSING ON WATER SUSTAINABILITY ACROSS INDUSTRIAL PARKS/ CLUSTERS AND PUBLISH IN A PORTAL

Data on technology providers, experts, government schemes/support, water consumption levels, recycling percentage, etc. should be collected and presented in a single portal. This portal should serve as a unified platform for all industries to learn and implement solutions, and also apply for subsidies/ schemes, etc. This will need cross-departmental collaboration on water as a cross-cutting issue.

ASSESS THE IMPACT OF EXISTING INTERVENTIONS, SCHEMES AND POLICIES

Industrial units are treating wastewater either through ETPs and ZLDs on their premises or by releasing into CETPs. There is a need to understand the efficiency and impact of such measures. Data can be collected pertaining to water tables, pollution levels, amount of fresh water consumption, volumes of recycled water etc. This will enable identification of hotspots and weak links and identify appropriate measures. This will also allow for customised solutions for different regions/clusters. Recognise and incentivise units/regions with better sustainable practices.

DESIGN LONG TERM PROGRAMMES ALIGNED TO THE 2030 AGENDA

Industry and government departments can jointly design programmes addressing both availability and quality of water. Experts and stakeholders have suggested several work packages towards a comprehensive water program. These work packages include detailed mapping of regional and cluster level water value chains (availability, requirement, use of water, wastewater treatment, discharge etc., development of requisite water infrastructure, knowledge sharing on new technologies and good practices, demand aggregation for suitable technologies, recognition for sustainable practices and impact assessment of such initiatives). This will serve as a long term goal, along with urgent short term actions suggested in above points.

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