

SASEC Events



Consultative Workshop on Draft Customs Act 26-27 March 2015: Thimphu, Bhutan

Bhutan's Department of Revenue and Customs (DRC), Ministry of Finance held a consultative workshop with the Government and autonomous agencies. The consultations sought general consensus on proposed amendments to the Customs Act. Recommendations from the workshop include final review by DRC of all changes incorporated in the Draft Customs Act before its submission to Parliament. [Read More >>](#)

- [Agenda](#)
- [SASEC Event Page](#)



National Workshop on Time Release Study 17-19 March 2015: Kathmandu, Nepal

The Nepal Department of Customs (DOC), in partnership with the Asian Development Bank, World Customs Organization (WCO), and Japan Ministry of Finance, organized the first National Workshop on Time Release Study (TRS). The first TRS is expected to be carried out in two Customs offices—Birgunj and Mechi—by a core group of Customs officials to be led by DOC under WCO guidance. The exercise is expected to produce a TRS report in December 2015, based on data collection and analysis to be conducted at these two locations. [Read More >>](#)

- [Agenda](#)
- [Final Report](#)



National Workshop on Revised Kyoto Convention and Draft Customs Act 16-20 March 2015: Phuentsholing, Bhutan

Bhutan's DRC, Ministry of Finance conducted a series of sensitization and consultation workshops on the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and Draft Customs Act. Outcomes from the Workshop include a discussion of RKC provisions and Customs reform initiatives with the private sector, as well as consultation on amendments to the Customs Act of 2000 drafted by DRC. ADB, through a Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction technical assistance project, financed the workshops and provided logistical arrangements and support. [Read More >>](#)

- [Agenda](#)
- [Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction](#)

SASEC Calendar

Upcoming SASEC Events

April 2015						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

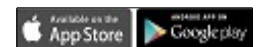
[SAARC-ADB Special Meeting of Representatives of Commerce and Finance Ministries](#)
14-15 April 2015
Goa, India

[National Workshop on Revised Kyoto Convention](#)
14-16 April 2015
Kathmandu, Nepal

[Meeting of the Transport Secretaries of India, Myanmar, and Thailand](#)
18 April 2015
Chennai, India

[SASEC Nodal Officials Meeting](#)
4 May 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan

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- [Agenda](#)
- [Second SCS Meeting](#)

SASEC Projects



- [Project Data Sheet](#)
- [ADB News Release](#)



- [Project Data Sheet](#)
- [Navhind Times](#)

SASEC News



- [The Bhutanese](#)
- [Kuensel Online](#)

Third Meeting of the SASEC Customs Subgroup 11-12 March 2015: Goa, India

The Third SASEC Customs Subgroup (SCS) Meeting agreed on implementation modalities for subregional projects in the SCS Work Plan 2014-2016, reviewed national and subregional initiatives aimed toward Customs reform and modernization, and endorsed the proposed terms of reference for a study on Electronic Exchange of Trade-Related Information. The Meeting also reviewed recent and upcoming subregional capacity-building activities by the World Customs Organization (WCO) Regional Office for Capacity Building for Asia and Pacific. ADB, in close partnership with WCO, highlighted the need to focus further technical assistance in the areas of international standards and conventions and coordinated border management. Prior to the Meeting, a knowledge-sharing event on Customs compliance programs was also held. [Read More >>](#)

ADB, Government of India Sign \$300 Million Loan Boosting Regional Road Connectivity 26 March 2015: Manila, Philippines

ADB and the Government of India signed a \$300 million loan agreement on 26 March 2015 to improve road connectivity and increase domestic and regional trade along the North Bengal-Northeastern Region international trade corridor. This loan is the first under a \$500 million multitranche South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Road Connectivity Investment Program (SRCIP) approved by ADB in 2014. SRCIP Project 1 will construct two national highways totaling about 150km in West Bengal, and state roads totaling about 180km in Manipur, extending to Myanmar. [Read More >>](#)

Dagachhu Hydropower Project Running at Full Capacity 15 March 2015: Thimphu, Bhutan

The 126 megawatt (MW) Dagachhu hydropower plant is now fully commissioned, with the successful run of the second 63MW unit test on 15 March 2015. As a joint venture between Druk Green Power Corporation of Bhutan and the Tata Power Company Limited of India, it has a 25-year power purchase agreement to export power from Bhutan to India. The Asian Development Bank, under the SASEC program, funded its construction through the Green Power Development Project. It is the world's first certified cross-border clean development mechanism. [Read More >>](#)

Bhutan High-Level Workshop to Improve National Competitiveness 23 March 2015: Thimphu, Bhutan

The Better Business Council High-Level Workshop on Improving National Competitiveness was held in Thimphu, Bhutan and provided a platform for Bhutan to learn from the experience of the Republic of Georgia and the Republic of Korea how to improve their national business climate and international trade. The Better Business Council meets monthly to discuss and draft the Government's Private Sector Development Plan and maintain dialogue with the private sector. Bhutan also formed the Doing Business Steering Committee to respond to Bhutan's low ranking in the International Finance Corporation/World Bank Group's Ease of Doing Business ranking. Bhutan aims to improve its ranking over the coming two years to within the top 100. [Read More >>](#)



WCO Holds First Regional Workshop on Trade Facilitation 16-18 March 2015: Jakarta, Indonesia

The world's first regional workshop on the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA) was held in Jakarta, Indonesia and discussed strategic initiatives that focused on three main agendas: WTO TFA implementation; the World Customs Organization's Mercator Programme; and Customs cooperation among government agencies. The Mercator Programme was adopted by WCO as a strategic initiative to support the implementation of trade facilitation. It builds on the strengths of WCO in standard setting for Customs by delivering training and technical assistance and building cooperation among a network of accredited experts from Customs administrations, international organizations, and other agencies. [Read More >>](#)

- [Workshop agenda](#)
- [WCO Presentation](#)



BIMSTEC Finalizes MoU for Inter-regional Power Grid 17 March 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh

BIMSTEC countries have finalized a draft deal to set up grid connectivity, allowing its seven member countries to share their surplus electricity with each other. The draft deal came out of the 5th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Task Force on Trans-Power Exchange. The draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) provides a broad framework for grid interconnections, and promotes balanced power transmission across the region. It is estimated that the seven BIMSTEC countries have a combined hydropower potential of about 290,000 MW. [Read More >>](#)

- [The Financial Express](#)



Nepal International Trade Fair Highlights 19 Export Products 16 March 2015: Kathmandu, Nepal

The fourth Nepal International Trade Fair, jointly organized by the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and Ministry of Commerce and Supplies, highlighted 19 priority export products identified by the Nepal Trade Integration Strategy. Through the fair, FNCCI hopes to slash Nepal's trade deficit by increasing exports of local products in the domestic and international markets. Business enterprises from other SAARC countries—Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Pakistan—also joined. A total of 340 stalls exhibited different goods for 5 days, drawing 125,000 visitors, and recorded sales worth over \$1.9 million. [Read More >>](#)

- [NTIS](#)
- [eKantipur](#)



India and Sri Lanka Forge Ties to Increase Trade 15 March 2015: Colombo, Sri Lanka

Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi visited Sri Lanka on 13-14 March 2015, and signed four agreements with recently-elected Sri Lanka President Maithripala Sirisena, including a Customs Cooperation Agreement to balance the trade deficit between the two countries. Prime Minister Modi enjoined Sri Lanka to partner with India in taking the lead to increase cooperation in the South Asian region and the linked BIMSTEC region. Prime Minister Modi also assured Sri Lanka's business community that he will address issues concerning India-Sri Lanka trade, and expressed optimism that bilateral trade will grow exponentially in the coming years as both countries forge healthy cooperation. [Read More >>](#)

- [Prime Minister Modi's Speech](#)



SAARC to Finalize Standards Harmonization 12 March 2015: New Delhi, India

SAARC countries are finalizing mutually acceptable standards in five sectors: food and agricultural products, jute, textile and leather, building materials, chemicals and chemical products, and electrical and electronic products. These sectors have significant trade interest for member countries. Harmonizing standards can help boost trade within South Asia and assist member countries in looking for markets beyond the region. The South Asian Regional Standards Organization (SARSO), established by SAARC members in 2011, will finalize the SAARC Regional Standards to be mandatorily followed by all member countries. [Read More >>](#)

- [Livemint](#)



SAARC CCI Proposes Subregional Blocs to Address Common Economic Agendas **10 March 2015: New Delhi, India**

The SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI) plans to form subregional blocs that will address common economic issues of its member countries to increase intra-regional trade. This was proposed under the SAARC CCI Action Plan for 2015 tabled during a joint session of SAARC CCI's 62nd Executive Committee and 20th General Assembly in New Delhi, India on 10 March 2015. The proposed work plan also includes a SAARC Shipping Company and a SAARC Transport and Logistics Company to facilitate faster and more efficient intra-regional trade. [Read More >>](#)

- [SAARC CCI](#)
- [The Economic Times](#)



SAFTA Certificates for Bangladesh Small Garment Makers **10 March 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

The Government of Bangladesh will issue South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) certificates to allow South Asian countries to export at lower duty and receive duty benefits while shipping products in eight South Asian countries. The Export Promotion Bureau recently decided to issue certificates to smaller apparel makers to help them export to neighboring countries and meet the growing demand of low-cost garments from Bangladesh. [Read More >>](#)

- [The Financial Express](#)



Indian Energy Exchange Plans to Trade with Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal **7 March 2015: New Delhi, India**

New Delhi has facilitated an integrated power grid for SAARC member states to begin cross-border trading on the Indian Energy Exchange (IEX). The IEX plans to trade 120MW with Bhutan, and 50MW each with Bangladesh and Nepal. This four-nation power trading will hasten the implementation of the SAARC Framework Agreement for Energy Cooperation. [Read More >>](#)

- [The Daily Star](#)



Bangladesh-India Second Railway Link **7 March 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Bangladesh and India moved to establish a second cross-border railway link through Akhaura-Agartala to boost bilateral trade and business. The dual-gauge railway track to be funded by the Government of India will connect with the North-Eastern States of India and become the second effective railway corridor of the two neighboring countries.

[Read More >>](#)

- [The Financial Express](#)



India Announces Foreign Aid to Neighbors **1 March 2015: New Delhi, India**

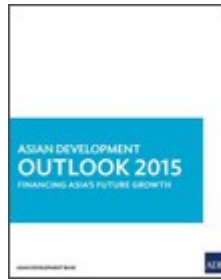
India announced more grant aid to developing countries during the unveiling of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's full year budget for 2015-2016. 84% of the total aid amount has been allocated to India's fellow members in SAARC, with Bhutan receiving the largest single amount of \$981 million to continue developing the country's hydropower sector. Majority of the grant financing will go toward various development assistance projects already being implemented. [Read More >>](#)

- [DevEx](#)

Related Publications



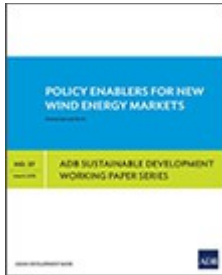
Towards Trade Policy Analysis 2.0:
From National Comparative Advantage
to Firm-Level Trade Data



Asian Development Outlook 2015



World Tariff Profiles 2014



Policy Enablers for New Wind
Energy Markets



SME Competitiveness and Aid for Trade:
Connecting Developing Country
SMEs to Global Value Chains



Enabling Trade: Increasing the
Potential of Trade Reforms

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