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Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana Cell

**SUMMARY RECORD OF DISCUSSION IN THE EASTERN ZONE
CONFERENCE TO REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RASHTRIYA
KRISHI VIKAS YOJANA (RKVY) HELD ON 20-11-2007 AT PATNA**

List of participants is appended at Annexure-I.

At the outset, Shri N.S. Madhavan, Principal Secretary (Agriculture), Government of Bihar welcomed Shri R.J.M. Pillai, Development Commissioner, Government of Bihar and the participants from the Government of India as well as the States in the Eastern Zone. The Conference was formally inaugurated by Shri Pillai. He highlighted the need for having a close look at the process of preparation of District Agriculture Plans (DAPs) by agencies such as the Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA), the nature and the extent of involvement of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in preparation of the DAPs in the context of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the requirement of manpower in the Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and the focus on increasing the area under cultivation of sugarcane in Bihar.

Shri P. K. Basu, Additional Secretary, Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC), Government of India (GOI) thanked Shri Pillai, Development Commissioner for having agreed to inaugurate the Conference, Shri Madhvan, Principal Secretary to have organized the Conference, and also the senior officers and representatives from the participating States. He explained in brief the background of launching the RKVY scheme. The objective of holding the five Zonal Conferences at the State Capitals/New Delhi was to sensitize and activate the State Governments to implement the RKVY scheme in a time-bound manner in the current year.

Shri Pankaj Kumar, Joint Secretary, DAC made a brief presentation on the RKVY scheme, inter alia, highlighting the objectives, salient features, eligibility criteria, allocation of funds to Southern States and the time lines to be followed for each activity in the current year as under:

- Constitution and notification of SLSC by 03.11.2007;

- Identification of Nodal Agency for implementation by 03.11.2007;
- Identification of District Planning Unit by 16.11.2007;
- Preparation of State Agriculture Plan / District Agriculture Plan by 30.11.2007;
- Preparation of shelf-projects under Stream I by 30.11.2007;
- Preparation of proposals under Stream II by 30.11.2007;
- Holding of SLSC meeting during from 16.11.2007 to 23.12.2007;
- Submission of proposals for release of fund to DAC by 31.12.2007.

He also said that it was a matter of concern that the allocations made in the agriculture & allied sectors as a percentage of the State Plan by the Eastern States during 2007-08 were lower than the allocations (in percentage terms) for 2006-07 which could lead to these States failing to meet the eligibility criteria for funding under RKVY during 2008-09. He informed that pursuant to a recent decision taken in consultation with the Planning Commission, 25% of the RKVY allocation was being released to the eligible States under Stream-II so that the implementation of the scheme was not delayed. The States could utilize these funds broadly in conformity with the priorities set forth in the State Plan for 2007-08 already approved by the Planning Commission. The details of the schemes taken up under Stream-II for 2007-08 would have to be intimated to the Planning Commission. If the States wanted to utilize the funds being released under Stream-II for funding the projects under Stream-I, they could do so with the approval of the SLSC.

Shri Madhavan, Principal Secretary (Agriculture), Government of Bihar also highlighted the issue of the nature and the extent of involvement of PRIs in preparing the DAPs. In the presentation on implementation of RKVY in Bihar, it was informed that the Bihar Agriculture Management and Extension Training Institute (BAMETI) was the designated Nodal Agency for implementation of RKVY. The DAPs had been prepared. The projects under Stream-I had also been prepared and no proposal was contemplated under Stream-II for 2007-08.

Dr. A.K. Padhee, Director (Agriculture), Government of Orissa informed that the SLSC had been constituted and the Nodal Agency identified. The emphasis under RKVY was on soil management, mechanization, green manuring, system of rice intensification, seed processing, the agriculture information system, capacity building in providing extension services etc. Crops were not being taken during 2007-08 as the time available was short and the Rabi season was well under way. He emphasized the need for quick

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release of funds. He also suggested that it would be pragmatic to involve the PRIs in the selection of beneficiaries. He also raised the issue of non-availability of SC/ST beneficiaries for mechanization under Macro Management of Agriculture (MMA) scheme and was advised to send a formal proposal to DAC in this regard.

Shri S.P. Nanda, Agriculture Production Commissioner, Government of Orissa felt that the figures of investment in the agriculture & allied sectors utilized by the Planning Commission for determining eligibility/allocation under RKVY needed to be reconciled with the State Government. He emphasized the need for seamless implementation of RKVY, a realistic timeline (say 18 months) for the submission of Utilization Certificates (UCs) and limiting the role of PRIs to selection of beneficiaries. He said that the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and procurement policies should support the farmers effectively as the aim of programmes like the RKVY and the National Food Security Mission (NFSM) was to increase the production. Rural wage levels have undergone a shift due to the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) and this needed to be factored into for policy level decisions in the agriculture sector.

Shri P.K. Basu, Additional Secretary, DAC clarified that the PRIs should be involved, where feasible, in the implementation of RKVY as per para 6.7 of the RKVY guidelines. He also said that while taking up the cultivation for bio-fuels, the States must keep in mind the overall thrust areas in the sector, especially food security.

Shri A.K. Sarkar, Principal Secretary (Agriculture), Government of Jharkhand said that the SLSC had been constituted. Proposals under Stream-I had been framed including crops, mechanization, soil health, watershed development, strengthening of seed farms, integrated pest management, bio-fertilizers, organic fertilizers, vermin-composting, farmers' study tours, Farmers' Field Schools, minor irrigation, fisheries, fodder, poultry, duckery etc. The meeting of the SLSC would be convened around end November. While there was no proposal under Stream-II during 2007-08, he wanted to know the type of schemes which could be taken up under this Stream. He also suggested that the investment made in minor irrigation may be taken into account in determining the eligibility and allocations under RKVY.

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Shri Pillai, Development Commissioner, Government of Bihar inquired whether the outlay under RKVY would be treated as a part of the State Plan. If so, whether the funds under Stream-II could be utilized to meet the resource gap in the scheme of Plan financing. He also opined that for determining eligibility/allocations under RKVY, the absolute expenditure on agriculture & allied sectors, or the baseline of the Plan size, rather than the percentage share of such expenditure in relation to the Plan size should be taken into account considering the fact that the Plan size for 2007-08 of some States, including Bihar, had gone up significantly.

Dr. D. Konar, Director & Ex-Officio Secretary (Agriculture), Government of West Bengal intimated that the projects under Stream-I had been finalized including crops, hybrid variety of seeds and harvesters for summer rice, soil treatment (acidic in 1/4th of the cultivated area and alkaline in coastal areas), agri. business centres/clinics, farmers' tours, fisheries, support to Seed Farms etc. He emphasized the need for regulation of producers of hybrid seeds in the private sector. He said that 40% of the posts of Village Level Worker (VLW) were lying unfilled and it was important that the remaining staff was not deployed for other duties, including election work, keeping in view the increasing workload in the agriculture sector.

Shri Anil Kumar, Principal Secretary (Animal & Fisheries Resources Department), Government of Bihar said that there was a need to involve the representatives from the Animal Husbandry & Fisheries sectors fully in the implementation of RKVY.

Prof. Maurya, Vice Chancellor, Rajendra Agricultural University, assured of full support and cooperation of the University in implementation of schemes like the RKVY in Bihar.

Shri Surinder Singh, Director (Agriculture), Planning Commission clarified that the approval of the Planning Commission was not required for the Stream-II proposals under RKVY for 2007-08. The States could take up schemes approved in the State Plan for 2007-08 for additional funding, wherever required, under Stream-II of the RKVY. The outlay as well as proposals under the RKVY for 2008-09 would be discussed with the States during the Working Group discussions as part of the Annual Plan exercise. He further said that minor irrigation was not included in the agriculture & allied sectors for the purpose of

eligibility/allocation under RKVY. Referring to the query raised by the APC, Orissa, he said that the data utilized by the Planning Commission had been taken from the Annual Plan document of the States. On a request by all the States he clarified that the heads of account of agriculture and allied sectors would be intimated to the States.

Concluding the discussion, Shri P.K. Basu, Additional Secretary, DAC observed that the States in the Eastern Region appeared to be in a relatively advanced state of preparedness for implementing RKVY. He requested them to intimate the details of the District Planning Units so that the funds for preparation of the DAPs could be released. Preparation of DAPs was important and no exception would be allowed from 2008-09 in this regard. The eligible States would get funds under Stream-II for 2007-08 of RKVY shortly. The suggestions made by the States had been noted. He thanked the Government of Bihar once again for having made the arrangements for the Conference.

The Conference came to an end with a Vote of Thanks by Shri R.S. Pal, Director (Agriculture), Government of Bihar.

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