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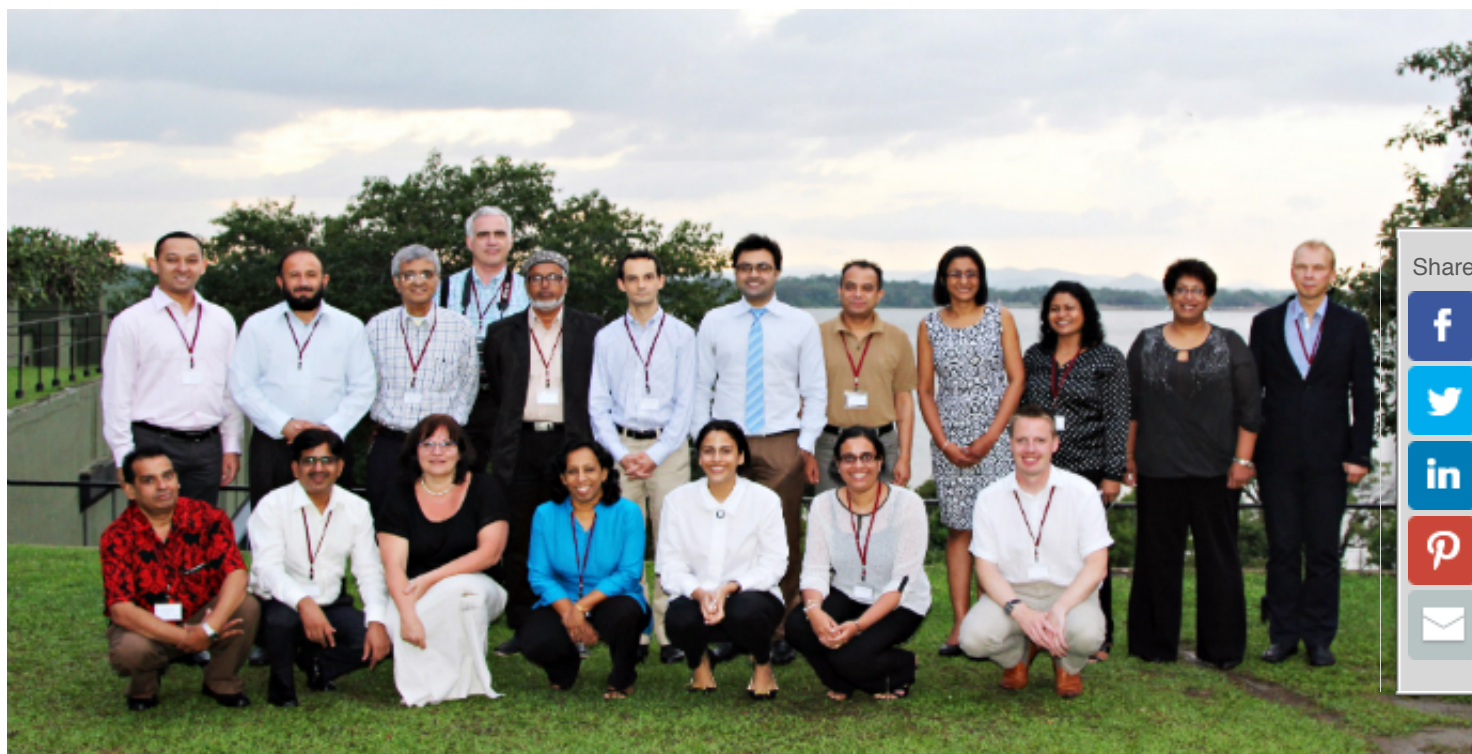
Science and technology cooperation between South Asia and the EU

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Bangkok, Thailand

Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) with partners has built a foundation for a future International Cooperation Network to promote science and technology cooperation between South Asia and the European Union (EU).

Under the CASCADE project (Collaborative Action towards Societal Challenges through Awareness, Development and Education), ADPC contributed to an extensive study to identify the societal challenges in South Asia related to health, food security, sustainable agricultures, clean and efficient energy, and climate action, among other themes.



ADPC and partners gathered for a CASCADE meeting in Sri Lanka

“CASCADE is an excellent opportunity for raising awareness of the potential for EU-Southern Asia

cooperation and stimulating regional and international participation. (- -) The endeavor will be to pave the way for more advanced, inclusive and innovative societies,” said Mr. Denis Dambois, Science Counselor of the EU Delegation in Delhi, upon the launch of the program in 2013.

During the program, ADPC worked closely with the European Commission, Global Disaster Resilience Center, the University of Huddersfield, and the University of Central Lancashire in the UK in the program’s focus countries, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

“The study showed that all the target countries face several societal challenges that need to be overcome in order to build sustainable development. We hope that the governments will utilize the research results to efficiently address these challenges,” says Dr. Rishiraj Dutta, Technical Specialist at ADPC.

Bangladesh: A need to invest in health care and agriculture

ADPC led the team tasked with identifying regional societal challenges and analyzing national policies and research priorities. In addition to a regional position paper on South Asia, ADPC developed a national position paper on Bangladesh in collaboration with Patuakhali Science and Technology University.

“We found that there is a great need to invest in health infrastructure, support immunization programs for protection of infants from diseases, and invest in awareness campaigns for health care in Bangladesh,” says Dr. Dutta.

Like many other countries in the region, Bangladesh needs to strengthen its agriculture sector for food security.

“Key measures would be to introduce early-maturing and high-yielding crop varieties that will reduce crop damage resulting from floods and other natural disasters prompted by the climate change,” Dr. Dutta mentions.

***Horizon2020* to tackle societal challenges**

Upon the conclusion of CASCADE, the EU launched its new financial program for research and innovation, *Horizon2020*. The program recognizes the importance of internationalization and aims to tackle global societal challenges and create new growth and jobs. It will build on the societal challenges identified in the South Asian regional position paper, and contribute to the objectives of Europe2020 strategy (2014–2020) by drawing lessons from the CASCADE project.

“CASCADE created awareness about opportunities available for research cooperation between the EU and South Asia. By identifying key societal challenges, the study offers topics for future research that can be conducted under *Horizon2020*,” commented Dr. Dutta.

The regional position paper for South Asia also found several recurring and crosscutting priorities; these include development and financing of infrastructure, adopting an evidence-based approach to policy, capacity building, and sustainable development.

“Many countries had accelerated their economic growth, development and industry competitiveness by paying close attention to research and innovation. With the *Horizon2020* funding, the goal is first and foremost to contribute to growth, jobs and a better quality of life,” EU Ambassador David Daly reiterated on the South Asian launch of the new program.

Documents:

[South Asia regional position paper on Horizon 2020 societal challenges](#)

[National position paper – Bangladesh](#)

[CASCADE: Bi-regional coordination of Science and Technology Cooperation](#)

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