

## **IWAI Signs Contract with DST, Germany for Designing Special Vessels for NW-1**

With its objective of providing safe, environment friendly and economical mode of transportation through National Waterway-1 (NW-1), The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), Ministry of Shipping signed a contract with M/s DST, Germany to design vessels, especially suited to navigate the 1620 km stretch of NW-1.

Speaking on the occasion a senior IWAI official said it is a revolutionary step and a milestone in the journey of NW-1. “The objective of IWAI is to go along with nature and disturb the river minimally. The specially designed vessels will navigate on low drafts and will be of high carrying capacity, and most importantly, will be environment friendly,” he said.

Considering the expected growth of the Inland Waterways sector in India, DST, Germany is expected to develop a combination of standardised vessels to meet the requirement of various types of cargo. One of the most important navigational challenges for NW-1 is the kind of vessels that will play on the Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly stretch. Keeping in view the difficult hydro-morphological characteristics of the river in the upper reaches between Patna and Varanasi, it is important to have vessels which can ply on low draft, with high carrying capacity, and are economically viable and environment friendly.

Earlier in August 2016, the Hon’ble Minister for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Sh. Nitin Gadkari flagged off the trial run of two cargo vessels from Varanasi on NW-1 (River Ganga). Keeping in view the demand for transportation of cars through NW-1, M/s DST, Germany has been initially tasked to develop low draft vessels that can carry up to 150-200 vehicles.

Government is developing NW-1 under the Jal Marg Vikas Project, with assistance from the World Bank at an estimated cost of Rs. 4,200 crore. The project would enable commercial navigation of vessels with capacity of 1500-2,000 tons. Phase-I of the project covers the Haldia-Varanasi stretch. The project includes development of fairway, Multi-Modal Terminals at Varanasi, Haldia, and Sahibganj, strengthening of river navigation system, conservancy works, modern River Information System (RIS), Digital Global Positioning System (DGPS), night navigation facilities, modern methods of channel marking, construction of a new state of the art navigational lock at Farakka etc.

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(Release ID :150993)