



# SASEC

South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation



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## News and Events



[Report & Recommendation of the President](#)  
[ADB News Release](#)  
[Colombo Port Expansion Brochure](#)  
[ADB Video: Colombo Port Upgrade](#)

### Colombo Port Expansion Putting Sri Lanka at the Centre of Asian Silk Route

The opening in August 2013 of Colombo Port's South Container Terminal marks an essential step in boosting the transshipment capacity of Sri Lanka and its attractiveness as a strategic hub for trade between India and European markets. The first of three new container terminals designed and financed under the Asian Development Bank's Colombo Port Expansion Project, the South Container Terminal provides the only deepwater terminal in South Asia able to handle today's largest container ships, giving Sri Lanka a competitive edge in international trade. When the East and West Container Terminals are complete and functional, Colombo Port will have increased its combined container handling capacity by 7.2 million 20-foot equivalent units.

ADB provided \$300 million in financing for the project, with the Government of Sri Lanka adding about \$100 million. Implementation of South Container Terminal is being implemented by private sector investments of \$500 million from Colombo International Container Terminals.



### A Great Leap Forward in Energy Cooperation: South Asia Regional Power Exchange Study

*14 August 2013: Kathmandu, Nepal*

Asian Development Bank Country Director for Nepal, Mr Kenichi Yokoyama, presented to the Secretary General South Asia Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) a copy of the final report of the South Asia Regional Power Exchange Study. The study was completed in 2 years with financial assistance from ADB's Regional Cooperation and Integration Fund. The study activities were coordinated by ADB along with the SAARC Secretariat while monitoring and technical advice were provided by power sector experts from SAARC member countries through regular intergovernmental meetings.



[KANKEIREN](#) [KEIDANREN](#)  
[Improving South Asia-Southeast Asia Connectivity and the Role of Myanmar](#)

### SASEC Secretariat Briefs Japan Private Sector on South Asia-Southeast Asia Connectivity

*16-18 July 2013: Tokyo and Osaka, Japan*

Mr Ronald Butiong, ADB's Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist from the SASEC Secretariat, delivered a presentation on "Improving South Asia-Southeast Asia Connectivity and the Role of Myanmar" at Keidanren (Japanese Business Federation) and Kankeiren (Kansai Economic Federation). Key points of the presentation included:

- Improving South Asia-Southeast Asia connectivity makes good business sense as it has potential to expand markets and broaden the reach of production networks;
- Myanmar can play a transformational role in accelerating inter-subregional cooperation and integration, which is crucial in realizing the "Asian Century"; and
- Despite many ongoing and planned cooperation initiatives, there remains much to be done to improve both the hard and soft sides of South Asia-Southeast Asia connectivity.

The presentation helped raise awareness of emerging opportunities for the involvement of and investment by the Japanese private sector as a result of the opening up of Myanmar and South Asia-Southeast Asia integration.



Japan  
Fund for  
Poverty  
Reduction

[Bangladesh Approved TA Report](#)  
[Bhutan Approved TA Report](#)  
[Nepal Approved TA Report](#)  
[RETA Approved TA Report](#)

## Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction Approves Technical Assistance Funding for SASEC

*9 July 2013: Tokyo, Japan*

The Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction has approved a total of \$6 million in funding for four technical assistance projects in support of participation by Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal in the SASEC Trade Facilitation Program. Three national technical assistance projects, each worth \$1.5 million, will focus on country-specific activities, including support to

- Accession process and compliance with the Revised Kyoto Convention;
- Development of effective Customs automation processes;
- Establishment of client service centers and access to information for traders;
- Strengthening of national trade facilitation committees.

An associated regional technical assistance project (\$1.5 million) will focus on improving Customs cooperation in SASEC countries through support to

- Customs Subgroup of the SASEC Trade Facilitation Working Group for improved coordination and cooperation among customs officials in the SASEC countries;
- Capacity-building activities, including knowledge and experience exchange, that foster international good practice in customs reforms and modernization among South Asian countries (with participation by Maldives and Sri Lanka); and
- Development of an interface framework for modern customs administration systems between and among SASEC countries.

ADB is the executing agency for these technical assistance projects.



[Report & Recommendation of the President](#)  
[ADB News Release](#)  
[US Treasury News Release](#)  
[Green Energy Bhutan Photo Essay](#)

## SASEC Energy Project in Bhutan Wins United States' Treasury Honors

*25 July 2013: Washington, D.C., United States of America*

The Royal Kingdom of Bhutan's Green Power Development Project is one of five recipients of the US Treasury Department's Development Impact Honors. Under the project, construction of the Dagachhu hydropower plant through a public-private partnership arrangement is increasing access to green power for export to India, making this the first certified cross-border clean development mechanism in the world. Almost 9,000 remote schools, health clinics, and community facilities in Bhutan will also have access to green electricity sourced from hydropower and solar energy.

ADB is providing \$105 million in financing for the project, the Government of the Royal Kingdom of Bhutan \$45 million, and the Asian Clean Energy Fund (supported by the Government of Japan) \$1 million.



[Report & Recommendation of the President](#)

## \$97 Million Loan Approved for Transport Project in Nepal

The SASEC Road Connectivity Project, approved 30 July 2013, aims to enhance Nepal's road transport system by improving connectivity within Nepal, and between Nepal and its neighbors. The project will fund an alternate transport route in Sunsari and Saptari districts, creating year-round passable conditions along the East-West Highway, especially across the Koshi River. The repair of three feeder roads in the hill areas will improve connectivity between villages along this road system and better access to basic services. The project will

- Upgrade to two lanes 73 kilometers (km) of alternate road and border road along the East-West Highway;
- Upgrade 114 km of roads upgraded to intermediate-lane mid-hill roads;
- conduct a road safety awareness campaign; and
- Develop an integrated road maintenance scheme and a road user charge.

ADB is providing \$75 million in financing for the project through its Asian Development Fund, and the Government of Nepal is contributing a further \$22 million.



[Report & Recommendation of the President](#)

### Bangladesh-India Power Interconnection Charged, Ready to Exchange Electricity

The 400 kilovolts (kV) double-circuit transmission line between the electrical substations at Baharampur in India and Bheramara in Bangladesh has been charged, in preparation for exchange of electricity between the two countries. The Bangladesh-India Electrical Grid Interconnection Project, approved in August 2010, will help address significant power shortages in Bangladesh by establishing a cross-border interconnection between the western electrical grid of Bangladesh and the eastern electrical grid of India. Under the Project, ADB and the Government of Bangladesh will also

- Construct a new high voltage direct current substation of 400/230 kV at Bheramara;
- Create a 230 kV switching station at Bheramara substation;
- Build capacity and information sharing on power exchange and planning, development, operation, maintenance, and regulation of the interconnection; and
- Develop transmission, interconnection, operation, and power exchange agreements between Bangladesh and India.

ADB allocated \$100 million in financing for the project in 2010, while the Government of Bangladesh allocated \$59 million. ADB will consider an additional \$ 12 million of financing at the request of the Government to meet part of the cost over-runs on the project.



[Report & Recommendation of the President](#)  
[Project Completion Report](#)

### Bhutan Road Network Project under SASEC Rated “Successful”

According to ADB’s project completion report, issued in August 2013, Bhutan’s Road Network Project has succeeded in improving economic prospects, living conditions, and quality of life for communities in the project catchment areas by strengthening 136 kilometers (km) of the Gelephu-Trongsa national highway and constructing 66 km of feeder roads, together with other activities. The enhanced road network has greatly facilitated the movement of people, freight, and business along national highways and rural areas. The project has helped

- Provide better access for rural populations to social and economic opportunities;
- Reduce travel times by an average of 23%, vehicle operating costs by an average of 18%, and walking distance for villagers by 65%; and
- Increase average vehicle speeds in the project area by up to 100%.

The project received \$29.15 million in loan financing from ADB, and \$7.14 million from the Royal Government of Bhutan.

## Upcoming SASEC Events

Date	Event	Venue
9 – 13 Sep	<b>World Customs Organization Asia/Pacific Regional Workshop on Risk-Based Cargo Selectivity</b>	Japan, Kashiwa
17 – 19 Sep	<b>National Workshop on the Authorized Economic Operators’ Programme</b>	Bangladesh, Cox Bazar
1 Oct	<b>Meeting of the SASEC Electricity Transmission Utility Forum</b>	Sri Lanka, Colombo
3 Oct	<b>SAARC Workshop on SAARC Regional Economic Integration Study</b>	Nepal, Kathmandu
4 Oct	<b>SAARC Macroeconomic Surveillance Study</b>	Nepal, Kathmandu
9 – 10 Oct	<b>Regional Workshop on National Trade Facilitation Committee (in cooperation with UNCTAD)</b>	Nepal, Kathmandu
9 – 11 Oct	<b>Workshop on Secure and Efficient Cross-Border Transport for the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Program</b>	Thailand, Bangkok
14 – 15 Oct	<b>SASEC Brainstorming Meeting on Sanitary/Phytosanitary Priorities and Challenges in SASEC Member Countries (in cooperation with UNESCAP)</b>	Thailand, Bangkok
20 – 24 Oct	<b>World Customs Organization Workshop on Customs Valuation</b>	Male, Maldives
29 – 30 Oct	<b>Meeting of the SASEC Trade Facilitation and Transport Working Groups</b>	Singapore
19 – 20 Nov	<b>ADB-Confederation of Indian Industries Conference on Promoting Mekong-India Cooperation</b>	New Delhi, India
26 – 27 Nov	<b>Finalization Workshop on the Business Process Analysis Study</b>	Thailand, Bangkok
29 Nov	<b>Inception Meeting of SASEC Network of National Energy Efficiency Institutions</b>	Thailand, Bangkok

## Recent SASEC Events

Date	Event	Venue
6 Jun	First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Road Development	Yangon, Myanmar
5 Jun	Inception Workshop on BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study Updating	Yangon, Myanmar
27 – 31 May	Regional Knowledge Sharing Workshop on SAFE Framework, Authorized Economic Operators and Authorized Trader Program	Singapore, Singapore
20 May	Brainstorming Meeting on the BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study Updating	Manila, Philippines
03 May	SASEC Nodal Officials' Meeting	New Delhi, India
4 – 5 Apr	Asia-Pacific and Americas: Customs Leaders' Partnership Dialogue	Panama City, Panama
25 – 28 Mar	SASEC Trade Facilitation Week	Bangkok, Thailand

## Publications



[Economics of Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions in South Asia: Options and Costs](#)  
2013



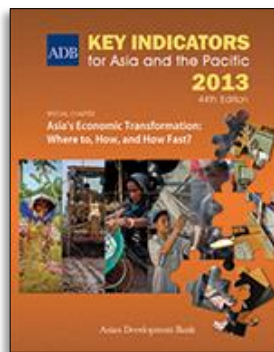
[The Economics of Climate Change in South Asia: Adaptation and Impact Assessment](#)  
2013



[Development in an Era of Accentuated Climate Risks](#)  
2012



[The Transformation of Rice Value Chains in Bangladesh and India: Implications for Food Security](#)  
2013



[Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific](#)  
2013



[What is Economic Corridor Development and What Can it Achieve in Asia's Subregions?](#)  
2013

See more publications on regional cooperation in South Asia and other regions at <http://sasec.asia/web/index.php/en/knowledge-products/books>

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