

Field Visit Report
Wilmanna Tank Rehabilitation (Phase II – CSIAP)
Southern Province

The World Bank financed Climate Smart Irrigated Agriculture Project (CSIAP)
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Land and Irrigation



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FIELD VISIT REPORT

Wilmanna Tank Rehabilitation Site- SP

Date of Visit: 19/05/2025

Location: Wilmanna Tank, Wilmanna Cascade

Project: Climate Smart Irrigated Agriculture Project (CSIAP) – Phase II

Contractor: Pearl Construction

Visited by: Dr. Sithara Attapattu (World Bank), Ms. Sharmila Shanmuganathan (PMU), the Safeguard Team, and the Technical Team of the DPDO/SP&UP.

Background

Wilmanna Tank is one of the **comparatively larger tanks** within its **cascade system**. It supports approximately **37 farmers** cultivating **80 acres** of land, with regular engagement in both the **Maha** and **Yala** paddy seasons. The **rehabilitation works**, include **spill repair**, **desilting**, and **bund rehabilitation**. The **existing spill** will be **rehabilitated** but **not raised**.



Field Observations

1. The **contractor** has established a **site office** at the **worksite**. A temporary rest camp has been set up at the worksite; however, workers do not stay there overnight. Instead, accommodation has been arranged for laborers 1 km away from the tank site in a rented house.



2. Machinery was **present** at the site, but **inactive** on the day of the visit due to **heavy rainfall** experienced earlier.

3. Laborers were working at the site where there was dust pollution and were not wearing face masks for protection. They were instructed to wear masks during work involving dust pollution.



4. Farmers reported significant deviations in the weather pattern, with an unusual increase in rainfall. Due to unusually heavy rains over the past month, completion is now expected by **September 2025**.



5. *Spill rehabilitation* is in progress. During *stone breaking* work on the spill, workers were observed **not wearing dust masks**. They were immediately instructed to wear proper PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).



6. *Desilting* is ongoing, and the *dredged material* is **not** being removed from the site as farmers have requested it for filling low-lying paddy lands.

7. An *artificial water drawdown* was implemented by *cutting the tank bund* to facilitate **dry working conditions**.



8. The *tank bund* is not used for *transport*; it functions solely as a *reservoir*. Therefore, no *road access blockages* were observed.



9. The *temporary shelter* at the worksite is located *under trees*, posing **safety risks** during *heavy rain*, *lightning*, or *falling branches*.

10. Within a *1-hour period*, *high temperature* was followed by *heavy rainfall* at the worksite. During the *field visit*, *workers* were observed without *raincoats* or *protective clothing* despite the rain.

11. The contractor has requested permission to install an elephant fence around the site because the tank is located near elephant corridors, where Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) is a significant concern.

12. The **upstream area** of the tank falls within the **Lunugamvehera Forest Reserve**, while the **downstream area** is managed by the **Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWLC)**.



13. **Vegetation clearance** and **cutting of tree branches** were observed on-site. Seven **Kohomba trees** were proposed for removal — only those **upstream** will be removed, while trees in the **downstream** area will remain.



14. Banana and coconut cultivation were observed within the tank bed, indicating encroachment of approximately 80 acres by farmers.



15. The Social Audit Committee (SAC) is actively engaged in monitoring rehabilitation activities. Both farmers and SAC members confirmed their participation in formation and ratification meetings, and agreed to forego the Yala season. SAC members received training on monitoring material quality, work supervision, and implementing rotational site visits. However, due to wildlife threats, especially to female SAC members, consistent on-site monitoring by women remains challenging.

16. Farmers agreed to forego Yala paddy cultivation and requested the tank rehabilitation work be completed as soon as possible.



17. Good practices identified include the implementation of OHS measures at the site. Safety signs were strategically placed at the worksite to enhance worker



18. Dredging materials were observed at the worksite.

4. Recommendations

- Ensure that **all workers are provided with PPE**, especially dust masks during activities like stone breaking. **Provide raincoats** or protective clothing for workers during rainy periods.
- Expedite the **approval and installation of an elephant fence** to safeguard workers and assets. Keep workers informed about **safe timings** and **protocols in case of elephant sightings**.
- Ensure tree removal (7 Kohomba trees) follows proper **approval and documentation** protocols. Avoid unnecessary vegetation clearance unless approved under environmental guidelines.
- Farmers requested green gram seed compensation under the Livelihood Support Assistance program. As of the visit date, no compensation had been provided. Farmers requested the compensation in June.
- Continue involving the **SAC and FO** in monitoring the use of dredged material and ensure transparent sharing of project timelines and decisions.
- Ensure **daily logs are maintained** on work progress, safety incidents, and environmental observations. Encourage SAC members to document concerns and share updates with project officials for prompt action.
- The contractor must display the subproject **name board** at the site to ensure public awareness and accountability of the works.

Risk Level Assessment

Taking into account that the **work is currently underway**, however, **no machinery operation** was observed **during the field visit due to the rainy**. It is important to note that the **tank is located within a wildlife and forest protected area**, and the **required approval for rehabilitation** has been obtained from the **relevant departments**. The **tank rehabilitation activities** were initiated with the **full agreement of the farmers to forego cultivation** during the Yala season of 2025. Potential weather-related delays are considered **high**, although **major challenges in material transportation** may occur during the **rainy season**. Further, **artificial water drawdowns** were carried out, and due to **heavy rain**, water **drawdown** may need to be done again. The site is categorized as **Moderate-risk**, with a **high likelihood of completing the rehabilitation on or before 30th September 2025**.
