Integrated Irrigation Improvement and Management

March 2007—Integrated Irrigation Improvement and Management Project (2006-2014), for a total value of US$ 303 million with a World Bank loan of US$ 120 million, a contribution of US$ 78 million from foreign donors, and a contribution of US$ 105 million from the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, represents a continuing commitment of the World Bank to projects that focus on natural resources management, raising rural income, poverty alleviation, and environmental sustainability.

The Project’s Development Objective is to assist the GOE in achieving a more efficient and sustainable use of its land and water resources by improving the management of irrigation and drainage for all farmers in two command areas in the Nile Delta, and thereby mainstreaming Integrated Water Resources Management principles through:

1. empowering water users in decision making at both the investment and O&M levels for irrigation and drainage infrastructure,
2. financing complementary irrigation and drainage renovations;
3. providing users with technical assistance for improving water productivity; and iv) beginning to move the agenda of integration of planning and development of irrigation and drainage services through better integration of Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation departments at both the command area and district levels.

It is expected that water distribution, in terms of quality, quantity, equity and timeliness will improve. Furthermore, sustainability of agricultural production will be achieved through rehabilitation of subsurface drainage system to prevent soil salinity build-up and rehabilitation of water conveyance canals. Environmentally, the project is expected to have a positive impact by improving land and water management in the irrigated agricultural sector. The on-farm irrigation will lead to more reduced use of irrigation water and increased yields.

Both the design and planning of the project reflect the consideration of a number of lessons learned from previous related projects including the need for extending the implementation period to take into account previously experienced slow pace of small civil contracts in irrigation, as well as the participatory water management approach followed in the Irrigation Improvement Project at the tertiary canal level. In fact, the scope of participation and consultation with the water users is at the core. In addition, the design reflects a technical innovation, namely advocating the use of electric rather than diesel pumps in order to improve irrigation and reduce associated costs. As the improvement of the quaternary level irrigation canals level is addressed, about 15% of irrigation water will be saved.