

RAJASTHAN WATER SECTOR RESTRUCTURING PROJECT

Agricultural Support Services Component

Rajasthan Water Sector Restructuring Project funded by the World Bank, is basically to ensure the long term sustainability of existing irrigation systems and improving the efficiency of water use in agriculture along with greater participation of users in the management and operation of surface irrigation system. The project was started in 2002-03 with the following main objectives:

- (i) To improve surface irrigation system performance, efficiency and strengthening agricultural support services in selected schemes through increased involvement of users and
- (ii) To strengthen capacity for strategic planning and environmentally sustainable development and management of surface and ground water resources.

In the context of the Additional Financing for RWSRP, the project closing date of the ongoing RWSRP has been extended till March 31, 2013 with a view to complete the left over and ongoing works.

Agriculture Support Services (ASS) Component is one of the main components and is being implemented through the Department of Agriculture in 88 major, medium and minor irrigation schemes, covering about 6.19 lac ha spread over 24 districts of the State. The objective of this sub-component is to increase the productivity of irrigated agriculture through improved surface irrigation systems performance and strengthened agricultural support services with greater participation of users and private sector in service delivery.

During the additional financing project period the focus would be on consolidation of the component gains, continuing the activities which are expected to result in greater productivity gains on farmers' fields, monitoring the outcomes of various component interventions, and developing success stories in the areas of seed production, on-farm water management, crop planning, etc. The main activities which will be continued include demonstrations on improved crop and water management technologies, seed production, new micro irrigation methods using surface and sub-surface waters, training of farmers, departmental officials and line department staff, and monitoring & evaluation. The following activities are being undertaken in the project area :-

Activities covered under ASS component : For disseminating improved technologies, demonstrations are being organized on farmers' fields in the head, middle and tail regions of the irrigation schemes.

1. Improved crop management practices – Demonstrations are organized on various aspects like on-farm water management, seed production, crop diversification, improved crop husbandry practices, integrated methods of pest and nutrient management, etc. Training camps are organized at the demonstration sites inviting WUA farmers.
2. Diggi-cum-drip irrigation in cotton - In Rajasthan cotton is grown in about 4-5 lac ha and the major area (80%) is in the canal command areas of Ganganagar, Hanumangarh and Bikaner districts. Among the field crops, cotton has shown good response to drip irrigation both in the research trials and on cultivator field demonstrations. Thus the demonstrations on *Diggi-cum-drip* are being taken up on cotton crop in Ganganagar and Hanumangarh districts.
3. Drip irrigation using ground water: In well irrigated project areas, groundwater is receding @ about one meter per year to reduce the withdrawal of groundwater and promote its sustainable management demonstrations are organized on the use of drip irrigation in cotton crop in well irrigated areas covered under RWSRP.
4. Training, exposure visits and publicity materials: The project also support subject matter training of WUA farmers, departmental officials, line department staff with special focus on new methods of irrigation and improved technology in agriculture.
5. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Impact Assessment: In the on-going project, WAPCOS was hired to carry out independent third party impact assessment of sub-component activities. The third party M&E and impact assessment activities will be continued in the additional financing project.