

CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSAL



**SUBMISSION
DEADLINE**

15 AUGUST 2011

13TH ROUND
REGIONAL RESEARCH
COMPETITION (RRC)

SOUTH ASIA NETWORK OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH INSTITUTES

www.saneinetwork.net



South Asia Network of Economic Research Institutes

Call for Research Proposal

SANEI 13th Round RRC

Submission Deadline: 15 August 2011

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INTRODUCTION

The South Asia Network of Economic Research Institutes (SANEI) is the regional partner of the Global Development Network (GDN, www.gdnet.org). SANEI is a non-profit, regional initiative established in 1998, to foster networking amongst economic research institutions in the South Asia region for establishing strong linkages pertaining to broader concerns of regional cooperation, understanding and development.

Links about SANEI

1. SANEI Website : www.saneinetwork.net
2. About SANEI : <http://www.saneinetwork.net/about/index.asp>
3. Completed Studies : http://www.saneinetwork.net/research/sanei_I/index.asp
4. Ongoing Studies : http://www.saneinetwork.net/research/sanei_II/index.asp
5. SANEI Publication : <http://www.saneinetwork.net/publications/index.asp>
6. GDN Website : www.gdnet.org

Contact SANEI

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13TH ROUND RRC

Summary

SANEI is inviting Research Proposals for its 13th Round of Regional Research Competition (RRC) within the thematic focus ***‘Sustainable Urbanization in South Asia: Issues and Challenges’***. The proposals could relate to a single South Asian country or cover more than one country within a comparative framework. During evaluation, preference will be given to proposals covering more than one South Asian country and submitted for collaborative research by researchers from institutions of these countries. The funded project will run for one year from the date of signing the contract.

Concept Note

“Sustainable Urbanization in South Asia: Issues and Challenges”

In South Asia, cities are moving to the forefront of socio-economic change with a rapidly increasing share of population living in urban areas. The rest of the population is also becoming increasingly dependent upon cities for economic, social, and political progress. Factors such as globalization and democratization are increasing the importance of cities for sustainable development in the Region. Accordingly, it is generally accepted that urbanization not only poses threats to sustainable development but also holds promising opportunities for social and economic advancement and for environmental improvement at local, national, and regional levels in South Asia along with positive implications for global sustainability.

One reason for special concern on urbanization in South Asia is that it is now happening, and is likely to continue occurring, at a scale and speed probably never seen before in human history. This is partly because of the Region’s vast population and partly due to the unprecedented speed of economic and social change taking place in the Region. With the present trends, millions of rural people will have to be urbanized within a decade requiring the planning and building of numerous cities and/or expanding existing cities. If urbanization follows current models, the unsustainability of present practices will become vivid too soon. The time has come to take a close look at the phenomenon of rapid urbanization especially in view of the rapidly increasing urgency of the issues of urban poverty and environmental degradation with a large number of people living in slums. This brings out the need for initiatives to achieve urban development in a sustainable manner in South Asia.

Thus, sustainable urbanization can emerge as an important means of overcoming the fundamental problems of environmental degradation and poverty in South Asia.

Historically, urbanization has been mostly unplanned in the countries of South Asia. However, as population grows, overcrowding, congestion, environmental destruction, uncontrolled growth, unsustainable pressure on provision of basic services and infrastructure capacity, unplanned transformation of agricultural lands into urban uses, air pollution, water pollution from urban runoff, and many others including the increasingly negative impact of unplanned urbanization on the quality of life of the citizens have brought the issues of sustainable urbanization in South Asia into the forefront of policy debates. The policy makers and planners have expressed their increasing concern for unsustainable urbanization. The major issue is: Is there such a thing as sustainable urbanization and, if so, what are its principles?

Sustainable development has been defined as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Only in recent times, the concept of sustainability has begun to be applied in the field of urbanization with relevant agencies becoming aware of the need to adopt plans to make urban growth more sustainable. The concept of sustainable urbanization may be interpreted to encompass ideas, aspirations, and values that would inspire all concerned to become better stewards of the environment and that promote sustainable economic growth and social objectives.

For ensuring sustainable urbanization, researchers have focused on several basic principles, such as compactness, completeness, conservation, comfort, coordination, and collaboration. It is argued that unless the principles of sustainability are incorporated into urban planning, South Asia will face a future of increasingly difficult urban problems. It is more likely that the past and current patterns of urban growth will not sustain the quality of life that is associated with the development vision of the countries in South Asia.

The 13th round of SANEI Regional Research Competition (RRC) will address the wide arrays of issues surrounding sustainable urbanization under specific contexts in different countries of South Asia. The studies will examine the current trends and patterns of urbanization and examine their status from the perspective of sustainability based on analytical and empirical determinants. The studies are also expected to identify, again analytically and empirically, the factors contributing to unsustainability of urbanization taking specific contexts in view, assess the impact of unsustainable urbanization on the economies and societies, and recommend policy responses. The studies will be analytical in applying relevant theoretical concepts and use of appropriate tools of analysis, and bring in relevant national and international perspectives. Purely anecdotal stories and descriptions, unsupported by analysis, should be avoided.

The Scope

The scope of the studies could cover, among others, one or more of the following aspects relevant to individual or a group of countries in South Asia. However, these are only suggestive. Researchers are free to choose other researchable topics, provided they are relevant to the theme and to the countries of the Region.

- Sustainable Urbanization: Contexts, and Specific Visions
- Comprehensive Master Plan: A Tool for Sustainable Urbanization?
- Urban Land Use Planning and Traditional Neighborhood Development as Components of Sustainable Urbanization
- Reducing the Flow of Population from Rural to Urban Contexts: Relationships of Sustainable Urbanization to Healthy Rural Life
- Sustainable Urbanization: Building Larger Number of Smaller Cities or Smaller Number of Larger Cities?
- How to Make Existing Cities More Sustainable and Build New Cities Genuinely Sustainable?
- Sustainable Urbanization: What Forms of Local Self-Government?
- Conservation and Direct Involvement of Communities in Local Planning and Management
- Consistent Plans for Urban Services, Social Development, and Social Inclusion
- Tackling the Problems of Slums: Land Titling Issues, Affordable Housing, and Decent Sources of Livelihoods
- Sustainable Urban Living Technologies: Ingredients and Solutions
- The Impact of Urbanization Patterns on Economic Growth, Structural Transformation, and Spatial Inequalities
- Understanding Agglomeration Economies vis-à-vis Congestion Diseconomies as a Guide to Modifying Current Trends in Urbanization
- The Impact of Transport Infrastructure and Power Networks on Spatial Forms of Urbanization and City Growth Rates

Eligibility

- Proposals can be submitted by researchers from all relevant areas of social sciences.
- Applicants must be nationals of any of the following countries in South Asia: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, and should be currently resident in these countries.
- Applications may be submitted by individuals or a team of researchers.

- An applicant cannot submit more than one proposal or be a member of more than one research team. A SANEI Steering Committee Member cannot be a Principal Investigator or a Team Member in a SANEI supported project.
- A formal application must be made by the institution (e.g. universities, research institutes or non-profit organizations) with which the applicant is affiliated and if the project proposal is funded, the institution will be responsible for the administration of the grant.
- Awardees of the SANEI 11th and 12th Round RRC are not eligible to participate in this 13th Round RRC.

Guidelines for Proposal Submission

Proposals must include the following components:

- The language of the proposal should be in **English**.
- Proposal should be submitted in **Microsoft Word** format, 12 double spaced pages, font size at least 12, page number and page margin at least 1 inch each side.
- **Cover sheet:** clearly specifying the project title, names of principal researchers, e-mail address, postal address, and contact telephone numbers.
- **Abstract/Objective:** provide a clear and concise statement of the project abstract/objective of no more than 200 words.
- **Practical contribution of research:** describe the economic policy context of the problem you are addressing in the project. Provide a brief overview of policy alternatives you are aware of and explain how your project will contribute to their evaluation and/or development of new policy instruments and/or legislation.
- **Hypotheses:** a clear formulation of research hypotheses that are to be tested empirically. Please note that purely descriptive studies which do not aim at *explaining* observed behavior are most often rejected.
- **Literature review:** a *critical* examination of modern literature that is *directly* relevant to the project. Outline the project's potential contribution to the ongoing academic debate.
- **Methodology:** should typically include the following elements:
 - a) **Data:** *if relevant*, describe sources and structure of existing and available data. In case of new data collection, please include, *as an attachment*, a sample questionnaire.
 - b) **Theoretical model:** *if relevant*, provide a brief formal (mathematical) description of your theoretical model, including the main behavioral assumptions and constraints.
 - c) **Estimation:** *if relevant*, provide an outline of the econometric model you will use to test your hypotheses. Describe any other methods you will use to

assess empirical evidence and relate it to your research questions. Discuss estimation problems, including lack of relevant data and/or statistical difficulties.

- d) **Expected research outputs:** provide an outline of potential outputs and how they relate to the questions you are studying in the project. Any preliminary results (if available) could be provided as an attachment.
- **Bibliography:** alphabetical list of the literature *cited in the proposal*. Please list names and titles in the original language.
 - **CV:** short CVs of each of the participating researcher/s (maximum five pages).
 - **Biography:** short biography (maximum 100 words) of each of the team members.
 - **Other project involvement:** Information on how many other project/s the researcher/s will be involved at the same time along with the proposed study.
 - **Researchers Information Sheet** should be duly filled in which is available on the SANEI website (www.saneinetwork.net)
 - **Budget:** The proposed budget on a separate sheet in the format shown in *Schedule - A*. *All figures must be in US\$*. If more than one institute is involved, the budget must clearly state the expenses for each institute in respect of all cost-heads.
 - **Roadmap:** Schedule of work on the project on each stage.
 - **Institutional Affiliation Letter** to be signed by the *Head of Institute*.

Funding

- Maximum funding per proposal will be US \$ 10,000 for a single country study; US\$ 20,000 for a two country study; US\$ 30,000/- for a three country study. In view of the fund constraint, applicants are encouraged to economize on research costs to the extent possible within the maximum limit, particularly in the case of multi-country studies.
- Grants are awarded for one year only. The grant is awarded in US dollars.
- **No funds will be paid directly to the individuals.**
- Grants cannot be used for buying personal computers, hardware and other acquisitions of a capital nature.

Fund disbursement pattern

- 25% upon award of the grant and signing of the contract
 - 50% upon receipt of the progress report at the mid-point of the grant*
 - 25% upon receipt of final deliverables from the grant*
- 5% of the grant will be deducted if there are any delays in submitting the final draft of the paper.**

(*Fund will be released upon receipt the approval from the RAP Member)

Proposal Review

Selection will be made on a competitive basis. The Research Advisory Panel (RAP) of SANEI comprising of internationally renowned economists will evaluate the research proposals.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation of the research proposals will be based on scientific merit, policy relevance, capacity building, budget, and dissemination potential. More specifically, the following considerations will be relevant:

- Clarity of the proposed research question,
- Originality (preference will be given to proposals that develop new methodologies or use the transition experience to obtain new insights into fundamental questions rather than those that call for mechanistic application of conventional techniques to new data),
- Appropriateness of the proposed techniques,
- Use of the most modern and appropriate techniques.
- Overall policy relevance,
- Impact in developing research capacity,
- Cost effectiveness and appropriateness of the budget,
- Dissemination potential of the study.

Last date of submission of the Research Proposal

15 August 2011

The proposal should be forwarded both by email (in MS Word format) to saneibd@gmail.com with copy to saneibd@yahoo.com and a hard copy by post to the following address:

Dr. Mustafa K Mujeri

Coordinator SANEI & Director General BIDS
The SANEI Secretariat
Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)
E-17 Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, GPO Box # 3854
Dhaka-1207, BANGLADESH

(Please mark your envelope with “Research Proposal: 13th Round RRC”)

TYPICAL ERRORS

Following are some of the typical errors that should be avoided:

1. *Research goals*

- Overly ambitious
- No academic content (e.g. design a regional development strategy, production technology, etc.)
- Business-oriented (e.g. develop methodology to evaluate investment projects)
- Purely descriptive (e.g. construct a typology of ...). No attempt to explain behavior or dynamics
- Very abstract, no link to economic realities and policymaking

2. *Hypotheses*

- Statement of a general topic of research instead of a specific problem (“analysis of the labor market”, “enterprise restructuring”)
- Not testable in principle, or because data is not available
- Trivial (e.g. “to grow faster Bangladesh needs more investment”)

3. *Literature review*

- Just a list of titles and names doesn’t provide a critical assessment
- Focused on general literature (e.g. labor economics) rather than literature that is specific to the project
- Focused on textbooks (e.g. MacConnell-Brue) rather than research literature
- Focused on classical literature (Marx, Adam Smith) rather than modern research texts
- Focused on national sources only (as “foreigners don’t have a good grasp of Bangladesh’s national problems”)

4. *Research methodology*

- Description of methodology is purely declarative (e.g. “factor and cluster analysis”). The actual research methods are not described in any detail
- Methodology is inadequate (e.g. exclusive use of charts and visual comparisons when studying the determinants of economic growth, or borrowed from physics, biophysics, etc.)
- Theory is not linked to the empirical part (e.g. when a theoretical model is borrowed from a foreign source to strengthen an empirical proposal)
- Theory is not adapted to the specific South Asian circumstances (e.g. standard text-book theory)
- The theoretical model is not tractable (e.g. a system of 300 dynamic equations)
- A theoretical or econometric model is promised in the proposal but its basic structure is not presented
- The econometric model is not linked to data. Not clear how key model parameters will be calculated
- Data is not adequately described. No discussion of ways to fill in the existing data gaps. Questionnaire is not attached to the proposal

SANEI DONORS

The World Bank is one of the world's largest sources of development assistance. Its primary focus is on helping the poorest people and the poorest countries. The World Bank uses its financial resources and its extensive knowledge to help developing countries onto paths of stable, sustainable, and equitable growth. The World Bank works to bridge this divide and turn rich country resources into poor country growth. One of the world's largest sources of development assistance, the World Bank supports the efforts of developing country governments to build schools and health centers, provide water and electricity, fight disease, and protect the environment.

Contact information:

The World Bank, 1818 H Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20433 U.S.A.

Tel: +1 (202) 473-1000, Fax: +1 (202) 477-6391; <http://www.worldbank.org>

The Global Development Network (GDN) is a global network of research and policy institutes working together to address the problems of national and regional development. GDN supports multidisciplinary research in social sciences, promotes the generation of local knowledge in developing and transition countries, produces policy relevant knowledge on a global scale, builds research capacity to advance development and alleviate poverty, facilitates knowledge sharing among researchers and policymakers, and disseminates development knowledge to the public and policymakers.

Contact information: <http://www.gdnet.org>

SCHEDULE - A

(In US \$)

#	Heads	Institute-1	Institute-2	Institute-3
01	Salaries			
02	Field Survey/ Data Collection			
03	Books, Stationary and Software			
04	Communications			
05	Travel for workshop/Conference			
06	Subtotal			
07	Overhead (Maximum 15% of Subtotal)			
08	Total			
09	Grand Total			