

II. Agricultural Inputs

Irrigation

8.24 Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme: Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP), launched in 1996-97 to encourage the States for completion of ongoing irrigation projects through Central Loan Assistance (CLA), is now helping accelerate benefits from locked-up investments. The Fast Track Programme, launched in February 2002 under AIBP, has been modified with effect from April 2004 to provide central assistance in the form of 70 per cent loan and 30 per cent grant for non-special category States and 10 per cent loan and 90 per cent grant for special category States for projects under the Fast Track Programme. For projects not under Fast Track Programme, an incentive of conversion of loan to grant is being given if projects are completed on schedule.

8.25 The Programme covered 181 major/medium irrigation projects or components of projects and 3,810 surface minor irrigation schemes up to 2003-04, with release of Central Loan Assistance (CLA) of Rs. 15,398 crore up to December 2004 for such projects. This included 32 major/medium projects/components under the Fast Track Programme, for which CLA of Rs 1,444 crore was provided up to the end of December 2004. There were 32 projects completed by the end of December 2004, of which 5 were Fast Track Projects. An irrigation potential of 2.7 million hectares was created under the programme through the major/medium irrigation projects by the end of March 2004. During the same period, an irrigation potential of 80 thousand hectares were created through surface minor irrigation schemes.

8.26 Command Area Development and Water Management Programme: The restructured Programme which started from April 2004 is aimed at bringing about better water management practices and efficient utilisation of irrigation water which, inter-alia, includes taking up corrective measures for rectification of deficiencies of delivery systems on the one hand and participation of water users in sharing the cost of works on the other. The Programme would cover 133 project commands with total Culturable Command Area of 1.7 million hectares. The work is already in progress in 0.9 million hectares and is expected to pick up by the end of the 2004-05.

8.27 Repair, renovation and restoration of water bodies: A pilot scheme in the State sector for repair, renovation and restoration of water bodies directly linked to agriculture is proposed to be taken up during the remaining period of the Tenth Plan. The objectives of the scheme are: (a) to restore and augment storage capacity of water bodies, and (b) to recover and extend their lost irrigation potential. As per the guidelines prepared for the scheme, water bodies having original irrigation culturable command area between 40 hectares and 2000 hectares would be eligible for this pilot scheme. The States may undertake pilot projects in one or two districts for increasing the storage capacity and the project would include work or repair of related structures like check dams, weirs, bunds and the water conveyance systems. Once the pilot scheme is completed and validated, it would form the basis for launching of the "National Water Resources Development Project" at a much larger scale and spread.