

LAUNCH & ADVISORY GROUP MEETING - SMART DISTRIBUTION ALLIANCE (SDA)

Background

Distribution segment, the critical link in the electricity value chain, interfacing with the end-customers and the revenue source for the entire value chain, remains the weakest. The distribution utilities (DISCOMs) need to address both traditional grid challenges such as grid reliability, quality of supply, access, affordability, increasing and evolving demand, aging infrastructure, and high electricity transmission and distribution (T&D) losses along with emerging challenges of renewable energy integration, urbanization, resilience, cybersecurity, and data management. The DISCOMs in South Asian region are no exception and are currently grappling with these challenges. The South Asia region is one of the fastest growing globally, with electricity demand expected to more than double by 2030. Most of the existing regional cooperation mechanisms in South Asia are focused on generation capacity development particularly hydro power, grid interconnection, power trade/cross-border projects (investment in transmission and generation), renewable energy, and regulatory alignment. Power distribution until now has been perceived as a more localized subject with discussion mostly confined to stakeholders within respective countries.

However, a regional approach to sharing of best practices can be enormously beneficial. In light of the above, the South Asia Regional Energy Program (SAREP) proposes the South Asia "Smart Distribution Alliance (SDA)". The objectives of SDA are to:

- Enable knowledge sharing among DISCOMs in South Asia
- Enhance focus on distribution issues at the regional level
- Enable utility to utility (U2U) connect
- Reap the benefits of aggregation

The know-how created by one DISCOM in the form of model documents, frameworks, contracts, decision making tools, business models, new technology, pilots and demonstrations, etc., can be widely shared among the DISCOMs in the region to learn from and avoid reinventing the wheel. This will also reduce the learning curve and accelerate the pace of planning and execution of DISCOM modernization projects. SDA will ensure faster modernization of utilities, that will yield great benefits for utilities, consumers, and society at large, and ensure clean, reliable and affordable power for all.

The launch will present SDA to the South Asian DISCOMs as a platform to engage, build capacity and foster peer-to-peer learning.

DATE: OCTOBER 21, 2024
TIME: 15:30 - 17:40

Launch Objectives

- Apprise stakeholders about SDA's objectives, structure, and proposed activities.
- Understand the current priorities impacting South Asian DISCOMs in terms of (4Ts) i.e. (i) themes to focus upon; (ii) training and capacity building needs; (iii) thought leadership areas for white papers/reports; and (iv) tools and frameworks needed.

Agenda

15:30 - 15:40	Welcome Address by Naren Chanmugam , Director - Environment & Resilience Office, USAID/ Nepal
15:40 - 16:00	Context Setting on SDA: Charter and Proposed Activities and Introduction of the SDA Members by Apurva Chaturvedi Senior Regional Clean Energy Specialist, Indo Pacific Office, USAID/India
16:00 - 16:20	Presentation on SDA: Charter and Proposed Activities by Ajay Rawat and Vikas Gaba , USAID's SAREP
16:20 - 17:30	Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding country priorities• Deliberation on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Focus themes for SDA◦ Good practices from the region◦ Capacity building needs◦ Nature and type of activities Moderators: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apurva Chaturvedi, Senior Regional Clean Energy Specialist, Indo Pacific Office, USAID/India• Vikas Gaba, USAID's SAREP Discussants: SDA Members
17:30 - 17:40	Summary and Vote of Thanks by Shankar Khagi , Energy Specialist, USAID/Nepal

