Papers and Presentations

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Regional Cooperation Initiatives in South Asia and the Importance of Regionalism
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-Experiences in Asia and the Pacific
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RCI in Practice in South Asia

SAARC - South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SASEC - South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation
BIMSTEC - Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
RCI Approaches in South Asia

- National (w/subregional dimensions)
- Subregional (SASEC)
- Regional (SAARC)
- Inter-regional (SAARC-BIMSTEC)

- Government ownership
- Multi-speed, Multi-track approach

Bottom-up phased approach in accelerating RCI:
National ->>> Subregional ->>> Regional

Building-block, Multi-track, Multi-speed framework:
2 countries ->>> 2+1 countries ->>> 2++ countries

SASEC: Major Accomplishments (2001-2009)

- Environment
  - Regional Air Quality Management
  - Networking of Experts
  - Freshwater Pollution
  - Hazardous Waste
  - Sustainable Development Corridor

- Trade, Investment and Private Sector Cooperation
  - South Asia Business Forum
  - Tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers
  - Human Resource Development
  - ICT
  - Agro-processing
  - Audio-visual Entertainment
  - Tourism

- Energy and Power
  - BAN-IND Project
  - Dagachhu Hydropower
  - Rural Electrification
  - Compressed Natural Gas
  - Other cross border projects

- Tourism
  - SASEC Tourism Infrastructure Project
  - Tourism Development Plan
  - Tourism Promotion Website and Office

- ICT
  - Information Highway Corridor Project
  - ICT Masterplan
  - E-community Centers and HRD
  - Harmonization of regulations
SASEC: Operational Framework (2010 onwards)

Aligned to ADB’s Regional Cooperation Strategy (RCS) for South Asia 2011-2015

- High Level Forum
- ADB Secretariat
  - 1st HLF: 2009
  - 2nd HLF: 2010

- Working Groups
  - Transport
  - Trade Facilitation
  - Energy

- Dhaka Meeting, Dec 2010
- Bangkok Meeting, Oct 2011
- Kolkata Meeting, Mar 2012
- Bhutan Meeting, Nov 2012
- Bangkok Meeting, Oct 2011
- Kolkata Meeting, Mar 2012
- Bhutan Meeting, Nov 2012

Nearly $2 billion projects identified for investments in Transport, TF and Energy

SASEC lies at the center of Asian connectivity

- SASEC is at the centre of the connectivity between East Asia, Central Asia and South East Asia
- If the potential of Asia 2050 is to materialize, greater integration of Asia will be central

Realizing the Asian Century: Increasing Share of Global GDP

Baseline, 2009

- PRC: 20% GDP
- India: 16% GDP
- South East Asia: 16% GDP

Asian Century Scenario, 2050

GDP figures:
Estimate of global GDP contribution by India, PRC and South East Asia in 2050 if full potential is realized

Source: ADB. 2011. Asia 2050. Manila
Prospects and Opportunities

1. Opportunities for SASEC countries
   • Increased access to ports for land-locked countries
   • Improved transport and transit agreements
   • Streamlining trade regulations and processes across borders

2. SASEC++
   • Strengthen coordination with other programs (BIMSTEC, GMS, CAREC, ...)
   • Enhance interregional connectivity (Asian Highways, Trans-Asian Railways)
   • Create win-win opportunities and unlock full growth potentials

Prospects and Opportunities

3. Increasing trade and investments will have large benefits
   • Integrated production and supply chain networks
   • Improved specialization will increase global competitiveness
   • Expanding intraregional and interregional trade
   • Increased business and job opportunities

4. Address regional issues
   • Energy security and energy efficiency
   • Climate adaptation and food security
   • Disaster management
   • Resilience to external market shocks
   • Technology spillovers
Thank You