Rapid Assessment Study of Integrated Welfare Management System (IWMS) Project

Summary Report

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1. Acronyms

Acronym	Formal Acronym Meaning
BPI	Business Process Improvement
BPR	Business Process Reengineering
DSRS	Detailed Software Requirement Specification
IRD	Inland Revenue Department
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ICTA	Information Communication Technology Agency
IWMS	Integrated Welfare Management System
JV	Joint Venture
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NPD	National Planning Department
RFP	Request for Proposal
SSN	Social Safety Net
SRS	Software Requirements Specification
TEC	Technical Evaluation Committee
UAT	User Acceptance Testing
WBB	Welfare Benefits Board

2. Project Background

The following rapid assessment qualitative study on the current progress and level of stakeholder engagement of the Integrated Welfare Management System (IWMS) project is for the Welfare Benefits Board at the Finance Ministry implemented by the Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA). ICTA is the main government institution responsible for creating policies and implementing digital projects for the digital transformation of Sri Lanka.[1]

In 2016, the World Bank approved $75 million from the International Development Association (IDA) in order to develop Sri Lanka's welfare programs to create an IWMS. Having an IWMS will help Sri Lanka enhance the equity, efficiency, and transparency of its social welfare programs.[2] Since 1994, the Samurdhi Program is the main and largest social welfare program and there are about 1.8 million beneficiaries of this program in Sri Lanka. The administration of welfare disbursement process is carried out by the Department of Samuridhi Commissioner General (SCGD) and the empowering of low income earners is carried out by the Samurdhi Authority of Sri Lanka (SASL).[3]

The IWMS project focuses on developing a single window for Sri Lanka Safety Net Management system.[4] The sole owner of the IWMS project is the Welfare Benefits Board (WBB) at the Ministry of Finance. The IT managers from the Social Safety Net provide technical guidance to the WBB for this project. The main objectives for the IWMS project is to improve efficiency and effectiveness of management and delivering of social welfare and subsidies.[5] Based on the project documents, the specific objectives of the IWMS project as follows:[6]

1. To develop a one stop shop for integrated welfare and subsidy management programs.
2. To integrate subsidy management related citizen services.
3. To integrate eSamurdhi system with population registry.
4. To integration of eSamurdhi with beneficiary evaluation and subsidy management solution.
5. To provide necessary connectivity and cloud infrastructure to system.

Activities

The main activities for the IWMS project are as follows:[7]

1) System study and design of architecture
2) Conduct the baseline survey
3) Set up of the project steering committee

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[1] ICTA (2018). Terms of Reference for Monitoring and Evaluation Consulting Organization.
[2] The World Bank (2 December 2016). World Bank approved $75 Million to strengthen Sri Lanka's social safety net program. Retrieved from https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/12/02/strengthen-sri-lankas-social-safety-net-program
[3] ICTA (n.d). Project proposal for Integrated eSamurdhi solution with population registry and beneficiary identification system
[4] ICTA (2019). Action plan of ICTA projects.
[5] ICTA (2019). Action plan of ICTA projects
[6] ICTA (2019). Action plan of ICTA projects.
[7] ICTA (2019). Action plan of ICTA projects.

4) Consult stakeholder
5) Develop the system
6) Maintain existing system
7) Classification of data, information and services and preparation of an information sharing policy
8) Prepare change management plan
9) Train users and administrators
10) Ensure software quality
11) Carryout stakeholder training and awareness
12) Procure HW

Key Outputs for the IWMS Project

The key outputs for the IWMS project are listed below.[8]

1) Developed integrated welfare management system
2) Prepared eligibility criteria for selecting beneficiaries

Desired Key Outcomes

Based on the project documents, the desired key outcomes from the IWMS project are outlined below.[9]

- Improved management welfare and subsidy management.
- Reduced number of grievances from beneficiaries.
- Beneficiaries are satisfied with the transparency.

3. Purpose of Study

For this rapid assessment qualitative study, the main purpose is to assess the current progress and level of stakeholder engagement of the IWMS project.

4. Methodology and Data Collection Methods

The methodology that was used for this study was qualitative rapid assessment. Rapid assessment uses multiple data collection methods to quickly assess a project an rapid assessment can be conducted any stage of a project or program.[10]

For the study, rapid appraisal methods such as document reviews, key informant interviews, and group interviews were used to collect qualitative data in order to answer the evaluation questions. The Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Consultants conducted field work on 23rd July 2019.

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[8] ICTA (2019). Action plan of ICTA projects.
[9] ICTA (2019). Action plan of ICTA projects.
[10] International Training & Education Center for Health (2008). Rapid Evaluation. Tech Technical Implementation Guide #6. Retrieved from http://www.pointk.org/resources/files/TIG_6_Rapid_Eval.pdf

Key Informant Interviews
The following government official from the Ministry of Finance below was interviewed in order to understand the current progress and level of stakeholder engagement for the IWMS project. Appendix 1 shows the interview protocol used for the interview with the government official for the IWMS project.

- Mr. Rangana Silva, IT Manager for Social Safety Net (SSN) Project, Ministry of Finance

Document Reviews
The project proposal and other relevant documents were reviewed by the M&E consultants.

5. Limitations of Data Collection Methods

One of the major limitations for this study was that KPMG staff involved in the IWMS project were reluctant to be interviewed for this study. Numerous attempts were made to schedule an interview with KPMG by the M&E Consultants, but they were not cooperative to take part in this study. As a result, only the viewpoints of the government official from the Ministry of Finance taken into account in this study. Additionally, currently, a thorough outcomes evaluation using mixed methods (Quantitative and Qualitative) cannot be conducted, since the IWMS is not currently implemented and still in the developing stage.

6. Data Analysis

The M&E consultants mainly looked at themes of the collected qualitative data for this rapid assessment study.

7. Summary of Findings

The following section summarizes the results collected from the key informant interview with the key stakeholders for the IWMS project.

Current Progress of the IWMS Project
The initial time duration for the IWMS project was from March 2016 to December 2018. Currently, the project has been extended until December 2020.[11] Table 1 below demonstrates that the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) based on the National Planning Department (NPD) proposal allocated Rs.164.00 Million for the IWMS project. Table 1 illustrates the amount of funds that was allocated each year and the total disbursed (Bills raised) from 2016 to 2019. In 2018, there was no funds disbursed for the project. Up to now, for the IWMS project, from 2016 up to the end of June 2019, total spent is Rs.35.18 Million and total bills in hand is Rs.27.23 Million.

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[11]ICTA (2019). Capital project expenditure.

Table 1: Financial Progress for the IWMS Project

Item	Rs (Million)
TEC (Rs) According to the NPD Proposal	164.00
2016 Allocation	114.00
2016 Total Disbursed (Bills Raised)	4.30
2017 Allocation	70.00
2017 Total Disbursed (Bills Raised)	58.11
2018 Allocation	18.00
2018 Total Disbursed (Bills Raised)	-
2019 Allocation	37.50
2019 Total Disbursed (Bills Raised)	4.88
Total Spent Up to End of June 2019	35.18
Bills in Hand/Outstanding Bills	27.23

Source: ICTA (2019). Capital project expenditure.

The IWMS project contract was signed on December 2016 between KPMG and Informatics (Joint Venture) and ICTA. For this project, KPMG was in charge of doing the business analysis part and Informatics was in charge of doing the software development part. The duration for the project was 8 months but the project has been delayed by about two years. Currently, iteration is fully completed and parts have iteration two and iteration three have been completed. The Ministry of Finance is planning to launch the IWMS data base by the end of July 2019 even though some parts of iteration 2 and iteration 3 are not completed. At the end of July 2019, KPMG/Informatics will hand over the IWMS project to WBB. In order to complete the parts that are not completed for iteration 2 and iteration 3, the Ministry of Finance plans to do it internally through their IT team by hiring university graduates as software development consultants. Further, in terms of training for the IWMS data base, KPMG has conducted training to 4 officers at the WBB and to two officers at the SSN project on how to use the system. Going forward, officials from the SSN project will train government officials from the IWMS data base.

The interviewed key stakeholders for the IWMS project mentioned the following main reasons for the delay in the IWMS project.

- **High Turnover of ICTA Project Managers:** The high turnover of ICTA project managers created some delays and inefficiencies for the IWMS project. The ICTA project managers changed three times during this project. Thus, the new project managers coming in needed time to understand the context of IWMS project. Also, when the ICTA project managers kept on changing there was lack of guidance provided to the WBB and developers of this project.

- **High Turnover of Developers Staff:** Due the high turnover of KPMG staff and Informatics staff working on this project contributed to this project being delayed. The quality assurance process for the IWMS project was weak due to the high turnover of software developers from Informatics.

- **Delays in Payments to Vendors:** The IWMS project got delayed by one month when payments were not made on time to KPMG.

- **Conflicts and Payment Issues between Joint Venture Parties:** Due to internal conflicts between KPMG and Informatics contributed to the delay in this project. Also, when KPMG did not make payments to Informatics, they stopped working on this project.

- **Insufficient Time Allocated for the IWMS Project:** The time allocated for the development of IWMS data base was only 8 months. The time is not sufficient at all to complete the deliverables for this project.

- **Issues with the BPI Study:** The BPI study for this project is taken from somewhere else and it has been applied to this project. Thus, the Software Requirement Specifications (SRS) have been created according to that BPI study. Due to a proper BPI study not been done it's been an issue for this project, since some of the requirements of the WBB have been not taken into account.

Level of Stakeholder Engagement for the IWMS Project

The key stakeholders interviewed indicated that there were communication barriers and issues faced by the stakeholders involved in this project. For instance, the WBB found it difficult that they could not communicate directly with the developers KPMG/Informatics for the IWMS project, since the contract with the developer was signed with ICTA and not with the WBB. Thus, all communications had to go through ICTA, which was a tedious process at times for the WBB. Additionally, at the earlier stages of the project, the attendance of Informatics for stakeholder meetings were poor, but now they are participating regularly. At the start of the project, when KPMG was only participating for stakeholder meetings there was a huge knowledge gap between KPMG and Informatics for this project. KPMG had to communicate the information from the stakeholder meetings to Informatics when Informatics did not attend meetings initially.

Moreover, the Ministry of Finance government official credits the former CEO of ICTA and the current ICTA project manager for being instrumental to getting this project moving forward by engaging all the key stakeholders, when the IWMS project was stalled and delayed. The officials from the WBB and SSN project find it easy to work with the current ICTA project manager and they fully satisfied with the work of the current ICTA project manager.

Currently, all key stakeholders involved in this project meet once a week. Now, due to the good working relationship developed between ICTA, WBB, and KPMG/Informatics, they are all working well. However, the WBB is not satisfied with the quality assurance process done by KPMG/Informatics for the IWMS data base. The quality assurance had a lot of errors and bugs that was found by WBB. On the other, the WBB is satisfied with the business approach done by KPMG/Informatics for this project.

Suggestions to ICTA by Key Stakeholders

The interviewed key stakeholder made the following suggestions below to ICTA to take into account for future projects.

- For the current IWMS project contract, the WBB, Ministry of Finance does not have a direct agreement with vendor. Due to this, they do not have any legal bond with them. For future projects, its better to incorporate the client (Eg: WBB) also in the contract. This will enable the client to communicate directly with the developer as well.
- A proper technical evaluation of vendors should be conducted by ICTA.
- In the future, vendors with join ventures should not be selected for projects. When there is conflicts between joint venture parties, the project gets stalled.
- A needs assessment of the client should be conducted by ICTA before procurement is done.
- Consider having the client as part of the procurement process.

8. Conclusion

The following qualitative rapid assessment looked at the current progress and the level of stakeholder engagement for the IWMS project. For this study, key informant interview was conducted with a key stakeholder from the Ministry of Finance for the IWMS project. The vendor for this project KPMG was reluctant to participate to be interviewed for this study. Currently, all the key stakeholders involved in this project have been working well. The Ministry of Finance is planning to launch the IWMS data base at the end of July 2019. For this project, the developers were KPMG and Informatics (Joint venture). The duration for the project was 8 months but the project has been delayed by about two years. The main reasons for the delay in the IWMS project are high turnover of ICTA project staff, high turnover of developers' staff, delays in payments to vendors, conflicts between KPMG and Informatics, insufficient time allocated to work on the IWMS project, and gaps in the BPI study. When the IWMS project was stalled, the CEO of ICTA and the current project manager from ICTA played a vital role to get the project started again and to bring WBB and KPMG/Informatics to work together to develop the IWMS data base.

9. Recommendations

The following recommendations below are made by the M&E Consultants to ICTA:

*Have a Strong Contract Management Process for Future Projects***:** For future projects, a contract management team should be considered to be appointed consisting of members from ICTA technical team, procurement and ministry officials where the project is taking place (client) to ensure that the problems and issues be addressed at the start of the project and to monitor the project progress and timelines.

Have a Clear Communication Plan and Strategy for Future Projects: When there are multiple stakeholders involved having a strong communication plan and strategy is critical for the success of a project. Each stakeholder should have one person designated with good written and verbal

communication skills for communication and all key stakeholders involved in the project should be able to communicate directly with each other in order to reduce communication barriers.

Have Accurate Timeline for Deliverables for the RFP: ICTA should work closely with an industry expert consultant to come up with accurate estimation for the deliverables in the RFP. This way, it will avoid vendors saying that tasks outlined in the RFP were underestimated for a particular project.

Engage a Single Project Manager Throughout the Project: For future projects, ICTA should consider having the same project manager for the duration of the project. Having the same project manager for the duration of the project will help to ensure that the project will be run smoothly and that there will be stability for the project.

Conduct an Outcome Evaluation of the IWMS After its Fully Implemented: Once the IWMS is fully implemented and in about 2 to 3 years, an outcomes evaluation using a mixed method (Quantitative and Qualitative) design should be conducted. This will help ICTA to assess the achievement and non-achievement of outcomes.

Appendix 1: Government Officials Key Informant Interview Protocol for IWMS Project

Date:_____

Time:_____

Interviewee Name:_____

Interviewer(s):_____

Location:_____

Informed Consent Form

ICTA has contracted Skills International (Pvt) Limited to provide ongoing Monitoring and Evaluations (M &E) of its digital projects. As a key stakeholder of the Integrated Welfare Management System (IWMS) project, we would like to ask your permission in order to participate in this interview voluntarily. The main purpose of this interview is to assess the current progress of the implementation and stakeholder engagement of the IWMS project.

The interview will take around **30 minutes.**

- During the interview, we will ask questions about your thoughts and personal experiences regarding the IWMS project.
- We will take notes during the interview.
- You can ask questions any point during the interview.
- You can skip any questions that you do not want to answer, and you can leave the interview anytime if you decide that you no longer want to participate.
- The interview notes and transcripts will be kept confidentially and privately.
- There won't be any monetary compensation for participating in this interview.
- If you don't want us to include anything you said to be included, please let us know.

We are asking for your verbal consent in order to participate in this interview.

Interview Questions

1. Please explain what has been your role and involvement in the IWMS project?

2. What activities of the IWMS project have been completed so far?
   Probe: Quality of the work completed
3. Please describe currently how well the IWMS project is being implemented?

4. What are the main challenges faced for the implementation of the IWMS project?
   Probe: Issues with vendor procurement/contract management/Why the implementation stopped/delays/What actions were taken

5. Going forward, how can these challenges be addressed successfully for the IWMS project?

6. To the best of your knowledge, how effective was interactions between the key stakeholders (Finance Ministry/KPMG/ICTA) for the IWMS project?

7. Did you take part in any training programs on how to use the IWMS? If so, what types of trainings did you take part in?
   Probe: How effective were the trainings?

8. Please share any other comments that you have about the IWMS project?

Demographic Questions

1. What is your profession/designation?_____

2. What is the name of your government agency you work for?_____

3. What is your telephone number?_____

Appendix 2: Vendors Key Informant Interview Protocol for IWMS Project

Date:_____
Time:_____
Interviewee Name:_____
Interviewer(s):_____
Location:_____

Informed Consent Form

ICTA has contracted Skills International (Pvt) Limited to provide ongoing Monitoring and Evaluations (M&E) of its digital projects. As the vendor of the Integrated Welfare Management System (IWMS) project, we would like to ask your permission in order to participate in this interview voluntarily. The main purpose of this interview is to assess the current progress of the implementation and stakeholder engagement of the IWMS project.

The interview will take around **30 minutes.**

- During the interview, we will ask questions about your thoughts and personal experiences regarding the IWMS project.
- You can ask questions any point during the interview.
- We will audio tape (If permitted) and take notes during the interview.
- You can skip any questions that you do not want to answer, and you can leave the interview anytime if you decide that you no longer want to participate.
- The interview notes and transcripts will be kept confidentially and privately.
- There won't be any monetary compensation for participating in this interview.
- If you don't want us to include anything you said to be included, please let us know.

We are asking for your verbal consent in order to participate in this interview.
Interview Questions

1. Please explain what has been your role and involvement in the IWMS project?

2. What activities of the IWMS project have been completed so far?
    a. Probe: Timeline of activities

3. Please describe currently how well the IWMS project is being implemented?

4. What are the main challenges faced for the implementation of the IWMS project?
    a. Probe: Why the implementation stopped/delays/What actions were taken to expedite it

5. Going forward, how are these challenges been addressed successfully for the IWMS project?

6. To the best of your knowledge, how effective was interactions between the key stakeholders (Finance Ministry/KPMG/ICTA) for the IWMS project?

7. Did you provide any training programs on how to use the IWMS for the relevant government officials? If so, what types of trainings did KPMG provide?
   a. <u>Probe:</u> Plans for future trainings/Creation of a user manual

8. Please share any other comments that you have about the IWMS project?

Demographic Questions

1. What is your profession/designation?_____

2. What is the name of your organization you work for?_____

3. What is your telephone number?_____