

DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION

A. Major Development Partners: Strategic Focus and Key Activities

1. **Common sector focus and ownership.** Development partners have supported Sri Lanka's education sector for many years. More recent investments from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank supported a transition from the traditional project approach to a common sector approach. The introduction of the Education Sector Development Framework and Program 2013–2017 by the Ministry of Education (MOE) marked this transition, providing a platform for all development financing to support a common sector framework.

2. **Key development partners.** ADB and the World Bank are the largest development partners in Sri Lanka's education sector. Both work in all three subsectors—general education, higher (university) education, and technical and vocational education and training—and have collaborated in secondary education and skills development. Continued close coordination between ADB's proposed results-based lending (RBL) program (Secondary Education Sector Improvement Program) and the World Bank's General Education Modernization Project needs to ensure that they are complementary and not duplicative. Other significant development partners in the education sector are the governments of Japan and Korea; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and United Nations Children's Fund; and the OPEC Fund for International Development. The table shows the programs supported by the main development partners in Sri Lanka's education sector since 2015.

Major Development Partners

Development Partner	Name of Operation	Focus Area (P/S/B)	Duration	Amount (\$ million)
ADB	Secondary Education Sector Improvement Program	S - Senior	2020–2025	400.00
World Bank	General Education Modernization Project includes both primary and lower secondary education. Key interventions include: Improving English Language and Mathematics Learning, Pre-Service Teacher Training; Strengthening Education Inspection Services; Strengthen School-Based Management; Support for Inclusive Education and School health and nutrition program	B - up to grade 9 (remedial mathematics grade 10)	2018–2022	100.00
KOICA	National College of Education for Technology	S	2015–2022	13.00
	Development of Educational Environment of 13 Schools in Killinochchi District (grades 1–11)	B	2018–2022	7.50
KEXIM	Establishment of Information and Communication Technology Hubs for Secondary Education (1 national and 2 provincial hubs in eastern and southern provinces; includes infrastructure and equipment; training for operators and 60 teachers)	S	2019–2021	30.01
UNESCO	Education for All, Sustainable Development Goals	B	2018–2021	0.40
UNICEF	Early Childhood Education, Primary and Lower Secondary Education, Peace and Social Cohesion	B - up to grade 9	2018–2022	0.25
OFID	Vocational Education (13-year mandatory vocational education)	S - Senior	2019–2023	50.00
JICA	Strengthening Education for Children with Disabilities, Inclusive Education	B	2019–2021	Mainly technical assistance
	Plantation Schools			

ADB = Asian Development Bank; B = both primary and secondary education; JICA = Japan International Cooperation Agency; KEXIM = Export-Import Bank of Korea; KOICA = Korea International Cooperation Agency; OFID = OPEC Fund for International Development; P = primary education; S = secondary education; UNESCO = United Nations

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; UNICEF = United Nations Children's Fund.
Source: Asian Development Bank.

B. Institutional Arrangements and Processes for Development Coordination

3. **Mechanisms and processes for development coordination.** The Sector Monitoring and Technical Support Unit at MOE has successfully managed the transition from a project approach to a full program approach. The Education Sector Development Framework and Program has since been updated and superseded by MOE's General Education Sector Development Plan (GESDP) 2020–2025, which has four thrusts: (i) educational quality, (ii) equity, (iii) stewardship, and (iv) evidence-based policy and planning. While funding modalities may vary, ADB and other development partners are committed to supporting the GESDP and coordinating their work to this end.

4. Cooperation and coordination of development partners' activities in the education sector take place through meetings, field missions, and exchanges of information and documents. The transformative reform agenda for secondary education highlighted in the GESDP was shaped by ADB's long-term dialogue with the government, the experience and lessons derived from its previous RBL program, Education Sector Development Program.¹ The lessons underscore that achieving sector objectives requires not only good coordination between development partners and the government, but also effective coordination between MOE's departments, and good partnership between MOE and the provinces.² ADB and the World Bank will implement their projects through both national agencies (MOE, National Institute of Education, Department of Examinations, and Department of Education Publications) and provincial agencies (provincial education authorities and zonal education offices) and schools.

5. **Benefits of results-based lending for development coordination.** The program's RBL modality is particularly useful for promoting complementarity and coordination. The value of RBL can be attributed to three factors: (i) leadership by the host country or organization—Sri Lanka's MOE leads and owns the program; (ii) single comprehensive program and budget framework—the program has such a framework, as captured in its plans and documentation; and (iii) efforts to increase the use of local systems—when preparing the RBL program, the team assessed the country systems for program design and implementation, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation, and determined institutional actions to strengthen these systems for use in program delivery.

6. **Partnerships and strategic areas of collaboration.** The program will promote partnerships in its design and implementation through collaborative work in several strategic areas. The curriculum, teacher standard, and assessment frameworks lay the foundation for all the reforms and are an overarching guide for all stakeholders in the sector. Coordination between the ADB program and the World Bank project involves quarterly meetings between MOE, the World Bank, and ADB to coordinate activities related to (i) remedial materials on mathematics for grade 10; (ii) school-based leadership development activities; (iii) overall alignment in the development and implementation of curricula, pedagogy, and assessments, which will affect both primary and secondary education; and (iv) the further development of the national education management information system, and the setting of national norms, frameworks, and quality standards. The dialogue on strengthening post-secondary pathways—for vocational education and training, in particular—will be coordinated with the OPEC Fund for International Development.

¹ ADB. 2013. [Sri Lanka: Education Sector Development Program](#). Manila.

² ADB. 2016. [Country Assistance Program Evaluation for Sri Lanka: Education Sector Assessment](#). Manila.

In addition, quarterly meetings of the National Program Steering Committee will include representation from key development partners as needed.

C. Achievements and Issues

7. **Recent experience, achievements, and issues.** ADB's recent support to Sri Lanka's education sector includes the (i) Science and Technology Human Resource Development Project (2018–2023),³ which focuses on university education, (ii) Skills Sector Enhancement Program (2014–2016), which focused on technical and vocational education and training, and (iii) Education Sector Development Program (2013–2017) (footnote 1). Both the Education Sector Development Program and the Skills Sector Enhancement Program used the RBL modality so the government, including MOE, are familiar with the approach and the formulation of disbursement-linked indicators. ADB's previous support yielded two key lessons relating to development coordination. First, the government's efforts to improve the systems for recruiting and deploying schoolteachers to rural disadvantaged schools—especially in mathematics, English, science, and technology (including information technology)—must be coordinated with the provision by development partners of rehabilitation support and equipment for laboratories and schools. Second, the interface between secondary and tertiary education systems plays a critical role in minimizing unemployment among graduates. ADB is already critically positioned in both subsectors and needs to coordinate proactively with all development partners that support secondary and tertiary education, and skills training and labor issues.

D. Summary and Recommendations

8. The latest RBL program builds on lessons from previous investments by ADB and development partners in Sri Lanka's education sector, and the successes generated by their complementary approach and multipartner dialogue. The program's design and implementation strategy reflects this. Effective development coordination requires that special attention be given to (i) tripartite coordination between the government, ADB, and the World Bank; (ii) coordination between development partners and with subnational authorities to boost support at provincial, zonal, and school levels; and (iii) coordination among all donors in the development and adoption of national data norms, various frameworks, and quality standards.

³ ADB. 2018. [Sri Lanka: Science and Technology Human Resource Development Project](#). Manila.