



Current Status of SASEC Program

Presentation by

Philip Chang

15 March 2004

Background

SASEC Phase I (RETA 5936, Mar 2001)

- Established a Country Advisors' Group and 5 sector working groups
- Facilitated sector WGs in identifying & prioritizing subregional projects

SASEC Phase II (RETA 6010, Oct 2002)

- Advance progress made under SASEC Phase I
- Support preparation of studies on selected subregional projects/programs
- ICT endorsed as the 6th priority sector

Progress in Energy & Power

EPWGW agreed to:

- ✓ Adopt Bangladesh Rural Electrification Model in Assam, Bhutan and Nepal
- ✓ Assess feasibility of developing hydropower projects in Arun Valley
- ✓ Review studies on electricity interconnections between India & Bangladesh
- ✓ Review merits of USAID's "Four Borders Project"

Progress in Energy & Power (Continue)

ADB supported the following studies:

- ✓ India-Bangladesh Cooperation in Compressed Natural Gas
- ✓ Rural Electrification in Assam

**Findings to be presented at 3rd EPWG meeting
(June 2004)**

Progress in Transportation

TWG agreed to conduct a transport sector review.

The following impediments were identified:

- ✓ Lack of regional road connectivity
- ✓ Cumbersome cross border inspections
- ✓ Lack of electronic data interchange
- ✓ Inefficient and costly port operations

**Improving regional road connectivity
identified as a priority**

Progress in Transportation (continue)

Technical Workshop of TWG held on 2-3 Feb 2004 in Bangkok

TWG identified the following corridors to be studied:

- ✓ Central Nepal/Kathmandu to Birganj/Raxaul to Kolkata/Haldia (India)
- ✓ Thimphu to Phuentsholing (Bhutan) to Siliguri to Kolkata/Haldia (India)
- ✓ Kolkata/Haldia to Jessore to Khulna/Monghla and via Jamuna Bridge to Dhaka/Chittagong
- ✓ Kathmandu to Kakarbita (Nepal), via Phulbari to Banglabandh – thence to Khulna/Monghla or Dhaka/Chittagong
- ✓ Inland Water Transport Routes through the Sunderbhans, Narayanganj to Brahmaputra to Assam

Progress in Tourism

The 3rd TWGM held on 30–31 July 2003, New Delhi

TWG agreed to:

- ✓ Prepare SASEC tourism development plan based on 2 themes: *eco-tourism and Buddhism*
- ✓ Initiate a joint marketing strategy for tourism
- ✓ Enhance coordination mechanism among national tourism organizations
- ✓ Explore possibility of setting up a regional tourism secretariat
- ✓ Establish network with PATA

Progress in Tourism *(continue)*

- ✓ TA on SASEC Tourism Development Plan
 - TA Inception Phase has commenced
 - Consultation workshops held in February
 - Findings to be presented in TWGM in 26-28 May

Progress in Environment

EWG agreed to conduct studies on:

- Regional Air Quality Management Program
 - Regional Capacity Building & Networking of Experts
 - Knowledge Base Towards Strengthening Monitoring of Freshwater Pollution
 - Hazardous Waste Management
 - Conservation & Sustainable Development Corridor
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- ✓ TA on Regional Air Quality – hiring consultants
 - ✓ 4th EWG Meeting – July

Progress in Trade, Investment and Private Sector Cooperation (TIP)

The 3rd TIP Working Group meeting held in Dhaka,
20 Jan 2004

TIPWG selected 4 projects on trade facilitation:

- ✓ Mutual Recognition of Manufacturing Processes;
- ✓ Towards Sharing Common Facilities in the SASEC Region;
- ✓ Simplification of Customs Procedures and Harmonization of Trade Documents; and
- ✓ Affirmative Action for Landlocked Countries.

Progress in TIP *(continue)*

The 2nd South Asia Business Forum (SABF)
Meeting held in Dhaka, 21 Jan 2004

SABF agreed on priorities for the next phase in areas of:

- ✓ non-tariff, trade barriers
- ✓ human resources development
- ✓ cross-border private sector cooperation in ICT
- ✓ Other areas include: agro-processing, audio-visual entertainment, and tourism

Conclusion

ADB will continue to:

- ✓ facilitate subregional cooperation activities
- ✓ assist sector working groups to fast track its cooperative agenda
- ✓ provide technical advisory support to subregional cooperation projects
- ✓ support research on regional cooperation issues
- ✓ assist SASEC to forge links with other subregional/regional cooperation initiatives



For More Information

philipchang@adb.org

Web site: www.adb.org/sasec