

19th South Asian Economics Students' Meet (SAESM)

January 22nd – 27th, 2024 | Colombo, Sri Lanka

Building Resilient Economies: South Asia's Green Transition to a Sustainable Tomorrow



Hosted by the

Department of Economics, University of Colombo

in collaboration with the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme



Department of Economics
University of Colombo

About SAESM

The South Asian Economics Students' Meet (SAESM) is a long-standing undergraduate Economics students' annual meet in South Asia. This event provides an opportunity for students to develop academic papers on various issues of regional importance, present the papers, and learn from each other. The annual meeting is usually a conference followed by a quiz contest, a policy presentation session, and a competition for budding economists. The conference is followed by a retreat for the participants, generally sightseeing at some of the cultural and natural heritage sites, marking the conclusion of the meet.

SAESM Design

The SAESM runs as a regional network. A team of dedicated faculty members representing various academic institutions in South Asia facilitate the network. Its governing council, the apex advisory body, provides vision, guidelines, and a framework for the smooth functioning of SAESM. The organizing committee works hard on logistics to ensure that this annual gathering provides an opportunity to undergraduate students to share their knowledge and research findings, while the scientific committee takes care of the academic merits of the conference.

Coordinating Institutions

Governing Council

Afghanistan: Kabul University, Faculty of Economics

Bangladesh: South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM)

Bhutan: Royal University of Bhutan, Sherubste College

India: SAESM India (Association of South Asian Scholars)

Nepal: Tribhuvan University, Central Department of Economics

Pakistan: Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan

Sri Lanka: University of Colombo, Department of Economics

Prof. Dr. Bishwambher Pyakuryal,
Chairperson (Nepal)

Dr. Mihir Pandey, Member (Department
of Economics, Ramjas College,
University of Delhi, India)

Prof. Dr. Selim Raihan, Member
(Department of Economics, Dhaka
University- Bangladesh & Executive
Director, SANEM)

Prof. Dr. Sirimal Abayratne, Member
(Department of Economics, University
of Colombo, Sri Lanka)

Dr. Syed Turab Hussain- Member
(Department of Economics, Lahore
University of Management Sciences-
Pakistan)

Roadmap of SAESM from 2004 to 2023

	<i>Year</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Main Partner</i>
<i>1st</i>	2004	New Delhi	Economic Developments in South Asia: Which Way Ahead	National Foundation of India
<i>2nd</i>	2005	Lahore	Issues for South Asian Development	Syed Babar Ali Foundation
<i>3rd</i>	2006	Dhaka	Sharing Ideas for a Better Understanding of South Asian Development	Prime Bank
<i>4th</i>	2007	Colombo	Economic Development and Regional Cooperation in South Asia	The World Bank
<i>5th</i>	2008	New Delhi	Economic Challenges to Make South Asia Free from Poverty and Deprivation	The World Bank
<i>6th</i>	2009	Dhaka	Young Economists for an Integrated South Asia	National Bank
<i>7th</i>	2010	Colombo	Economic Freedom and Poverty Reduction in South Asia	Friedrich Naumann Stiftung
<i>8th</i>	2011	New Delhi	Development Alternatives in South Asia	Institute for Financial Management and Research
<i>9th</i>	2012	Kathmandu	Towards a Green South Asia	The World Bank
<i>10th</i>	2013	Lahore	The Political Economy of South Asia	The World Bank
<i>11th</i>	2014	Thimphu	South Asian Integration: Prospects and Challenges	The World Bank
<i>12th</i>	2016	Colombo	South Asia in the Asian Century	The World Bank
<i>13th</i>	2017	Kathmandu	One South Asia	The World Bank
<i>14th</i>	2018	Chittagong	Sustaining South Asian Integration	The World Bank
<i>15th</i>	2019	Colombo	Development in South Asia: Challenges and Opportunities	The World Bank
<i>16th</i>	2020	Kathmandu	Toward prosperous South Asia	The World Bank, UNDP Nepal
<i>17th</i>	2022	Lahore	Equitable, Inclusive, and Sustainable South Asian Cities	LUMS (Virtual)
<i>18th</i>	2023	Kathmandu	Towards Resilient South Asian Economies	The World Bank
<i>19th</i>	2024	Colombo	Proposed	The World Bank, UNDP Sri Lanka

Call for Participation

The Department of Economics, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, is pleased to announce the 19th round of the South Asian Economics Students' Meet (SAESM) and invites participation from undergraduates in Economics from South Asian countries. The Meet will be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from January 22nd to 27th, 2024. The theme of this year's meet is "Building Resilient Economies: South Asia's Green Transition to a Sustainable Tomorrow" which aims to foster intellectual discussions among young individuals to contribute to a more sustainable and improved South Asia.

Structure of SAESM 2024

We have planned to accommodate 12 delegates from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan, including the accompanying Faculty members. Each country's delegation will be organized by the respective Country Coordinators.

The participation of students in different categories will be as follows,

Country	Number of students	Paper Presentation	Budding Economist	Quizonomics	Policy presentation
Bangladesh	10	All participating students should participate in subtheme paper presentation category. (4+4+2=10)	Four Students (4)	Four Students (4)	Two Students (2)
Bhutan	10				
India	10				
Nepal	10				
Pakistan	10				
Sri Lanka	20				

Notes:

¹ Each Country will nominate a team of 10 participants.

² Students should exclusively be nominated for each category, namely Budding Economist, Quizonomics, and policy presentations. For example, those participating under the Budding Economist category cannot participate in Quizonomics or Policy presentations and vice-versa.

³ Sri Lanka, the host country, may include a maximum of 2 teams, nominating 2 students per subtheme for the paper presentation category, and proportionately for other competitions as required.

Paper Presentations

All eligible students are invited to submit papers focusing on the themes listed below. A total of 10 students from each country should be selected by the country coordinator and the details of the selected students should be communicated to the organizer. Students are required to write a research paper according to the prescribed format and make a presentation based on the paper at the conference. 60% of the total marks will be given to the research paper and the remainder will be allocated to the presentation.

Theme 1: Promoting Sustainable Technologies in South Asia

This theme focuses on the promotion and adoption of sustainable technologies in South Asia. It involves exploring innovative solutions and practices that contribute to environmental sustainability, resource efficiency, and clean energy. Research areas could include the economic impact of adopting sustainable technologies, cost-benefit analysis of renewable energy systems, and evaluation of the role of policy frameworks in promoting sustainable technology adoption.

Theme 2: Opportunities to shift to a Circular Economy in South Asia

The theme of shifting to a circular economy in South Asia explores the potential for transitioning from a linear "take-make-dispose" model to one that emphasizes resource efficiency, recycling, and waste reduction. Research areas could include economic implications of circular economic practices, business models for circularity, and assessing the feasibility of implementing circular economic principles in different sectors of South Asian economies. It could also focus on lifestyle changes and consumer preferences in moving towards a circular economy.

Theme 3: Promoting Sustainable Infrastructure in South Asia

This theme focuses on developing sustainable infrastructure in South Asia, encompassing areas such as transportation, energy, and urban planning. It involves studying the economic viability of sustainable infrastructure projects, assessing their long-term benefits, and exploring financing mechanisms. Research areas could include the economic impact of sustainable infrastructure development, cost-benefit analysis of green transportation systems, and exploring public-private partnerships for sustainable infrastructure projects.

Theme 4: Collaborations for Green Energy Options in South Asia

This theme emphasizes collaboration within and among South Asian countries to promote green energy options. It involves exploring opportunities for national level collaborations among firms, community and public-private collaborations and cross-border energy sharing, joint research and development efforts, and policy coordination. Research areas could include the economic implications of national and regional energy collaborations, assessing the potential for renewable energy integration, and analyzing the cost-effectiveness of shared energy infrastructure.

Theme 5: Green Financing Solutions for South Asia

The theme of green financing focuses on identifying and developing financial mechanisms to support sustainable development projects in South Asia. South Asia faces significant environmental challenges and sustainable development goals that require substantial financial resources. It involves exploring innovative funding models, financial mechanisms, and collaborative efforts that can facilitate the flow of green finance and investments towards sustainable projects in the region through incentivizing private sector participation. Research areas could include analyzing the economic viability of green financing mechanisms, assessing the effectiveness of sustainable investment policies, and exploring the role of financial institutions in promoting green finance alongside the economics of bio financing.

Theme 6: Sustainable Livelihoods and well being

This theme centers around promoting sustainable livelihoods and well-being in South Asia. It involves examining the economic aspects of sustainable agriculture, social entrepreneurship, and inclusive development. Research areas could include analyzing the economic impact of sustainable farming practices, economics of ensuring food security in South Asia, evaluating the business models of social enterprises, examining sustainable practices in natural resource management and assessing the relationship between sustainable development and human well-being.

Theme 7: Encouraging Green Tourism and Green Transportation in South Asia

The theme of green tourism and transportation focuses on promoting environmentally friendly practices in the tourism and transportation sectors of South Asia to promote sustainable and resilient travel systems. The tourism sector plays a vital role in the region's economic development, but it also poses significant environmental challenges. It can involve studying sustainable tourism development, low-carbon transportation options, and promoting eco-tourism.

Research areas could include assessing the economic benefits of sustainable tourism, promoting community engagement and empowerment in the tourism sector, analyzing the potential for electric vehicles in transportation systems, and evaluating the economic feasibility of green transportation infrastructure.

Theme 8: Economics of Biodiversity in South Asia

This theme explores the economic value and management of biodiversity in South Asia as a means to value and protect natural ecosystems for sustainable development. South Asia, with its rich biodiversity and diverse ecosystems, is facing significant environmental challenges, including habitat loss, species extinction, and ecosystem degradation. It involves assessing the economic benefits of biodiversity conservation, exploring the potential for nature-based solutions, and exploring strategies to integrate nature's value into economic decision-making processes. Research areas could include valuing and payment mechanism for ecosystem services, analyzing the economic impact of biodiversity-based industries, and evaluating the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation policies.

Theme 9: Climate change and a risk-resilient South Asia: promising minimizing vulnerabilities in the future

Theme 9 focuses on the urgent need to address climate change and build a risk-resilient South Asia to minimize vulnerabilities in the face of climate-related challenges. South Asia is highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events, rising temperatures, sea-level rise, and changing precipitation patterns. Research areas include economic analysis of climate change impacts, climate risk assessment and management, socio-economic implications of climate change, and policy frameworks, and technological innovations for climate resilience. The objective is to develop strategies and policies to foster resilience, minimize vulnerabilities, and create a promising future for South Asia in the face of climate change.

Theme 10: Facilitating Green and Decent Jobs and skills in the South Asian Region

The theme of facilitating green and decent jobs and skills in the South Asian region emphasizes the transition towards sustainable employment opportunities that promote environmental protection, social well-being, and inclusive growth. It involves identifying and developing skills required for green sectors, promoting entrepreneurship in sustainable industries, and ensuring

decent working conditions. Research areas could include assessing the economic potential of green job creation, analyzing the skill gaps and training needs for green sectors, and evaluating the socio-economic impacts of green employment on local communities. Additionally, examining the role of government policies, public-private partnerships, and stakeholder engagement in facilitating the transition to green and decent jobs could provide valuable research area. Furthermore, exploring the linkages between green job creation and poverty reduction, as well as studying the economic feasibility of green job programs and their impact on income distribution, could contribute to a comprehensive understanding of this theme.

Format of Research Paper

The research paper should follow a standard format that is commonly practiced in writing a research article or discussion paper. You can use either MS Word or Latex to produce your article and should submit a PDF document.

It should consist of the following components:

- Preliminaries (Front page, Abstract, Keywords, Name of the author and the affiliation, Acknowledgement, Table of content, List of figures, List of tables),
- Main body (Background and rationale, Research questions and objectives, Review of Literature, Methodology, Results, and Discussion and Conclusions)
- Annexures (References, Appendices, Big tables, or Maps, etc.).

The researcher may decide about sub-headings as per his/her requirements. However, chapter divisions of the paper is not recommended.

- a) Frontpage: Title of the paper, name of candidates and representing the institution, date of submission (center aligned)
- b) Abstract: Maximum 200 words.
- c) Keywords: Maximum up to 5, Alphabetically ordered and separated by a semicolon.
- d) Main body: 1-inch margin on all sides, 1.5-line space, Font: Times New Roman or Arial (applicable for all pages of the paper), Size 11. The main body of the paper should not exceed 5000 words (Excluding tables, figures, references, and appendices)
- e) Referencing and in-text citation: APA style, 6th edition

Budding Economist Competition

Four students should be nominated (among the ten students) for the Budding Economist category. Following traditions, this Meet too will declare the Budding Economist of the region for the year 2024, in honor of the contribution by Prof. Deb Kusum Das to SAESM and the South Asian Economics fraternity. The winner will be conferred with DKD Budding Economist of the South Asia Award for 2024. The students must undergo a very tight selection process that includes a written examination comprising core courses in undergraduate economics, economic interpretation of visual information, and an interview round.

Submission of an opinion essay

Students willing to compete for the Budding Economist category must submit an opinion essay on "*Unleashing Economic Potential through South Asia's Green Transition: A Path to Resilient and Sustainable Economies*". This will be an opinion or perspective essay. No sub-headings or abstracts should be presented. This essay carries 10% of the weight of the Budding Economist competition. The length of the paper (main body) should not exceed 3 pages (with 1.5-line space). The applicable formatting details will be the same as that for the research paper.

Written Exams

Budding economist participants will sit for two rounds of written exams. The first paper will cover Mathematical methods, Statistical methods, and Basic econometrics. The second paper will be a mixture of Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, and Development issues in South Asia. Further details regarding the content will be shared in due course. This will carry 50 % of the total marks in this competition.

Visual Round

All students vying for the Budding Economist must participate in the visual round. Instantaneous comment(s) on audio-visual materials played/displayed involving valid economic ways of thinking will be evaluated in this round. This will carry 15% of the total marks.

Interview Round

The top five students based on the score from written exams and the visual round will be included for this round. This will carry 25% of the total marks. The student with the highest overall score will be declared the “SAESM Budding Economist 2024” of the region.

Quizonomics

A group of seven teams, each team comprising four members from four different nations will participate in the quiz competition. Each country will nominate four students to participate in this segment. The names of the members in the six teams will be announced in due course. The selection of students for each team will be based on a lottery method. The content or coverage of the quiz will be shared in due course.

Policy presentation

Two students are required to be nominated for participation in the policy presentation category. These students will collaborate as a team and their performance will be evaluated based on the quality of the outcomes they produce. The primary task for the team will be to identify a policy-relevant environmental issue specific to their respective countries. They must conduct a comprehensive foundational study on the nature of the issue, its impact on society at large, and the policy requirements necessary for addressing it effectively. The identified issue can either be one that has already been addressed or an issue that needs immediate attention.

To conduct an in-depth investigation, the team is encouraged to engage in Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with experts. The coordination of these interviews can be overseen by the country coordinators from each respective country. Based on the findings, the team must prepare a concise policy brief, limited to a maximum of 5 pages, which should be submitted along with their research articles. The formatting guidelines for the research papers provided earlier should be followed for the policy brief as well.

Furthermore, the team is required to deliver a 10-minute presentation, followed by a 5-minute question and answer session, during the conference. The presentation can take various formats, such as a general talk, slide presentation, documentary or video clip, or poster presentation. Each component of the team's performance will be equally weighted during the evaluation process.

Awards and Honor

- a) "Amartya Sen - Mahub UI Haq" Best of the Best Research Paper Award
- b) "Best Paper Award" under each Theme
- c) "DKD Budding Economist Award-2024" for the winner of the Budding Economist category
- d) "Best Quiz Team Award" for the winning quiz team
- e) "Best Policy Analysis Award" for the best policy presentation

Eligibility

The student must be studying at an undergraduate level and pursuing a core course in Economics at the time of application. Students must have the citizenship and residence of one of the South Asian countries and should be studying at a University or College in the same country. The age of the students should not exceed 26 years at the time of application. The other eligibility criteria will be as per the guidelines issued by the respective country coordinators.

Deadlines

Submission Requirements	Deadline
List of participants (including Faculties) with passports	1 st of October, 2023
Details of participants and abstracts of the papers	1 st of November, 2023
Submission of full papers	1 st of December, 2023
Submission of policy papers and essays	15 th of December, 2023
Submission of research presentations & material of policy presentations	31 st of December, 2023

Selection Process

Country coordinators will be responsible for the selection of the students from their respective countries. Country coordinators may develop their own guidelines and procedures for collecting applications and the selection of the students. Country coordinators must communicate with the organizer about their final selections. The deadline for submission of details of delegates is October 01, 2023. Applications sent directly to the organizer will not be entertained.

The number of students to be selected from each country and the contact details of the country coordinators are provided below.

Country	Number of Students	Country Coordinators/ Contact
Bangladesh	10	<i>Dr. Sayema Haque Bidisha (sayemabidisha@gmail.com)</i> <i>Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka & Research Director, South Asian Network on Economic Modeling</i>
Bhutan	10	<i>Mr. Ugyen Lhendup</i> <i>(lhendup@sherubtse.edu.bt)</i> <i>Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan</i>
India	10	<i>Dr. Rupali Sharma (rupalisharma23@gmail.com)</i> <i>Dr. Apoorva Gupta (apoorva.gupta4@gmail.com)</i> <i>University of Delhi, India</i>
Nepal	10	<i>Mr. Naveen Adhikari (nabueco@gmail.com)</i> <i>Central Department of Economics, Tribhuvan University</i>
Pakistan	10	<i>Dr. Syed Ali Hasanain (hasanain@lums.edu.pk)</i> <i>Department of Economics, Lahore University of Management and Sciences</i>
Sri Lanka (Hosts)	20	<i>Prof. Prasad Serasinghe (serasinghe@econ.cmb.ac.lk)</i> <i>Department of Economics, University of Colombo</i>

Other Information

Tentative Agenda

Day	Date	Main Events (Proposed)
1	22.01.2024	The arrival of the foreign participants Budding Economist test Inaugural ceremony followed by Welcome dinner
2	23.01.2024	Paper presentations Budding Economist visual round
3	24.01.2024	Quizonomics Policy presentation Budding economist final round (Hot seat) Closing ceremony & Cultural night
4	25.01.2024	Retreat : Tour around Colombo city Travel to down-south
5	26.01.2024	Retreat or Departure to home country
6	27.01.2024	Departure of all foreign participants

Retreat

A Two-day retreat will be organized for participants around the down-south. The venue for the retreat will be announced later.

Airfare & Other Expenses

We request the respective country coordinators to seek/explore financial support from local institutions. The organizer will communicate and coordinate with the respective country coordinators regarding providing this support.

Conference Registration

Each participating student/faculties must register for the conference. A registration fee of 200 USD is compulsory for all participating students/faculties. The organizer will provide all the meals and accommodation (on shared basis) during the conference period. The conference venue will be announced later.

Contact Details – Colombo, Sri Lanka

For any further queries and correspondence kindly write to SAESM general communications.
saesmsrilanka@econ.cmb.ac.lk

SEE YOU IN COLOMBO, SRI LANKA