

DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION

A. Major Development Partners: Strategic Foci and Key Activities

1. Aligning with its priorities in the Public Investment Program 2018 as well as Vision 2025, the government has sought sizable loan-financed projects to expand access to and quality of higher education, especially outside of Western province. This is in addition to the overall increase in government financing to all state universities and introduction of a student loan scheme for private higher education. Development partners supporting the higher education subsector are mostly bilateral agencies, except the World Bank. The recent projects are summarized in the table. The focus of most bilateral support has been on technical areas, such as engineering and agriculture, and most funding goes to infrastructure provision. The Government of Japan, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, has provided grant financing to improve effective research, education, and promotion activities of dry zone agriculture in Northern province. The Government of India has provided several grants to improve university facilities.

Major Development Partners

Development Partner	Project Name	Duration	Amount (\$ million)
Tertiary Education Development			
Government of India (grant)	Construction of Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Auditorium at University of Ruhuna	2016–2018	1.8
	Providing Facilities to the Faculty of Agriculture at Kilinochchi for University of Jaffna	2014–2018	2.0
	Providing Facilities to the Faculty of Engineering at Kilinochchi for University of Jaffna	2014–2018	2.0
	Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies, Eastern University	2 years ^a	1.8
	New Gymnasium Complex and obtaining motor vehicles - Sabaragamuwa University	3 years ^b	2.2
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (loan)	Building Complex for the Faculty of Health Care Sciences, Eastern University	2016–2020	34.0
	South Eastern University of Sri Lanka Development Project -Phase 1B	2011–2018	10.8
Saudi Fund for Development (loan)	Wayamba University Township Development Project	2017–2021	28.0
Japan International Cooperation Agency (grant)	Establishment of Research and Training Complex at the Faculty of Agriculture	2016–2020	16.0
World Bank (loan)	Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century Project	2010–2015	40.0 ^c
	Accelerating Higher Education Development Programme	2017–2023	100.0 ^d

^a The project is in the pipeline with a proposed implementation of 2 years.

^b The project is in the pipeline with a proposed implementation of 3 years.

^c International Development Association (IDA) credit.

^d Consisting of \$33 million IDA credit and \$67 million International Bank for Reconstruction and Development credit. Source: Department of External Resources, Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka.

2. The World Bank has engaged in higher education since 2003 to support the government's long-term tertiary education reform program. The first project's focus was quality and relevance of higher education through institutional capacity development and financing specific initiatives to improve quality of higher education and employability of graduates.¹ The follow-on project, Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century, established the Sri Lanka Qualification Framework and a quality assurance system for all higher education institutions. It introduced university development grants to improve social and economic relevance of university education, and quality and innovation grants to improve the performance of selected programs. It also strengthened alternative higher education by modernizing the Sri Lanka Institute for Advanced Technological Education. The third project, Accelerating Higher Education Development Programme, will increase enrollment in priority disciplines, improve the quality of degree programs, and promote research and innovation in the higher education subsector using results-based financing.

B. Institutional Arrangements and Processes for Development Coordination

3. Development coordination in the higher education subsector is carried out through interaction of (i) the Ministry of Higher Education and Cultural Affairs (MHECA) as the main ministry responsible for higher education policy and strategy; (ii) the University Grants Commission which channels public funding to universities and higher education institutions under its purview; (iii) the National Planning Department under the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, which assesses development proposals for universities in line with the strategic directions of national development; (iv) the National Budget Department and Department of External Resources, which considers financing from domestic or foreign funding sources.

C. Achievements and Issues

4. In 2017, the MHECA developed a medium-term sector development strategy (2017–2025), reflecting the national priorities.² This sets the focus areas for investment. The proposed ADB financing is fully aligned with the strategy. Through selection of participating universities, the MHECA and University Grants Commission guided the design process so as not to overlap with other development partners' ongoing and planned support. The World Bank's ongoing program includes capital investment support for science, technology, engineering, and medical studies in state universities, which will exclude the technology and engineering programs that will be supported by ADB financing. The MHECA will monitor the overall progress in all higher education projects and report against the targets set in the higher education development strategy as part of its regular planning and monitoring activities.

5. For overall higher education sector development monitoring and coordination, mechanisms to include private higher education institutions and state universities and higher education institutions under the purview of other line ministries should be strengthened.

D. Summary and Recommendations

6. The proposed project has a clearly defined boundary of support hinged on the four universities' technology and engineering faculties, while contributing to the priority areas in the overall Higher Education Sector Development Strategy. During the implementation, the MHECA will guide the project activities to create synergies and greater value addition to overall sector

¹ The World Bank. 2003. *Project Appraisal Document: Sri Lanka - Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education*. Washington D.C.

² Ministry of Higher Education and Cultural Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka. Forthcoming. *Higher Education Development Strategy*. Colombo.

development and the activities supported by the World Bank program, while meeting all committed results and avoiding duplication in investment. This will require a close review of annual work plans of the participating universities for the project, in comparison with their overall annual work plans, to identify areas for collaboration, complementarity, or duplication. The role of the university project coordination committee will be crucial in communicating and coordinating project activities with the university-wide program and/or planning team. The project management unit and the project implementation units as well as management engaged in project implementation at the ministry and the university level will be briefed on the potential issues in coordination. They will develop coordination mechanisms such as joint annual planning processes and joint monitoring or progress monitoring meetings at both the university and ministry level.