

Call for Applications

Third South Asian Training Programme on CGE Modelling

2-6 August 2010
Kathmandu, Nepal

BACKGROUND

Effective trade policy making and implementation depend significantly on *a priori* assessments of the implications that could arise from different policy options. It is thus important for researchers and policy makers to conduct *ex ante* analyses of alternative policy scenarios, for example, the potential implications of a particular trade policy reform measure such as tariff reduction for the macroeconomic environment, exports, imports, industrial growth, economic sectors, economic welfare, employment, poverty and food security.

The growing importance of, and hence demand for, *ex ante* trade analysis also arises from the ongoing negotiations for further multilateral trade liberalization at the World Trade Organization (WTO) as well as the proliferation of preferential/free trade bilateral/regional agreements the world over. A methodologically sound and rigorous *a priori* quantification of the possible gains and losses—in terms of output, employment, welfare, etc.—from trade liberalization at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels has become a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for informed policy making. Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) models have emerged as a potent tool to carry out *ex ante* analysis and are being increasingly used in trade analysis.

CONTEXT

Despite the utility and growing importance of CGE modelling in trade policy analysis, most developing and least-developed countries, including those in South Asia, face the constraint of a dearth of human resources having expertise in the application of CGE modelling—which most researchers consider an esoteric area.

The result is that *ex ante* analyses using CGE models are still few and far between, even though researchers are well aware of the potency of such models in answering certain research questions. Thus, research questions that demand an *ex ante* analysis largely remain unanswered and the formulation of trade policy and/or positions during trade negotiations runs the risk of being divorced from reality.

TRAINING

Realizing this dearth of capacity in South Asia, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment (SAWTEE), Kathmandu and South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM), Dhaka launched a programme in 2008 to provide CGE modelling training to researchers in the region and encourage research using the tool.

SAWTEE and SANEM have organized two CGE modelling training programmes so far, one from 14-18 July 2008 in Kathmandu, Nepal and the other from 18-23 April 2009 in the same city. Over two dozen researchers from universities, research organizations, government and non-government organizations and central banks in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participated in each training programme. Encouragingly, some of the training participants are now engaged in research using CGE modelling.

Based on our experience of holding two training programmes and the encouraging feedbacks/responses we received, SAWTEE and SANEM are organizing a third CGE training programme from 2-6 August 2010 in Kathmandu.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the training programme is to help build the capacity of researchers in South Asia providing them with basic knowledge of CGE modelling using GAMS software so that they are able to contribute to informed trade policy making and implementation in South Asia, and help the region in its pursuit of an effective and meaningful integration into the global economy, not least the rules-based multilateral trading system, espoused by the WTO.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants should have at least a Master's degree in Economics or a related subject and a good knowledge of applied micro- and macro-economics. While no previous knowledge of modelling is assumed, applicants must have research experience in trade and development issues. Preference will be given to candidates who also have experience in using quantitative research tools.

FUNDING

Applicants who need funding support from the organizers to cover their travel expenses are requested to indicate the same in their applications. Please note that such funding is limited to a *few South Asian applicants from South Asia with a demonstrated need*. The organizers will provide accommodation (food and lodging) to all the selected applicants, irrespective of whether they receive travel funding or not.

DEADLINE

Applications must include a letter of expression of interest and a CV not exceeding two pages. Applications must be sent to sawtee@sawtee.org by 30 June 2010.

INSTRUCTOR

The participants of the training will be instructed by Dr. Selim Raihan. Dr. Raihan (sraihan_duecon@yahoo.com) is Associate Professor of Economics at University of Dhaka, Bangladesh and Executive Director of SANEM. He is a specialist in economic modelling, trade policy analysis and poverty. He has a number of publications on international trade and economic modelling.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS



SAWTEE (South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment) is a regional network that operates through its secretariat in Kathmandu and 11 member institutions from five South Asian countries, namely Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The overall objective of SAWTEE is to build the capacity of concerned stakeholders in South Asia in the context of liberalization and globalization. www.sawtee.org (under construction)



SANEM (South Asian Network on Economic Modeling) was launched on January 1, 2007. It is primarily a network of economic modelers in South Asia. SANEM aims to promote the production, exchange and dissemination of basic research knowledge in the areas of regional integration, multilateral and domestic trade liberalization, environment and poverty. There is no denying the fact that these issues are of the utmost importance for all South Asian countries. www.sanemnet.org