

## **Background Note**

### **Inception Meeting**

# **Border Haats between India and Bangladesh as a tool to reduce informal cross-border trade of agricultural commodities**

**January 12 – 13, 2019, Agartala, Tripura**

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## **Objective and Purpose**

CUTS will organise a project inception meeting in Agartala, Tripura with its partner – Unnayan Shamannay from Bangladesh. The meeting is expected to be a full-day event involving key stakeholders such as project partner, project advisory committee members (PAC), state level mentors (SLM), policy makers, officials, researchers, chambers and media, etc. The meeting will serve as a platform to deliberate and fine-tune the project design and methodology, and will also create awareness on the objectives of the project and generate an ownership among policy makers in the region. This meeting will also be followed by the PAC internal meeting to evaluate the intended progress of the project. CUTS will also present other components of the project such as the project website, partner reporting formats, monitoring and evaluation plans, etc.

## **Background and Context**

Considering Bangladesh and India's geographical proximity and cultural landscape, informal cross-border trade is a common practice between the two countries. Presence of acute poverty and illiteracy in the remote locations of India-Bangladesh border have increased incidence of cross-border informal trade in these regions. Inhabitants living along the border areas of the two countries are far removed from the formal trade routes and related procedures which have had negative impact on their economic progress. Integrating informal cross-border trade of agricultural commodities via established border markets might improve the economic growth of the local economy. This project proposes to collect gender-inclusive evidences including case studies from India and Bangladesh to study the prospects of establishing border haats as a tool to reduce informal cross-border trade of agricultural commodities.

## Deliverables

The event will target to deliver the following:

- I. Introducing the project and its objective, activities and expected outcome.
- II. Introduction of Project Advisory Committee (PAC) & State Level Mentors (SLM).
- III. Introduction of partner's organisation in Bangladesh.
- IV. Sharing experiences of previous CUTS' project on border haat and finalisation of the present project implementing strategy with inputs from participants.
- V. Finalise the plan of action for literature review and scoping along with field research plan.
- VI. Seeking guidance from the floor in addressing two major objectives of the project:
  - Gender-inclusive evidences including case studies to study the prospects of establishing border haats as a tool to reduce informal cross-border trade of agricultural commodities between India and Bangladesh.
  - Awareness and generate consensus on the prospects of establishing border haats as a tool to reduce informal cross-border trade of agricultural commodities between India and Bangladesh.
- VII. Finalisation of the strategy for project methodology, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination.
- VIII. Exposure visits to Kasba – Kamalasagar border haat – for the initial round of exposure and organization of a small roundtable meeting with the haat management committee for their understanding and exposure on the ground.

## Expected Outputs

- I. The inception meeting will serve as a platform to deliberate and fine-tune the project design and methodology.
- II. Create awareness on the objectives of the project and generate ownership from early on among policy makers in the region.
- III. Project website, reporting format for Unnayan Shamannay, M&E plan, etc.

## Outcome

The launch meeting will finalise the overall implementation strategy of the project deliverables including view point papers, policy brief, research report, etc. Along with the mentioned, this will also fine-tune the project design and methodology, and will create awareness on the objectives of the project.