

Scheme to enhance agro-productivity approved

The government Thursday approved Rs.550 billion for implementing the Macro-Management of Agriculture (MMA) scheme to boost farm output.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) Thursday approved the outlay and implementation of the revised MMA.

"The scheme aims at increasing the agricultural production and productivity by reducing yield gaps towards ensuring food security and increasing farmers' income," Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said after the CCEA meeting.

"It is a significant development towards enhancing the country's agro-productivity. The scheme intends to implement agricultural plans at the ground level keeping in mind local needs, crop patterns, and remove regional imbalances," an official in the ministry of agriculture told IANS, requesting anonymity.

The share of agriculture in India's gross domestic product (GDP) has been steadily declining from 36.4 percent in 1982-83 to 18.5 percent in 2006-07, said the country's Economic Survey 2007-08. It grew at the rate of 1.2 percent during 1990-07 against the annual growth of population averaging 1.9 percent.

The MMA scheme will be implemented during the 11th plan period ending 2012, subject to a mid-term appraisal.

"The revised MMA scheme will avoid overlapping and duplication of efforts and to make present agriculture scenario more relevant in the states based on district agriculture plans prepared by them," said Chidambaram.

He said that the scheme had been comprehensively revised in terms of the scope of activities, rationalisation of cost and subsidy norms vis-a-vis other schemes to bring about uniformity and avoiding confusion at the field level.

"The revised MMA scheme will dovetail with other major initiatives like the National Food Security Mission, the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and address the concerns of states with the aim to complement and supplement their efforts to increase agricultural production," he said.

(© IANS / India eNews)