

**South Asia: Emerging Macroeconomic and Governance  
Challenges and Opportunities Workshop**

*Part of ADB's Knowledge Sharing Platform on  
Public Sector Management and Governance Issues in  
the Asia-Pacific Region*

27-29 October 2026  
Hotel Marriott  
Kathmandu, Nepal

## South Asia: Emerging Macroeconomic & Governance Challenges and Opportunities Workshop

| Time                                                                                                                     | Day 1 (27 October 2026, Tuesday)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| 08:30 – 09:00                                                                                                            | <b>Registration</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 09:00 – 09:30<br><b>Opening Session</b>                                                                                  | <p>(1) <b>Welcome remarks</b> – Arnaud Cauchois, Country Director, Nepal Resident Mission, ADB</p> <p>(2) <b>Opening addresses</b> – (a) Sona Shrestha, Director General, South Asia Department, ADB; and (b) Christine Engstrom, Director General, Sectors Department 3, ADB</p> <p>(3) <b>Featured speaker</b> – Senior official from Government of Nepal</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <b>Short Break for Group Photo</b> </div>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 09:45 – 10:15                                                                                                            | <p><b>Issues in RCI, and Climate-Disaster Financing Nexus in South Asia</b></p> <p><b>Presenter:</b> Cigdem Akin, Director, SD3-PSMG, ADB</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 10:15 – 10:30                                                                                                            | <b>BREAK</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 10:30 – 12:00<br><b>Core Session 1</b><br><i>(Group discussions at country table to ensue after views from speakers)</i> | <p><b>Targeting High Trade Costs and Inefficient Trade Facilitation</b></p> <p>(a) Key reforms and innovations in customs modernization, digital trade platforms, national single-window systems, electronic certification systems, and transit agreements.</p> <p>(b) Lessons from the countries of the region on how regional cooperation has successfully lowered trade costs and resulted in more efficient and effective regional trade</p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Yurendra Basnett, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, ADB</p> <p><b>Discussant:</b> Kanupriya Gupta, Senior Public Sector Economist, India Resident Mission, ADB (online)</p>                                                                                                           |
| 12:00 – 13:00                                                                                                            | <b>LUNCH</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 13:00 – 14:30<br><b>Core Session 2</b><br><i>(Group discussions at country table to ensue after views from speakers)</i> | <p><b>Strengthening Regional Connectivity and Logistics Systems</b></p> <p>(a) Initiatives in major industrial and economic corridors in South Asia for greater regional integration, including – (i) East Coast Economic Corridor, and West Bengal Economic and Industrial Corridor Sector Development Program (India); and (ii) Integrated Growth Network Development Initiative (Bangladesh).</p> <p>(b) Focus is also on enhancement of regional competitiveness through better trade integration, transport networks, logistics hubs, and supply-chain resilience</p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Chandan Sapkota, Country Economist, Bangladesh Resident Mission, ADB</p> <p><b>Discussant:</b> Aanchal Karanth, Senior Economics Officer, India Resident Mission</p> |
| 14:30 – 14:45                                                                                                            | <b>BREAK</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 14:45 – 16:15<br><b>Core Session 3</b><br><i>(Group discussions at country table to ensue after views from speakers)</i> | <p><b>Enhancing integration into Regional and Global Value Chains</b></p> <p>(a) Improving cross-border production networks, and digital and services trade in the region.</p> <p>(b) Measures in place on investment planning and promotion (particularly for MSMEs), as well as on PPPs, and regulatory frameworks to facilitate strategies to help MSMEs participate more effectively in global markets and value chains</p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Hannah Bucher, Senior Public Sector Specialist for Trade &amp; Industry, ADB</p> <p><b>Discussant:</b> Yurendra Basnett, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, ADB</p>                                                                                                                                     |
| 16:15 – 16:30                                                                                                            | <p><b>Discussions on issues raised at the day's sessions</b></p> <p>Gambhir Bhatta, International Consultant, ADB</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 16:30                                                                                                                    | <b>End of Day 1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

| Time                                                                                                                                         | Day 2 (28 October 2026, Wednesday)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| 08:00 – 08:45                                                                                                                                | <b>Networking</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 08:45 – 09:00                                                                                                                                | Recap of Day 1 proceedings<br><b>Facilitated by:</b> Kina S. Pascua, Associate Project Officer (Knowledge), SD3-PSMG, ADB                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 09:00 – 10:15<br><b>Panel Session 1</b><br><br><b>Moderated by:</b><br><i>Krishna Pathak,<br/>Senior Public<br/>Sector Officer,<br/>NRM</i>  | <b>Country Context – Broad Macro–Fiscal Issues and Governance Reforms in Nepal</b><br><br>Discussions with senior officials of the Government of Nepal on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current governance and policy reform environment</li> <li>• Managing fiscal risks (particularly from subnational governance, and SOE performance as well as natural disasters)</li> </ul><br><b>Panellists:</b> Senior officials from OPMCM, MOF, NPC – Government of Nepal                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 10:15 – 10:30                                                                                                                                | <b>BREAK</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 10:30 – 12:00<br><b>Core Session 4</b><br><br><i>(Group<br/>discussions at<br/>country table to<br/>ensue after views<br/>from speakers)</i> | <b>Expenditure Management and Fiscal Risks (including Contingent Liabilities)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of expenditure management (particularly on Integrated Financial Management Systems, Treasury Single Account, and Direct Benefits Transfer)</li> <li>• Identification and management of fiscal risks (including those from contingent liabilities from SOEs, poorly structured PPPs, and climate and disaster-related liabilities)</li> </ul><br><b>Speaker:</b> Rachana Shrestha, Senior Public Sector Specialist, ADB<br><b>Discussant:</b> Nyda Mukhtar, Senior Public Sector Economist, Sri Lanka Resident Mission, ADB |
| 12:00 – 13:00                                                                                                                                | <b>LUNCH</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 13:00 – 14:30<br><b>Core Session 5</b><br><br><i>(Group<br/>discussions at<br/>country table to<br/>ensue after views<br/>from speakers)</i> | <b>Climate and Disaster-Financing Nexus, Part 1 – Understanding the Macro–Fiscal Issues</b><br><br>Nature of macro–fiscal (including debt) pressures resulting from climate change and natural disasters<br><br><b>Speaker:</b> Nyda Mukhtar, Economist, Sri Lanka Resident Mission, ADB<br><b>Discussant:</b> Hiranya Mukhopadhyay, former Director, Public Sector Management and Governance Group, ADB                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 14:30 – 14:45                                                                                                                                | <b>BREAK</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 14:45 – 16:15<br><b>Core Session 6</b><br><br><i>(Group<br/>discussions at<br/>country table to<br/>ensue after views<br/>from speakers)</i> | <b>Climate &amp; Disaster-Financing Nexus, Part 2 – Tackling Issues in Disaster Insurance</b><br><br>The core challenge in Asian disaster insurance is the combination of low coverage (protection gap), unaffordable or inaccessible insurance products, and insufficient risk data and institutional capacity, which leaves governments and communities exposed to disaster losses<br><br><b>Speaker:</b> Thomas Kessler, Principal Disaster Risk Insurance & Finance Specialist (on disaster risk financing)<br><br><b>Discussants:</b> Carmen Garcia Perez, Regional Cooperation Specialist, ADB (for RCI aspects).                                        |
| 16:15 – 16:30                                                                                                                                | <b>Prelude to the World Café Presentations on Day 3</b><br><br>Gambhir Bhatta, International Consultant, ADB                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 16:30                                                                                                                                        | <b>End of Day 2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

| Time                                                                                                                    | Day 3 (29 October 2026, Thursday)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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| 08:00 – 08:45                                                                                                           | <b>Networking</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 08:45 – 09:00                                                                                                           | Recap of Day 2 proceedings<br><b>Facilitated by:</b> Kina S. Pascua, Associate Project Officer (Knowledge), SD3-PSMG, ADB                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 09:00 – 10:30<br><b>Panel Session 2</b><br><br><b>Moderated by:</b><br>Yurendra<br>Basnett, ADB                         | <b>Conversation with Development Partners</b><br>Topics to be covered include: issues in RCI, disaster management, as well as expenditure management and fiscal risks in the DMCs of South Asia<br><br><b>Panellists:</b> Officials from World Bank, IMF, FCDO, along with selected government delegates                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 10:30 – 10:45                                                                                                           | <b>BREAK</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 10:45 – 12:00<br><br>Facilitator: Luis<br>Almeida, ADB                                                                  | <b>Dedicated Discussion Session 1</b> with experts on key associated themes of Days 1 and 2<br><br><b>(1) RCI &amp; Trade, Private Sector Focus</b><br><br><b>Digitalization of trade, and private sector considerations in RCI in South Asia</b><br><br><b>Expert:</b> Steven Beck, Director, Trade and Supply Chain Division, Private Sector Operations Department, ADB<br><br><b>Discussant:</b> Hannah Bucher, Senior Public Sector Specialist for Trade & Industry, ADB                                                                                                                                                       |
| 12:00 – 13:00                                                                                                           | <b>LUNCH</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 13:00 – 14:15<br><br>Facilitator:<br>Waewnet<br>Sukkasem,<br>Public Sector<br>Specialist, ADB                           | <b>Dedicated Discussion Session 2</b> with experts on key associated themes of Days 1 and 2<br><br><b>(2) Enhancing Resource Mobilization</b><br><br><b>Strategies to strengthen domestic resource mobilization to reduce fiscal vulnerabilities</b><br><br><b>Expert:</b> Sandeep Bhattacharya, Principal Public Management Specialist (Tax), ADB<br><br><b>Discussant:</b> Dr Rup Bahadur Khadka, Consultant, ADB (online)                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 14:15 – 14:30                                                                                                           | <b>BREAK</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 14:30 – 16:00<br><br><b>Facilitation by</b><br>• Gambhir<br>Bhatta,<br>Consultant<br>• Kina Pascua,<br>ADB <sup>1</sup> | <b>Focus on Country Experiences – in World Café style</b><br>Presentations from DMC delegates on emerging issues, challenges, and opportunities on the themes of RCI, and climate & disaster-financing nexus in their respective countries.<br><br>Format of World Café style – presentations at their own table by each group representing the participating DMCs. All those participating at the event will then visit up to three stations to listen to the specific country experiences and compare lessons. A wrap-up of the exercise will be provided by the facilitators after hearing the opinions of all separate groups. |
| 16:00 – 16:30<br><b>Closing Session</b><br><br><b>Moderated by</b><br>Luis Almeida,<br>ADB                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentimeter exercise on level 1 learning gained</li> <li>• Self-evaluation of the workshop</li> <li>• Presentation of certificates of participation</li> </ul><br><b>Closing remarks</b> – Cigdem Akin, Director, SD3-PSMG, ADB                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 16:30                                                                                                                   | <b>END OF WORKSHOP</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

<sup>1</sup> Individual country facilitation at the country table during the 3-day Workshop will be provided by ADB staff members as follows: (i) Chandan Sapkota (for Bangladesh); (ii) Hanna Bucher (for Bhutan); (iii) Sandeep Bhattacharya (for India); (iv) Waewnet Sukkasem (for Maldives); (v) Krishna Pathak (for Nepal); and (vi) Nyda Mukhtar (for Sri Lanka). Other participating ADB staff will also be part of country groups.

ADB: Asian Development Bank, CCSD: Climate Change and Sustainable Development, DMCs: developing member countries, ERDI: Economic Research and Development Impact, FCDO: Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office, IMF: International Monetary Fund, MOF: Ministry of Finance, MSMEs: micro, small, and medium enterprises, NPC: National Planning Commission, NRM: Nepal Resident Mission, OPMCM: Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, PPP: public-private partnerships, PSMG: Public Sector Management and Governance, RCI: regional coordination and integration, SD3: Sectors Department 3, SOEs: state-owned enterprises