



## MR. HASITHA WIJESUNDARA



### GENERAL

*Hasitha Wijesundara is an expert in international development consulting, with a focus on private sector development, international trade, SME development, export competitiveness, and access to finance. He is a qualified economist, finance expert, and attorney-at-law with extensive local and international experience. Currently, Hasitha works as a freelance consultant for several international agencies, including Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), in the areas of private sector engagement, market access, and skills building.*

### RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

*During 2024, the Presidential Secretariat of Sri Lanka entrusted him as a senior expert to the Technical Committee, a role that involves formulating an implementation framework for the groundbreaking “Enterprise Sri Lanka” initiative. This transformative project is set to revolutionize the SME sector in Sri Lanka by creating a unified entity by reshaping the existing institutional and legal framework.*

*Until December 2023, Hasitha worked as the Team Lead at the USAID-funded Partnership for Accelerating Results in Trade, National Expenditure and Revenue (PARTNER) Activity. In this role, he effectively inspired, led, managed, and ensured the performance of all staff under him in compliance with the project work, enabling the trade and investment climate in Sri Lanka. Early in his career, Hasitha was the*

*Senior Advisor/Deputy Team Lead (DCoP) in the SME Sector Development Program of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. He was extensively involved in formulating SME Policy, the National Export Strategy, advising on microfinance legislation, and the National Financial Inclusion Strategy.*

### **POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT REFORMS**

*Hasitha's influence extends to the highest levels of policy-making. He played a pivotal role in advising and drafting the Sri Lankan "National SME Policy Framework" (2015-16), a document that was not only approved by the Ministers of the Cabinet of Sri Lanka but also continues to serve as the cornerstone of the SME Sector. His expertise was further sought in shaping the "National Action Plan for SME Development" in subsequent years (2016-17), demonstrating his enduring impact on the country's economic landscape. Hasitha was involved in drafting the "Sri Lankan National Quality Policy - NQP" (2017) in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Standards Institution (SLSI). This document is the primary documentation of the quality infrastructure sphere. Additionally, he represented the consultative board appointed to draft the "National Export Strategy" (2017-18) by the Export Development Board (EDB) of Sri Lanka.*

### **INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

*Hasitha was part of appraisal missions for Indonesia's Sustainable Regional Economic Growth and Investment Program (SREGIP) and the Promotion of Green Economic Development (ProGED) Program in the Philippines. He helped with project design and start-up as part of this work. Hasitha has extensive experience and knowledge of small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sectors, financial systems, and trade regimes in various countries, including India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, and Pakistan.*

### **ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS**

*Hasitha holds a Master's degree in Economics (MA) from the University of Colombo, a Bachelor's degree in Law (LL.B), and a Bachelor's degree in Science (B.Sc.). He is currently pursuing his LLM degree. Additionally, he is an alumnus of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management and the World Trade Institute at the University of Bern, Switzerland.*

*He also has fellowships with several local and international professional bodies, such as the Institute of Consultancy (IC) - UK. He is accredited as an SME Finance by the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management in Germany, and as a certified Microfinance trainer from the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP) in Washington, USA. Further, he is an accredited Organisational Development (OD) Advisor, certified by MDF International, Netherlands.*

## **OTHER**

*Hasitha is a senior visiting faculty at the Institute of Bankers (IBSL) in Sri Lanka. He is actively involved in the academic council, where he advises on the course content and syllabi for the SME Finance course. Additionally, he teaches development economics, SME finance, and microfinance subjects at the University of Colombo for the post-graduate programs. Apart from his academic roles, Hasitha has also served as a Senior Independent Director on the Board of HNB Finance PLC, the premier private-sector finance company in Sri Lanka focusing on the SME sector.*