

 Early Warning System

ADB-59419-001

Enhancing Cross-Border Connectivity in the Greater Mekong Subregion
and the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Programs



Quick Facts

Countries	Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam
Financial Institutions	Asian Development Bank (ADB)
Status	Approved
Bank Risk Rating	U
Voting Date	2026-05-15
Borrower	Regional - Asian Development Bank
Sectors	Technical Cooperation, Transport
Investment Type(s)	Grant
Investment Amount (USD)	\$ 1.00 million
Project Cost (USD)	\$ 1.40 million



Project Description

According to the Bank's website, the proposed TA will support the development of a Regional Cooperation and Integration (RCI) project pipeline to enhance cross-border transport connectivity in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) and South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) countries. Specifically, the TA will conduct scoping studies for priority projects, including those that will develop key environmentally-friendly land, sea and air ports and associated last mile connectivity. These land and sea ports are part of priority GMS and SASEC corridors, which will improve intrasubregional connectivity as well as connectivity with the rest of the world.

The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries are currently undertaking a midterm review and update of the GMS Transport Sector Strategy 2030 (TSS 2030 Update), which is expected to be finalized by December 2025. The updated strategy outlines six strategic thrusts:

1. Completing the GMS economic corridor network and strengthening links with South and Southeast Asia;
2. Facilitating cross-border transport;
3. Strengthening intermodal connectivity;
4. Promoting logistics development;
5. Improving road asset management; and
6. Enhancing road safety.

In parallel, the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) countries are formulating the SASEC Strategy 2035 for the Transport Operational Priority (SST 2035), also targeted for completion by December 2025. The SST 2035 identifies five strategic thrusts:

1. Upgrading and completing the SASEC transport corridors;
2. Transitioning from transport corridors to trade corridors;
3. Promoting multimodal transport and modal shifts to support sustainability;
4. Improving logistics efficiency, sustainability, and safety; and
5. Graduating to highly facilitated trade corridors.

Both strategies share common priorities; enhancing cross-border connectivity, improving logistics development, and strengthening intermodal transport systems; to advance regional cooperation and integration (RCI) and strengthen regional value chains.

Despite these shared goals, a critical gap remains in project planning and programming, as highlighted in the GMS TSS 2030 Update. Although the transport sector continues to dominate the RCI portfolio in both GMS and SASEC, representing the largest share of projects by number and investment volume, there is a limited pipeline of well-prepared regional projects ready for financing.

For instance, the GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF) lists only a limited number of transport and trade facilitation projects financed by ADB for 2025-2027. While the situation in SASEC is somewhat better, similar constraints exist in developing regional projects with sufficient preparatory work and confirmed financing sources. Both GMS and SASEC formulate a list of indicative project pipelines covering potential investments by ADB, national governments, and other development partners. However, many of these projects remain at an early conceptual stage, lacking feasibility assessments, intergovernmental coordination, or secured funding.

This TA is therefore critical to bridge these strategic and operational gaps. Specifically, it will:

- " Conduct scoping studies to identify high-priority regional projects such as land and sea port development from the GMS and SASEC strategy pipelines that are not yet in ADB's pipeline;



Investment Description

- Asian Development Bank (ADB)

The TA financing amount is \$1.4 million, of which (i) \$1.0 million will be financed on a grant basis by ADB's Technical Assistance Special Fund (TASF-other sources from the RCI set-aside) and (ii) \$0.4 million will be financed on a grant basis by the Project Preparation and Implementation Support Trust Fund.



Contact Information

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Bank Documents

- [Technical Assistance Report](#)