

Field Visit Report
Murunga Wewa Rehabilitation (Phase II – CSIAP)
Southern Province

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



20/05/2025
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FIELD VISIT REPORT

MURUNGA WEWA TANK REHABILITATION (PHASE II – CSIAP)

Date of Visit: 19/05/2025

Location: Murunga Wewa Tank, Wilmannna Cascade, Hambantota District

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

Contractor: CJ Construction

Start Date of Work/ contractor mobilized: 29th April 2025

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

Background

Murunga Wewa tank has been selected for rehabilitation under Phase II of the CSIAP. The tank supports 09 beneficiary farmers cultivating approximately 30 acres of paddy in both *Yala* and *Maha* seasons annually. The tank falls within a wildlife-protected area and the required approval for rehabilitation has been obtained from the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWLC). The tank rehabilitation activities were initiated with full agreement from the farmers to forego cultivation during the Yala season of 2025.



Field Observations

1. Construction and Site Management:
The contractor has established a site office at the worksite.



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



3. About eight laborers were engaged in light duties during the visit.



4. Construction Progress & Delay: Farmers reported significant deviations in the weather pattern, with an unusual increase in rainfall during the last months. The contractor originally planned to complete the rehabilitation by August 2025, but due to unusually heavy rains over the past three months, completion is now expected by September 2025.



5. Environmental Compliance: The tank is located within a wildlife boundary. Elephant movement and crocodile sightings were noted, especially Elephant movements after 4:30 pm. Contractors are not permitted to work after 6:00 pm. An elephant fence has been temporarily installed to safeguard workers and equipment. It was reported that wildlife officer visits the site regularly during major construction/ rehabilitation activities. All relevant information (vehicle numbers, worker names, IDs) was submitted to DWLC beforehand. Approximately 30% of tank water is retained to support wildlife, in line with DWLC guidance.



6. Road Access: While no access blocks were observed, the road to the site is in poor condition. However, due to the area's sensitive environmental status, DWLC has denied permission for road rehabilitation to prevent increased human movement, agricultural expansion, and encroachment into the protected area.

7. Construction materials and burrow pits were observed; however, the test reports from IA for burrow samples are pending. Slight vegetation clearing and general site clearing were noted. No tree removals were observed. The contractor has rented accommodation 1.5 km from the site for worker housing.

8. Community & SAC Engagement: Farmers and SAC members confirmed they had participated in information and ratification meetings, and agreed to forego the Yala season. SAC members received training on monitoring material quality, work supervision, and implementing rotational visits to the site. Due to wildlife threats, especially to female SAC members, consistent on-site monitoring by women is challenging.



9. Farmer Cooperation & SAC Presence: Farmers agreed to forego Yala paddy cultivation. During the visit, members of the Farmer Organization and the Social Audit Committee (SAC) were present. SAC comprises five members (3 males, 2 females); however, only male members were observed onsite due to safety concerns stemming from wildlife presence.

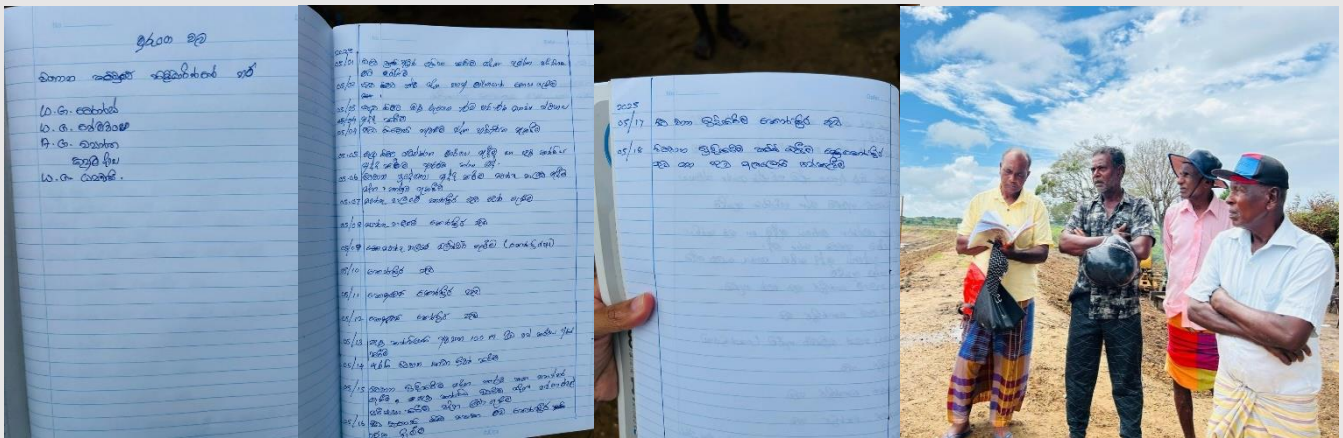


10. An artificial water drawdown was carried out at this tank. Farmers requested green gram seed compensation under the Livelihood Support Assistance program. As of the visit date, no compensation had been provided. Farmers requested the compensation by June.

11. Good practices identified include the implementation of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) measures at the site.



12. The site logbook is being properly maintained. The Site Audit Committee (SAC) is actively involved.



Recommendations

1. **Expedite Livelihood Compensation:** Immediate provision of green gram or suitable seeds should be ensured to mitigate livelihood losses.
2. **Scheduling the works:** The contractor should adjust the work schedule accordingly to optimize remaining dry periods without delay the construction works.
3. **Ensure Regular DWLC Coordination:** Continue close collaboration with DWLC and maintain daily updates, especially during critical construction/ rehabilitation phases, to ensure compliance.
4. **Document and Justify Safeguard Expenses:**

The elephant fence and other safety-related measures should be clearly documented and justified in the safeguard budget to ensure proper reimbursement.
5. **Display the name board:** 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, it is important to note that the tank is located within a wildlife-protected area, and the required approval for rehabilitation has been obtained from the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWLC). A DWLC officer visits the site on a daily basis once major activities commence. 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 moderate, although minor challenges in material transportation may occur during the rainy season. Since the proposed interventions are confined to upstream areas, the site is categorized as low-risk, with a high likelihood of completing the rehabilitation on or before 30th September 2025, without any delays due to cultivation.
