IWMI’s vulnerability mapping shapes Sri Lanka’s National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

SUMMARY

IWMI and its partners, Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) and National Council for Disaster Management, Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights, Sri Lanka, conducted a study ‘Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Agriculture in Sri Lanka: A Review and Preliminary Vulnerability Mapping’, which significantly influenced Sri Lanka’s climate change strategies and policies. The study, a first of its kind, provided background information and identified research gaps on the impacts of climate change on the agricultural sector and water resources.
It used a climate change vulnerability index to identify climate change hotspots in agriculture, providing valuable insights into changes in precipitation, stress on water resources, and impacts on sectors such as paddy rice, tea, and coconut. In addition, suggestions were made for ‘no regrets’ adaptation interventions capable of addressing development and enhancing resilience, despite uncertainties.

IWMI’s analysis informed Sri Lanka’s Second National Communication (SNC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) before COP16 in 2010. The study was then incorporated into the country’s National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for 2011-2016, and several ‘no regrets’ interventions were included in the Strategy, including rainwater harvesting and restoration of an ancient water tank system to provide irrigation under drought, and water storage under floods. The study established the need for increasing the government’s capacity in climate change vulnerability analysis. IWMI supported this process by participating in various government expert committees, and by organizing trainings for civil servants. The recommendations from the study also led to an initiative to set up climate stations across Sri Lanka.