



Cabinet approves continuation and Restructuring of National Rural Drinking Water Programme

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The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has accorded its approval for continuation and restructuring of National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) to make it outcome-based, competitive and better monitored with increased focus on sustainability (functionality) of schemes to ensure good quality service delivery to the rural population.

A sum of Rs. 23,050 crore has been approved for the programme for the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) period 2017-18 to 2019-20. The programme will cover all the Rural Population across the country. The restructuring will make the programme flexible, result-oriented, competitive, and will enable the Ministry towards to reach the goal of increasing coverage of sustainable Piped Water Supply.

The details of the decision are as follows:

1. National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) is to be continued co-terminus with the 14th Finance Commission cycle till March 2020.
2. With the restructuring of the NRDWP, there will be 2% earmarking of funds for Japanese Encephalitis (JE) /Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) affected areas.
3. A new Sub-programme under NRDWP viz. National Water Quality Sub-Mission (NWQSM) which has been started by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation in February 2017 will address the urgent need for providing clean drinking water in about 28000 Arsenic & Fluoride affected habitations (already identified). As per estimates, about Rs. 12,500 crore as Central share will be required over 4 years i.e. up to March, 2021. This is being funded from the allocation under NRDWP.
4. Pre-financing for the agreed schemes, to the extent of half of the second instalment amount, will be made by the State Governments, which will be reimbursed later on from the central funding. If the State(s) fails to claim this amount before 30th November in the financial year, then, these funds will become a part of the common pool, which will be released to the high performing States, which have already pre-financed the requisite Government of India share on a first come first serve basis.
5. Other half of second instalment of funds will be released to the States based on functionality status of completed piped water supply schemes, which will be evaluated through a third party.
6. The Cabinet has approved Rs. 23,050 crore for the programme for the FFC period 2017-18 to 2019-20.

The NWQSM aims to cover all rural population in Arsenic/Fluoride affected habitations with clean drinking water on a sustainable basis by March 2021. States have been given more flexibility in utilization of NRDWP funds by reducing the number of components under the programme.

As per the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) of the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, about 77% of rural habitations in India have achieved a fully covered (FC) status (40 litres per capita per day) and 56% of the rural population have access to tap water through public stand posts within which 16.7% have household connections.

Background:

The NRDWP was started in 2009, with a major emphasis on ensuring sustainability (source) of water availability in terms of potability, adequacy, convenience, affordability and equity. NRDWP is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with 50.50 fund sharing between the Centre and the States. Over the years, learning from the success achieved and the deficiencies felt during the implementation of NRDWP, certain modifications are needed in existing guidelines and procedure of release of funds to the States for making the programme more outcome-oriented and competitive.

Keeping in view the need to make the NRDWP more result-oriented, incentivize competition amongst States and focused on sustainability, a series of discussions were held with States, various stakeholders / domain experts / international institutions and NITI Aayog, some amendments in the guidelines of the programme have been introduced. These are giving more flexibility to the states in utilization of NRDWP funds by reducing the number of components under the programme. Focus on piped water supply, increase level of service delivery, thrust on coverage of water quality affected habitations (National Water Quality Sub-Mission to tackle Arsenic & Fluoride affected habitations, JE / AES areas), coverage of Open Defecation Free (ODF) declared villages, SAGY GPs, Ganga GPs, Integrated Action Plan (IAP) districts, Border Out Posts (BOP) with piped water supply and Institutional set up for proper O&M of water supply assets etc. have been introduced.

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