



December  
22, 2009

## South Asia Regional Collaboration Series

The eight-country Regional Dialogue and Knowledge Sharing Series is produced in cooperation with GDLN; addressing various areas of potential regional collaboration in South Asia. The program was developed to initiate multi-sector collaboration programs through dialogue, sharing experiences and networking within as well as beyond South Asia - presently the least integrated region in the world.

### Vision

***South Asia Regional Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing for Equitable Growth and Prosperity***

### Mission

The intent of the program is to coordinate a series of sector-specific dialogues focused on collaboration and knowledge sharing among the eight South Asian countries. The chosen sectors incorporate country perspectives and regional dimensions, sustainable growth and development, and advancement of innovative ideas within the region to promote intra-regional or inter-regional projects. The GDLN videoconferences and virtual knowledge platforms (Wikis) work as collaborative tools, allowing the participants to exploit opportunities within each country and the region, promoting innovation and growth within each area of focus.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## BACKGROUND

Information Technology Enabled South Asia (ITESA) along with a vibrant private sector is a precursor to South Asian regional cooperation. ICT has, over the last 20 years, emerged as the fundamental infrastructure of the knowledge economy. Private sector, whether acting alone or in concert with government, plays a pivotal role. The combination of ICT and private sector provides the South Asia Financial and Private Sector Development (SASFP) Department with the unique rationale for taking the lead on a variety of actionable ideas for South Asian regional cooperation and regional integration. The Matrix of Collaboration ([Attachment I](#)) is designed to be a dynamic alignment of World Bank priorities in South Asia, South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) declarations, regional institutional anchors, and activities of the South Asia Regional Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing for Equitable Growth and Prosperity team. The role of SASFP involves not only linking regional players and institutions but also equipping them with pooled information resources provided by each country and the studies developed at the bank to methodically initiate "actionable ideas". This rapid analysis does not minimize the role of other actors within the Bank (e.g. HNP, Education, GICT, WBI) or outside the Bank (e.g. ADB, SAARC, UN specialized agencies, private foundations), but in fact hopes to incorporate those units own efforts and activities into both the constructive dialogue and the implementation of those "actionable ideas".

SASFP is able to create through its knowledge and networks a discussion on actionable ideas and effect a 'community of practice' which will continue to build avenues for collaboration at both formal and informal levels. The unit's knowledge in Private Sector Development (PSD), particularly the combination of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and ITES as the underlying basis to leverage capabilities available in the region grants SASFP a unique position in facilitating these initiatives. IT-enabled partnerships have the potential to overcome some of the political and social paradigms that have acted as barriers in the past.

## **GDLN VIDEOCONFERENCE SERIES**

Coordinated by the World Bank, the Global Development Learning Network (GDLN) is a partnership of over 120 recognized global institutions in over 80 countries that collaborates in the design of customized learning solutions for individuals and organizations working in development. These learning sessions range from training courses and informal brainstorming sessions to multi-country dialogues and virtual conferences. For this series on South Asian regional collaboration, the intent was to bring multiple countries from the south Asia region to have a series of dialogues in which stakeholders can come together in what would eventually come to fruition as a series of concrete recommendations for regional collaborative projects in multiple growth sectors, championed by one or more regional institutions.

Two initial videoconferences were organized in May and June of 2009 on Innovation and High Technology and HIV/AIDS, respectively. They revealed that many projects and programs exist within the region which would benefit from regional cooperation on a more programmatic basis. In addition, these dialogues also highlighted the strong desire among these institutions/stakeholders for the World Bank's (WB) collaboration in creating a community of practice for sharing of knowledge, experiences and constructive dialogue. In formulating the above two conferences and the subsequent IT enabled services [ITES] event the team successfully sought out significant participation and knowledge resources through an effective communication campaign amongst the key stakeholders in government as well as industry. An interesting feature of this series of collaborative initiatives is that active discussion and contributions are fostered well before the videoconference and thereafter enriched further by the dialogue continuing on the Wiki.





The wiki ([Attachment 2](#)) for each sectoral theme acts as a “community of practice”, serving as a platform for knowledge and information sharing as well as a virtual dialogue forum. This base is meant to work as a springboard for program development. It should be noted however that while some of the initiatives may be initially instituted by the team they are intended to be carried to full term by either other departments of the WB, whose expertise is more in line with the sector, or regional stakeholder groups.

## ACTIVITIES & FINDINGS

### *Technology Diffusion for Development and Industrial Competitiveness - May 21, 2009*

As the kick-off session for this series, this videoconference focused on establishing the existence of ongoing activities within the region within the private sector and private or public institutions active in the areas of high technology and the development of a more competitive private sector. In addition, the session aimed to provide a base for continuous dialogue among these institutions. Participants identified existing programs and initiatives which are pivotal for collaboration on a regional level; such as (i) Sri Lanka's nanotechnology park; (ii) Bangladesh's effort on nanotechnology for clean water; (iii) India's research on nanotechnology and innovations for a "Second Green Revolution" in agriculture, smart clothes, high performance rubber, solar paints, scientific efforts in preclinical characterization of nano-materials, efficient drug delivery using nano agents, and other 'nano-missions'. The work at the University of Karachi and IIT Bombay in nano-medicine was at par with the research at Georgetown and all participants desired a forum for exchange of knowledge and sharing resources. It was clear from the discussion that all countries were strongly supportive of some form of regional collaboration.

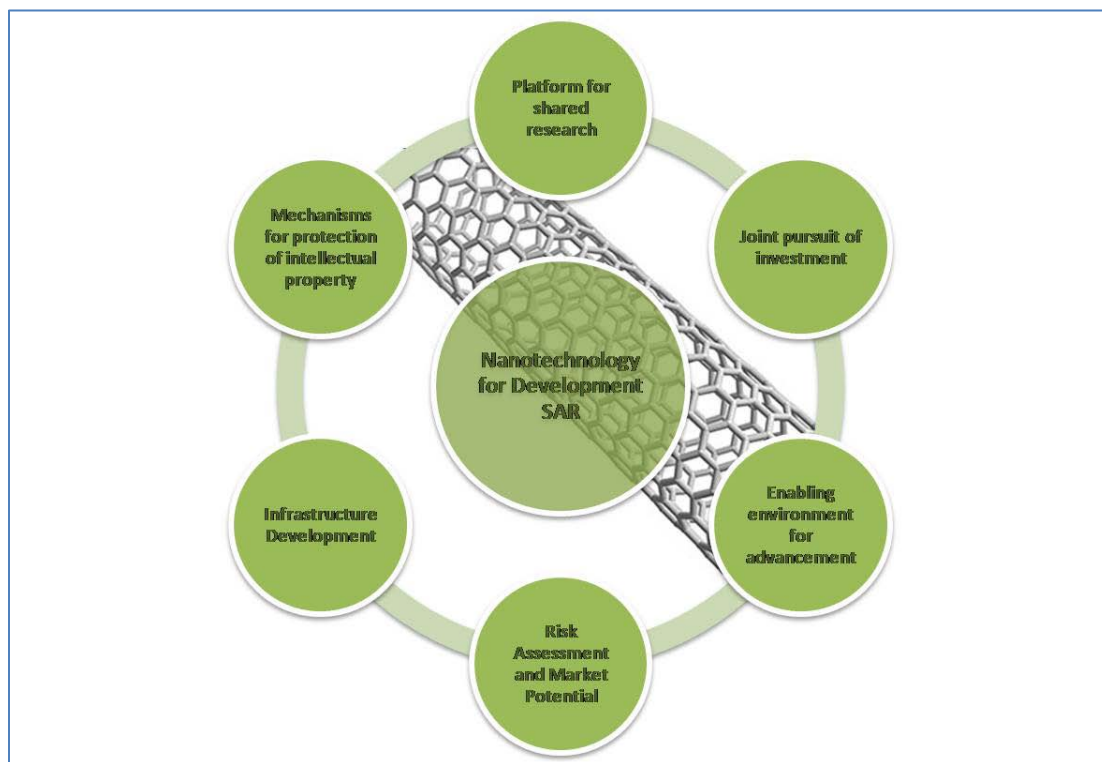
The dialogue presented an opportunity whereby each country had an opportunity to highlight the obstacles and alternatives to regional collaboration, which highlighted the following:

-  **Capacity Building** - each country ranging from those with a more advanced application of technology and diffusion mechanisms in the private sector, stressed the need for more investment in modern institutional infrastructure and human resources. This was established as a pre-condition for private sector players to invest in less developed countries in the region.
-  **Legislation** - one of the recommended actions was to institute legislation and mechanisms for the protection of intellectual property, which would facilitate smooth collaboration between even potential competitors, given the right legal environment and appropriate institutions.
-  **Advocacy** - participants emphasized the need for advocacy through the development of centers for excellence (CoEs) for example in nanotechnology for the region, as well as, a model framework for CoEs in other collaborative subjects. Sri Lanka volunteered to provide the institutional support for regional cooperation in nanotechnology by offering its new nanotechnology facility as SAR's first CoE.
-  **Collaborative Technology** - the drive to build a dialogue among the stakeholders through existing collaborative tools, such as WIKIs, thereby sustain the momentum generated through the VC received unanimous support.

🌐 **Conservation** - by 2045 the region is expected to face severe water shortages across the region if water sanitation and conservation issues are not addressed. Consequently, it was suggested that the region should identify a project addressing water shortages and food production for collaboration using nanotechnology as a non-controversial segue into multi-country collaboration.

🌐 **Social Impact** - it was stressed that the existing market potential of any potent cross cutting technology should be weighed against its perceived detrimental aspects and be cognizant and sensitive to public opinion.






The EU was given as an example of successful regional cooperation which could be emulated. The EU identified nanotechnology as the emerging high tech area for development and is developing a fund for the purpose of investment in promising projects or private sector initiatives. A few of the participants in the videoconference voiced their recommendation that South Asia should follow suit with the support of the WB. This is an opportune time to capitalize on this discussion and its outcomes as Sri Lanka hands over the SAARC presidency to the Maldives this fall by putting in place a regional cooperation program on technology infusion for development and industrial competitiveness. Hon Minister Vithrana in attendance agreed to propose such an initiative.



## ***HIV/AIDS in South Asia and the Role of the Private Sector – June 17, 2009***

This session revolved around the role of the private sector in mitigating the spread of HIV/AIDS in the South Asia region, in collaboration with the South Asia Human Development Sector of the WB. The video conference combined the experiences of private sector participants in developing their programs to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS in their respective countries; with special emphasis on the ICT sector. It was revealed during the dialogue that much of the current work is India-centric given the relatively advanced development of its private sector organizations. However, insights from that work were used to develop a regional perspective fueled by the discussion from the other South Asian countries present.

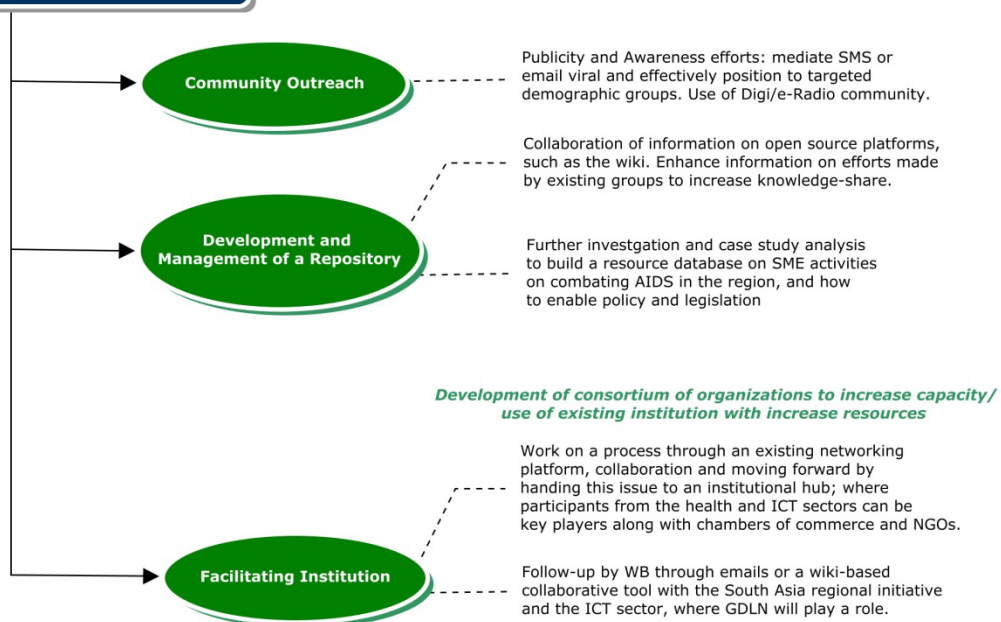
The preparatory discussions with participants in the videoconference revealed the need to develop collaboration based on the following recommendations:

-  **Expansion of the Role of Private sector** - participants all agreed that the role of private institutions in combating HIV/AIDS should be expanded from the current, very specific private HR campaigns to a more generally applicable Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) among regional institutions.
-  **Outreach, Publicity and Awareness Efforts** - suggest utilizing SMS or email through viral marketing techniques and effectively position themselves to targeted demographic groups. In addition, the use of the digital/e-Radio community was seen as a prime gateway to reach the more rural areas. However, it was emphasized that cultural awareness should accompany any public outreach campaign so as not to hurt any ongoing efforts.
-  **Institutional** - participants stressed the need to develop a consortium of organizations to increase capacity and champion the regional cause. Groups such as Friends of South West Asia were brought to the attention of other parties at the conference as a potential convening agency.
-  **Repository** - there was demand for to create common database/ website to house relevant information on ongoing efforts by existing groups and institutions easily accessible by the user community. Open source platforms such as the wiki will facilitate wider knowledge-sharing.
-  **Private Sector Gap** - attendees focused their attention on the lack of relevant work on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) which represent the highest proportion of companies in South Asia.

It was evident that using (empowering) an existing framework is better than spending energies to create a new institutional framework. SAARC Chamber, ASSOCIO are probable candidates.

South Asia Regional Collaboration on  
The SARC "Expanding the Role of the Private Sector  
combating HIV/AIDS in South Asia"

GICT-SASFP-GDLN 17 June 2009





## ***IT Enabled Services for Accelerated Growth and Job Creation– July 14, 2009***


The GDLN session on IT Enabled Services was organized to highlight collaboration-oriented activities in the ITES sector carried out to date by the region and bring together the key policy makers to share their experiences in building the sector in each country. The session also addressed the key constraints to collaboration in ITES in South Asia and defined the areas, level of engagement and the potential benefits of Collaboration in IT Enabled Services in SAR. This was the first full scale model of the series. In which all facets of collaboration were brought together; it demonstrated the benefits of preparatory discussions among a core group of protagonists, effective use of networks, WIKIs, and the need to ground these with in-country trade associations to bring ideas into action.


Preparatory consultation for the GDLN event was allocated sufficient time so the participants could come prepared with "actionable ideas" and develop their own approach on how to make use of available resources. An example is our conference call with one of India's leading IT entrepreneurs which: (i) identified his interest in risk financing on a regional basis and (ii) showed his willingness to get buy-in from the right partners from India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The WB team provided him with potential entry points (SAARC Development Fund, USAID PACT, BIRD, etc.) and encouraged him to participate in the videoconference to gauge the response of the other participants.


It was voiced during the videoconference that SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry is an acceptable institutional hub for championing the cause of regional collaboration. In order to explore this with the SAARC Chamber, a follow-up videoconference will be scheduled. The other alternative of leveraging the capacity of existing country trade associations such as NASSCOM, bringing together its respective leadership team as constituents to virtual regional body was also discussed. Indeed, there is an opportunity to build their capacity to lead regional initiatives, which would mutually benefits their members. Assistance to and help them develop a coherent plan of action was then necessary.

Alternatively, NASSCOM Foundation and CII, who are not members of the SAARC Chamber have the necessary experience and capacity to facilitate collaboration may be a third alternative.

Therefore, key recommendations for regional collaboration in ITES for SAR included:






 **SAR Venture Fund** - it was suggested that a multi-country fund should be mobilized (e.g. SAARC venture fund) and/or a risk fund to catalyze/incentivize regional entrepreneurial activity; such as intra-SAR collaborative ventures in training, assessment, infrastructure sharing, and promotion.

 **Virtual Organization** - a virtual regional organization comprising all country ITES trade associations was also discussed as a expedient way to create a regional body to champion the regional cause, given that such composite entity will not face the usual geopolitical challenges which have hitherto plagued collaborative efforts in SAR.





 **The WBG Role** - SASFP's role, along with WBI and GICT, was emphasized as the 'Convenor' and impartial catalyst to launch this agenda and move it to the next stage.

## PROGRAM MANAGEMENT & OUTCOMES

The three videoconferences which have been highlighted in this report provide a strong argument for deeper more action orientated collaboration within South Asia. Indeed a strong appetite and desire for such collaboration clearly exists with the key stakeholder groupings across many sectors. The team needs to build further on this agenda and build a pilot initiative as a proof of concept in one sector. Such a pilot will bring together these rich ideas, collaboration opportunities and cross-sectoral synergies which evidently exist at the intersection of the private sector, ICT and High Technology in furthering industrial competitiveness, healthcare and other development initiatives. These GDLN sessions helped also to identify and develop the common pillars necessary for effective regional cooperation. The following insights provide a basis for further dialogue:

-  **Focus on Country Strengths** - each country in South Asia has unique selling points, consequently, we must be careful not to dilute these in the process of collaboration, rather we need to ensure that we enrich and enhance these attributes.
-  **Open Source Wiki** - create an open source wiki with improved end user access and efficacy to enhance pre-meeting discussions designed to promote actionable ideas during videoconferences; and continue developing the program management wiki to assign, track, and evaluate program success.
-  **Document management platform** - to efficiently share information resources.
-  **Matrix of Collaboration** - need to frequently revisit the Matrix of Collaboration to check consistency with regional and VWB priorities, and simultaneously detect new opportunities.
-  **Policies & Procedures** - to effectively manage conference logistics before, during and after the conference.

Furthermore, the team focused on concrete recommendations that emerged in the initial session in any of the follow up sessions. These recommendations included:

-  **Standardization in Academic & Professional Training** - need for common regional standards for curricula, training, and assessment/accreditation.
-  **Creating an enabling environment** - a policy framework which facilitates free movement of personnel, reduces regional trade barriers, and encourages collaboration.
-  **Knowledge Sharing** - addressing regional markets in SAR with a significant segment of the population which is growing rapidly and is under employed. Ensuring that the lagging countries in the region learn from the more advanced countries – Facilitate the opportunity for the former to leap frog over those mistakes.
-  **Regional Disaster Recovery/Business Continuity Centers** - in various country sites with PPPs designed for management of such common facilities.

## 2009-2010 SARC Dialogue

The videoconference series on Technology Diffusion for Development, Private Sector Combating HIV/AIDS, and ITES in the SAR has derived and applied shared knowledge to develop initiatives such as *collaborating on nanotechnology research across a number of sectors and the development of a regional market for ITES, increasing outreach via multi-media through private sector support for HIV/AIDS awareness, and exploring the possibilities to standardize training and certification enabling increased labor flow within the information technology industry in the region.*

Another benefit of the initial series of conferences was the expansion of the network of participants and the inclusion of stakeholders in taking these demand driven initiatives forward. The next series has been oriented to develop two or three themes deeper, which would be designed to **stimulate collaborative actions, develop a practical framework for regional projects and realize tangible outcomes hitherto lacking in the SAR.** The follow-up series, activities and the Report is expected to yield two specific deliverables:

- 1) A regional Innovation and Technology infusion for competitiveness strategy note;
- 2) Regional consultations resulting in a well informed/designed Regional Project Framework to develop the ITES sector and jobs through collaboration across the countries in SAR.

### Proposed Schedule:

#### December 2009 - March 2010

Bank wide BBL on the findings & recommendations of Regional ITES report with stakeholder participation

#### April- May 2010

- 1) ITES follow-up VC – Discuss draft Regional Project Framework
- 2) Follow-up VC on the emerging contours of the Regional Strategy for Innovation & Technology diffusion for Industrial Competitiveness

#### May – June 2010

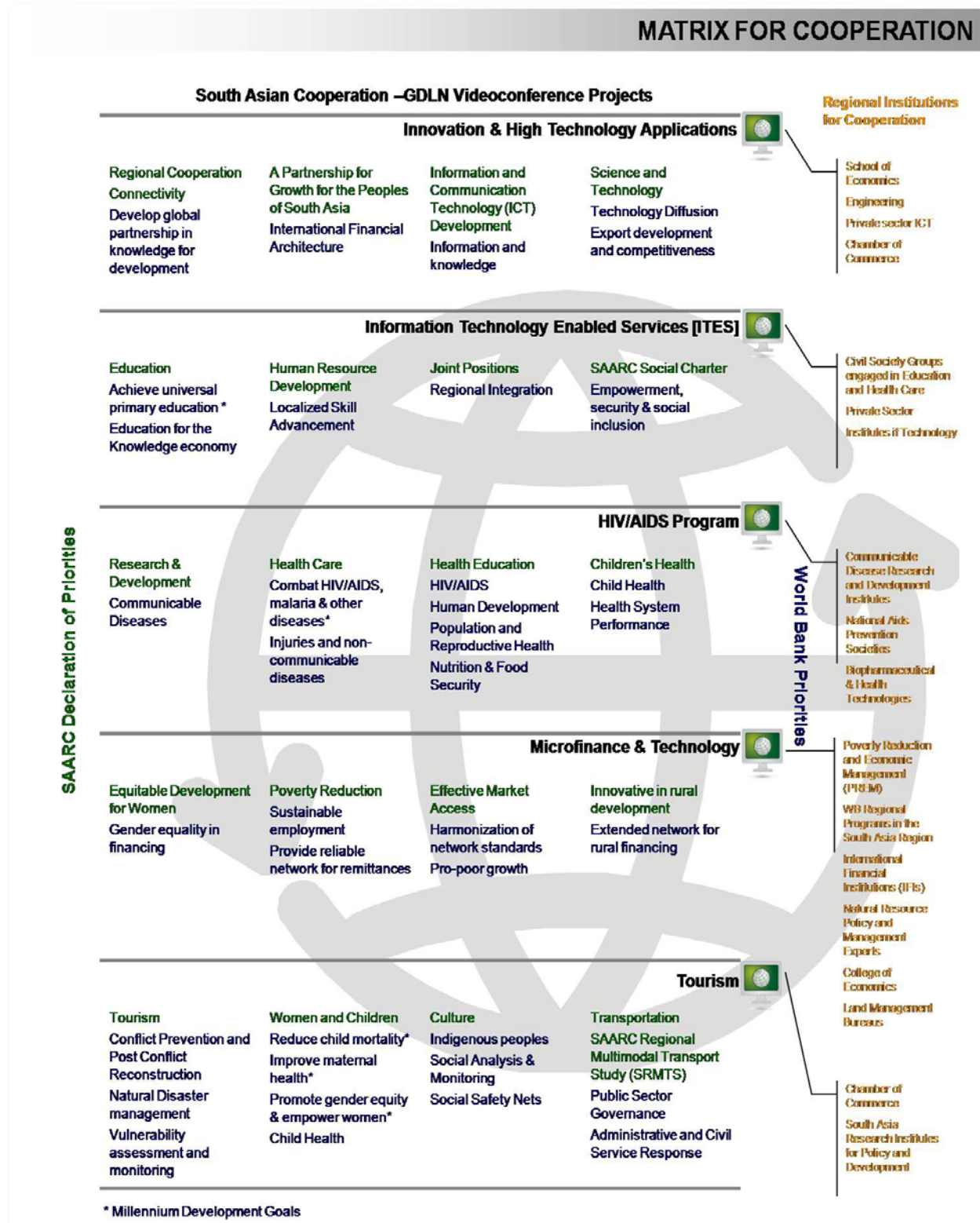
Regional Tourism VC - Multi country Stake holder consultation across the regional to discuss and validate the Regional Strategy Note

#### June – Sept 2010

- 1) Concluding discussions on Regional ITES Project details; timelines, resources & actors.
- 2) Presentation & Discussion of the Regional Strategy Note on Innovation & Technology infusion for Industrial Competitiveness.
- 3) Possible additional VC on a regional approach to Microfinance & sharing the country experiences.

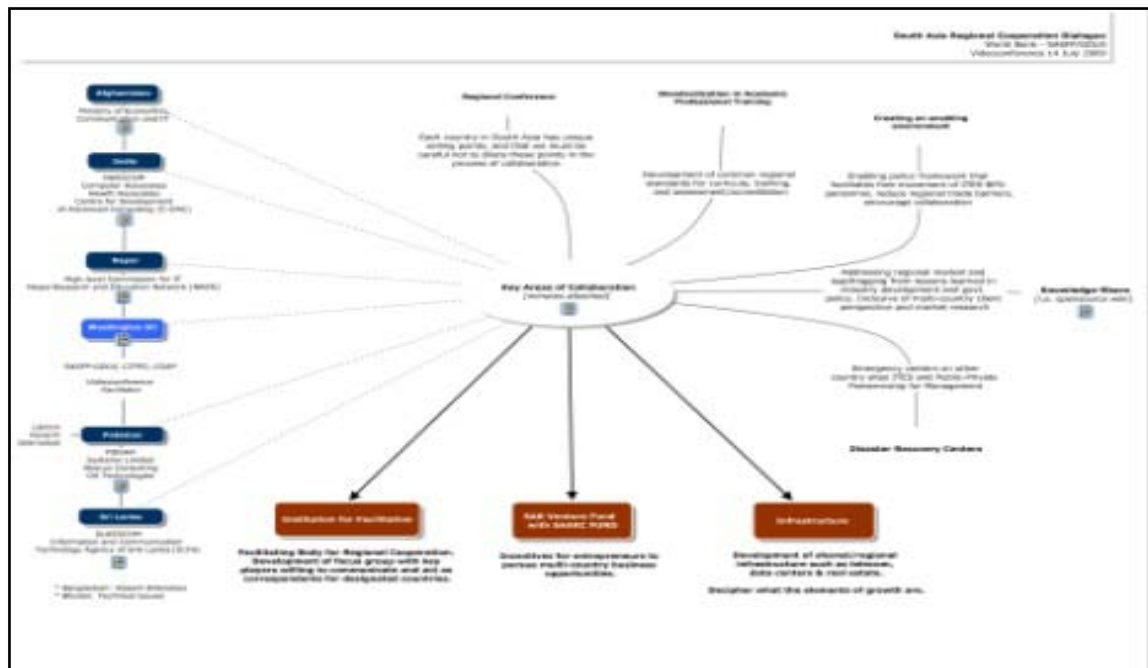
## Attachments and Additional Materials

### I. Matrix of Collaboration

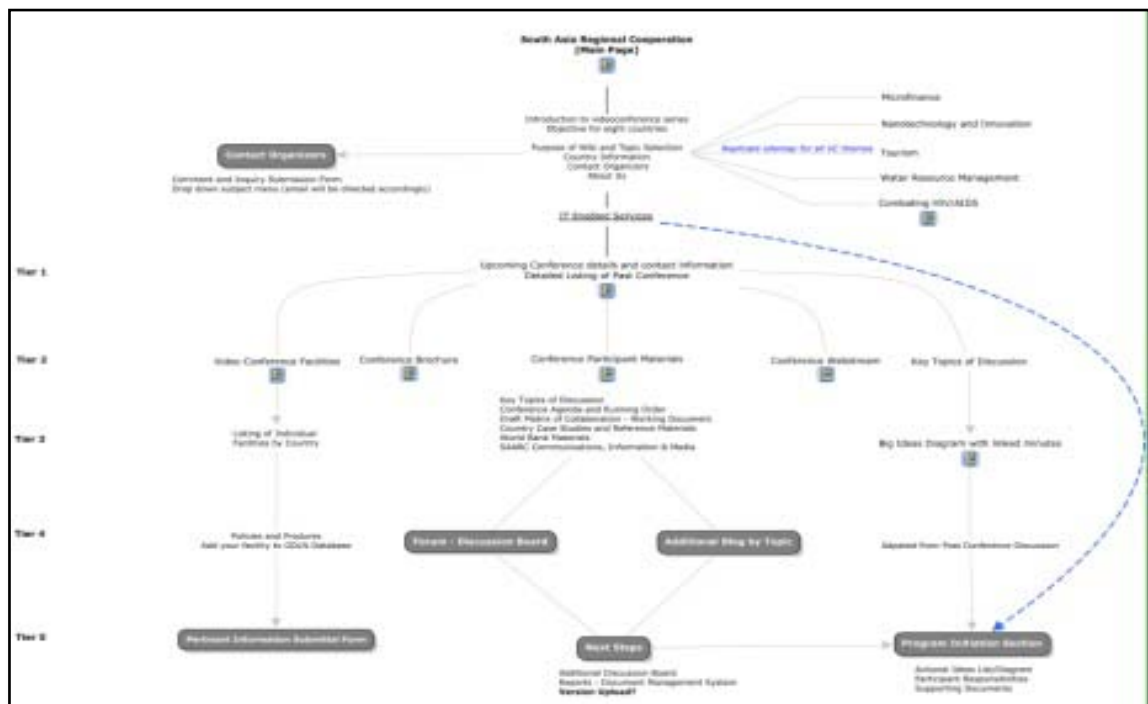


## 2. ITES Community Open Source Wiki – Template for thematic program sites

- <http://southasiancooperation.wikidot.com/sarc-ites>
- [Key areas of Collaboration](#)

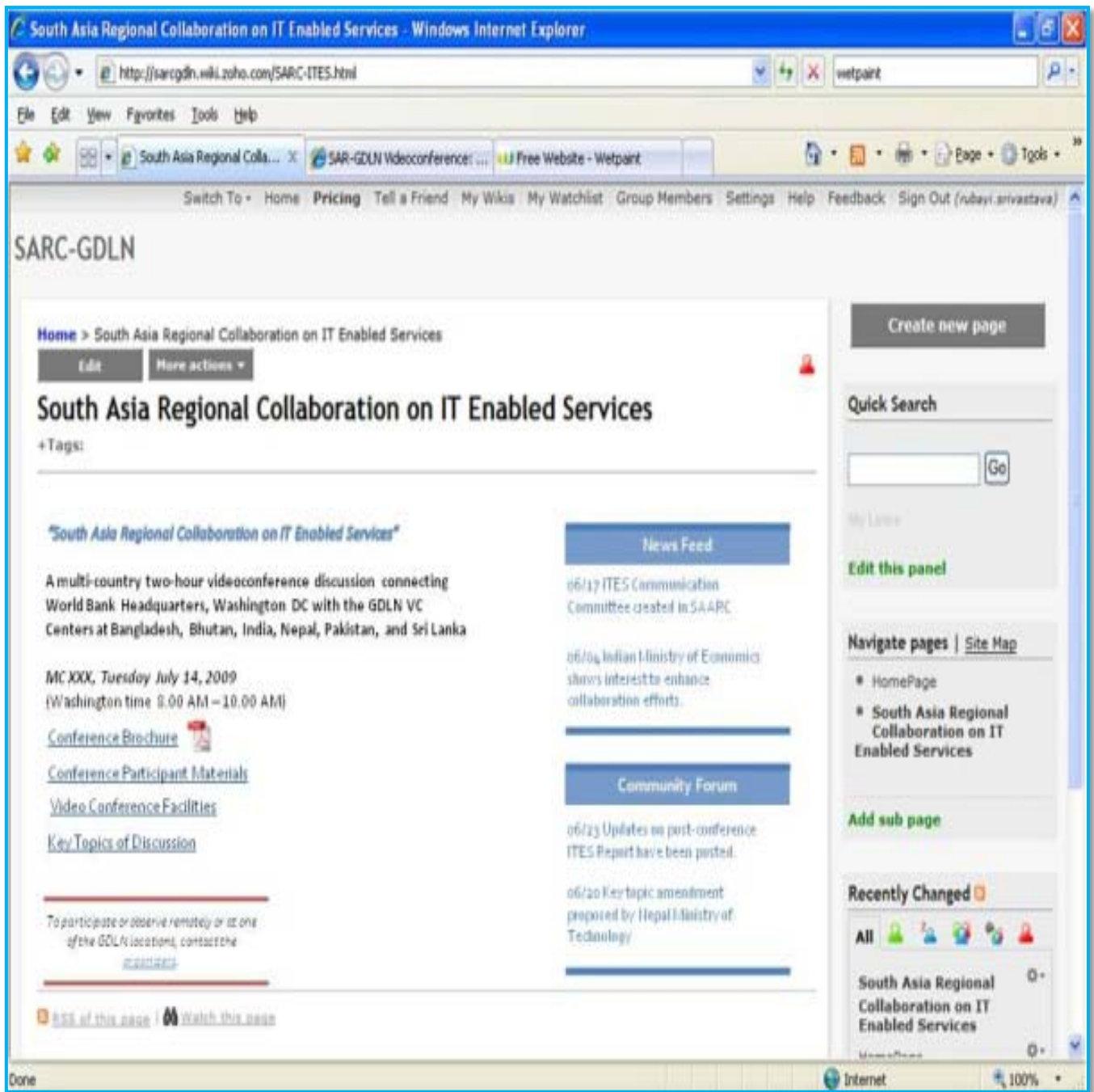


- [SARC Wiki Layout](#)





## [SAR WIKI HOME PAGE](#)



The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the SAR WIKI HOME PAGE. The address bar shows the URL <http://sarcgdn.wiki.zoho.com/SARC-ITES.html>. The browser's menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Favorites, Tools, and Help. The toolbar shows various icons for navigation and editing. The page title is "South Asia Regional Collaboration on IT Enabled Services - Windows Internet Explorer".

The main content area of the wiki page is titled "SARC-GDLN" and "South Asia Regional Collaboration on IT Enabled Services". It includes a "Home" link, a "Pricing" link, and a "Tell a Friend" link. The page also features a "Create new page" button and a "Quick Search" box. The main content area is divided into sections: "South Asia Regional Collaboration on IT Enabled Services" (with a description of a multi-country two-hour videoconference discussion), "News Feed" (with updates on ITES Communication Committee and Indian Ministry of Economics), and "Community Forum" (with updates on post-conference ITES Report and key topic amendment).

The right sidebar contains a "Quick Search" box, a "My Links" section, and a "Recently Changed" section. The "Recently Changed" section lists the page "South Asia Regional Collaboration on IT Enabled Services" as recently changed. The bottom status bar shows "Done" and "Internet" with a 100% zoom level.

### 3. SARC-GDLN Project Management Portal

*For Internal Use Only*

The screenshot displays the SARC-GDLN Project Management Portal. The browser window shows the URL <https://sargdln.projects.sas.ac.uk/login.do>. The portal's navigation bar includes links for Dashboard, Tasks & Milestones, Calendar, Meetings, Documents, Timetable, Reports, Forums, and Users. A sidebar on the left contains links for Projects, Upgrade, Archived Projects, and Users.

**Week Ahead**

Tue, Jul 28	Wed, Jul 29	Thu, Jul 30	Fri, Jul 31	Sat, Jul 31	Sun, Jul 31	Mon, Aug 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Bank Pre-Conference Brief</li> <li>Research Post expenditure on S-GDLN Conf.</li> <li>10:00 AM - ITES Planning Meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and distribute participant list</li> </ul>					

**Recent Documents** (1 to 5 of 15)

Filename	Folder	Version	Uploaded By
Community Open St... PPT format of ITES Community Site design 452 KB	ITES-VC July 14, 2009	1.1	Rubeyl Srivastava
SARC-VC CONTACTS... Draft Internal Contacts 42 KB	SARC-GDLN	1.1	Rubeyl Srivastava
Nano Tech Meeting... Nanotechnology Meeting Minutes 52 KB	Nanotechnology-VC Collaboration	1.1	Rubeyl Srivastava
WB_SAM_ASTMAR_Va... Advisative SAM Model - Draft 48 KB	SARC-GDLN	1.1	Rubeyl Srivastava
South Asia Region... SAR Growth and Poverty PPT 3 KB	SARC-GDLN	1.1	Rubeyl Srivastava

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**SAARC Overview**  
 Rubeyl Srivastava, 24-04-2009 16:18:48, 7 Posts  
 South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (<http://www.sasac-sac.org/>)