

Cabinet approves Atal Bhujal Yojana

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The Union Cabinet recently approved the Atal Bhujal Yojana.

It is a Rs. 6000 crore scheme aimed at sustainable management of ground water resources. The scheme is stated to cover 8350 villages of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

The scheme envisages active participation of the communities in various activities such as formation of water user associations, monitoring and disseminating ground water data, water data, water budgeting, preparation and implementation of gram Panchayat-wise water security plans and information, education and communication (IEC) activities related to sustainable ground water management.

About Atal Bhujal Yojana

- The Scheme also known as 'Atal Jal' will promote Panchayat-led ground water management and behavioral change with primary focus on demand-side management.
- The scheme is aimed at contributing towards:
- the goal of doubling farmer's incomes
- promoting participatory ground water management
- improving water use efficiency on a mass scale, improving cropping pattern
- promoting efficient and equitable ground water resources
- behavioral

change at community level.

- The Yojana has two major components:
- Institutional
strengthening and capacity building for sustainable ground water management in the states including improving monitoring networks, capacity building, strengthening of water user associations.
- Incentivizing
the states for achievements in improved ground water management practices namely data dissemination, preparation of water security plans, implementation of management interventions through convergence of ongoing schemes, adopting demand side management practices etc.
- The total outlay of Rs 6,000 crore, 50% shall be in the form of World Bank loans and will be repaid by the Central Government. The remaining 50% shall be through central assistance from regular budgetary support. The entire World Bank loans and Central Government assistance shall be passed on to states as grants.