



## **MoEF signs MoU with IIT consortium to prepare Ganga River Basin Management Plan**

*New Delhi: July 6, 2010*

A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was signed today by the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) with a consortium of seven IITs for the development of Ganga River Basin Management Plan (GRBMP). The Plan will outline comprehensive measures for restoration of the Ganga, with due regard to the issue of competing water uses in the river basin. On the occasion, the Minister for Environment & Forests, Mr Jairam Ramesh said: “This is an important early step in our *Mission Clean Ganga* which aims to ensure that no untreated sewage enters the River Ganga by the year 2020. I am happy that the IIT consortium has been given this task. It is for the first time that a consortium of 7 IITs is coming together for a project of this magnitude and importance. An important co-benefit of this project will be the opportunity it will give young Indian scientists to apply their technical skills to a project of such national importance, while further honing their abilities”.

The work of preparing the Plan has been entrusted to a consortium of IITs (Kanpur, Delhi, Madras, Bombay, Kharagpur, Guwahati and Roorkee) who will prepare the plan based on scientific principles and application of modern tools/technologies combined with traditional wisdom. The necessity of adopting practices that require a paradigm shift on use of land, water and other natural resources in the Ganga Basin for various purposes would be examined. Alternative approaches using innovative concepts and state-of-the-art technologies/methods will be explored.

The Plan will detail comprehensive measures for restoration of the wholesomeness of the Ganga system and improvement of its ecological health, with due regard to the issue of competing water uses in the river basin.

GRBMP will aim to have adequate provision for water and energy in the Ganga Basin to accommodate the pressures of increased population, urbanization, industrialization and agriculture while ensuring the sanctity of the fundamental aspects of the river system are protected. These include:

- (i) river must continuously flow (**Aviral Dhaara**),
- (ii) river must not be seen as a carrier of waste loads (**Nirmal Dhaara**),
- (iii) river must have longitudinal and lateral connectivity,
- (iv) river must have adequate space for its various functions,
- (v) river must function as an ecological entity

Achieving the above objectives will require development of a framework for coordination whereby all stakeholders can come together to formulate and implement an agreed set of policies and strategies having a balanced approach to land, water, and natural resource management in the Ganga Basin.



## Ministry of Environment and Forests

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The preparation of the first phase of the Plan will be completed within a period of 18 months from the date of signing of this agreement. Endeavour will be made to complete the work in 12 months. It is expected to cost approximately Rs 15 crores.

The task of preparing the Basin Management Plan would be undertaken by several thematic groups in Environmental Science and Engineering, Water Resources Engineering, Fluvial Geomorphology, Ecology and Biodiversity, Socio-cultural Aspects, Legislative Aspects, Institutional Capacity Building & Public Participation, Economic Aspects, Project Planning and Financing, Simulation (processes as well as decision making), Geo-spatial Database Management and System Integration. The work of these groups will be coordinated by a Project Implementation and Coordination Committee (PICC). The PICC will include the thematic group leaders and other experts chosen in such a way that they will have representation from each of the seven IITs. There will be a Project Management Board to oversee the work. The Board will have representation from all seven IITs and eminent persons from outside. In addition, the IITs and MoEF will constitute a Joint Committee for review of progress of various tasks.

The Basin Management Plan will be rolling and dynamic in nature and will be the basis for NGRBA's Action Programme. The Plan would identify projects to be undertaken, policy interventions required and non-project investments. The Plan would include identification and estimation of present and prospective pollution loads from domestic, industrial and non-point sources, measures for maintaining water quality by providing a road map for control and prevention of pollution into the river and its tributaries, measures necessary for maintaining minimum ecological flows, measures for augmentation of river flow, catchment area treatment and protection of floodplains, public participation and awareness, assessment of technical and financial resources required for a time bound action programme. A number of intermediate reports will also be prepared. These would include status reports and simulated future scenarios on various aspects of the Ganga Basin with atlases, databases, modeling tools, etc.

It may be recalled that the Government of India has given Ganga the status of a "National River", and constituted a National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) on 20.2.2009 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for cleaning of the river Ganga. The objective of the Authority is to ensure effective abatement of pollution and conservation of the river Ganga by adopting a river basin approach for comprehensive planning and management. The NGRBA is an empowered planning, financing, monitoring and coordinating body. The Authority is chaired by the Prime Minister and has as its members the Union Ministers concerned, the Chief Ministers of the States through which Ganga flows, viz., Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, among others. This initiative is expected to rejuvenate the collective efforts of the Centre and the States for cleaning the river.

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