



SAARC
SAARC Development Fund



Afghanistan



Bangladesh



Bhutan



India



Maldives



Nepal



Pakistan



Sri Lanka

SAARC Development Fund

SDF Newsletter Q3, July-September 2023



Greetings from SAARC Development Fund.

Welcome to our latest newsletter, the third this year, all of which we hope have helped keep you updated on our efforts together with partners in the region.

These newsletters reflect the journey of the Fund and the SDF Secretariat, which was established in 2010 by the Heads of the SAARC Member States to promote the welfare of the people of SAARC Region, to improve the quality of life, and to accelerate economic growth, social progress and poverty alleviation in the SAARC Region through projects implementation.

Despite significant progress, much remains to be done as SDF continues with its mandate of building regional

integration and economic cooperation through project-based collaboration.

This third quarter newsletter, 2023 has updates and stories from the field. SDF operates through the three financing windows: Social, Economic and Infrastructure. SDF has about 100 projects approved by the SDF Board under the three funding windows.

The support and trust of our partners make everything we do possible. We wish to acknowledge the enormous contribution of all our partners for working together with us to achieve sustainable results through our projects in the SAARC Member States.

Thank you and happy reading!



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Our Funding Windows

Social Window funds projects on poverty alleviation, social development focusing on education; health; human resources development; support to vulnerable/disadvantaged segments of the society; funding needs of communities, micro-enterprises, rural infrastructure development.

Social Window

Economic Window extends funding to projects in Trade and Industrial Development, Agriculture and allied sectors, Services Sector, Science and Technology, and other non-Infrastructure areas.

Economic Window

Infrastructure Window of SDF extends funding to projects in Energy, Power, Transportation, Telecommunication, Environment, Tourism and other Infrastructure areas.

Infrastructure Window

SOCIAL WINDOW HIGHLIGHTS

Completed SDF Project in Nepal Continue to Empower Rural Communities

In the heart of Nepal's easternmost Kankai Municipality, braving the summer heat is a 35-year-old Dipa Kafley who is making flattened bamboo sheets for bamboo walls and plyboards. A mother of two, Dipa has been working in the SDF-funded bamboo Community Facility Centre (CFC) for the last four years.

Earning NPR 100,000 every six months, women like Dipa have taken up jobs that were traditionally reserved for men in Nepal and are providing materials to build bamboo homes and other products.

This is part of SDF's Social Window project - Promoting Integrated Bamboo-Based Enterprise Development among SAARC countries. The project, which is implemented in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal, has successfully completed in Nepal benefiting thousands in this Member

State. SDF had partnered with ABARI Foundation, Nepal with a total approved SDF grant of USD 640,400. The project began on 30 March, 2017.

While it may seem like just another completed project, the reality is that bamboo, with its versatile properties, continues to provide employment opportunities, valuable skills, and sustainable livelihoods to some of these farmers who call this community facility centre their home.

Bamboo, often referred to as the "green gold," is a remarkable resource known for its rapid growth, strength, and adaptability. Rural communities around the world have tapped into its potential to create projects that go beyond their initial objectives, ultimately becoming catalysts for long-term economic growth and social development.



The project was implemented by our partner ABARI Foundation with the objective to promote community-based bamboo resources development, management and enterprise development.

According to ABARI's Director, Nirpal Adhikary, the project fulfilled the objective of providing a source of income and generating employment opportunities for its people.

Some of the project highlights are as follows:

- Built two bamboo-based Common Facility centers (CFC) as a dedicated place to initiate all bamboo-related activities.
- Trained 350 people in bamboo handicraft, construction and plantation.
- Trained artisans are being hired by public and private entities to build bamboo products and infrastructure across Nepal.

He added that Bamboo is a cheap, very resistant and easily available material to build homes in Nepal. This

project has leveraged the fact that bamboo is one of most environmentally friendly construction materials and one of the fastest growing plants in the world. The trainee artisans from this project are now working mostly in the construction sector.



The project provided technical support for the construction of over 55 affordable but quality prefabricated bamboo homes to poor and homeless people in Kankai municipality alone.

A model of the low-cost bamboo home was constructed as part of the SDF project, located next to the CFC, which is being replicated by the local government and the people.



The Acting Mayor of Kankai Municipality, Sushil Kumar Pokhrel, said that they have allocated NPR 20 million in this fiscal year to build more such bamboo houses, which are structurally safe and affordable, to support low-income households

Meanwhile, Dipa and her fellow artisans such as 34-year-old Bishnu Nepal, said that they look forward to continue working in the bamboo CFC, gain more expertise, and explore other bamboo related work to grow their earning opportunities. Here is a video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9FPfx3Nz0A&t=2s>



Ensuring swift fund disbursements and regular meetings with partners for project implementation

The SAARC Development Fund in the third quarter of 2023 completed grant disbursements for projects under SDF Social Window to ensure smooth project implementation. The size of investment/disbursement will continue grow in the coming months.

During the third quarter, SDF ensured the disbursement of USD 81,850 to the SAARC Agriculture Centre for the project - Scaling-up Climate Smart Agriculture in South Asia.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and SAARC Development Fund (SDF) launched a partnership in November 2021 for Scaling-up Climate Smart Agriculture in South Asia.

The central objective of the partnership is to develop evidence-based strategies to collectively tackle the impact of climate change in South Asia, and especially to benefit smallholder farmers. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for over 50 percent of the population in South Asia.

Several Virtual calls held with various partners during July-September 2023 including with Livelihood project partners in Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka to discuss the progress of the project, and held discussions with partners for SABAH Bangladesh and COVID Bhutan. In addition, the team is holding ongoing discussions on new potential projects.

World Bamboo Day

is celebrated on 18 September every year! This global event prioritizes spreading awareness about the importance and versatile usage of the bamboo plant.

Given the vast potential of bamboo for enterprise development, economic resilience and environmental sustainability, SDF is working with partners across SAARC Member States to support communities with bamboo-related employment and income generation.



Through the project, SDF and partners are helping farmers and artisans with harvest, to produce and market bamboo products to improve their quality of life through sustainable economic opportunities.

The US\$ 4.3 million SDF grant project - Promoting Integrated Bamboo-Based Enterprise Development among SAARC Countries – is implemented in Member States including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. Bamboo constitutes a significant portion of the total forest area in the region. Here's a video of the SDF-funded project on "Promoting Integrated Bamboo-Based Enterprise Development among SAARC Countries": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kQv2atup04>

ECONOMIC & INFRASTRUCTURE WINDOW HIGHLIGHTS

The Economic & Infrastructure (E&I) Windows of the fund provides loans for financing both sovereign and non-sovereign projects in the SAARC Member States. The mandate of the E&I windows is to finance economic and infrastructure projects in the member states with direct benefit going to at least 2 member states. The lending is guided by the SDF Board-approved Credit policy and E&I policy guidelines.

Exploring new Economic & Infrastructure Projects

SDF's E&I team continues to strategize in order to garner sound bankable projects and have initiated meetings and field missions to build and strengthen partnership with several relevant organizations and partners. The team continued with their discussions with various partners during the third quarter of this year:



On 11 July 2023 - The SAARC Development Fund team met and held discussions with the World Bank team on project ACCESS - Accelerating Transport and Trade Connectivity in Eastern South Asia!



28 July 2023 - SDF Team met with a delegation from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to discuss joint funding opportunities in tourism and infrastructure sectors. The IFC team was led by Mr Joy Biswas from Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Services Department.



24 August 2023: SDF Team met with officials from the Asian Development Bank today to discuss the co-financing of a 400kV transmission line in Nepal.

PARTNERSHIP AND EVENTS:



16 August 2023 - A team from the Bar Council of Bhutan led by Hon'ble Justice Retd. Rinzin Penjor met with the SAARC Development Fund team at the SDF Secretariat. They discussed opportunities to collaborate and promote legal education in the region.

Who we are?



SAARC Development Fund was established in April 2010 by the heads of the eight member countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Our mandate is to promote the welfare of the people of SAARC region, to improve their quality of life, to accelerate economic growth, social progress and poverty alleviation in the region and to contribute to “Regional Cooperation and Integration through Project Collaboration”.

SDF manages projects in all the SAARC Member States under its three investment Windows: Social, Economic and Infrastructure Windows. For details, Visit Website: www.sdfsec.org



Towards Regional Integration and Economic
Cooperation Through Project Funding

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