



# TVET Country Profile Sri Lanka

January 2018

Compiled in collaboration with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC), Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training

## Contents

Statistics.....	3
1. TVET formal, non-formal and informal systems .....	5
2. TVET strategy and key policy documents.....	7
3. Governance and financing.....	8
4. TVET teachers and trainers.....	8
5. Qualification system and quality assurance .....	9
6. Current reforms and policy discussion .....	10
7. References and further reading.....	12

## TVETipedia Glossary

Words marked in [blue](#) are linked to UNESCO-UNEVOC’s online TVETipedia Glossary, which provides definitions and background information from various trustworthy sources on terms commonly used in the area of technical and vocational education and training. Find out more [here](#).

## Acknowledgements

The following report has been compiled with the support of the [Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission \(TVEC\) under the Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training](#) of Sri Lanka, a UNEVOC Centre. Other UNEVOC Centres in Sri Lanka are: [University of Vocational Technology \(UNIVOTEC\)](#)

## Statistics<sup>1</sup>

### General information

Category	Indicator	Statistics (2015)
Demographic	Total population (in thousands)	20,175
	Population growth (annual %)	0.9
	Median age of population <sup>2</sup>	32.3
	Population aged 15-24 years (in thousands)	3,120

Socio-economic	GDP growth (annual %)	4.8
	GDP per capita (current US\$)	11,739
	Unemployment rate (%) <sup>3</sup>	5
	Youth literacy rate, population 15-24 years, both sexes (%)	98.77

### Participation in education by level and by programme orientation, 2015

Category		Gross enrolment ration (%)		Percentage of students who are female (%)	
Primary education (ISCED 1)		101.68		49.18	
Secondary education, all programmes	Lower secondary (ISCED 2)	99.72(2013)	98.55	50.87 (2013)	49.6
	Upper secondary (ISCED 3)		99.06 (2013)		52.18 (2013)
Tertiary education, all programmes (ISCED 5-8)		19.80		61.06	

Category		Percentage of students enrolled in vocational programmes, both sexes (%)		Percentage of students in vocational education who are female (%)	
Secondary education, all programmes	Lower secondary (ISCED 2)	5.75 (2013)	-	45.18 (2013)	-
	Upper secondary (ISCED 3)		11.89 (2013)		45.18 (2013)

Indicator	Both sexes (%)	Percentage of students who are female (%)
Percentage of students in tertiary education enrolled in short cycle education (ISCED 5)	5.84 (2015)	61.09 (2015)

<sup>1</sup> All statistics retrieved from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). <http://uis.unesco.org/>. unless otherwise indicated

<sup>2</sup> UN DESA. World Population Prospects. <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>

<sup>3</sup> International Labour Organization. [ILOSTAT - ILO database of labour statistics](http://ilostat.org/)

### Education finance

Category	Indicator	Statistics (2015)
Expenditure	Government expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure (%)	10.95
	Expenditure on secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary vocational education as % of total government expenditure (%)	-

### SDG thematic indicators related to TVET and skills<sup>4</sup>

Category	Indicator	Statistics (2015)
Selected SDG thematic indicators	Participation rate in technical-vocational programmes (15- to 24-year-olds) (%)	-
	Percentage of youth/adults who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital literacy skills (%)	-

### Type of TVET institutions<sup>5</sup>

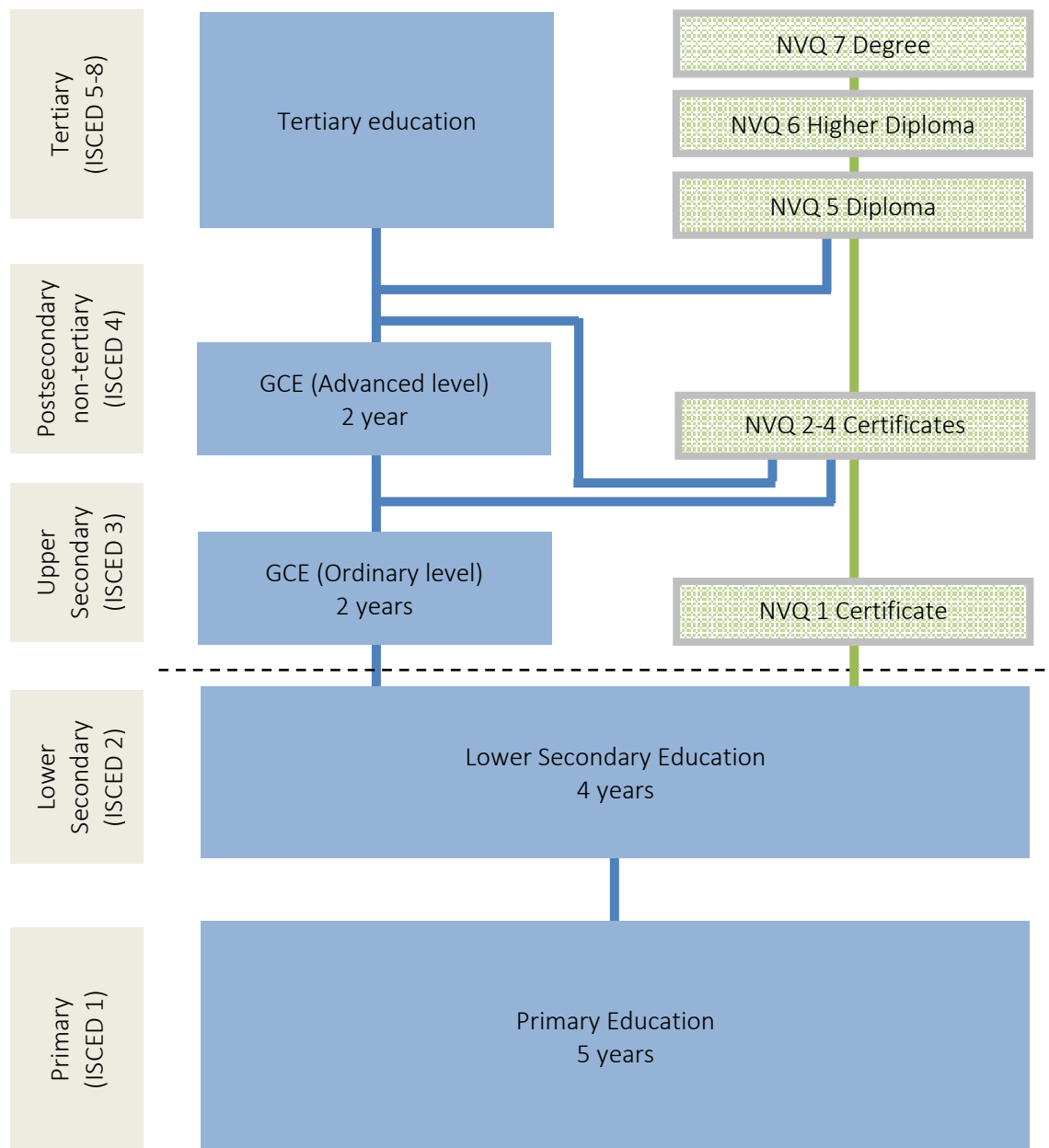
Type of institution	Education level	Ministry/Institute responsible	Number of institutions
University of Vocational Technology (UNIVOTEC)	Degree (ISCED 5)	Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training	1
Colleges of Technology (CoTs)	Diploma (ISCED 5)	Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET)	9
University Colleges	Diploma (ISCED 5)	University of Vocational Technology (UNIVOTEC)	6
Technical Colleges (TCs)	Certificate	Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET)	30
Vocational Training Centers	Certificate	Vocational Training Authority (VTA)	250
Apprenticeship Training Institutes	Certificate	National Industrial and Apprenticeship Training Authority	68
Vocational Training Centers	Certificate	National Youth Services Council (NYSC)	40
Private and NGO sector Training Centres	Certificate/Diploma	Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission	400

<sup>4</sup> Other Sustainable Development Goal 4 thematic indicators at <http://sdg4monitoring.uis.unesco.org/>

<sup>5</sup> Compiled by the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC)

## 1. TVET formal, non-formal and informal systems

TVET in the Sri Lankan education system



- General education
- TVET as an optional subject
- TVET
- Compulsory education
- TVET pathway
- General education pathway

## Formal TVET system

The **National Vocational Qualifications 1-4 (Certificate)** are offered at the upper secondary (ISCED 3) and postsecondary non-tertiary (ISCED 4) levels.

Duration:	1 year (6 months institutional + 6 months on-the-job training)
Admission requirements:	Differ according to specific course requirements.
Taught in:	Technical colleges; Vocational Training Centres

Graduates are able to go to the labour market, or enrol for National Vocational Qualifications 5-6 (Diploma) at the tertiary level (ISCED 5).

**National Vocational Qualifications 5-6 (Diploma and Higher Diploma)** are offered at the tertiary level (ISCED 5).

Duration	1 ½ - 2 years
Admission requirements:	NVQ 3 or 4 (or equivalent)
Taught in:	College of Technologies; University colleges

Graduates are able to go to the labour market, or enrol for National Vocational Qualification 7 (Degree) at the tertiary level (ISCED 5).

The **National Vocational Qualification 7 (Degree)** are offered at the tertiary level (ISCED 6).

Duration:	3 years
Admission requirements:	NVQ 5 or 6 (or equivalent)
Taught in:	University of Technology (UNIVOTEC)

## Non-formal and informal TVET systems

A number of ministries provide training programmes, including the Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training, and the Ministry of Education.

There are a number of mechanisms in place to recognize prior learning. The **National Vocational Qualifications Operation Manual** stipulates that NVQ qualifications may be awarded through the [recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#) if the applicant has a minimum industrial experience of 18 months for NVQ 2 or 3 qualifications. Moreover, the criteria for awarding NVQ Level 4 qualification through RPL Assessment is as follows:

- For applicant with NVQ Level 2 or 3 qualifications
  - Minimum of 24 months work experience in relevant section; or
  - Minimum of 5 years relevant experience in formal employment with contributions to Employees Provident Fund (EPF) or pension; or
  - Minimum of 5 years relevant experience in self employment with a business registration
  - Competent in the NVQ 4 Assessment

- For applicants without NVQ Level 2 or 3 qualifications
  - Minimum of 5 years relevant industry experience. If relevant formal employment with contributions to EPF or pension or self employment with business registration can not be proved, TVEC will nominate an assessor, in addition to the assessors nominated by the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA) or the Vocational Training Authority (VTA), for Level 4 assessment.

## 2. TVET strategy and key policy documents

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Sri Lanka aims to improve the effectiveness and employability of the population, and aims to provide education and vocational qualifications for [lifelong learning](#).

The following key documents help guide the development of TVET in Sri Lanka.

Name of document	Tertiary and Vocational Education Policy
Date entered into force	July 2016
Website link	<a href="#">Link</a>
Key points and objectives	
<p>The Tertiary and Vocational Education Policy aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify training needs based on labour market analysis through the establishment of a Labour Market Advisory and Coordinating Committee (LMACC) that includes ministries and national bodies, as well as the Employers Federation and Chambers of Commerce;</li> <li>• strengthen TVET teacher and trainer training and selection processes;</li> <li>• link training providers' annual training targets to national training targets;</li> <li>• take measures to mitigate dropout rate and reduce the unemployment of TVET dropouts;</li> <li>• improve the TVET delivery process by strengthening the institutional mechanisms of the National Vocational Qualifications steering committee and sub committees.</li> </ul>	

Name of document	National Strategy on TVET Provision For Vulnerable People in Sri Lanka
Date entered into force	July 2008
Website link	<a href="#">Link</a>
Key points and objectives	
<p>The National Consultation on Skills Development for Vulnerable Group identified six groups as vulnerable groups that would require immediate attention. These six groups were subsequently incorporated in the section on vulnerable groups in the overall National TVET Policy (Section 14.8: Policy 80). The National Strategy on TVET Provision For Vulnerable People in Sri Lanka calls for programmes that allow better access to TVET to the following groups:</p>	

- Women, especially those heading households
- Persons with disabilities
- Disadvantaged youth, including school dropouts and former child labour
- Poor persons, including people in plantation areas and urban poor
- Persons affected by conflict (including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and ex-combatants)
- Migrant workers, and family members of migrant workers

Name of document	Tertiary and Vocational Education Act No. 20, and Amendment Act No. 50
Date entered into force	Tertiary and Vocational Education Act No. 20 (1990) and TVE Amendment Act No. 50 (December 1999)
Website link	<a href="#">Link</a>
Key points and objectives	The Tertiary and Vocational Education Act No. 20 of 1990 established the regulatory framework for the TVET in Sri Lanka. It established the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) and defined its roles and responsibilities. The TVE (Amendment) Act No. 50 (1999) reconstituted TVEC as a statutory body.

### 3. Governance and financing

#### Governance

The **Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training** is responsible for the development of TVET policies. Specifically, the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC), under the Ministry, is involved in policy formulation, planning, quality assurance, coordination and the development of tertiary and vocational education. Members of the TVEC include Employer Associations and private sector entrepreneurs, providing a forum for the private sector to contribute towards developing policies and programmes.

The Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training implements TVET related policies and programmes in collaboration with national agencies, provincial councils, and Zonal Education Office and Divisional Officers.

#### Financing

TVET is funded by public expenditure, which includes contributions from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors and grants from development partners. All full time courses in public training providers are offered free of charge and students receive a stipend for selected courses.

### 4. TVET teachers and trainers

In order to teach technical and vocational education and training, teachers and trainers need to have one National Vocational Qualification level higher than the level that they intend to teach at, plus industry experience.



The Faculty of Training Technology (FTT) at the University of Vocational Technology offers pre-service and in-service TVET teacher and trainer training.

## 5. Qualification system and quality assurance

### National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) monitors and evaluates the [NQF](#), which has seven levels as follows:

Level	Academic Qualification	TVET Qualification
1	Certificate	National Vocational Qualification 1
2	Certificate	National Vocational Qualification 2
3	Advanced Certificate (GCE A/L or equivalent)	National Vocational Qualification 3
4	Advanced Certificate (GCE A/L or equivalent)	National Vocational Qualification 4
5	Diploma	National Vocational Qualification 5
6	Higher Diploma	National Vocational Qualification 6
7	Degree	National Vocational Qualification 7

National Vocational Qualifications at levels 1 to 4 aims to teach students basic skills to be at the master craftsman, while courses at levels 5 and 6 add supervisory and/or process management competencies. The University of Vocational Technology teaches programmes at the National Vocational Qualification level 7.

National Competency Standards (NCS) are developed in consultation with the industry. Each [competency standard](#) defines the skills, standards and activities related to acquiring relevant knowledge, competencies and attitudes related to each level. These NCS are used to develop the curriculum, trainer and trainee guides, and assessment criteria.

### Quality assurance

The Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) monitors and evaluates the registration, accreditation and the [quality management System](#). It grants registration certificates to TVET institutions based on the assessment of adequacy and relevance of infrastructure, training equipment, teacher qualification, curricula and training delivery.

TVET institutions need to be [accredited](#) to teach, and the TVEC grants registration certificates to TVET institutions based on National Competency Standards. Institutions are also required to prepare documents to prove that it delivers the required [competencies](#) specified in the National Competency Standard, including course and year plans for the course noting that the time duration of each module, lesson plans, and assessment criteria.

The responsibility of ensuring the quality of the programmes lies with the providers, and the quality assurance system that is used is based on ISO 9001:2008. The system aims to match TVET providers' input systems, processes and output to the intended objectives.

## TVET curriculum

The Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) is responsible for the development, updating and quality of TVET curriculum. This is done through the development of committees including industry stakeholders, lead institutions, practitioners, trade unions and newly established skills sector councils for few sectors.

## 6. Current reforms and policy discussion

The Skills Sector Enhancement Programme supports the implementation of the government's medium-term development plan intends to transform the education system into one that will provide the technological skills, educational content, and methods to promote the development of inquiring and adaptable minds.

The Skills Sector Development Program (SSDP) is to be implemented from 2014 to 2020 and consists of two components.

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Component 1 | (i) Strengthen governance and management of the TVET sector by a tighter and more intensive focus on results and more efficient use of resources; and (ii) improve the quality and relevance of the skills development programmes offered by all institutions, including public, private and NGO. |
| Component 2 | Strengthen the capacity of MYASD and its participating agencies and help them to achieve the SSDP objectives.   |

## Challenges

Sri Lanka is facing the following challenges to the TVET system:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Low tertiary enrolment rate</b>       | Tertiary enrolment rates in Sri Lanka are low compared to other countries in the region. As of 2014, only 5% of 20-24 year olds were enrolled in a university, while another 8% were enrolled in other educational institutions and only a 3% of the same age group were enrolled in TVET courses. Sri Lanka's gross tertiary enrolment rate (21%) is below the averages for lower middle-income countries (22%) and upper middle-income countries (44%), according to the World Bank's World Development Indicators of 2014. |
| <b>Lack of labour market information</b> | Current skills development programmes are not well integrated with national development priorities. The planning process does not regularly ascertain national and regional demand based on labour market information. Timely and accurate information about current skill demands and available training opportunities is lacking, as are reliable forecasts of potential needs.   |

**Negative perception of TVET**

TVET programmes are negatively perceived, resulting in low student demand. These perceptions include views that training is associated with manual labour and that TVET programmes do not provide any upward social and educational mobility. The government is currently working on increasing awareness about TVET, promote it as a pathway for upward mobility, and introduce more horizontal learning pathways in the education system for TVET students.

**Low quality of TVET programmes**

The quality of TVET programmes varies substantially according to institution. About 64% of employers state that the general education system is not meeting their skill needs, especially for the newer trades. They also feel that TVET graduates lack general business and management skills, which reduces their opportunities for promotion. Several factors contribute to poor TVET outcomes:

- poor quality of primary and secondary education in rural schools limits student achievements, lengthens the time it takes to complete training, and often necessitates bridging programmes;
- governance and Finance arrangements suffer because; (i) the private sector is not adequately involved in skills development; (ii) public institutions have little freedom to replace obsolete training courses, change curricula, and involve the private sector in decision making so as to become more responsive to labour market demand; and (iii) resources are not linked to performance;
- training standards and curricula need to be updated regularly;
- there is a shortage of qualified instructors, especially those with industrial experience;
- except for a few established institutions, instructional materials, equipment, and facilities are not up to par;
- a large number of private providers are still neither registered nor accredited, and sometimes lacks mechanism to monitor and improve quality in public institutions, for example by programme and institutional reviews and self-assessments;
- there are no regular mechanism or studies that track employability, and it is not possible to evaluate the outcomes of TVET programmes directly.

**Enhancing the relevance**

The government's aim is to make TVET programmes more relevant to the labour market by establishing the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) and by the

establishment of the NVQ system. However, a number of challenges remain:

- the NVQ framework, though created with employer input, does not cover the full range of skills employers require;
- though skills needs change along with changes in the economy and labour market demand, the TVET system is not designed to respond quickly;
- there is no mechanism, aside from the NVQ, and few industry sector councils through which employers can feed their skills needs into the TVET system;
- because delivery of TVET programs is often not aligned with national development priorities;
- some private training providers are more oriented to social demand than to actual labour market demand.

## 7. References and further reading

### References

- Dundar, H., B. Millot, Y. Savchenko, H. Aturupane, and T.A. Piyasiri. 2014. *Building the Skills for Economic Growth and Competitiveness in Sri Lanka*. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/790661468114536058/pdf/882690PUB0978100Box385205B00PUBLIC0.pdf> (Accessed 8 September 2017).
- ILO [International Labour Organization]. 2009. National Vocational Qualifications Framework of Sri Lanka – Operations Manual. <http://apskills.ilo.org/resources/national-vocational-qualifications-framework-of-sri-lanka-operations-manual> (Accessed on 8 October 2017).
- Jayawardena, P. 2017. *Bridging the Skill Gap: A Challenge in Sri Lanka's Quest for Economic Growth*, 'Talking Economics', the blog of the Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS), Sri Lanka's apex socio-economic policy think tank. <http://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2017/06/19/bridging-the-skill-gap-a-challenge-in-sri-lankas-quest-for-economic-growth/> (Accessed on 8 October 2017).
- TVET [Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission]. 2017. Institute registration criteria. <http://www.tvec.gov.lk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Institute-Registration-Criteria.pdf> (Accessed on 8 October 2017).
- TVET [Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission]. Curricular. [http://www.tvec.gov.lk/?page\\_id=84](http://www.tvec.gov.lk/?page_id=84) (Accessed on 8 October 2017).
- University Grants Commission. 2015. Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework. [http://www.ugc.ac.lk/attachments/1156\\_SLQF.pdf](http://www.ugc.ac.lk/attachments/1156_SLQF.pdf) (Accessed 8 September 2017).
- UoVT [University of Vocational Technology]. 2015. Bachelor of Education in Technology. <http://univotec.ac.lk/index.php/bachelor-of-education-in-technology/> (Accessed 8 September 2017).
- World Bank. 2017. World Development Indicators: Education gaps by income, gender and area. <http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/2.11> (Accessed 8 September 2017).

Compiled by

**UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for  
Technical and Vocational Education and Training**  
UN Campus  
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1  
53113 Bonn  
Germany

Contact

Tel: +49 228 815 0100  
Fax: +49 228 815 0199  
[www.unevoc.unesco.org](http://www.unevoc.unesco.org)  
[unevoc.tvetprofiles@unesco.org](mailto:unevoc.tvetprofiles@unesco.org)



This publication is available in Open Access under the Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO (CC-BY-SA 3.0 IGO) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/igo/>). By using the content of this publication, the users accept to be bound by the terms of use of the UNESCO Open Access Repository (<http://www.unesco.org/open-access/terms-use-ccbysa-en>).

Country profiles are compiled from a variety of national and international sources and have been informed and validated by UNEVOC Centres in the country or other TVET national authorities.

The designations employed and the presentations of material throughout this report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.