NEW DELHI: Seeking to ensure that rivers across the country have at least minimum flow of water round-the-year, the Centre is working on a national framework for implementation and monitoring of e-flows (environmental flows) in all major rivers in the country. Uninterrupted flow of water in a river is important not only to keep it clean through its natural ecological functions and processes but also to keep it organically fit to support aquatic life.

“We have been working on guidelines, keeping international experts on board under the existing India-European Union (EU) water partnership,” said Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, director general of National Mission for Clean Ganga.

The India-EU water partnership has prepared a draft guidance document on the subject. Released by ‘Jal Shakti’ minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Monday, the draft aims to develop a mechanism to assessing the benefits and impacts of e-flows on socio-economic and river ecosystem services.

Under the plan, detailed studies are being carried out in three different hydro-climatic regions as pilot projects for evolving appropriate methodologies for assessment of e-flows in rivers across the country. These three regions include Ramganga (perennial Himalayan river), Mahanadi delta (peninsular river) and Bharatapuzha river (Western Ghats).

Efforts for a comprehensive national framework are being made in the backdrop of the government’s decision to ensure e-flow of Ganga as part of its ongoing rejuvenation programme. Under this decision, all existing projects in the upper Ganga basin will have to ensure desired e-flow in the national river by December 15. This compliance deadline applies to hydro-power, irrigation and other major projects in upper reaches of the river in Uttarakhand up to the Ganga’s main stem in Unnao district of UP.