

Guidelines for Watershed Development

(Revised – 2001)

Introduction

1. The Watershed approach has conventionally aimed at treating degraded lands with the help of low cost and locally accessed technologies such as in-situ soil and moisture conservation measures, afforestation etc. and through a participatory approach that seeks to secure close involvement of the user-communities.

2. The broad objective was the promotion of the overall economic development and improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the resource poor sections of people inhabiting the programme areas. Many projects designed within this approach were, at different points of time, taken up by the Government of India. The Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and the Desert Development Programme (DDP) were brought into the watershed mode in 1987. The Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IWDP) launched in 1989 under the aegis of the National Wasteland Development Board also aimed at the development of wastelands on watershed basis.

3. All these three programmes were brought under the Guidelines for Watershed Development with effect from 1.4.1995. Other major programmes now being implemented through this approach are the 'National Watershed Development Project in Rainfed Areas' (NWDPA) and the 'Watershed Development in Shifting Cultivation Areas' (WDSCA) of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).

4. The focus of these programmes has, with the advent of the Department of Land Resources (DoLR) shifted to the enhancement of the viability and quality of rural livelihood support systems.

5. While the programmes of DoLR are designed to address areas characterized by a relatively difficult terrain and preponderance of community resources, those of Ministry of Agriculture are expected to aim at increasing production and enhancing productivity in cultivated areas largely privately owned.