**Sri Lanka**

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Dimensions**

1. **Strategic Framework**
   Government leaders in Sri Lanka have promoted workforce development (WfD) over the last two decades through sustained advocacy and systematic efforts. Positive steps have been taken to foster a demand-led approach to WfD. The assessments of economic prospects and their implications for skills have been adequate, although this can be further improved by greater coordination among the Department of National Planning, the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC), and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development (MYASD). Critical coordination for implementation has been improved by bringing most public training providers under MYASD, but inter-ministerial coordination and monitoring mechanisms within MYASD and the training institutions are not adequately comprehensive.

2. **System Oversight**
   Public institutions play a greater role than others in providing technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and programs are largely funded by the government. However, funding is not tied to the training output and outcomes. Competency standards for a number of occupations and fields have been established with industry participation, but wider use of standards in public and private institutions needs to be promoted. Quality assurance through course accreditation also needs to be further promoted. The National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) Framework, established in 2004, provides diversified pathways for skills acquisition and qualification upgrading for those following a vocational track. These pathways are further strengthened by mapping the NVQ Framework to the broader Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework.

3. **Service Delivery**
   Only limited incentives are offered to induce and enable private and public training providers to improve performance. The lack of enabling policy interventions to incentivize private training providers has limited the growth of private sector efforts to promote diversity and excellence in training. Linkages between industry and public training institutions are moderate and mainly exist at the head-office level of institutions. Training for center managers and instructors is provided in an ad hoc manner, so there is a need to institutionalize professional development. Improvements are also needed in the reporting of training and administrative data, and the design of policies and system improvements must be strongly supported by reliable data and the results of surveys and impact evaluations.
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SYSTEMS APPROACH FOR BETTER EDUCATION RESULTS  2
Executive Summary

Sustained economic growth and structural change have been a feature of the Sri Lankan economy over the past decade, despite armed internal conflict and the global financial crisis. This has transformed the skills requirements of the workforce. The country is following an ambitious development plan, published under the title “Mahinda Chintana,” aiming to become a regional hub in strategic economic areas and to transform itself into an efficiency-driven middle-income economy. As a result, the demand for skills is likely to accelerate. Unfortunately, despite high achievements in general education, major skills gaps and mismatches in the labor market remain that constrain firm and worker productivity.

The government of Sri Lanka recognizes the critical importance of developing a skilled labor force for achieving the country’s development goals, and it is committed to building a high quality, market demand-driven, and responsive workforce development (WfD) system. The strategic directions for WfD are outlined in both “Mahinda Chintana” and the National Human Resources and Employment Policy. The WfD sector-wide strategy is being developed by the Ministry of Finance and Planning and other relevant line ministries to operationalize these strategic directions. The SABER-Wfd diagnostic tool presents a great opportunity to enrich the policy dialogue on WfD in Sri Lanka, helping the government of Sri Lanka identify key bottlenecks and set priorities in the WfD process.

Summary of Results

The SABER-WFD scores, summarized on the cover of the report, show that the Sri Lankan WfD system is at the Established level along one of the three functional dimensions—Strategic Framework—and at the Emerging level along the other two dimensions: System Oversight and Service Delivery. The analysis highlights a strong commitment from the government in setting a strategic direction; however, the implementation of the strategy is lagging behind. In terms of system oversight, the system needs to be strengthened to ensure better efficiency and equity in the funding of public institutions. Moreover, although a major effort has been made in setting up the competency standards and the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) framework, challenges remain in their implementation and in ensuring the market relevance of those standards and qualifications. Finally, there is much room for improvement in service delivery. Accountability for training delivery needs to be strengthened, the relevance of public training programs needs to be improved, and both the diversity and excellence of training provision need to be increased through private sector participation.

Key Developments

Strategic Framework. There is sustained leadership from government leaders that manifests itself through a range of specific efforts to raise awareness of WfD and to include it as a priority in the country’s national strategy. However, advocacy by non-government stakeholders is generally absent. The government has taken some positive yet modest steps to foster a demand-led approach to WfD. However, the system remains largely supply-driven, with limited private sector participation both in training delivery and in providing feedback on skills needs to the system. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development (MYASD) is the main ministry in charge of skills development in Sri Lanka, but WfD responsibilities are spread across many ministries. Coordination for implementation of WfD policy presents a major challenge.

System Oversight. The analysis identified that the funding of the training institutions is ad hoc and is not tied to the training outputs or outcomes. There is no continuous monitoring and assessing of the equity of funding, and the links with employers are also generally weak. To ensure that standards in training are relevant and reliable, the NVQ Framework and Competency Based Training were both launched in 2004. There are diverse pathways for skills acquisition in Sri Lanka: The NVQ Framework provides clear pathways for skills acquisition within the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system. The NVQ system was also mapped to a general qualifications framework. Formal provisions for recognition

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1 This report presents a diagnostic assessment of Sri Lanka’s workforce development (WfD) policies and institutions as of December 2014. Sri Lanka’s Ministry of Education has since undergone several structural changes, and a new Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training was established in April 2015.
of prior learning (RPL) allow employees who have acquired competencies through work practice in an industry to have those competencies assessed and certified, which in turn opens avenues to them for further learning. However, the implementation of these initiatives needs strengthening.

**Service Delivery.** There are few mechanisms and incentives to enhance diversity and excellence in training provision. Most of the training is carried out by public providers; 70 percent of students receive training in public TVET institutions. While there are some links between public training providers and the industry in setting competency standards and in placing students in on-the-job training, these links are very weak in most institutions and require strengthening. Finally, there is no mechanism to ensure evidence-based accountability for the training results. The public training institutions mostly track only enrollments and completion results. Tracer studies are done only rarely and on an irregular basis.

**Looking Forward**
The government is committed to skills development – a priority which is outlined in “Mahinda Chintana” – to foster effective Wfd in Sri Lanka. A comprehensive skills development strategy is also currently under preparation; it aims to identify the key sectoral issues and policy directions needed to achieve the vision and goals set out in “Mahinda Chintana.”

The results of the SABER-WfD diagnostic tool, together with a comprehensive skills development report, are meant to contribute to the continuous efforts of the government to strengthen system efficiency, improve quality and relevance, and expand access in order to create a market-driven and responsive WfD system. Key areas for action suggested by the SABER-WfD analysis include the following:

**Strategic Framework**
- Strengthen mechanisms to ensure that strategic decisions are effectively followed.
- Strengthen the collection and monitoring of labor market information.
- Encourage employer participation in WfD.
- Improve sector-wide coordination.

**System Oversight**
- Ensure that efforts to expand access to TVET are sufficiently resourced.
- Promote continual improvement of the NVQ system and strengthen its implementation.
- Strengthen the system’s capacity for assessing trainees and employees.
- Improve instructor quality and school infrastructure and equipment.
- Encourage course accreditation for private and public sector providers that are not under the MYASD umbrella.
- Encourage training for the informal sector and for entrepreneurship.
- Strengthen RPL testing and career advancement services.
- Raise awareness about TVET as a career path as a step to improving its attractiveness.
- Introduce mechanisms to broaden the paths for lifetime learning, such as a training levy system.

**Service Delivery**
- Take steps to enforce the registration of non-state training providers.
- Broaden the incentives for non-state training providers to enter the market and improve quality.
- Increase administrative and financial autonomy of training providers.
- Strengthen the relevance of public training programs by increasing industry partnerships.
- Increase opportunities for the professional development of instructors.
- Strengthen the management information system (MIS) and take measures to improve reporting by providers.
1. Introduction

Sri Lanka aims to transform itself into an efficiency-driven middle-income economy and become a regional hub in strategic economic areas by 2016, as outlined in its national development strategy “Mahinda Chintana,” issued by the Ministry of Finance and National Planning in 2010.2 “Mahinda Chintana” stresses the importance of improving the education and training sectors to achieve these ambitious development goals, transforming them into modern, state-of-the-art systems and improving labor productivity by enhancing the skills of the population. To inform policy dialogue on these important issues, this report presents a comprehensive diagnostic of the country’s workforce development (WfD) policies and institutions. The results are based on a new World Bank tool designed for this purpose. Known as SABER-WfD, the tool is part of a World Bank initiative—the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) 3 —whose aim is to provide systematic documentation and assessment of the policy and institutional factors that influence the performance of education and training systems. The SABER-WfD tool examines initial, continuing, and targeted vocational education and training offered through multiple channels, and focuses largely on programs at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

The tool is based on an analytical framework4 that identifies three functional dimensions of WfD policies and institutions:

1) **Strategic Framework**, which refers to the praxis of advocacy, partnership, and coordination in relation to the objective of aligning WfD in critical areas to priorities for national development;

2) **System Oversight**, which refers to the arrangements governing funding, quality assurance, and learning pathways that shape the incentives and information signals affecting the choices of individuals, employers, training providers, and other stakeholders; and

3) **Service Delivery**, which refers to the diversity, organization, and management of training provision, both state and non-state, that delivers results on the ground by enabling individuals to acquire market- and job-relevant skills.

Taken together, these three dimensions allow for systematic analysis of the functioning of a WfD system as a whole. The focus in the SABER-WfD framework is on the institutional structures and practices of public policymaking and what they reveal about capacity in the system to conceptualize, design, coordinate, and implement policies in order to achieve results on the ground.

Each dimension is composed of three **policy goals** that correspond to important functional aspects of WfD systems (see Figure 1). Policy goals are further broken down into discrete **policy actions** and **topics** that reveal more detail about the system.5

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3 For details on SABER, see http://www.worldbank.org/education/saber.

4 For an explanation of the SABER-WfD framework, see Tan et al 2013.

5 See Annex 2 for an overview of the structure of the SABER-WfD framework.
topic to be scored on a four-point scale against standardized rubrics based on available knowledge on global good practice (See Figure 2). Topic scores are averaged to produce policy goal scores, which are then aggregated into dimension scores. The results are finalized following validation by the relevant national counterparts, including the informants themselves.

**Figure 2. SABER-Wfd Scoring Rubrics**

![Scoring Rubrics Diagram]


The rest of this report summarizes the key findings of the SABER-Wfd assessment and also presents the detailed results for each of the three functional dimensions. To put the results into context, the report begins with a brief profile of the country’s socioeconomic makeup.

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6 See Annex 3 for the rubrics used to score the data. As in other countries, the data are gathered by a national principal investigator and his or her team, based on the sources indicated in Annex 4; they are then scored by the World Bank’s SABER-Wfd team. See Annex 5 for the detailed scores and Annex 6 for a list of those involved in data gathering, scoring and validation, and report writing.

7 Since the composite scores are averages of the underlying scores, they are rarely whole numbers. For a given composite score, X, the conversion to the categorical rating (shown on the cover of this report) is based on the following rule: $1.00 \leq X \leq 1.75$ converts to “Latent”; $1.75 < X \leq 2.50$, to “Emerging”; $2.50 < X \leq 3.25$ to “Established”; and $3.25 < X \leq 4.00$ to “Advanced.”
2. Country Context

Political Context

Sri Lanka is an island nation located in the Indian Ocean off the Indian sub-continent with a total area of 65,707 square kilometers. It gained independence from Great Britain in 1948. Much of the nation’s recent history has been marked by a violent struggle that began in the 1970s between the government and the separatist movement known as the Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Upon his election in 2005, President Mahinda Rajapaksa launched a military campaign that brought an end to the 30-year conflict in 2009. President Rajapaksa was re-elected in 2010 to a six-year term, and his party, the United People’s Freedom Alliance, gained strong support in subsequent parliamentary elections (where it holds more than a two-thirds majority) as well as provincial and local elections.

Economic Trends

Sri Lanka is a lower-middle-income country (LMIC) with a per capita GDP of $2,835 in 2011—higher than that of the South Asia region as a whole but considerably below the average for middle-income countries (MICs). The Sri Lankan economy has enjoyed an average growth rate of 5.3 percent over the past decade. The end of the armed conflict in 2009 accelerated growth to an average of 8 percent in 2010 and 2011.

Building on a period of unprecedented peace and on its national recovery effort after the 2004 tsunami, according to its “Mahinda Chintana” strategy Sri Lanka plans to (i) double the size of its economy between 2010 and 2016 to achieve middle-income status through sustained economic growth; and (ii) increase per capita income to $4,470 by 2016. Based on the recent growth rate, this vision appears to have been over-ambitious. However, Sri Lanka is moving in the right direction. Its efforts to achieve this vision rest on the diversification of the Sri Lankan economy by taking advantage of the country’s geographic location to become an Asian hub in five strategic spheres: naval, aviation, commerce, energy, and knowledge. To support this vision, the government is treating as important priorities these four areas: infrastructure development, improvements in the business environment, firm competitiveness, and workforce quality.

Once agriculture-based, the Sri Lankan economy has become one based on manufacturing and services. Between 1977 and 2010, agriculture’s share of GDP steadily declined from 31 to 12.8 percent, while industry’s share rose from 12 to 29.4 percent, and the share of services grew from 41 to 57.8 percent. The 12.8 percent share of agriculture in Sri Lanka’s GDP is lower than for the South Asia region as a whole (18.3 percent), close to Malaysia’s 10.6 percent share, and below the average of other LMICs (at 17 percent) (see Figure 3).

In 1977, Sri Lanka became the first economy in South Asia to liberalize trade. Trade peaked as a share of GDP at 89 percent in 2000, subsequently declining to 60 percent in 2011. Reflecting the growing prominence of industry in the Sri Lankan economy, in 2011 industrial products made up over 75 percent of Sri Lanka’s total exports, with textiles and apparel accounting for nearly 40 percent of industrial exports (see Figure 4). The “Mahinda Chintana” envisions further strengthening of Sri Lanka’s exports as one of its strategic goals, calling for an expansion of total exports from US$8 billion in 2010 to US$18 billion by 2016.

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This section is based on “Building the Skills for Economic Growth and Competitiveness in Sri Lanka,” a 2013 World Bank report written by Halli Dundar, Benoit Millot, Yevgeniya Savchenko, T.A. Piyasiri, and Harsha Aturupane.
Poverty and Inequality

The inclusive growth policy enabled Sri Lanka to dramatically reduce the proportion of poor people in the country from 22.7 percent in 2002 to 8.9 percent in 2009, with poverty declining in urban, rural, and estate areas (see Figure 5). However, inequality within the country increased: The Gini coefficient went up from 0.3 in 1985 to 0.47 in 2002 to 0.49 in 2009.

Figure 5. Composition of Exports, 2011

![Graph showing the composition of exports in 2011.]


Demographics

Sri Lanka had a population of 20.3 million in 2011, with an average annual population growth rate of around 1 percent between 1981 and 2011. The country has been enjoying a favorable age-dependency ratio,⁹ which has been conducive to economic growth. In 2005, the age-dependency ratio was 46.7 percent; since then, it has been steadily rising, reaching 49.9 percent in 2011. The proportion of youth in the total population is expected to decline, from 19 percent in 1995 to a projected 12.8 percent by 2030. Sri Lanka is also experiencing a rise in internal migration to urban areas from individuals seeking to earn wages. The percentage of the total population that is living in urban areas has increased from 24.9 percent in 1991 to 31.3 percent in 2011. This process began as early as 1977, in great part as a result of more open economic policies related to the export processing zones, which have attracted a huge number of young people from rural areas (Ranathunga, 2011).

Employment

Sri Lanka has made substantial progress in bringing down unemployment, which has declined from 9 percent in 2000 to 4.2 percent in 2011 (Sri Lanka, DCS 2011b). However, youth constitute more than half of all unemployed, with an unemployment rate of 13 percent in 2012, three times higher than the rate for adults (Gunatilaka, Mayer, and Vodopivec 2010). In addition, while for adults the unemployment rates decline with their education level, for youth these rates actually rise with increasing education. For example, almost 28 percent of Sri Lankans ages 19–25 with a bachelor’s or higher degree are unemployed, compared with 1 percent of adults over 25 years old with similar education (see Figure 6). Finally, the unemployment rate for women is more than three times that for men at 10 percent and 3 percent, respectively (STEP Household Skills Measurement survey, 2012).

Figure 6. Unemployment by Age and Education, 2012

![Graph showing unemployment by age and education in 2012.]

Source: Dundar et al., 2013

The structural change in the Sri Lankan economy has shifted employment from agriculture to industry and services. Between 1971 and 2010, the share of employment in agriculture declined from 51 percent to 34 percent, the industry share rose from 11 percent to 25 percent, and the services share fluctuated between 38 percent and 42 percent (see Figure 7). Within the services sector, the major areas of employment growth have been in the retail trade, health, education, business, and personal services subsectors.

Figure 7. Structural Changes in Employment, 1971–2010

![Graph showing structural changes in employment from 1971 to 2010.]

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2011a.

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⁹ The dependency ratio is the ratio of dependents (people younger than 15 or older than 64) to the working-age population (those aged 15–64).
Labor force participation in Sri Lanka is low, with only 53 percent of those ages 15 and up in the workforce (Department of Census and Statistics, 2011b). However, the majority of the population of those in the labor force (62 percent) are employed in the informal sector (Department of Census and Statistics, 2011b), including an estimated 86 percent of employment in agriculture. Another important feature of the Sri Lankan labor market is overseas employment; estimates suggest that more than a million Sri Lankans—about 12 percent of the labor force—are employed abroad (Secretariat for Senior Ministers, 2012). Moreover, the annual departures of migrants has been increasing, rising from 182,188 in 2000 to 266,445 in 2010 (Bureau of Foreign Employment, 2010). About 42 percent of these migrant workers leave the country to work as housemaids. In addition to being a significant source of jobs, overseas employment provides substantial foreign exchange, with 2010 remittances accounting for nearly US$4 billion, about 7 percent of GDP. To enhance remittances, the government would like to ensure that emigrating workers have higher skills (Secretariat for Senior Ministers, 2012). However, the government has not yet taken many concrete steps to achieve this goal.

**Demand for Skills**

The increasing integration of Sri Lanka into global markets and its evolution from a resource-based to a productivity-driven economy require that the labor force become better educated and trained, have upgraded skills, and become equipped with higher-order competencies so that workers can apply new technologies and perform complex tasks efficiently. As illustrated by Figure 8, the demand for relatively low-skilled workers remains high in manufacturing, and employers in all sectors expect positive growth in all occupations, yet there is also an increasing demand for high-skilled workers in tourism and other services. The government’s goal of turning Sri Lanka into a regional hub in five areas (naval, aviation, commerce, energy, and knowledge) is likely to accelerate the demand for skills in sectors such as information and communications technology (ICT), construction, and tourism.

**Skills Shortages and Mismatches**

Sri Lanka has serious mismatches between the supply of and the demand for education, training, and skills. Firms there are much more likely (at 16 percent) to identify an inadequate labor force as a major or severe constraint than are firms in Pakistan (8.1 percent) or Nepal (5.9 percent). Moreover, the percentage of manufacturing firms that complained about the labor force’s skills increased from 21 percent in 2004 to 26 percent in 2010. It appears that the most serious constraints are faced by firms in modern, higher-value-added industries and when firms are hiring for higher-skilled occupations.

Additional evidence of skills gaps comes from the 2012 Skills Toward Employment and Productivity (STEP) survey, in which employers were asked about their expectations regarding the educational levels of workers in various jobs. In high-skilled occupations, about 60 percent of the employers surveyed expect the average worker to have completed technical or vocational education and training, while the corresponding share for low-skilled occupations is 24 percent. With only 16 percent of the current working-age population possessing this level of training, employers’ expectations do not align with actual educational attainment in Sri Lanka.
The gap between employers’ expectations and the supply of language and technical skills such as English and computer literacy is particularly acute. Eighty percent of employers expect a higher-skilled worker to be competent in English and 40 percent have the same expectation of less-skilled workers. Similarly, 75 percent of employers think an average higher-skilled worker should have computer skills and 38 percent expect lower-skilled workers to have those skills. However, only 20 percent of Sri Lankans ages 15 to 64 speak English and just 15 percent can use computers.

Simply increasing the quantity of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) graduates will not necessarily ease these constraints. Unmet demand for skilled labor coexists with high youth unemployment, in particular among the educated. Sri Lanka’s TVET system has failed to provide the needed skills for work in fields like tourism that can help sustain economic diversification and enhance competitiveness. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate for educated Sri Lankans ages 19 to 25 is as high as 28 percent.

**Education and Training**

Sri Lanka’s general education system has made important gains in the recent past. The country has achieved near universal primary school enrollment at the national level with a 99.4 percent primary enrollment rate (approximately 350,000) in 2011. The percentage of children ages 5 to 14 currently attending school is 99.4 percent, and 83 percent of those ages 15 to 65 have completed at least lower secondary education. There is gender parity in education completion, but people from poorer backgrounds have had fewer years of education than those from higher-income families. Figure 9 shows years of education by asset quintile, a proxy for household wealth. People in the lowest quintile have on average 7.6 years of education, and people in the highest quintile 11.6 years.

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**Figure 9. Education and Training by Wealth Quintile (2012)**

![Education and Training by Wealth Quintile](image)

Source: Dundar et al., 2013.

Education in Sri Lanka is compulsory until grade 9, and the system of public education provides essentially free schooling through university (see Figure 10). Students enrolled in grade 11 take the GCE (Ordinary Level – O/L) examinations, but only about 45 percent pass them and qualify to enter grade 12. At grade 13, students take GCE (Advanced Level – A/L) examinations, which are compulsory for enrollment in tertiary education. Only about 50 percent pass the GCE-A/L, and of those who do, only 11 percent enroll in universities and advanced technical institutions due to supply constraints. There are an estimated 128,000 tertiary students at state educational institutions, with a number of private institutions also offering tertiary programs to an estimated additional 46,000 students.

**Figure 10. Sri Lanka’s Education and Training System**

![Sri Lanka’s Education and Training System](image)

Source: Dundar et al., 2013.

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11 This methodology was developed by the STEP team and is based on Filmer and Scott (2008).
After completing general education, students may end their studies, continue on to university, or enroll in vocational or technical training. About 150,000 students, 43 percent of whom are women, enroll in TVET courses in Sri Lanka’s wide network of training institutes (TVEC 2011). In 2011, of the 2,269 training institutes registered with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC), 318 were public, 704 were statutory board institutes, 990 were private, and 257 were run by NGOs (TVEC 2012a). Altogether, they offer 852 accredited programs.

The public sector is the dominant provider of TVET and accounts for about two-thirds of total enrollment. The largest public agencies in terms of TVET enrollments are the Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET), the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), the Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka (VTA), and the National Youth Services Council (NYSC). These agencies, which report to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development (MYASD), enroll about 83,000 students a year—more than 80 percent of the total trained by public TVET providers. Several other ministries have their own training programs in areas that fall within their purview. Public TVET programs are essentially free for new school leavers, but fees are charged to those currently employed who take short or part-time courses.

About 29 percent of TVET students attend private institutes, and about 3 percent attend NGO-financed institutions. Private training is provided through fee-based professional associations, some of which offer certificate, diploma, and degree courses, and through private institutes set up under the Companies Act of 2007. Religious and voluntary NGOs offer craft training to unemployed youth, rural women, school leavers, and semi- or unskilled workers. Most programs are free or have only a nominal fee.

The National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) system, introduced in 2005, offers a clear path for progressing through TVET. The NVQ Framework is mandatory for public institutions; the private sector also increasingly offers NVQ-certified courses. The NVQ Framework has led to setting national skills standards and national quality standards for teaching and assessment using a competency-based approach. However, students are not allowed to continue to tertiary education from the TVET stream. In addition, there is a lack of horizontal mobility between TVET and general education. To address this lack of mobility, in 2012 the government approved the Sri Lanka Qualification Framework and integrated the NVQ into it. This has led to recognition of prior learning (RPL) and credit transfers, leading to greater flexibility between vocational and higher education.

Table 1. National Vocational Qualifications in Sri Lanka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level No.</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>National Certificate</td>
<td>This level recognizes the acquisition of a core entry-level skill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>National Certificate</td>
<td>These levels recognize increasing levels of competency. Level 4 provides a Full National Craftsmanship certification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>These levels recognize increasing competencies, from the technician to the management level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree or equivalent</td>
<td>This level includes competence in resource planning and management processes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Key Findings and Policy Implications

This chapter highlights findings from the assessment of Sri Lanka’s workforce development (Wfd) system based on the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)-Wfd analytical framework and tool. The focus is on policies, institutions, and practices in three important functional dimensions of policymaking and implementation—strategic framework, system oversight, and service delivery. Because these aspects collectively create the operational environment in which individuals, firms, and training providers, both state and non-state, make decisions with regard to training, they exert an important influence on observed outcomes in skills development. Strong Wfd systems have institutionalized processes and practices for reaching agreement on priorities, collaboration and coordination, and generating routine feedback that sustain continuous innovation and improvement. By contrast, weak systems are characterized by fragmentation, duplication of effort, and limited learning from experience.

The SABER-Wfd assessment results summarized below provide a baseline for understanding the current status of the Wfd system in the country, as well as a basis for discussing ideas on how best to strengthen it in the coming years.

Overview of the SABER-Wfd Scores

Figure 11 shows the overall results for the three Functional Dimensions in the SABER-Wfd framework. For its Strategic Framework, Sri Lanka is rated at the Established level. For Service Delivery and System Oversight, the score falls at the Emerging level of development.

Overview of Findings and Implications

Strategic Framework: Sustained advocacy for workforce development has taken place throughout the last two decades, but policy implementation has suffered due to a lack of critical coordination and monitoring. Economic prospects and the implications for skills have been adequately assessed, but such assessments can be further improved through greater coordination among the Department of National Planning, Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) and Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development (MYASD). The use of such assessments for designing and delivering training programs is inadequate. Critical coordination for implementation has been improved by bringing most public training providers under MYASD, but inter-ministerial coordination and monitoring mechanisms within MYASD and training institutions are inadequate.

System Oversight: Public institutions are the main providers of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), being responsible for the training of 70 percent of TVET students. Public TVET programs are largely funded by the government; however, the funding is not tied to the training output and outcomes. Competency standards for a number of occupations and fields have been established with industry participation, but wider use of the standards in public and private institutes, as well as quality assurance through course accreditation, needs to be further promoted. The National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) Framework, established in 2004, is intended to provide diversified pathways for skills acquisition and upgrading of qualifications.

Service Delivery: Incentives to better-performing private and public training providers are limited. The lack of policy interventions to incentivize private training providers has limited the growth of such providers and affected diversity and excellence in private training provision. Links between public training institutions and industry function are moderately strong, but they are mainly limited to the management level of institutes. The training of center managers and instructors is conducted in an ad hoc manner, indicating a need to institutionalize professional development. Improvements are also needed in the reporting of training and administrative data, since the design of policies and systems improvements must be strongly supported by reliable data and by the results of surveys and impact evaluations.

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12 See Annex 5 for the full results.
Policy Implications

Leaders in Sri Lanka have provided sustained advocacy over the last two decades to establish a TVET system that will support the development of a competent workforce. Several policy documents endorsed by the government have provided the direction for the transformation of education and training systems to realize this objective, and successive governments have supported the development process. Considerable progress has been made in several areas to improve the relevance, quality, equity, and efficiency of training, enabling Sri Lanka to bring its workforce development system above the emerging level. However, many goals remain unmet, including advancing the TVET programs’ relevance, efficiency, and quality, and ensuring access to them. The remainder of this section presents potential policy actions that could address these challenges and may support continued progress.

Relevance: There are several dimensions to the work of improving the relevance of education and training to employers. First, WfD needs to cater to the manpower requirements of the priority sectors of the economy. The analysis of development trends and the identification of priority areas by the Department of National Planning, MYASD and TVEC, which were done with employer participation, provide directions for labor market-oriented WfD. However, the participation of these WfD stakeholders in policy formulation is currently ad hoc, so the need remains for an institutionalized coordinating mechanism. The second aspect of relevance is the identification of competencies to perform the functions assigned to each occupation or profession, in order to meet the needs of employers. Sri Lanka has established a system for developing competency standards with the participation of industry, employers, employees, and training providers, and these competency standards are embedded in the NVQ Framework. Processes for competency standard development and curriculum development should be improved to involve more industry participants, and an adequate number of qualified staff should be maintained for timely development and updating of documentation and for handling industry feedback and surveys.

Quality: The TVEC has established a system for the registration of training institutes of both the public and private sectors under the Tertiary and Vocational Education Act of 1999. Norms have been established to assess institute facilities, course curricula, and the qualifications of instructors, and TVEC provides technical guidance to institutes. However, according to TVEC estimates, approximately 20 percent of institutes, mostly in the private sector, operate without registration, so mechanisms need to be established to ensure that these institutes get registered. Course accreditation and the establishment of quality management systems further improve the quality of training. While a large number of public sector courses have received accreditation, expansion of coverage requires dedicating an appropriate amount of funding and a sufficient number of qualified staff. The technical assistance and limited funding that TVEC has provided to private sector training institutes has promoted course accreditation and enabled these institutes to award National Vocational Qualifications. The professional development of training center managers and instructors is also key to delivering quality training programs, and institutionalized systems need to be established for this purpose. To enhance the quality of training, industry needs to participate at all levels by providing on-the-job training; industry participation in this work especially needs to occur at the

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13 For a detailed review of TVET performance, challenges and policy options, see Dundar et al. (2013).
decision-making and implementing levels of training institutes, as well as at the trainee level.

**Access:** A majority of the funding for TVET comes from the government. This has enabled youth in urban as well as rural areas to access TVET, although the capacity of public networks needs to expand to accommodate a greater number of secondary school leavers. The number of youth entering the informal sector without specific skills needs to be reduced to a minimum. The focus of Sri Lanka’s TVET is on initial vocational education and training (IVET), and little emphasis has been given to continuing vocational education and training (CVET) and training-related active labor market programs. Enhancing the skills of the existing labor force in the industry is not currently promoted by government policies; for example, a training levy system has not yet been introduced. While limited assistance is provided to private sector training providers at present, government policies need to focus on facilitating the expansion of training by the private sector.

Sri Lanka has established a policy for the provision of training to disadvantaged groups, and it has introduced various initiatives for this purpose, such as providing small stipends to low-income students and establishing Vocational Training Authority (VTA) centers in rural areas. The NVQ system provides qualification-upgrading pathways and opportunities for continuing education, but the pathways for skills acquisition need to be further diversified. TVET also suffers from a low image when it is compared to the higher education alternative, so it is the second choice of secondary school leavers. By providing vocational training orientation within secondary education and establishing a coordinated career guidance system, students would be better equipped to make informed decisions on their career path and be more likely to choose the TVET sector.

**Efficiency:** The establishment of MYASD has improved coordination among training providers and facilitated the implementation of policy decisions. However, some training institutes remain under other ministries, and therefore inter-ministerial coordination needs strengthening for systematic workforce development. Furthermore, WFD policies need to be integrated with economic development and fiscal policies in order to ensure a coherent approach.

Public institutes are mostly funded by the General Treasury through taxation, though some capital inputs have been provided through external development partners such as the Asian Development Bank during the past decade. Funding allocations to institutes are mostly based on the previous year’s budget and on special initiatives introduced by the government for priority sectors. The main criterion for measuring training institute performance is student enrollment, with little emphasis on completion rates, employability, quality of employment, employer satisfaction, and so on. Therefore, the internal and external efficiency of training institutes is not properly determined. The budgeting system of public sector institutes also needs reviewing, with the aim of improving operational efficiency. Training and administrative data gathering from public and private training providers is not comprehensive and there are gaps in the data collected. Research and surveys that will assist in making policy level decisions for the TVET sector need to be conducted on a regular basis, and greater collaboration should be established with research institutes for this purpose.
4. Aligning Workforce Development to Key Economic and Social Priorities

Workforce development (Wfd) is not an end in itself but an input toward broader objectives: boosting employability and productivity; relieving skills constraints on business growth and development; and advancing overall economic growth and social well-being. This section briefly introduces Sri Lanka’s socioeconomic aspirations, priorities, and reforms before presenting the detailed SABER-WFD findings on the Strategic Framework and their policy implications.

Key Socioeconomic Aspirations, Priorities, and Reforms

“Mahinda Chintana” sets the goal of doubling the size of the economy from 2010 to 2016, accompanied by a shift in the structure of the economy. The share of agriculture in GDP is to be consolidated at around 12 percent, the industry share at 28–30 percent, and services at around 60 percent, thereby diversifying the economy and balancing growth to prevent the widening of urban–rural gaps. To make effective use of the country’s strategic geographical location, the government has embarked on major developments to make Sri Lanka a hub for naval, aviation, commercial, energy, and knowledge industries, serving as a key link between the East and the West. This strategic direction requires significant infrastructure development and increased investment. In the medium term, the government expects investment to be increased to over a third of GDP, with a sustained commitment of 6–7 percent of GDP coming from the government and the balance coming from the private sector. It is also intended that by 2016 exports will have grown at twice the rate of real GDP, that tourism will show a fourfold expansion of earnings, that remittances from skilled migrant workers will have doubled, that the share of rural employment will have declined from about two-thirds to one-half, and that the share of the urban population will have increased from a quarter to a third.

Workforce Development Priorities

As Sri Lanka transitions to become an efficiency-driven middle-income economy, building job-relevant skills becomes a major concern in order to support economic growth and the country’s transformation into a regional hub. Considering the existing demands of industry and the expected growth in the medium term, the government has prioritized workforce development in certain sectors and taken steps for implementation, as identified in “Mahinda Chintana.” These priorities are detailed in Box 1.

Box 1. Areas Prioritized for Workforce Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information and Communications Technology (ICT): The ICT workforce that stood at about 50,000 in 2010 is expected to increase to 186,000 by 2016 in the areas of database management, digital media and animation, business analysis and systems integration, network administration, programming and software engineering and related applications.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism: The tourism industry is fast growing, with the return of peace to the country, and Sri Lanka expects to receive 2.5 million tourists by 2016. This development in the tourist sector envisages rapid growth in construction, furniture making, transport, food and beverages, room services, and hotel and tourism related management. The sector is projected to generate 700,000 new jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port and Airport Development: Two port projects and a new airport development already underway will generate employment in engineering, skilled craft work, and service-related occupations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce, Transport, Irrigation, and Urban Development: Similar employment generation is expected from developments in the commercial, road and transport, urban development, irrigation, and knowledge sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health: The health sector is expected to grow, and about 2,500 nurses and 600 radiographers, pharmacists, and medical laboratory technicians are estimated to be needed annually to serve the public and private medical institutes and meet the overseas demand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current and Proposed Reforms

The Presidential Task Force recommendations (1998) provided guidance for workforce development, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) reforms were embarked upon to offer industry-relevant and quality-assured training programs. The system of training in public training institutes was to be transformed into competency-based training in keeping with the industry-identified competency standards and quality assurance mechanisms, which included course accreditation, and quality management mechanisms were to be introduced. This system development and implementation process was facilitated by the establishment of a ministry dedicated to TVET; most of
the public training institutes came under the purview of MYASD in 2004.

The reform process was further strengthened by establishing a National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) Framework. NVQ certification can be obtained through two modalities: (i) through completion of an accredited training program; and (ii) through recognition of prior learning (RPL) by providing competency exams for those who have acquired a commensurate level of skill on the job. In addition, institutes were established to offer mid-level technical programs and bachelor degree-level courses in the TVET sector.

It is proposed that training in identified priority sectors should be expanded by the agencies responsible for training institutions and through apprenticeship-based training in industry; the private sector is encouraged to engage in training provision as well (Sri Lanka, Secretariat for Senior Ministers, 2012). The mid-level technical education and training is to be expanded in areas of high labor market relevance and will provide access to a significant number of upper secondary students who are competing to enter the programs. The relevance and quality of programs will be improved and will incorporate employable skills for TVET graduates so they can become nationally and internationally competitive.

SABER-WfD Ratings of the Strategic Framework

In the SABER-WfD framework, the role of WfD in helping Sri Lanka to realize its socioeconomic aspirations materializes through actions to advance the following three policy goals: (i) setting a strategic direction for WfD; (ii) fostering a demand-led approach in WfD; and (iii) ensuring coordination among key WfD leaders and stakeholders. The ratings for these policy goals are presented and explained below, followed by a brief reflection on their implications for policy dialogue.

Based on data collected by the SABER-WfD questionnaire, Sri Lanka receives an overall rating of 2.6 (Established) on the Strategic Framework dimension (see Figure 12. This score is the average of the ratings for the underlying policy goals relating to: (i) setting a direction for WfD (3.0); (ii) fostering a demand-led approach to WfD (2.2); and (iii) strengthening critical coordination for WfD (2.7). The explanation for these ratings and their implications follow below.

Policy Goal 1: Articulating a Strategic Direction for WfD

Leaders play an important role in crystalizing a strategic vision for WfD appropriate to the country’s unique circumstances and opportunities. Their advocacy and commitment attract partnership with stakeholders for the common good, build public support for key priorities in WfD, and ensure that critical issues receive due attention in policy dialogue. Taking these ideas into account, Policy Goal 1 assesses the extent to which apex-level leaders in government and in the private sector provide sustained advocacy for WfD priorities through institutionalized processes.

Sri Lanka scores at the Established level on this Policy Goal (3.0), reflecting sustained leadership from government leaders that manifests itself through a range of specific efforts to raise awareness about WfD and including it as a priority in the country’s national strategy. Advocacy by non-government stakeholders is generally absent, however.

Political leaders, officials occupying strategic positions, and WfD champions in both the public and private sectors have provided sustained advocacy over the past two decades, mainly focusing on the industry and service sectors. Systematic WfD began in the 1990s with the establishment of the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC), the planning and regulatory body. The “Mahinda Chintana” emphasizes that WfD should be a priority, and the national-level policy documents on

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14 The training agencies are the Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET), the National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), the Vocational Training Authority (VTA) and the National Youth Skills Development Council (NYSC).
TVET in 1998 and in 2009 set the specific strategic directions for the development of a competent workforce with skills that are relevant to the needs of the labor market. Major reforms that emanated from the policy documents were the introduction of competency-based training and the establishment of the NVQ Framework. The National Human Resources and Employment Policy (2012) has taken a comprehensive inter-sectoral approach, although it is yet to be implemented.

**Policy Goal 2: Fostering a Demand-led Approach**

Effective advocacy for WfD requires credible assessments of the demand for skills, engagement of employers in shaping the country’s WfD agenda, and incentives for employers to support skills development. Policy Goal 2 incorporates these ideas and benchmarks the system according to the extent to which policies and institutional arrangements are in place to: (i) establish clarity on the demand for skills and areas of critical constraint; and (ii) engage employers in setting WfD priorities and in enhancing skills upgrading for workers.

Sri Lanka scores at the *Emerging* level for Policy Goal 2 (2.2). It has taken some positive steps to foster a demand-led approach to WfD, but these consist mainly of occasional donor-supported assessments of national economic prospects and skills and ad hoc incentives for skills upgrading in the informal sector.

Sri Lanka’s strategy for WfD encompasses both initial vocational education and training (IVET) and continuing vocational education and training (CVET). The main focus has been on IVET for post-secondary students, with student enrollment in public and private training institutions in 2011 being 98,000 and 53,000, respectively. Institutions have been established for diploma and degree level learning, but access to CVET among the existing workforce in formal and informal industry has not been considered a priority. Therefore, WfD interventions are not well integrated with the economy-wide development agenda. As part of this strategy, the government established the Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training in 2004 (which in 2010 was renamed the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development—MYASD) as a separate ministry for skills development. This ministry has facilitated strategic development and coordination of the TVET sector. However, monitoring mechanisms of the policy agenda are weak, with no clear milestones and benchmarks or institutionalized stakeholder engagement.

There is limited and ad hoc employer engagement in setting WfD priorities, training delivery, and training design, which makes the TVET system supply-driven rather than demand-driven. The employers themselves have taken certain initiatives for skills upgrading of employees and training of school leavers; however, mechanisms for stimulating the skills upgrading of employees by industry employers, such as training levy systems, are absent. Government incentives to industry in the form of training for employees, skills testing, and certification (etc.) are not comprehensive. In addition, both the government’s monitoring of such programs and its dialogue with employers for upgrading workforce skills are weak.

**Policy Goal 3: Strengthening Critical Coordination for Implementation**

Ensuring that the efforts of multiple stakeholders involved in WfD are aligned with the country’s key socioeconomic priorities is an important goal of strategic coordination. Such coordination typically requires leadership at a sufficiently high level to overcome barriers to cross-sector or cross-ministerial cooperation. Policy Goal 3 examines the extent to which policies and institutional arrangements are in place to formalize roles and responsibilities for coordinated action on strategic priorities.

Sri Lanka scores at the *Established* level for this policy goal (2.7). Government ministries and agencies and non-government stakeholders have legally defined roles and responsibilities. Critical coordination for the implementation of WfD programs has been greatly improved by bringing most of the training institutions under one ministry—MYASD. However, specialized areas of TVET operate under other ministries, so inter-ministerial coordination, which is yet to be established, is vital to achieve the WfD objectives of the government. Furthermore, coordination among the relevant ministries, as well as with training institutions and industry, is ad hoc and needs to be strengthened.

The Central Bank of Sri Lanka and the Department of National Planning conduct analyses of different economic sectors and the implications for workforce development, with further data and analysis being provided by the Department of Census and Statistics. MYASD coordinates 70 percent of the training activity, making it the focal point for government provision of training. TVEC prepares vocational education and training plans and conducts labor market surveys, which
support the assessment of overall WfD needs. However, TVEC does not yet regularly ascertain the industry sectors’ demand for skills at national and regional levels, and coordination among the Department of National Planning, TVEC, and the Department of Census and Statistics is not institutionalized. Coordination between MYASD and the training institutions under its purview also needs strengthening by way of effective regulating and monitoring mechanisms to achieve the intended training targets. Coordination with the non-government training providers for improvement of quality and relevance is mostly limited to the registering of institutions and the voluntary accreditation of courses. Employer participation on the governing boards of training institutions helps to address the needs of industry in TVET provision, but industry coordination for implementing training programs at the training center level and the monitoring of such coordination both require improvement. Thus, WfD roles are not adequately defined to ensure coordinated action on strategic priorities.

Directions for Policy Development

1. **Strengthen mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of strategic decisions.** Visible champions provide sustained advocacy and strategic direction for WfD, and several policy documents with this aim exist, including the National Human Resources and Employment Policy (2012), which has taken a comprehensive inter-sectoral approach. However, implementing these policies through routine and institutionalized monitoring and review processes needs to be strengthened in order to ensure the realization of the WfD goals.

2. **Strengthen collection and monitoring of labor market information.** As an essential element of its planning process, TVEC should regularly ascertain the skills demand of the industry sectors at the national and regional levels. In addition, cooperation with the Department of National Planning should be institutionalized so as to provide TVEC with reliable data on the country’s WfD needs.

3. **Encourage employer participation in WfD.** Employer participation in WfD policy formulation and design, as well as in the delivery of TVET programs, would make the TVET system demand-driven rather than supply-driven, thereby improving the productivity and labor market outcomes of the workforce.

4. **Improve sector-wide coordination.** Institutionalized mechanisms for coordination and review of WfD implementation at all levels—institutional, ministerial, inter-ministerial, and government–nongovernment—would assist in realizing WfD policies and in mainstreaming the successful features.
5. Governing the System for Workforce Development

Three important functions of workforce development (WFD) authorities are to foster efficient and equitable funding of investments in WFD; to facilitate effective skills acquisition by individuals; and to enable employers to meet their demand for skilled workers in a timely manner. The objective is to minimize systemic impediments to skills acquisition and mismatches in skills supply and demand. This section begins with a brief description of how the WFD system in Sri Lanka is organized and governed before presenting the detailed SABER-WFD findings on System Oversight and their policy implications.

Overall Institutional Landscape

Organizational Structures

As explained earlier in this report (see Section 2), the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development (MYASD) is the main ministry responsible for workforce development in Sri Lanka, and several training agencies come under its purview. The Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET), the National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), the Vocational Training Authority (VTA), and the National Youth Services Council (NYSC) are the major networks providing training courses at the certificate level. \(^\text{15}\) DTET is a government department, and the others are statutory boards reporting to MYASD, each governed by a board of directors but receiving annual budgets from the Ministry of Finance. The University of Vocational Technology is the specialized university in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector, outside of the Ministry of Higher Education, and under the purview of MYASD. The Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education network, which operates under the Ministry of Higher Education, offers Higher National Diplomas for GCE Advanced Level qualified students. Ministries such as Agriculture, Irrigation, Power, and Energy operate training institutes in their specialized areas. The Ministry of Labor does not conduct TVET programs at present. The Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) is the planning, regulatory, and quality assurance body for the TVET sector.

Private sector training institutes are to be registered at TVEC in keeping with the provisions of the Tertiary and Vocational Education Act No. 20 of 1990. Private sector institutes are mainly operated as for-profits, and institutes operated by NGOs are funded by charities. An Accredited Training Providers Association, which represents private sector providers, was formed in 2007 and has established links with TVEC for making quality improvements to private sector courses.

Levels and Patterns of Funding

Annual budget allocations for general education, higher education, and technical and vocational education are given in Figure 14. The budget for technical and vocational education is the allocation for MYASD. Recurrent fund allocation for all three sectors of education has continuously increased over the years. However, capital fund allocations have varied; the TVET sector allocation followed a downward trend from 2007 to 2009 and an increasing trend from 2009 onwards.

The main responsibility of NAITA is placing students into apprenticeship programs. Its main task is to impart job skills through industry-based training. It arranges on-the-job training for university engineering undergraduates, issues National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) certificates through RPL for informally skilled and trained craftsmen, conducts entrepreneurship development programs, interacts with industry to draw up curricula, and sets national competency standards for vocational training.

Originally within the MYASD before the restructuring, the NYSC offers basic and semi-skilled courses for craftpeople, both urban and rural.
whereas in the higher education sector there is a downward trend from 2009 to 2011.

The TVET sector has been provided with development funding of about US$100 million for externally funded projects during the past decade.16 Individuals with TVET and apprenticeship training are more likely to participate in the labor force than those without it. Individual trainees have received considerable economic and social benefits such as improved housing, nutrition, and social acceptance. Overall, it appears that TVET is a good investment for Sri Lanka: It improves workers’ earnings and equips them with skills relevant to the labor market (STEP Household Survey).

Figure 14. Investment in Education by Level, Amount, and Percentage, 2005 – 11

Source: Department of National Budget- MFP Annual Report-2011.

SABER-WfD Ratings on Oversight of the Wfd System

The SABER-WfD framework identifies three pertinent policy goals corresponding to oversight mechanisms for influencing the choices of individuals, training providers, and employers: (i) ensuring efficiency and equity in funding; (ii) assuring relevant and reliable standards; and (iii) diversifying pathways for skills acquisition. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the institutional landscape for governance of the WfD system, then presents the detailed SABER-WfD results, and concludes with a discussion of the policy implications of these results.

Based on data collected by the SABER-WfD questionnaire, Sri Lanka receives an overall rating of 2.4 (Emerging) for system oversight (see Figure 15). This score is the average of the ratings for the underlying policy goals: ensuring efficiency and equity of funding (2.3); assuring relevant and reliable standards (2.8); and diversifying pathways for skills acquisition (2.2). The explanation for these ratings and their implications follow below.

Figure 15. SABER-WfD Ratings of the System Oversight Dimension

Note: See Figure 2 for an explanation of the scale on the horizontal axis. Source: Based on analysis of the data collected using the SABER-WfD questionnaire.

Policy Goal 4: Ensuring Efficiency and Equity in Funding

Wfd requires a significant investment of resources by the government, households, and employers. To ensure that these resources are effectively used it is important to examine the extent to which policies and institutional arrangements are in place to: (i) ensure stable funding for effective programs in initial, continuing, and targeted vocational education and training; (ii) monitor and assess equity in funding; and (iii) foster partnerships with employers for funding WfD.

Sri Lanka scores at the Emerging level (2.3) for this policy goal. Funding for initial vocational education and training (IVET) and continuing vocational education and training (CVET) is assured, although IVET receives the bulk of the funds. Budgeting for both IVET and CVET is done primarily based on previous years’ budgets. Some attention has been paid to determining how funding modalities can be used to improve outcomes and promote equity, but these have been limited.

TVET programs in public training institutions are mostly funded through general taxation, although there have been instances of projects funded through donor grants in the past. While some institutions do not charge course

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Donors include the Asian Development Bank (ADB), US$66 million (in total); GTZ, €10 million; USAID, US$13 million; Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), US$5 million; and Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), US$3 million.
fees, others, such as the VTA, charge fees at subsidized rates. Recurrent funding for IVET and CVET are mainly based on the previous year’s budget, though some effort has been made to channel additional funding to support priority industries, and only government officials are involved in the budgeting process. MYSAD, in consultation with the Ministry of Finance, is the central agency for funding decisions for IVET, CVET and Active Labor Market Programs (ALMPs). The main focus of funding is IVET, with little emphasis being other training modalities. No recent review of CVET has been conducted, but the impact of funding for IVET was reviewed in 2008, under the Asian Development Bank-assisted Technical Education Development Project. The review (i) assessed the efficiency of government and non-government TVET provision; (ii) quantified the economic and social benefits contributed by the TVET sector; (iii) examined the costing methodology and cost recovery mechanism to ensure financial sustainability for TVET public sector programs; and (iv) conducted a tracer study of the employment of vocational pass-outs. Some of the 2008 review’s recommendations were implemented.

MYSAD is responsible for all ALMP activities. Only a program for entrepreneurship training and a loan scheme for self-employment for TVET graduates were considered successful, and so additional funding was provided by the government. Partnerships between training providers and employers exist, mainly in NAITA and VTA networks, through initiatives from the head office level, and different models of partnership are benefiting both parties. However, these partnerships are not very extensive or effective.

Policy Goal 5: Assuring Relevant and Reliable Standards

The WFD system comprises a wide range of training providers, offering courses at various levels in diverse fields. An effective system of standards and accreditation enables students to document what they have learned and employers to identify workers with the relevant skills. For Policy Goal 5 it is therefore important to assess the status of policies and institutions to: (i) set reliable competency standards; (ii) assure the credibility of skills testing and certification; and (iii) develop and enforce accreditation standards for maintaining the quality of training provision.

Sri Lanka scores at the Emerging level (2.8) for Policy Goal 5. Competency standards are developed by training advisory committees with input from training providers and the respective industry, and these standards form the basis of the curricula taught by the majority of public and private institutes. With TVEC providing appropriate oversight, training provision is maintained at a high level.

Sri Lanka formally launched the NVQ Framework and competency-based training in 2004. The NVQ Framework consists of four certificate levels, two diploma levels, and the bachelor’s degree level. One hundred and fourteen competency standards have been developed at the certificate level and 17 at the diploma level for major occupations with strong industry participation and in keeping with international best practices. They are expected to be reviewed every three years. At the certificate level these standards have been developed for occupations such as electrician, machinist, and beautician, and at the diploma level for such occupations as automotive technology and construction technology. Each competency standard identifies the units and elements of competence, together with performance criteria, a range statement, an assessment guide, and underpinning knowledge. The development of these standards is done by the National Industry Training Advisory Committees appointed for each industry subsector with representation from industry, professional or trade bodies, training providers, and the Ministry of Labor.

Most training institutions under MYSAD base their training on the above competency standards and curricula. A substantial proportion of private institutes and other public institutes also choose to offer courses according to the competency standards leading to national certification. Competency assessment of trainees is performed by trained and certified assessors. In 2011, 16,572 NVQ certificates were issued to trainees, which means that less than 10 percent of all TVET graduates received certificates. The NVQ certificate is gaining recognition among employers, and the government has recognized it for recruitment to specific grades in the public service; however, the certificate has not yet gained the same level of recognition among employers.

TVEC has established a system of course accreditation to ensure compliance with competency standards and the quality of course delivery and assessments. Accreditation standards have been set in accordance with the manual and the respective competency standards, and are reviewed periodically. By the end of 2011, the TVEC had
accredited 652 courses in the public sector and 303 in the private sector, even though accreditation is not mandatory for courses operating outside MYASD. TVEC provides technical assistance and limited funding for course accreditation at public and private institutes. Through the development and enforcement of accreditation standards, the quality of training provision can be maintained at a high level.

**Policy Goal 6: Diversifying Pathways for Skills Acquisition**

In dynamic economic environments, workers need to acquire new skills and competencies as well as keep their skills up-to-date throughout their working lives. They are best served by a system of initial and continuing education and training that promotes lifelong learning by offering clear and flexible pathways for transfers across courses, progression to higher levels of training, and access to programs in other fields. For those already in the workforce, schemes for recognition of prior learning are essential to allow individuals to efficiently upgrade their skills and learn new ones. Policy Goal 6 therefore evaluates the extent to which policies and institutions are in place to: (i) enable progression through multiple learning pathways, including for students in TVET streams; (ii) facilitate the recognition of prior learning; and (iii) provide targeted support services, particularly among the disadvantaged.

Sri Lanka scores at the *Emerging* level (2.2) for this Policy Goal. The NVQ has increased the range of opportunities for trainees and employees to receive further training to upgrade their qualifications, and there is evidence that a substantial number of them have done so. However, assistance for career development remains limited, and since the University of Vocational Technology has only recently been established, the benefits are yet to be seen.

Learning pathways are provided for TVET through government networks and private institutes for post-secondary students, with increasing attention being paid to the disadvantaged. Middle-level technical qualifications are offered by Colleges of Technology, the Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education network, and other individual institutes; the specialized university that has been established for the TVET sector (University of Vocational Technology) is in the initial stages. The establishment of the NVQ Framework has provided qualification upgrading pathways for trainees receiving initial vocational training to continue their career advancement to diploma and degree levels. Non-NVQ holders, whose qualifications have been assessed against the NVQ, have the opportunity to enter the qualification upgrading pathways.

The NVQ Framework is mapped to the National Qualification Framework (NQF). Public perception of TVET is being improved by offering industry-relevant and high-quality training programs and conducting social marketing activities. However, publicly sponsored occupational and career development services are limited. TVET is yet to be considered a preferred option by the majority of students and, therefore, promoting education progression and permeability through multiple pathways is achieving limited results. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) allows employees who have acquired competencies through work practice in industry to have their competencies assessed and certified, thus providing avenues for further learning. Although 1,996 RPL certificates were issued in 2011, major impediments remain; these include a lack of awareness of the RPL system among the general public, inadequate competency assessment facilities and coordinating mechanisms, and the inability or lack of willingness of individuals to pay competency assessment fees.

**Directions for Policy Development**

1. **Ensuring Efficiency and Equity in Funding**
   - *Ensure sufficient funding for the TVET system and improve the efficiency of resource allocation.* Expansion of access to TVET for a greater number of trainees and enhancement of the quality of existing programs will require substantial capital and recurrent funding and efficient systems of budgeting to achieve the intended outcomes.

2. **Assuring Relevant and Reliable Standards**
   - *Improve the NVQ system and strengthen its implementation.* Sri Lanka is at the advanced stage in establishing the NVQ Framework and in setting competency standards, but continuous improvement of the system and processes in keeping with international best practices will greatly assist workforce development in Sri Lanka and will strengthen the confidence of the public and employers in the system.
   - *Strengthen system assessment.* The availability of trained and certified assessors island-wide, covering the full range of trades and occupations,
will enable timely assessment of trainees and employees.

- **Improve instructor quality and institutional capacity.** Trained instructors and workshops equipped with the necessary equipment and tools are basic necessities for delivering quality training and maintaining course accreditation. Thus, policy level intervention may be required to facilitate such services to both the public and private sectors.

- **Encourage course accreditation for private and public sector providers that are not under the MYASD umbrella.** Course accreditation is voluntary for private sector institutes and public institutes outside MYASD; the situation may be reviewed to ensure the relevance and quality of the training received by all trainees.

### 3. Diversifying Pathways for Skills Acquisition

- **Encourage training for the informal sector.** Measures to promote self-employment of TVET graduates have enjoyed great success, and hence further promotion of entrepreneurship training, enhanced funding for loans, and institutionalization of the coordination and mentoring processes are worthwhile investments that will help to mainstream the process.

- **Strengthen RPL.** Widespread availability of RPL testing and career advancement services will assist in upgrading the skills of workers and in improving worker satisfaction and productivity.

- **Raise awareness about TVET as a career path.** Public perceptions of TVET and awareness of the ways education can progress through multiple pathways are both low. Institutionalized career guidance and social marketing targeting students in secondary education, teachers, parents, workers, and employers may help to overcome this shortcoming.

- **Introduce mechanisms to broaden the paths for life-time learning.** Mechanisms for stimulating the skills upgrading of employees in industry by employers, such as a training levy system, have worked well in some countries (such as Malaysia) and are worth exploring.
6. Managing Service Delivery for Results on the Ground

Training providers, both non-state and government, are the main channels through which the country’s policies in workforce development (Wfd) are translated into results on the ground. This chapter therefore provides a brief overview of the composition of providers and the types of services available in the system before presenting the detailed SABER-Wfd findings on service delivery and their policy implications.

Overview of the Delivery of Training Services

Non-State Providers

All non-state training providers are expected to register with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC); however, some centers are not registered or did not renew their registration after it expired. Non-state providers registered with the TVEC can be categorized as follows: (i) for-profit private institutions, (ii) non-profit NGO training providers, (iii) companies that provide training in their field of expertise on a fee-levying basis, (iv) professional or para-professional institutions, (v) chambers of commerce, and (vi) industry.

Private for-profit training providers must attract a sufficient number of students for their sustainable operation, so courses offered by non-state training providers are mostly in subjects with high social demand but frequently low market demand, such as computing and information technology, finance and management, personal development (including beautician and hairdressing), hotel and tourism, apparel and textiles, healthcare, pre-school teacher training, and light engineering.

A large number of training providers are in the Western Province, where economic activities and population density are high. Although the need for course accreditation has not been made mandatory for non-state training providers, 140 institutes have accredited courses. An Accredited Training Providers Association (private sector) with the participation of all categories of training providers has been functioning since 2007; it promotes greater involvement of the private sector in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) provision and course accreditation and the award of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), and engages in career guidance activities.

State Providers

Major TVET networks operate under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development (MYASD). The Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET) is the oldest network, with its first institute established in 1893 in Colombo. There are nine Colleges of Technology and 29 Technical Colleges operating under the department, headed by a Director General. Regulations applicable to government departments in general apply to DTET, which has no governing board. The National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), Vocational Training Authority (VTA), and National Youth Services Council (NYSC) are statutory bodies, each governed by an executive chairperson and a governing board.

NAITA has the mandate to offer industry-based apprenticeship training and to conduct skills testing leading to recognition of prior learning (RPL) certification. VTA and NYSC offer institution-based training covering all geographical areas, and trainees are provided with on-the-job training on completion of the institution-based training component. The University of Vocational Technology is the specialized university in the TVET sector, established in 2008 and currently offering Bachelor of Technology degrees in technical education, building services, manufacturing, mechatronics and information technology related fields. The National Institute of Business Management is a self-funded public institute offering management and information technology courses, including degree programs. Finally, the Ceylon German Technical Training Institute is a specialized training institute for automobile technology training.

SABER-Wfd ratings on service delivery

The Policy Goals for this Dimension in the SABER-Wfd framework focus on the following three aspects of service delivery: (i) enabling diversity and excellence in training provision; (ii) fostering relevance in public training programs; and (iii) enhancing evidence-based accountability for results. The ratings for these three Policy Goals are presented below and are followed by a reflection on their implications for policy dialogue.

Based on data collected by the SABER-Wfd questionnaire, Sri Lanka receives an overall rating of 1.9 (Emerging) for the Service Delivery dimension see Figure 16. This score is the average of the ratings for the underlying Policy Goals: (i) enabling diversity and excellence in training provision (2.1); (ii) fostering
relevance in public training programs (1.8); and (iii) enhancing evidence-based accountability for results (1.7). The explanation for these ratings and their implications follow below.

Figure 16. SABER-WfD Ratings of the Service Delivery Dimension

Note: See Figure 2 for an explanation of the scale on the horizontal axis.
Source: Based on analysis of the data collected using the SABER-WfD questionnaire.

Policy Goal 7: Enabling Diversity and Excellence in Training Provision

Because the demand for skills is impossible to predict with precision, having a diversity of providers is a feature of strong WfD systems. Among non-state providers the challenge is to temper the profit motive or other program agendas with appropriate regulation to assure quality and relevance. Among state providers, a key concern is their responsiveness to the demand for skills from employers and students. Striking the right balance between institutional autonomy and accountability is one approach to address this concern. Policy Goal 7 takes these ideas into account and benchmarks the system according to the extent to which policies and institutional arrangements are in place to: (i) encourage and regulate non-state provision of training and (ii) foster excellence in public training provision by combining incentives and autonomy in the management of public institutions.

Sri Lanka scores at the Emerging level (2.1) for this Policy Goal. There is a wide range of state and non-state training providers but, due to implementation weaknesses, 20 percent of the latter are not registered. In addition, public training institutes focus on enrollment numbers, since they are given targets to meet and are not assessed on the basis of other performance criteria linked to trainee success and satisfaction. Despite receiving an annual allocated budget, public training institutions continue to face restrictions that limit their financial and management autonomy.

Non-state training provision is recognized by the government, and a regulatory mechanism has been established under the Tertiary and Vocational Education (TVE) Act to register institutes and to address quality assurance issues. However, implementation of the registration of institutes has shortcomings; private providers are mandated to register but TVET lacks enforcement authority, making implementation challenging. As a result, the number of institutes registered with the TVEC is approximately 80 percent of the total number of institutes, according to the estimates of TVEC. This is mainly because the legal provisions to enforce registration are lacking in the existing TVE Act. During the registration process, institutes are provided with technical guidance by TVEC with regard to physical facilities, course curricula, instructors’ qualifications, competency assessments and record keeping. The TVEC provides further technical assistance and small-scale financial support to purchase equipment for the purpose of course accreditation, and it permits the issuance of NVQ. However, the level of incentives provided to non-state training providers, both for-profit and non-profit, is low. The government has yet to make major policy-level interventions to facilitate expansion of non-state training provision.

The government has made the expansion of public training provision a priority, and public training institutes are given targets for overall enrollment of trainees and approximate numbers to be trained in different fields of study or occupations. However, trainee output targets are not generally given, and available data reveal that the overall dropout rate of trainees is approximately 25 percent. Examination pass rates, job placement rates, employer satisfaction, and trainee satisfaction are not generally considered in performance assessments, although these are assessed in ad hoc surveys. There are no reward systems for better performing public institutes, although there are commendations for individual officers and instructors. At present there is no institutionalized mechanism for closing training programs that are unproductive and fail to achieve targets, although training programs are closed based on ad hoc reviews.

Public institutions have the authority to spend the allocated budgets, but they cannot set the number of staff positions and the level of remuneration for staff, which require the approval of the Ministry of Finance. The institutes may generate funds from regular courses (except DTET) or extension courses offered on a part-
time basis, and they may pay the staff for work outside of assigned duties. This allows the staff to receive additional income, but the net income generated cannot be retained by the institute.

**Policy Goal 8: Fostering Relevance in Public Training Programs**

Public training institutions need reliable information on current and emerging skills demands in order to keep their program offerings relevant to market conditions. It is therefore desirable for public training institutions to establish and maintain relationships with employers, industry associations, and research institutions. Such partners are a source of both information about skills competencies and expertise and advice on curriculum design and technical specifications for training facilities and equipment. They can also help create opportunities for workplace training for students and continuing professional development for instructors and administrators. Policy Goal 8 considers the extent to which arrangements are in place for public training providers to: (i) benefit from industry and expert input in the design of programs and (ii) recruit administrators and instructors with relevant qualifications and support their professional development.

Sri Lanka scores at the *Emerging* level (1.8) for this Policy Goal. Ad hoc links between training institutions and industry exist, but in practice industry has little involvement in important activities such as improving the quality and relevance of courses by setting competency standards, endorsing course curricula, being represented on governing boards and advisory bodies, assessing labor market needs, carrying out industry training for instructors and trainees, collaborating on training programs, and providing part-time trainers. Moreover, there is no significant industry role in setting facility standards of institutes and no formal links with independent research institutes. Research conducted in the sector aimed at improving the operational efficiency of institutes and courses is coordinated by the Research Cell of TVEC, and the findings are presented at an annual seminar.

Recruitment of heads and instructors of public training institutes is based on criteria approved by the Department of Management Services of the Ministry of Finance; these include academic and vocational qualifications, industry experience, and teaching experience. However, the low level of salaries paid in the public sector does not attract the best qualified and most competent staff to manage and teach in TVET institutes. Initial training for new recruits and further professional development are carried out in an ad hoc manner, and the need for systematic professional development of heads of institutes and instructors has been identified as a priority.

**Policy Goal 9: Enhancing Evidence-based Accountability for Results**

Systematic monitoring and evaluation of service delivery are important for both quality assurance and system improvement. Accomplishing this function requires gathering and analyzing data from a variety of sources. The reporting of institution level data enables the relevant authorities to ensure that providers are delivering on expected outcomes. Such data also enable these authorities to identify gaps or challenges in training provision or areas of good practice. Additionally, periodic surveys and evaluations of major programs generate complementary information that can help enhance the relevance and efficiency of the system as a whole. Policy Goal 9 considers these ideas when assessing the system’s arrangements for collecting and using data to focus attention on training outcomes, efficiency, and innovation in service delivery.

Sri Lanka scores at the *Latent* level (1.7) for this Policy Goal. Public training institutions, as well as non-state training providers, are failing to provide adequate data that would provide the TVEC with the necessary basis for designing new policies and making system improvements.

The training-related data reported by public institutes is mostly confined to data on enrollment and completion of training. Client feedback, job placements, and earnings of graduates are rarely reported. All statutory bodies are expected to have a Corporate Plan covering the next five years, and this is updated every year. A detailed Annual Activity Plan needs to be prepared before the start of the year and forwarded to the Ministry of Finance; the output of each institute is monitored based on this annual plan. All public training institutes under MYASD report their trainee enrollments and completions to the ministry and to TVEC. Competency assessment results of trainees are forwarded online from head offices of training institutes to TVEC for the purpose of issuing NVQ certificates.

A computer based Management Information System (MIS) has been installed in public training institutions,
but data are not regularly fed into the system. As a result, special surveys have been conducted by the TVEC to collect accurate data from public training providers under MYASD. Non-state training providers report data on enrollment and completion to the TVEC – 286 institutes reported data in 2011, which represented only about 30 percent of registered training institutes. Since TVET has no enforcement authority, non-state training providers, although mandated, only report data at the time of registration. Training institutes and donor-funded projects have conducted surveys on special topics aimed at policy level interventions, and some of the recommendations have been implemented. Overall, use of data to monitor and improve program and system performance is limited, and no significant improvements have recently been made based on data.

Directions for Policy Development

1. **Enabling Diversity and Excellence in Training Provision**
   - *Take steps to enforce the registration of non-state training providers.* A well-functioning and comprehensive registration process will enhance the quality assurance process of non-state training providers and could minimize current shortcomings.
   - *Broaden the incentives for non-state training providers.* Only limited incentives and technical assistance are currently being provided to non-state training providers, but a significant enhancement of the incentives may build capacity and diversity in non-state training for workforce development.
   - *Strengthen the management and financial autonomy of training providers.* Giving greater management and financial autonomy to public training institutes within the overall objectives of the institutes will enhance operational flexibility and efficiency.

2. **Fostering Relevance in Public Training Programs**
   - *Strengthen the relevance of public training programs through increased industry participation and more extensive research and analysis.* Even though ad hoc links exist between training institutes and industry for setting competency standards and curriculum development, in practice there is currently little industry involvement in TVET design, delivery, and setting of facility standards. In addition, the research and survey activities of the TVET sector need to be strengthened, and links with reputable research institutes need to be established, so that strategic decisions on workforce development can be based on well-founded research findings.
   - *Strengthen opportunities for the professional development of instructors.* The systematic professional development of instructors and heads of training centers is vital for improving the quality and efficiency of training provision. This could be achieved by setting up institutions and programs dedicated to this purpose.

3. **Enhancing Evidence-based Accountability for Results**
   - *Strengthen the management information system (MIS) and the monitoring and evaluation system.* Reporting of public sector training-related data is incomplete and does not effectively contribute to the analysis of operational aspects and decision making. The MIS needs to be enhanced so that it can gather reliable and comprehensive data. Given the inadequate reporting of training data by the non-state sector, monitoring and evaluation of these training providers requires significant improvement.
## Annex 1: Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALMP</td>
<td>Active Labor Market Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>COT</td>
<td>College of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>CVET</td>
<td>Continuing Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>DTET</td>
<td>Department of Technical Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>IVET</td>
<td>Initial Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIS</td>
<td>Management information system</td>
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<tr>
<td>MYASD</td>
<td>Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development</td>
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<td>NAITA</td>
<td>National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NVQ</td>
<td>National Vocational Qualifications</td>
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<td>NYSC</td>
<td>National Youth Services Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>RPL</td>
<td>Recognition of Prior Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>SABER</td>
<td>Systems Approach for Better Education Results</td>
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<tr>
<td>TVEC</td>
<td>Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical and Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>UVT</td>
<td>University of Vocational Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<td>VTA</td>
<td>Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka</td>
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<tr>
<td>WfD</td>
<td>workforce development</td>
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## Annex 2: Structure of the SABER-WfD Framework

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<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Strategic Framework</th>
<th>Policy Goal</th>
<th>Policy Action</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Setting a Strategic Direction</td>
<td>Provide sustained advocacy for Wfd at the top leadership level</td>
<td>G1_T1 Advocacy for Wfd to Support Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2</td>
<td>Fostering a Demand-Led Approach</td>
<td>Establish clarity on the demand for skills and areas of critical constraint</td>
<td>G2_T1 Overall Assessment of Economic Prospects and Skills Implications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G3</td>
<td>Strengthening Critical Coordination</td>
<td>Formalize key WFD roles for coordinated action on strategic priorities</td>
<td>G3_T1 Roles of Government Ministries and Agencies</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>G4</td>
<td>Ensuring Efficiency and Equity in Funding</td>
<td>Provide stable funding for effective programs in initial, continuing and targeted vocational education and training</td>
<td>G4_T1 Overview of Funding for Wfd</td>
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<tr>
<td>G5</td>
<td>Assuring Relevant and Reliable Standards</td>
<td>Monitor and enhance equity in funding for training</td>
<td>G4_T5 Equity in Funding for Training Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>G6</td>
<td>Diversifying Pathways for Skills Acquisition</td>
<td>Develop and enforce accreditation standards for maintaining the quality of training provision</td>
<td>G5_T6 Government Oversight of Accreditation</td>
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<tr>
<td>G7</td>
<td>Enabling Diversity and Excellence in Training Provision</td>
<td>Facilitate lifelong learning through articulation of skills certification and recognition of prior learning</td>
<td>G5_T7 Establishment of Accreditation Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>G8</td>
<td>Fostering Relevance in Public Training Programs</td>
<td>Provide support services for skills acquisition by workers, job-seekers and the disadvantaged</td>
<td>G5_T8 Accreditation Requirements and Enforcement of Accreditation Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>G9</td>
<td>Enhancing Evidence-based Accountability for Results</td>
<td>Integrate industry and expert input into the design and delivery of public training programs</td>
<td>G5_T9 Incentives and Support for Accreditation</td>
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<tr>
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<th>Policy Goal</th>
<th>Policy Action</th>
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<tr>
<td>G2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide stable funding for effective programs in initial, continuing and targeted vocational education and training</td>
<td>G4_T2 Recurrent Funding for Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET)</td>
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<td>G5</td>
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<td>Monitor and enhance equity in funding for training</td>
<td>G4_T3 Recurrent Funding for Continuing Vocational Education and Training Programs (CVET)</td>
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<td>G6</td>
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<td>Develop and enforce accreditation standards for maintaining the quality of training provision</td>
<td>G4_T4 Recurrent Funding for Training-related Active Labor Market Programs (ALMPs)</td>
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<td>G11</td>
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### Functional Dimension 1: Strategic Framework

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<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Established</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G1: Setting a Strategic Direction for WfD</td>
<td>Visible champions for WfD are either <strong>absent</strong> or take <strong>no specific action</strong> to advance strategic WfD priorities.</td>
<td>Some visible champions provide <strong>ad hoc</strong> advocacy for WfD and have acted on a <strong>few</strong> interventions to advance strategic WfD priorities; <strong>no arrangements</strong> exist to monitor and review implementation progress.</td>
<td>Government leaders exercise <strong>sustained</strong> advocacy for WfD with <strong>occasional, ad hoc</strong> participation from non-government leaders; their advocacy focuses on <strong>selected</strong> industries or economic sectors and manifests itself through <strong>a range</strong> of specific interventions; implementation progress is monitored, albeit through <strong>ad hoc</strong> reviews.</td>
<td>Both government and non-government leaders exercise <strong>sustained</strong> advocacy for WfD, and rely on <strong>routine, institutionalized</strong> processes to collaborate on <strong>well-integrated</strong> interventions to advance a <strong>strategic, economy-wide</strong> WfD policy agenda; implementation progress is monitored and reviewed through <strong>routine, institutionalized</strong> processes.</td>
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## Functional Dimension 1: Strategic Framework

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<th>Policy Goal</th>
<th>Level of Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latent</strong></td>
<td><strong>Emerging</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2: Fostering a Demand-Led Approach to WfD</td>
<td>There is <strong>no assessment</strong> of the country’s economic prospects and their implications for skills; industry and employers have a <strong>limited or no role</strong> in defining strategic WfD priorities and receive <strong>limited</strong> support from the government for skills upgrading.</td>
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### Functional Dimension 1: Strategic Framework

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<th>Established</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G3: Strengthening Critical Coordination for Implementation</td>
<td>Industry/employers have a <strong>limited or no role</strong> in defining strategic WfD priorities; the government either provides <strong>no incentives</strong> to encourage skills upgrading by employers or conducts <strong>no reviews</strong> of such incentive programs.</td>
<td>Industry/employers help define WfD priorities on an <strong>ad hoc</strong> basis and make <strong>limited</strong> contributions to address skills implications of major policy/investment decisions; the government provides <strong>some</strong> incentives for skills upgrading for formal and informal sector employers; if a levy-grant scheme exists its coverage is <strong>limited</strong>; incentive programs are <strong>not systematically</strong> reviewed for impact.</td>
<td>Industry/employers help define WfD priorities on a <strong>routine</strong> basis and make <strong>some</strong> contributions in <strong>selected</strong> areas to address the skills implications of major policy/investment decisions; the government provides a <strong>range</strong> of incentives for skills upgrading for all employers; a levy-grant scheme with <strong>broad</strong> coverage of formal sector employers exists; incentive programs are <strong>systematically</strong> reviewed and <strong>adjusted</strong>; an annual report on the levy-grant scheme is published with a <strong>time lag</strong>.</td>
<td>Industry/employers help define WfD priorities on a <strong>routine</strong> basis and make <strong>significant</strong> contributions in <strong>multiple</strong> areas to address the skills implications of major policy/investment decisions; the government provides a <strong>range</strong> of incentives for skills upgrading for all employers; a levy-grant scheme with <strong>comprehensive</strong> coverage of formal sector employers exists; incentive programs to encourage skills upgrading are <strong>systematically</strong> reviewed for <strong>impact on skills and productivity</strong> and are <strong>adjusted</strong> accordingly; an annual report on the levy-grant scheme is published in a <strong>timely fashion</strong>.</td>
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## Functional Dimension 2: System Oversight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Goal</th>
<th>Level of Development</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>G4: Ensuring Efficiency and Equity in Funding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Latent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The government funds IVET, CVET and ALMPs (but not OJT in SMEs) based on <em>ad hoc</em> budgeting processes, but takes no action to facilitate formal partnerships between training providers and employers; the impact of funding on the beneficiaries of training programs has not been recently reviewed.</td>
<td>The government funds IVET, CVET (including OJT in SMEs) and ALMPs; funding for IVET and CVET follows routine budgeting processes involving only government officials with allocations determined largely by the previous year's budget; funding for ALMPs is decided by government officials on an <em>ad hoc</em> basis and targets select population groups through various channels; the government takes some action to facilitate formal partnerships between individual training providers and employers; recent reviews considered the impact of funding on only training-related indicators (e.g. enrollment, completion), which stimulated dialogue among some WfD stakeholders.</td>
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### Functional Dimension 2: System Oversight

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<th>Policy Goal</th>
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<tr>
<td>G5: Assuring Relevant and Reliable Standards</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Latent</td>
<td>A few stakeholders engage in <em>ad hoc</em> policy dialogue on competency standards and/or the NQF; competency standards exist for a few occupations and are used by some training providers in their programs; skills testing is competency-based for a few occupations but for the most part is mainly theory-based; certificates are recognized by public and some private sector employers but have little impact on employment and earnings; no system is in place to establish accreditation standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Numerous stakeholders engage in policy dialogue on competency standards and/or the NQF through institutionalized processes; competency standards exist for most occupations and are used by some training providers in their programs; the NQF, if in place, covers some occupations and a range of skill levels; skills testing for most occupations follows standard procedures, is competency-based and assesses both theoretical knowledge and practical skills; certificates are recognized by both public and private sector employers and may impact employment and earnings; the accreditation of training providers is supervised by a dedicated agency in the relevant ministry; the agency is responsible for defining accreditation standards in consultation with stakeholders; standards are reviewed following established protocols and are publicized and routinely enforced; all training providers are required as well as offered incentives and support to seek and retain accreditation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>All key stakeholders engage in policy dialogue on competency standards and/or the NQF through institutionalized processes; competency standards exist for most occupations and are used by training providers in their programs; the NQF, if in place, covers most occupations and a wide range of skill levels; skills testing for most occupations follows standard procedures, is competency-based and assesses both theoretical knowledge and practical skills; robust protocols, including random audits, ensure the credibility of certification; certificates are valued by most employers and consistently improve employment prospects and earnings; the accreditation of training providers is supervised by a dedicated agency in the relevant ministry; the agency is responsible for defining accreditation standards and is consulted with stakeholders; standards are reviewed on an ad hoc basis and are publicized or enforced to some extent; all providers receiving public funding must be accredited; providers are offered incentives and limited support to seek and retain accreditation.</td>
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### Functional Dimension 2: System Oversight

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<tr>
<th>Policy Goal</th>
<th>Latent</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Established</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>G6: Diversifying Pathways for Skills Acquisition</strong></td>
<td>Students in technical and vocational education have few or no options for further formal skills acquisition beyond the secondary level and the government takes no action to improve public perception of TVET; certificates for technical and vocational programs are not recognized in the NQF; qualifications certified by non-Education ministries are not recognized by formal programs under the Ministry of Education; recognition of prior learning receives limited attention; the government provides practically no support for further occupational and career development, or training programs for disadvantaged populations.</td>
<td>Students in technical and vocational education can only progress to vocationally-oriented, non-university programs; the government takes limited action to improve public perception of TVET (e.g. diversifying learning pathways); some certificates for technical and vocational programs are recognized in the NQF; few qualifications certified by non-Education ministries are recognized by formal programs under the Ministry of Education; policymakers pay some attention to the recognition of prior learning and provide the public with some information on the subject; the government offers limited services for further occupational and career development through stand-alone local service centers that are not integrated into a system; training programs for disadvantaged populations receive ad hoc support.</td>
<td>Students in technical and vocational education can progress to vocationally-oriented programs, including at the university level; the government takes some action to improve public perception of TVET (e.g. diversifying learning pathways and improving program quality) and reviews the impact of such efforts on an ad hoc basis; most certificates for technical and vocational programs are recognized in the NQF; a large number of qualifications certified by non-Education ministries are recognized by formal programs under the Ministry of Education, albeit without the granting of credits; policymakers give some attention to the recognition of prior learning and provide the public with some information on the subject; a formal association of stakeholders provides dedicated attention to adult learning issues; the government offers limited services for further occupational and career development, which are available through an integrated network of centers; training programs for disadvantaged populations receive systematic support and are reviewed for impact on an ad hoc basis.</td>
<td>Students in technical and vocational education can progress to academically or vocationally-oriented programs, including at the university level; the government takes coherent action on multiple fronts to improve public perception of TVET (e.g. diversifying learning pathways and improving program quality and relevance, with the support of a media campaign) and routinely reviews and adjusts such efforts to maximize their impact; most certificates for technical and vocational programs are recognized in the NQF; a large number of qualifications certified by non-Education ministries are recognized by formal programs under the Ministry of Education; policymakers give sustained attention to the recognition of prior learning and provide the public with comprehensive information on the subject; a national organization of stakeholders provides dedicated attention to adult learning issues; the government offers a comprehensive menu of services for further occupational and career development, including online resources, which are available through an integrated network of centers; training programs for disadvantaged populations receive systematic support with multi-year budgets and are routinely reviewed for impact and adjusted accordingly.</td>
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## Functional Dimension 3: Service Delivery

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<tr>
<th>Policy Goal</th>
<th>Level of Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G7: Enabling Diversity and Excellence in Training Provision</td>
<td>There is no diversity of training provision as the system is largely comprised of public providers with limited or no autonomy; training provision is not informed by formal assessment, stakeholder input or performance targets.</td>
<td>There is broad diversity in training provision; non-state training providers, most registered and licensed, operate with comprehensive government incentives, systematic quality assurance measures and routine review and adjustment of government policies toward non-state training providers; public providers, mostly governed by management boards, have significant autonomy; decisions about training provision are time-bound and informed by formal assessment of implementation constraints; stakeholder input and use of a variety of measures to incentivize performance include support, rewards and performance-based funding.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>There is some diversity in training provision; non-state providers operate with limited government incentives and governance over registration, licensing and quality assurance; public training is provided by institutions with some autonomy and informed by some assessment of implementation constraints, stakeholder input and basic targets.</td>
<td>There is diversity in training provision; non-state training providers, some registered and licensed, operate within a range of government incentives, systematic quality assurance measures and routine reviews of government policies toward non-state training providers; public providers, mostly governed by management boards, have some autonomy; training provision is informed by formal analysis of implementation constraints, stakeholder input and basic targets; lagging providers receive support and exemplary institutions are rewarded.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is no diversity of training provision as the system is largely comprised of public providers with limited or no autonomy; training provision is not informed by formal assessment, stakeholder input or performance targets.</td>
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## Functional Dimension 3: Service Delivery

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<th>Policy Goal</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latent</td>
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<tr>
<td>G8: Fostering Relevance in Public Training Programs</td>
<td>There are few or no attempts to foster relevance in public training programs through encouraging links between training institutions, industry and research institutions or through setting standards for the recruitment and training of heads and instructors in training institutions.</td>
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### Functional Dimension 3: Service Delivery

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>G9: Enhancing Evidence-based Accountability for Results</td>
<td>There are no specific data collection and reporting requirements, but training providers maintain their own databases; the government does not conduct or sponsor skills-related surveys or impact evaluations and rarely uses data to monitor and improve system performance.</td>
</tr>
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Annex 4: References and Informants

References


## Annex 5: Table of SABER-WfD Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Goal</th>
<th>Policy Action</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G1 3.0</td>
<td>Provide sustained advocacy for WfD at the top leadership level</td>
<td>3.0 G1_T1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2 2.2</td>
<td>Establish clarity on the demand for skills and areas of critical constraint</td>
<td>3.0 G2_T1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G3 2.7</td>
<td>Engage employers in setting WfD priorities and in enhancing skills-upgrading for workers</td>
<td>1.7 G2_T2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G4 2.3</td>
<td>Formalize key WfD roles for coordinated action on strategic priorities</td>
<td>2.7 G3_T1 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G5 2.8</td>
<td>Provide stable funding for effective programs in initial, continuing and targeted vocational education and training</td>
<td>2.3 G4_T1 info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G6 2.2</td>
<td>Monitor and enhance equity in funding for training</td>
<td>2.0 G4_T2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G7 2.8</td>
<td>Facilitate sustained partnerships between training institutions and employers</td>
<td>3.0 G4_T3 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8 1.8</td>
<td>Broaden the scope of competency standards as a basis for developing qualifications frameworks</td>
<td>4.0 G4_T4 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9 1.7</td>
<td>Establish protocols for assuring the credibility of skills testing and certification</td>
<td>3.0 G4_T5 IVET 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G10 1.8</td>
<td>Develop and enforce accreditation standards for maintaining the quality of training provision</td>
<td>3.0 G4_T5 CVET 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G11 1.6</td>
<td>Promote educational progression and permeability through multiple pathways, including for TVET students</td>
<td>2.0 G4_T5 ALMP 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G12 2.2</td>
<td>Strengthen the system for skills certification and recognition</td>
<td>2.0 G5_T1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G13 1.9</td>
<td>Enhance support for skills acquisition by workers, job-seekers and the disadvantaged</td>
<td>2.0 G5_T2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G14 2.8</td>
<td>Encourage and regulate non-state provision of training</td>
<td>2.3 G5_T3 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G15 2.0</td>
<td>Combine incentives and autonomy in the management of public training institutions</td>
<td>2.0 G5_T4 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G16 1.8</td>
<td>Integrate industry and expert input into the design and delivery of public training programs</td>
<td>1.8 G5_T5 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G17 1.7</td>
<td>Recruit and support administrators and instructors for enhancing the market-relevance of public training programs</td>
<td>2.0 G5_T6 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G18 1.7</td>
<td>Expand the availability and use of policy-relevant data for focusing providers’ attention on training outcomes, efficiency and innovation</td>
<td>1.7 G5_T7 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 6: Authorship and Acknowledgements

This report is the product of collaboration between Dr. Tilkaratne A. Piyasiri and staff at the World Bank comprising Halil Dundar and Yevgeniya Savchenko, members of the South Asia Region, as well as Jee-Peng Tan, Sankalpa Dashrath, and Ryan Flynn of the SABER-Wfd team based in the Education Global Practice office. Dr. Piyasiri collected the data using the SABER-Wfd data collection instrument and prepared initial drafts of the report; the regional team from the Bank finalized the report; and the SABER-Wfd team scored the data, designed the template for the report, and made substantive contributions to the final write-up. Graham Colin-Jones provided excellent editorial support and contributed to the final text of the report.

The research team acknowledges the support of all who have contributed to the report and its findings, including informants, survey respondents, participants at various consultation workshops, and other members of the SABER-Wfd team at the World Bank: Rita Costa, Viviana Gomez, Rijak Grover, Kiong Hock Lee, Francisco Marmolejo, Joy Yoo-Jeung Nam, Brent Parton, and Alexandria Valerio. The research team gratefully acknowledges the generous financial support of the Government of the United Kingdom through its Department of International Development’s Partnership for Education Development with the World Bank which makes it possible for the SABER-Wfd team to provide technical support to the principal investigator in the form of standardized tools for and guidance on data collection, analysis, and reporting.
The **Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)** initiative produces comparative data and knowledge on education policies and institutions, with the aim of helping countries systematically strengthen their education systems. SABER evaluates the quality of education policies against evidence-based global standards, using new diagnostic tools and detailed policy data. The SABER country reports give all parties with a stake in educational results—from administrators, teachers, and parents to policymakers and business people—an accessible, objective snapshot showing how well the policies of their country's education system are oriented toward ensuring that all children and youth learn.

This report focuses specifically on policies in the area of **Workforce Development**.