

**The Minutes of the Project Board Meeting – December 2023**  
**Climate Resilient Integrated Water Management Project (CRIWMP)**  
**27<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 2.00 p.m. at**  
**Main Auditorium of Mahaweli Authority,**  
**Ministry of Irrigation, T. B. Jayah Mawatha, Colombo 10**

**Present:**

**GoSL**

Mr U. D. C. Jayalal	-	Secretary to the Ministry of Irrigation
Mrs Chandika Ethugala	-	Additional Secretary (Land & Legal)/Mol
Mr Uditha Fernando	-	Deputy Director/ERD, Ministry of Finance (Via Zoom)
Ms S. V. S. Darshani	-	Deputy Director/PM&M, Ministry of Finance
Ms K. K. A. C. M. Kumarasinghe	-	Assistant Director/CCC, Ministry of Environment

**CRIWMP**

Eng. Chandana Edirisooriya	-	Project Director (CRIWMP), Mol
Mr S. A. D. T. Canicius	-	Deputy Project Director, CRIWMP/Mol
Eng M. H. A. Haseeb	-	Senior Project Engineer, CRIWMP/Mol
Maj Gen Renaka Udawatta (Rtd)	-	Procurement Specialist, CRIWMP/Mol
Mr. Anil Rajakaruna	-	Project Accountant, CRIWMP/Mol
Mr Lal Wakkumbura	-	Environmental & SS Specialist, CRIWMP/Mol
Eng. S. Kanarajan	-	Project Engineer, CRIWMP/Mol
Eng. A. C. Range Bandara	-	Project Engineer, CRIWMP/Mol
Mr Nalin Meemanage	-	Communication Specialist, CRIWMP/Mol
Ms Hiranthi Perera	-	Project Secretary, CRIWMP/Mol

**UNDP**

Ms Azuza Kubota	-	Resident Representative, UNDP
Dr Buddika Hapuarachchi	-	Team Lead (Climate & Environment), UNDP
Eng. Asoka Ajantha	-	Project Manager, UNDP
Mr M. Ashraff	-	Management Specialist / UNDP
Dr Damith Chandrasekera	-	Technical Specialist (CSA), CRIWMP/UNDP
Mr Vajira Hettige	-	Technical Specialist (Component 3) / UNDP
Mr Ifthikar Alom	-	Finance & Admin Associate/UNDP

Mr U. D. C. Jayalal, Secretary/Mol and the Chairman of the Project Board presided over the meeting.



## **Item 1: Opening Remarks by the National Project Director/CRIWMP**

- 1.1 National Project Director welcomed the Chairman of the Project Board and the Secretary to the Ministry of Irrigation, Mr. U. D. C. Jayalal, Ms Azuza Kubota, the Resident Representative of the UNDP and all other distinguished invitees to the CRIWMP Project Board meeting.
- 1.2 Eng. Chandana Edirisooriya, National Project Director in his opening remarks mentioned that CRIWMP has entered into the sixth year of implementation and currently the plans are underway to reach all the Project goals within the Year 2024 with combined efforts of the Ministry of Irrigation (Mol) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- 1.3 He stressed that more attention would be focused to the Project activities carried out in the ground level as there is very limited period to complete the Project and achieve the relevant targets. He further mentioned that in order to achieve the Project goals within the said period the fullest support and assistance from all the Responsible Parties, Stakeholder institutions and other implementing partners would be expected to greater extent.
- 1.4 National Project Director then invited the Secretary, Ministry of Irrigation (Mol) to deliver his welcome note, remarks and directions.

## **Item 2: Opening Remarks by the Project Board Chairman/Secretary, Ministry of Irrigation**

- 2.1 In his opening remarks Mr U. D. C. Jayalal, Secretary / Mol stated that the Ministry of Irrigation was currently implementing two GCF Projects, those were, CRIWMP and the GCF Knuckles Project and the Mol successfully held the Inception Workshop of the GCF Knuckles Project at the beginning of December 2023. He further mentioned that both the Projects have common key aspects i.e., Climate Change and how to be resilient for such extreme events and how climate adaptation takes place.
- 2.2 Secretary, Mol explained that the threat of climate change, which is fast becoming a reality in day-to-day economic life, is increasingly becoming a key factor in emerging challenges that a developing country such as Sri Lanka faces. Farmers in village tank systems in the dry zone of Sri Lanka depend on local rainfall for their livelihood. In the dry zone, conditions of water stress usually prevail throughout the year except for relatively short rainy period. Distribution of rainfall in many localities shows high annual variation, resulting in significant fluctuations. Fluctuation of rainfall sometimes leads to extreme events giving rise to widespread livelihood damages. Consequently, village tank farmers carry out their livelihood activities under persistent risk of rainfall fluctuations. Therefore, "adaptation" has been the key strategy that helped global farmers to face the climatic uncertainties, and village tank farmers are not an exception to this.
- 2.3 In addition, Secretary, Mol emphasized the importance to implement the Project with the assistance/support of the institutions under the Ministry of Irrigation such as Irrigation Department (ID), Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka (MASL), Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau (CECB), Mahaweli Consultancy Bureau (MCB), Central Engineering Services (Pvt) Ltd (CESL). He also stated that it would help the Government during its difficult times and for the economic sustainability and it is mandatory as per the available Treasury guidelines. He further mentioned that implementation of these activities through these institutions must be considered as direct implementing under the Executing Entity, Ministry of Irrigation. He directed the PMU to facilitate this on maximum level possible.



- 2.4 Secretary, MoI added that he would trust that, CRIWMP activities would certainly benefit the smallholder farmers in the Dry Zone and the Project would achieve its goals as planned, as the Project is reaching its completion very shortly.

### **Item 3: Opening Remarks by the Resident Representative of the UNDP, the Accredited Entity**

- 3.1 In her remarks Ms Kubota thanked the MoI for convening the year-end Project Board meeting of the CRIWMP to discuss the progress made by the Project in Year 2023, project specific challenges and risks, and agree on the Year 2024 Annual Work Plan of the Project.
- 3.2 She thanked the Secretary and the Ministry of Irrigation and Project Team for the successful implementation of activities and progress made during the Year 2023 and highlighted the importance of the project's objectives in order to achieve the food security and livelihood sustainability of the most marginalized communities at a critical time period.
- 3.3 Further Ms Kubota emphasized that the Government's ambitious commitment at COP28 and highlighted the need for an enhanced partnership among the government, development partners, private sector and the communities to tackle the increased climate risks. She also expressed appreciation to all Responsible Parties to the Project, i.e., the Ministry of Environment as the National Designated Authority (NDA), ERD, NPD, and the Ministry of Finance for their continued commitment and efforts to make the project successful.
- 3.4 She also appreciated the GoSL for its allocation of LKR 652 million as co-financing for the project activities, which showed the country ownership of the Project and mentioned that the project had achieved remarkable progress in 2023 by achieving almost 95% of direct beneficiaries. Ms Kubota further stated that the Project contributed considerably to addressing the current food security issues and continued to support and improve the livelihoods of climate vulnerable groups in Project districts. She also added that the celebration of Rural Women Day 2023 in Polonnaruwa was a good example of empowering women for economic development.
- 3.5 The Resident Representative, UNDP said that, in Year 2023, GCF approved an 18-month no-cost extension to the Project, allowing adequate time to achieve the Project objectives.
- 3.6 Ms Kubota also informed the meeting that the UNDP, with the other donor agencies, invested over USD 3 million in the Project districts in 2023 to meet the food security needs of vulnerable groups in the Project districts. This includes the distribution of seeds and other agricultural inputs, including backyard poultry. In partnership with the Japanese government, UNDP invested USD 2.7 million in backyard poultry and other food security programmes for Year 2023.
- 3.7 Ms Kubota stated that the Project must deliver nearly USD 10 million in 2024 (USD 7.0 million from GCF funds and USD 3.0 from the GoSL funds). She said that the last two funding disbursements from GCF would be pending, and the Project would be able to request the sixth disbursement in Year 2024.
- 3.8 In conclusion, Ms Kubota suggested to conduct a risk analysis to identify possible bottlenecks and develop risk mitigation measures in advance. She emphasized the need for a well-articulated existing strategy for the project since the project needs to complete all the project activities within the Year 2024 and then implement the exit strategy in Year 2025. She reassured once again that UNDP would stand ready to provide support to meet the delivery targets and, most importantly, the project's intended objectives.



#### **Item 4: Remarks by the Key Stakeholders of the CRIWMP**

**Ms S. A. S. Darshani, Deputy Director General, Department of Project Management & Monitoring, Ministry of Finance (Representative of the Department of Department of Project Management & Monitoring)**

- 4.1 Ms Darshani stated that the Department of Project Management & Monitoring is perceiving the Project's monthly and quarterly progress and pleased to note that CRIWMP has achieved 80% of its physical progress by now. She also said that the Project is at very satisfactory level when comparing to the other Projects under all ministries. Project has completed more than six years and only one year is left for the Project to complete the balance work in line with the Annual Work Plan for Year 2024.
- 4.2 Ms Darshani also emphasized that it would be very important to engage in a mechanism for a Monitoring and Evaluation of all assets for the Project and take all the measures to share the lessons learned with the other Projects. She also mentioned that as CRIWMP was the first GCF funded grant Project in Sri Lanka, all lessons learned and sharing of implementation experience would be very advantageous for any upcoming future projects.

**Ms Chamani Kumarasinghe, Assistant Director, Climate Change Secretariat, Ministry of Environment (Representative of the National Designated Authority)**

- 4.3 Ms Kumarasinghe stated that, though CRIWMP is the first GCF funded Project in Sri Lanka, the Project has been effectively implemented in the field. The mechanisms used for implementation of the Project could be shared with the other Projects in future as the Project has identified different modalities to implement the Project when facing challenges. It is also important to share the lessons learned and the experience gained from this Project with the other projects.
- 4.4 Ms Kumarasinghe also mentioned that it would be imperative to assess the Project activities with its final framework and the objectives as there would be a final audit performed on the Project.
- 4.5 She also added that, the Ministry of Environment as the National Designated Authority (NDA) for the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is responsible for the Project sustainability once the Project is completed, and, therefore, it has a major role to be performed.
- 4.6 Ms Kumarasinghe further stated that, the communication with the GCF is done by the NDA and the NDA has provided its fullest support for the Project to give the assurance of the co-financing and also to obtain the requested extension of the Project.
- 4.7 Finally, Ms Kumarasinghe said that NDA was very keen on observing that the Project is effectively running at the ground level and wished that the Project would be completed achieving its targets on time and delivering the benefits to the vulnerable communities.

**Remarks from the Ministry of Irrigation By Mrs. Chandika V. Ethugala, Additional Secretary (Land and Legal, Ministry of Irrigation)**

- 4.8 Mrs Ethugala stated that that the CRIWMP is the very first GCF grant Project in Sri Lanka and it has been successfully implemented by the Ministry of Irrigation since Year 2017 and now the Project has stepped into its sixth-year of implementation.



- 4.9 She explained that the climate uncertainty has become a major economic challenge to Sri Lanka and, therefore, the farming community whose livelihood depends heavily on climate, faces more severe consequences, while disturbances caused by extreme climate changes affect everyone. Therefore, the activities carried out by “Wew Gam Pubuduva” Project are very important to the people in the relevant Project administrative areas.
- 4.10 The Additional Secretary (Land & Legal), Mol also mentioned that since this Project has come to its final stage, she is confident that its activities would benefit the vulnerable communities in the Dry Zone in Sri Lanka at the end of its time period meeting the primary objective of the Project that is, **“Strengthening the resilience of smallholder farmers, particularly women, in the Dry Zone through improved water management to enhance their lives and livelihoods.”**
- 4.11 Mrs Ethugala expressed her greetings for the Project Director and the PMU, the UNDP team, and the other relevant stakeholders for their immense contribution in making this Project a success. She also stated that, the success of this Project would definitely set a right example for the second GCF grant Project in Sri Lanka that is, GCF Knuckles Project implemented by the Ministry of Irrigation.

**Item 5: Presentation of Progress of the Project for Year 2023 up to 31<sup>st</sup> November 2023**

- 5.1 As per the Agenda, the Project Progress up to 31<sup>st</sup> November 2023 was presented to the Board using a video presentation and a slide show covering all three Project components/subcomponents and key results achieved during that period.

Component 1: VIS (Upstream & Downstream)	-	80%
Component 1: Climate Smart Agriculture	-	82%
Component 2: Safe Drinking Water	-	95%
Component 3: Agro-met Advisories & Disaster Preparedness	-	88%

**Item 6: Presentation of CRIWMP Annual Work Plan for the Year 2024 - Annexure (A)**

The CRIWMP Annual Work Plan for the Year 2024 was presented to the Board by Eng. Asoka Ajantha, Technical Specialist, UNDP/CRIWMP and the Project Accountant, Mr Anil Rajakaruna.

The total financial value of the planned Project activities for the Year 2024 is **LKR 3,266,641,413.75** and the component-wise breakdown of the Budget is as follows:

Output 1 (Rehabilitation of Village Irrigation Systems) and Sub Output (Climate Smart Agriculture)	:	LKR 2,618,475,057.25
Output 2 (Safe Drinking Water)	:	LKR 137,430,725.25
Output 3 (Agro-Met Advisories and Disaster Preparedness)	:	LKR 278,848,131.25
Project Administration Cost (UNDP and Mol PMU)	:	LKR 231,887,500.00

**Status:** In view of the above, the approval was granted for the CRIWMP Annual Work Plan for Year 2024 by the Project Board.



## **Item 7: Presentation of Project Board Papers – Special Approvals**

The following Board Papers were presented and discussed at the Project Board Meeting.

### **7.1 Board Paper No: Mol/CRIWMP/PBM/DEC-2023/BP-01 – Explained by Project Director & Technical Specialist, Eng. Asoka Ajantha/UNDP (Annexure B)**

**Subject:** Providing updates and obtaining concurrence for the Proposals for approved CRIWMP Symposium, and Securing of Essential Funding

**Comments:** Project Director, CRIWMP said that the Proposed Note presented in this regard at the previous Project Board Meeting held in June 2023 in relevance to this Symposium was successfully approved by the Project Board. The Symposium is scheduled to be conducted in collaboration with the UNDP and a comprehensive Road Map has been crafted by the PMU to initiate the planned activities.

Eng. Asoka Ajantha, Project Manager, UNDP for CRIWMP explained that the estimated budget on this purpose would be USD 100,000.00 and expected to be facilitated by the GCF grant of the CRIWMP. He also added that the specific object of this Proposal would be to capture the lessons learned on the paradigm shift approach of an integrated water management at the cascade systems and document them in a specific manner so that they would be guiding the future interventions.

**Status:** **The Board approval was granted to proceed with the activity as stated in the Board Paper.**

### **7.2 Board Paper No: Mol/CRIWMP/PBM/DEC-2023/BP-02 - Explained by Eng. Asoka Ajantha/UNDP and Eng. M. H. A. Haseeb - (Annexure - C)**

**Subject:** Request approval to Re-allocate Necessary Funds Allocated for the Year 2023

**Comments:** Eng. Asoka Ajantha explained that the Project Board had approved USD 7.8 million from GCF proceeds for the financial Year 2023 at the Project Board meeting held in June 2023. The proposed budget enhancement was mainly for VIS rehabilitation (Output 01) and installing small and large advanced filtration for drinking water (Output 02). With this enhancement, the total allocation for VIS rehabilitation, the Project expedited the rehabilitation process in multiple ways. Thus, the Project requested the Project Board approval to increase this amount to USD 3.8 million as per the detailed breakdown stated in the Annexure 01 to the Board Paper.

Eng. Haseeb mentioned that due to favourable weather conditions, ease of economic crisis, there was an opportunity to expedite the VIS rehabilitation work. Hence, the specific objective of this Proposal would be to facilitate the disbursement of all allocated funds for the Year 2023 within the components to meet the annual targets and to facilitate the completion of the VIS rehabilitation in advance which would contribute to enhance the cropping intensity targets of the Project.

Dr Buddika Hapuarachchi, UNDP pointed out that as per the GCF guidelines the resources allocated to one component could not be moved for some other component and such guidelines should not be violated. Eng. Haseeb clarified in this regard stating that the fund re-allocations would be within the components and, therefore, it would not be against the GCF guidelines.

**Status:** **The Board approval was granted to proceed with the activity as stated in the Board Paper.**



**Item 8: Any other Matters to be Discussed:**

Project Director mentioned that there were no other matters to be discussed.

**Item 9: Delivering of Vote of Thanks**

- 9.1 Finally, Mr. S. A. D. T. Canicius, Deputy Project Director of CRIWMP delivered concluding remarks and thanked all participants for supporting the Project activities and attending the Project Board Meeting.
- 9.2 The Project Board meeting – December 2023 was concluded at 3.15 p.m.

Prepared by:

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Project Secretary/CRIWMP

Recommended and Approved by:

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**Eng. Chandana Edirisooriya**  
**National Project Director**  
**Climate Resilient Integrated Water Management Project (CRIWMP)**

Project Director  
Climate Resilient Integrated Water Management Project  
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**Chandika V. Ethugala**  
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**Saman Darshana Pandikorala**  
**Chairman of the Project Board - CRIWMP**  
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