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Farmers to maintain lakes, tanks for irrigation

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TIRUVALLUR: In a welcome move, the farmers of Tiruvallur district will maintain lakes and tanks themselves for irrigation purposes henceforth. To facilitate this, water users associations (WUAs) have been formed for the first time in the district.

The initiative is part of the World Bank-aided Irrigated Agriculture Modernisation and Water Bodies Restoration and Management (IAMWARM) project to improve irrigational (infrastructure) facilities besides getting the farmers involved in the water resources management of their region.

Under phase III of the plan for Tiruvallur district, the water users forums are being formed along side improving the Kosathalayar basin, which is the life line of farmers in the district.

According to sources in the Public Works Department here, development works including that of the Periya Kalakattur and Manavur Isa tanks would soon begin in all the 198 tanks in the district. These two tanks alone support irrigation in about 1,500 hectares out of the total 35,256 hectares in the district.

The works that are to start soon include strengthening of tank bunds, repair and reconstruction of sluices and surplus weirs. Tenders will be floated soon inviting bidders and the whole exercise of development of tanks is likely to be over before mid 2011. The 143 WUAs, formed in the district, will supersupervise the works.