

South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Program

# SASEC Trade Facilitation Program and Activities

**Bhutan National Consultation on SPS/TBT**  
Thimphu, Bhutan  
12 August 2016



## Outline of Presentation

SASEC Overview

Trade Facilitation as a SASEC Sector

SASEC TF Program and TA Resources

SASEC Trade Facilitation Strategic Framework 2014-2018

SASEC 2025: the Way Forward



## SASEC Overview

- Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka
- **SASEC goal** – “to increase trade and economic cooperation within South Asia, create linkages to East and Southeast Asia, and promote sustained and inclusive economic growth through regional cooperation”
- **40 investment projects worth over \$7.6 billion**
- **69 TA projects worth over \$65 million**
- **3 sectors: transport, energy, trade facilitation**
- ADB serves as SASEC Secretariat



3

## Trade Facilitation as a SASEC Sector

Reduction of trade transaction cost

Improved competitiveness of firms

Trade Expansion

More trade creates more jobs and income opportunities

Economic growth



4

## SASEC TF Program and TA Resources

### SASEC Trade Facilitation Program (2012)



- Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal – \$48 million



- modern and effective customs administration
- streamlined and transparent regulations and procedures



- improved information and responsiveness to the private sector

### Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction TAs

- National TAs – Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal
- Regional TA – six SASEC countries



5

## SASEC TF Strategic Framework



Developed 2013, endorsed 2014

- Customs modernization & harmonization
- Standards & conformity assessment
- Cross border facilities improvement
- Through transport facilitation
- Institution & capacity building



6

## SASEC TFSF: Pillar 2

- **Standards & conformity assessment**
  - i. Identify SPS-sensitive products commodities
  - ii. Strengthen national conformity assessment boards through SARSO



7

## SASEC TFSF: Pillar 2



**November 2013** – SASEC Brainstorming Meeting on Sanitary/Phytosanitary Priorities and Challenges in SASEC Member Countries



**December 2014** – SASEC Trade Facilitation Week: Sanitary/Phytosanitary and Technical Barriers to Trade



8

## SASEC 2025: the Way Forward

- SASEC 2025 – 10-year strategy and operational plan, laying out a road map to achieve the fundamental SASEC goal
- Strengthen national conformance bodies and the development of infrastructure and automation in SPS-related and other border agencies
  - upgrading testing and certification facilities to expedite cargo clearance
  - strengthening national conformance bodies and promoting harmonization of standards - creating opportunities for Mutual Recognition Agreements
  - promoting automation in other border agencies to enable them to link into the NSWs



9

## For Discussion / Agreement

- i. Review the terms of reference for the national SPS/TBT diagnostic study, reflecting the national priorities and preferences for Bhutan;
- ii. Review the commodities chosen by Bhutan for the national diagnostic study;
- iii. Confirm the willingness of the nodal point and group to work with the national consultant for the period of the diagnostic study; and
- iv. Schedule for conducting the study.



10



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11