

Coastal Regulation Zone

The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) in India is a regulatory framework that governs human and industrial activities near the coastline to protect fragile ecosystems.

The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) in India was first established under the Environmental Protection Act of 1986.

It was initially notified in 1991, underwent a significant modification in 2011, and has been slightly amended several times since then. Most recently, it was amended in 2019 based on the recommendations of the Sailesh Nayak Committee.

The present types and norms of CRZ in India include:

Types of Coastal Regulation Zones:



CLASSIFICATION

CRZ I | Ecologically sensitive areas like sanctuaries, reserve forests, mangroves, coral reefs, turtle-nesting grounds, which could be inundated due to rise in sea level

CRZ II | Areas which have already been developed up to the shoreline within municipal or corpn limits

CRZ III A | CRZ III areas with a population of more than 2,161 per sqkm. Here, 50m from high tide will be no-development zone (NDZ)

CRZ III B | Other CRZ III areas with less population. Here area up to 200m from the HTL on the landward side will be earmarked as NDZ

BOOST FOR TOURISM

- With the freeze on constructions along the coastal zone more or less lifted, the tourism sector will be the biggest beneficiary

BACKGROUND

- Under Environment Protection Act, 1986 a notification was issued in February 1991 for regulation of activities in coastal area by the ministry of environment and forests
- Coastal land up to 500m from the high tide line (HTL) and area of 100m along banks of estuaries, backwater, creeks and rivers which are subject to tidal fluctuations are called coastal regulation zone (CRZ)

Allowable Activities:

- Toilets, changing rooms, drinking water facility and temporary shacks can be constructed even on beaches
- Existing residential buildings can be converted into homestays without increasing the plinth area
- CRZ will not be a bar for public utilities like roads even if it passes through mangrove forests
- Introduction of CRZ-III into A and B clauses will address state's main concern of issuing permission to dwelling units as well

CRZ Category	Description	Allowable Activities	Restrictions
CRZ-I	Ecologically sensitive areas such as mangroves, coral reefs, and intertidal zones. Further subdivided into CRZ-IA and CRZ-IB.	CRZ-IA: Eco-tourism activities like mangrove walks, tree huts, nature trails. CRZ-IB: Land reclamation for ports, sea links.	Strong restrictions on development, with certain exceptions for strategic and public utility projects.
CRZ-II	Areas that are already substantially developed up to or close to the	Increased Floor Area Ratio (FAR), construction of resorts, and other tourism facilities.	Construction allowed with some restrictions to encourage urban development while

	shoreline. Includes urban areas.		balancing ecological concerns.
CRZ-III	Relatively undisturbed areas excluding those covered under CRZ-I or II. Includes rural and semi-urban areas.	Reduced No Development Zone (NDZ) from 200 m to 50 m from the High Tide Line (HTL) in densely populated areas, allowing construction closer to the coast. CRZ-III A (densely populated rural areas) has a no-development zone of 50 meters from the high-tide level, while CRZ-III B (rural areas with lower population density) maintains a 200-meter no-development zone.	Construction of hotels, resorts not allowed in the NDZ, with stricter norms in less populated areas.
CRZ-IV	Coastal water area up to 12 nautical miles offshore and water area of tidal influenced water bodies.	Permission for land reclamation, setting up ports, harbours, and roads; discharge of treated effluents; and construction of memorials or monuments.	Emphasis on regulating pollution from offshore activities, though less stringent than before.

Major changes compared to the CRZ Notification 2011

- The latest rules aim to promote sustainable development, promotion to tourism, conserve coastal environments, and balance economic growth with environmental conservation.
- The regulations allow for post-facto clearances for projects that started without prior CRZ clearances, streamlining the clearance process and promoting tourism infrastructure.

Below is a table highlighting the major differences between the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notifications of 2011 and 2018.

Feature	CRZ 2011 Notification	CRZ 2018 Notification
CRZ-I	Most ecologically sensitive areas, including mangroves, coral reefs, and sand dunes. Off-limits for	Further subdivided into CRZ-IA and CRZ-IB. Allows eco-tourism activities in CRZ-IA. Land

	most activities except for defence, strategic, and rare public utility projects.	reclamation permitted in CRZ-IB for specific infrastructure like ports and sea links.
CRZ-II	Covered areas substantially built up to or close to the shore. Restricted developments, primarily allowing only repair and reconstruction of existing authorised structures.	More liberal, allowing increased Floor Area Ratio (FAR), construction of resorts, and other commercial developments, promoting urbanisation.
CRZ-III	Relatively undisturbed areas, distinguished by a No Development Zone (NDZ) extending 200 m from the High Tide Line (HTL). Strict regulation on new constructions, especially commercial.	NDZ reduced to 50 m in densely populated areas, allowing greater development close to the shore. Construction of resorts and hotels permitted up to HTL under certain conditions.
CRZ-IV	Coastal water areas and the area between Low Tide Line and 12 nautical miles offshore. Emphasis on regulating pollution from offshore activities.	Continues regulation but relaxes certain norms, permitting land reclamation and other developments for strategic and infrastructure purposes, such as ports and harbours.
Ecological Sensitivity	High priority on protecting ecologically sensitive areas and minimizing human impact.	Allows more human activities, including eco-tourism and infrastructure development, even in sensitive zones under stringent conditions.
Developmental Focus	Focus on environmental protection with stringent regulations limiting developmental activities near the coast.	Promotes economic growth by facilitating infrastructure and real estate development, aiming to boost tourism and employment, with certain ecological considerations.
Public and Community Impact	Stronger regulations to protect coastal communities and their environment from overdevelopment and commercial exploitation.	Increased allowance for development potentially affecting local communities, though claims to balance economic benefits with ecological and community concerns.