

# IIMI'S PROGRAM ON LOCAL MANAGEMENT OF IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

There is much to be gained from learning about irrigation management turnover in different environments — particularly by policymakers and agency or farmer irrigation managers. Many are attempting to formulate turnover policies and implement programs in relative isolation from others who are involved in a similar process. Many countries are poised on the brink of reform but are inexperienced in how to move forward with the challenge.

One of IIMI's major programs concerns the transition to viable local management. It is conducting a reconnaissance of turnover policies and planning needs in several countries, a series of case studies, a few in-depth monitoring and evaluation studies, and strategic consultation with selected countries seeking guidance in formulating a turnover process. IIMI sponsors national and international workshops on the subject and facilitates exchange of information through publications and newsletters. This program is partially funded by the German Government (BMZ/GTZ).

One forum for exchanging information on this subject will be a series of Short Reports on Irrigation Turnover and Self-Management. A Short Report will briefly discuss the policy framework for a given case and will provide information on factors leading to the changes, planning and implementing arrangements and processes, perspectives of key stakeholders, and indications of results of the changes.

Important components of IIMI's program on Local Management are the special studies carried out in various locations in Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Sudan, Pakistan and Latin America. In Sri Lanka, a collaborative nation-wide assessment of the government's irrigation management turnover program for distributary canal management of large-scale systems (above 80 ha) is being carried out.

***Any persons wishing to share information of interest on the subject of Local Management of Irrigation Systems or contribute brief articles to the Short Report Series are invited to contact Dr. Doug Vermillion, Program on Local Management of Irrigation Systems, IIMI, PO Box 2075, Colombo, Sri Lanka. These articles will have a maximum length of approximately ten single-spaced pages, plus charts and tables. To the extent possible, this Program will act as a clearinghouse for sharing information on this subject.***

The Institute is monitoring field-level implementation of the turnover process, measuring the impact of the process on irrigation system performance and sustainability, and facilitating independent feedback to executing and planning agencies.

IIMI hopes to support a learning process which will address the following questions:

- How well are the distributaries and field channels, which have been turned over to farmers' organizations, being operated and maintained?;
- How well are the state agencies and farmers' organizations cooperating?;
- How effective are linkages between the project management committees and the Irrigation Department?;
- What factors constrain or support successful farmer-management?; and
- What is the impact of this process on irrigation performance and sustainability? In addition, IIMI is assisting the agencies to improve their systems for monitoring and evaluating the management of major irrigation systems and of the turnover program.

In Nepal, a research program has been conducted on the process of partial turnover of larger systems. It is about to conduct case studies on full turnover of small systems. IIMI will also assess the need for institutional support and training for water users' organizations and department staff and will be involved in continuing research, advisory and institutional

support services on management turnover.

The Institute has also embarked on an intensive research project regarding minor irrigation privatization in one of the least developed areas of Bangladesh. The program will monitor and assess tubewell irrigation equipment distribution, servicing and operation in the various districts of the northeastern part of the country. This is the site of the ADB-funded Northeast Minor Irrigation Project. IIMI will monitor and assess the performance of the market for irrigation equipment (including credit necessary for pump purchases) and for irrigation support services at the local level. The role of the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (long associated with the public provision of irrigation equipment) and other government agencies in the new local privatized market will also be examined. The management performance of selected tubewells is expected to answer questions on the efficiency and equity of privately supplied and managed tubewells. The focus of this study is at the pump command area and district levels, but the project will facilitate development of national policy and program guidelines for privatizing minor irrigation in Bangladesh. Another study on management of privatized tubewells by NGOs such as the Grameen Bank is also being done in 1992.

The main emphasis of the program initiated in Nigeria, funded by the Ford Foundation, is on management turnover of components of large-scale schemes of the River Basin Development Authorities in the north. IIMI is assisting the Government of Nigeria in developing and field-testing a viable joint RBDA-farmer management model in the RBDAs. Its initial task is to focus on the key Hadejia-Jamaare RBDA. Turnover methods and procedures developed will be refined and disseminated for

use in other areas of northern Nigeria. The Institute will help the government examine the implications for performance, profitability and sustainability of making the RBDAs financially autonomous and of turning over management of distributary canals to farmers' organizations. IIMI will gradually shift more attention in Nigeria towards private-sector, small-scale pump irrigation.

The Government of Sudan has decided to privatize small-scale lift irrigation along the Nile and to privatize some of the input and marketing functions in large-scale irrigation systems. It has announced plans to develop water users' associations to take over management below the distributary level. IIMI has been invited to participate in a working group on privatization policy formulation.

In Pakistan, IIMI is conducting research to compare management procedures and performance in public and private tubewell irrigation systems. It is also conducting a review with the government, of major policy and organizational change options, which include privatization and self-management.

An exploratory assessment of key irrigation management issues has been initiated by IIMI in Latin America. Irrigation privatization and turnover have already been identified as of utmost importance for research and development in Latin America and case studies are being planned in Mexico, Colombia, and Chile.

The findings derived from these special studies around the world are a critical source of information to better understand these issues at a transnational level.