

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways



National Waterways (Construction of Jetties/Terminals) Regulations, 2025; set to open new opportunities for private players in IWT sector

Posted On: 28 FEB 2025 12:27PM by PIB Delhi

In a significant move to enhance infrastructure development and improve the ease of doing business, regulations have been put in place for the establishment of jetties and terminals by various entities, including private, public, and joint ventures, on national waterways across the country.

The National Waterways (Construction of Jetties/Terminals) Regulations, 2025, formulated by Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), are designed to attract private sector investment in setting up terminals, streamline processes and promote efficient use of India's vast waterways network.

By enabling entities, including private players, to develop and operate jetties and terminals, these regulations open up new opportunities for investment, trade, and economic growth, while also improving logistical efficiency. This initiative is expected to contribute to the reduction of transportation costs, enhance cargo movement, and support the overall growth of the inland waterways sector, positioning it as a key driver of nation's economy.

Key Highlights of the Regulations

Under the new regulations, any entity including private, wishing to develop or operate an inland waterway terminal on a national waterway need to obtain a 'No Objection Certificate' (NoC) from IWAI. Both existing and new terminals, whether permanent or temporary, are covered under these regulations. Permanent terminals can be maintained for the lifetime by the operator, while temporary terminals will have an initial five-year term with the possibility of extensions. The terminal developer and operator will be responsible for the technical design and construction of the terminal, ensuring it aligns with their business plan and provides adequate access.

Digital Portal for Terminal Applications

IWAI is developing an online application portal to streamline and digitise the application process for terminal developers and operators. This digital platform will enhance efficiency, transparency, and accessibility, in line with the government's vision of Ease of Doing Business (EODB) and digitisation. The portal will provide a seamless interface for applicants to submit requests and track progress.

Boosting Private Participation and Infrastructure Development

Under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the guidance of Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, IWAI has made significant strides in developing waterways as a key engine of economic growth. The cargo movement on national waterways has surged over the last decade, from 18 million tonnes to 133 million tonnes in FY 2023-24. This advancement is in line with the Prime Minister's vision to promote sustainable development, foster private sector participation, and enhance Ease of Doing Business by leveraging digitalisation and streamlining processes.

Additionally, the newly launched Jalvahak scheme, which aims to incentivize a shift in cargo transport by nearly 17% from the current 4700 million tonne kilometres on national waterways, is expected to further boost private sector participation.

With the enforcement of the National Waterways (Construction of Jetties/Terminals) Regulations, 2025, private entities are expected to play a greater role in the development and expansion of inland waterway terminals, thus contributing to the overall growth of the sector.

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(Release ID: 2106826) Visitor Counter : 686

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