



# Ethnic Minority Development Framework

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## Sri Lanka: Technical Education Development Project

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**Asian Development Bank**

## **ETHNIC MINORITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

### **A. The Project**

1. The Project will directly benefit trainees and existing staff through the proposed University of Vocational Technology (Univotec) and the Colleges of Technology (CoTs), which would provide access to diploma- and degree-level qualifications that were previously unavailable in the technical education and vocational training (TEVT) sector.

### **B. Background**

2. The population in Sri Lanka in 2005 was about 19.9 million with a population growth rate of 1.3%. The Sinhalese population comprises 74%, while Tamils and Muslims represent 18% and 7%, respectively. Tamils comprise the largest ethnic minority group (EMG) and two-thirds of the Tamil population lives in the North and East of Sri Lanka. The Muslim population is concentrated in the Eastern province (about 32%). Muslims also use Tamil as their medium of instruction in education. There is no readily available information on the ethnic composition of the total number of students enrolled in the public and private sector training institutions. However, the courses offered in Technical Colleges (TCs) by medium of instruction are useful in understanding the ethnic composition of students. It is estimated that 15% of the total number of students in the technical colleges followed courses in Tamil medium. The percentages of courses offered are as follows, Sinhala, 56%; Tamil, 31%; and English, 13%. In contrast, the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority offers a total number of 150 courses and none was in the Tamil medium of instruction. This implies that the needs of ethnic communities have not been taken into account in each training provider despite some courses being offered in the common medium of instruction, which is English.

3. There is a sense of urgency to address the needs of ethnic minorities, particularly housing, social services and education in the North and East after the peace agreement was signed between the Government and the Liberation Tamils of Tiger Elam (LTTE) in 2002. In 1956 Sinhala was declared as the official language and it is evident that due to this reason there had been a decrease in the admission of Tamil speaking community in to the national training institutes. Sri Lanka has experienced a civil war with the separatist movement of Tamil Tigers and as a result of the armed conflict the North and East areas have been severely affected. The districts affected by the armed conflict are Jaffna, Killinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya in the Northern Province and Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampari in the Eastern Province.

4. The Government strategy in the establishment of CoTs is to upgrade one TC in each province to cater to the economic needs of the local and the provincial economy and to benefit the unemployed youths, the poor and EMGs of the area. To date, grant support has been obtained from a development partner to support the proposed Jaffna CoT located in the Northern Province, while negotiations are underway for grant support to the CoT to be upgraded in the Eastern Province. The Project aims to provide complementary support to establish CoTs in other provinces. In addition, the Project will support the establishment of the Univotec, which will provide the opportunity for students and workers from different provinces, many of whom come from EMGs, to continue their higher education, even without General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Level (A/L) qualifications.

5. All the levels of the education system - pre-school, primary, secondary and technical education and vocational training - were severely affected in the North and the East were severely affected by the conflict. Some problems reported are low enrollment, large number of dropouts, lack of human resources, and damaged buildings and infrastructure facilities. It is expected that the establishment of CoTs in each province will provide new career opportunities in emerging new technologies relevant to industries and agriculture in the area and improve equity of access to training and education for the local people. With the improved security situation of the country, there will be improved mobility of students from one province to another and also to the university. The unrest that prevailed in the North and East due to internal displacement has been reduced thereby creating an environment where the youth in the conflict-affected areas have the opportunity to continue their postsecondary education. In addition, the Project provides an opportunity for upward mobility in higher education by creating alternative entry points into the system.

6. The existing staff in the CoTs will be given the opportunity to raise their educational qualifications leading to Bachelor of Technical Education. International fellowships and local training will be provided to the existing staff and the selection criteria will ensure representation across staff teaching in the various CoTs.

### **C. Legal Framework**

7. The constitutional provisions to meet the aspirations of ethnic minorities are found in Articles dealing with Fundamental Rights, Proportional Representation, Language Policy and Devolution. The 1978 Constitution, Article 18 declared Sinhala to be the official language of Sri Lanka. The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the constitution declared that Tamil language should also be an Official Language. English is declared to be the link language. The 16<sup>th</sup> Amendment passed in 1988 declared that Sinhala and Tamil should be the languages of administration and language of the courts throughout Sri Lanka. Within this legal framework, ethnic minorities in the various provinces of the country have the freedom to use their local languages for education. However, the use of English language as a link language is encouraged in higher education for the benefit of all ethnic groups.

### **D. Objectives of Ethnic Minority Development Framework**

8. The objective of the Ethnic Minority Development Framework is to ensure that ethnic minorities have equal access to Project benefits.

### **E. Proposed Strategies for Addressing Issues Related to Ethnic Minorities**

9. The following strategies are included in the Project to address issues relating to ethnic minorities:

- (i) Within the first year of project implementation, Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational and Technical Education (MSDVTE) will develop and approve a policy and an action plan to ensure equal access for different ethnic groups to CoTs and Univotec. Such a policy and plan will address issues such as student selection and allocation criteria, subsidy and scholarship programs, and awareness raising activities within the first year of project implementation.
- (ii) Each CoT and Univotec will appoint an ethnic minority issues coordinator to oversee and monitor the implementation of the ethnic minority policy.

- (iii) The language of study in the diploma and degree courses in the CoTs and the Univotec will be English, which will establish a common medium in all education-related matters. Conducting courses in the English medium would give equal opportunities to students who had their basic education in the Sinhala or Tamil medium.
- (iv) The project implementation unit (PIU), MSDVTE, Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC), each CoT, and Univotec will collect Project baseline ethnicity-disaggregated data, and, thereafter, regularly collect and maintain ethnicity-disaggregated data in its database.
- (v) The PIU, in cooperation with TVEC, the CoTs, and Univotec will regularly analyze Project output and impact indicators, including by ethnicity.
- (vi) In recruiting teaching staff for new diploma courses and administrators for the proposed CoTs in the North and East, priority should be given to those who are proficient in both English and Tamil languages.
- (vii) Promote activities for ethnic harmony and social cohesion through awareness of the importance of inter-ethnic understandings and peace building, career guidance and job placements.

## **F. Procedures**

10. An ethnic minority development framework (EMDF) is a policy and procedural framework for ethnic minority development plans (EMDPs) that are developed for subprojects, components, or investments, and that are to be approved during loan implementation. The Government will prepare a specific action for EMGs for projects with limited impacts on indigenous peoples or when there is a risk that the project may not bring intended benefits to the affected EMGs within a specific plan.

11. An EMDP addresses the following issues: (i) aspirations, needs, and preferred options of the affected EMGs; (ii) local social organization, cultural beliefs, ancestral territory, and resource use patterns among the affected EMGs; (iii) potential positive and negative impacts on EMGs; (iv) measures to avoid, mitigate, or compensate for the adverse project effects; (v) measures to ensure project benefits will accrue to EMGs; (vi) measure to strengthen social, legal, and technical capabilities of government institutions to address EMG issues; (vii) the possibility of involving local organizations and non-governmental organizations with expertise in EMG issues; (viii) budget allocation; and (ix) monitoring.

12. An ethnic minority specific action (EMSA) may take the form of: (i) incorporating EMGs (who might be excluded from the project) into the project beneficiary group, (ii) incorporating EMGs' specific needs (that may not be addressed by the project) into the project plan, and (iii) a common community action plan where EMGs live with the non-ethnic minority peoples in the same project location.

13. The EMDP or EMSA will be submitted to Asian Development Bank (ADB) for review and concurrence.

## **G. Impact of the Project on Ethnic Minorities**

14. The establishment of Univotec and nine CoTs and the capacity development of academic staff will increase access to technical education programs. With admission qualifications not requiring GCE A/L qualifications, the Project provides increased access to

higher education, particularly to youths and workers wishing to continue their education but have less than these qualifications.

15. The establishment of CoTs in all the provinces provides increased geographical proximity to potential students-trainees of technician programs, which were only previously available in the Colombo area.

16. Staff development activities will contribute to improving the quality of TEVT throughout the country, including in the Northern and Eastern provinces. The provision of equipment, library materials, furniture and other learning facilities in CoTs in the provinces will contribute to making facilities more attractive and thus minimize dropouts and generate enrollment in new courses.

17. As the medium of instruction will be English, the disadvantages arising based on ethnicity and local language will be minimized and cross-cultural communications and interactions among students and academic staff will be strengthened.

## **H. Implementation Arrangements**

18. The executing agency for the Project, the Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational and Technical Education (MSDVTE), will ensure that the strategies are fulfilled during Project implementation. The Project Implementation Unit will have the day-to-day responsibility of coordinating these tasks with the CoTs and Univotec. The Social Equity Specialist will assist the PIU in implementing this strategy.

## **I. Cost Estimates and Financing**

19. The Project's budget will allocate adequate resources for the various components and activities of the Project to implement the strategy. The Social Equity Specialist will support the implementation of this Framework. The ethnic minority issues coordinators will be assigned from the staff of the CoT and Univotec and will be provided related capacity-building.

## **J. Monitoring and Evaluation**

20. As executing agency, the MSDVTE will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation of activities related to EMGs. The Project will collect ethnicity-disaggregated data. The PIU will regularly analyze Project output and impact indicators, including by ethnicity. The ethnic minority issues coordinator in each CoT and Univotec will oversee and monitor the implementation of the strategy within their respective institutions.