

Executive Summary

Strong relationship between water and culture is one of a notable feature in Sri Lankan history. Ancient water management technique of Sri Lanka is world famous and it has more focused on the sustainable use of water resource with ensuring the environment sustainability.

During the last two decades, the whole world is experiencing various adverse impacts of climate change and it has created various socio-economic and environmental issues in world wide. The Global climate Risk Index 2018 and 2019 ranked Sri Lanka respectively as 4th and 2nd most climate vulnerable country of the world. The impacts are already starting to show with several and long duration droughts and flash floods occurring almost every year in several parts of the country.

Sri Lanka's water resources are critically important to sustain the country's socio ecological integrity and development goals. In this context, Sustainable management of water resource is a very important subject and there should be a strategic and realistic long term plans, projects and programs for this limited resource.

"Sri Lanka Integrated Watershed and Water Resources Management Project" (IWRMP) which is executing under the Ministry of Irrigation is a five-year World Bank funded project mainly to address the current challenges instigated by the onset of climate change. The project development objective of IWRMP is to improve watershed and water resource planning and enhance the functionality of water resource infrastructure. Here, functionality refers to improved safety of dams and improved water distribution network of irrigation.

The project consist with four component as: Component 1: Watershed and Water Resources Planning, Component 2: Infrastructure Improvements, Component 3: Contingency Emergency Response and Component 4: Project Management. Between these various components, only Components one and two will involve any physical infrastructural works, while Component one will also aims to improve the capacity to plan water resources in the country.

The projects and programs financed with IBRD resources needed to comply with World Bank Operational Policies. Therefore all sub projects and components eligible for funding under IWRMP will comply with the World Bank's safeguard policies, in addition to conformity with environmental legislations of Government of Sri Lanka.

Proposed activities of IWRMP are related to following World Bank's safeguard policies: Environmental Assessment (OP 4.01), Natural Habitat (OP 4.04), Forests (OP 4.36), Physical Cultural Resources (OP 4.11), Involuntary Resettlement (OP 4.12) and Safety of Dams (OP 4.37). The proposed projects categorized into 4 categories according to the project type, sensitivity of the locations, scale of the project and the nature and magnitude of its potential environmental impacts. Accordingly, The IWRMP has been classified as category B.

The Environment and Social Management Framework (ESMF) of the IWRMP provides basic information on possible environment and social impacts which could be resulted due to the proposed project activities and facilitate to plan mitigatory actions on those issues. And the ESMF will guide to prepare relevant Environment and Social Management Plans for the respective project activities.