

CUTS CRC Activity Report

January-March 2014

ONGOING
PROJECTS

Enhancing Trade & Regional Economic Integration between India and Bangladesh Phase II

With support of the US Consulate, CUTS Calcutta Resource Centre (CUTS CRC) along with Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment (CITEE) undertook the study to examine the key issues which affect bilateral trade through land routes along the border between the state of West Bengal and Bangladesh and explore trade opportunities that can be realised by addressing such issues.

After completing the Phase I of this project and submitting the final report of the same, CRC undertook the Phase II of the study. The overall objective of the study is to frame policy recommendations for: signing and operationalising of the Motor Vehicle Agreement and drafting/signing of a Sanitary & Phyto-sanitary (SPS) Agreement between India and Bangladesh, hence to benefit and ease the efforts of traders; and b) replicating *Border Haats* along the India-Bangladesh border towards leveraging the economic and social benefits accruing out of it. The project commenced on September 30, 2013 and will continue till October 31, 2014.

Literature survey was completed by February end and based on that questionnaires were prepared for all stakeholder categories. It was decided that the field survey will cover land customs stations (LCS) from each of the five states that have borders with Bangladesh, viz. West Bengal, Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura, and Mizoram. This includes 4 LCS from West Bengal, 2 LCS each from Meghalaya, Assam and Tripura and 1 LCS from Mizoram. In total, the survey was planned in 11 LCS.

Till March 31, 2014, survey of 6 LCS had been completed in the states of Meghalaya, Assam and Tripura. Two *Border Haats* in Meghalaya were also surveyed.

CRC has planned four and one LCS in West Bengal and Mizoram respectively in May 2014. This will be followed by meetings with Exporter's Associations in three cities of India that emerge as three major origin points of India's major exports to Bangladesh.



Prithviraj Nath and Nilanjan Banik in Kalaichar *Border Haat* in West Garo Hills, Meghalaya under *Border Haat* Study



CUTS Calcutta
Resource Centre

3, Suren Tagore Road,
2nd Floor
Kolkata 700019
Ph: +91.33.24604985
Talefax: +91.33.24604987
E-mail: calcutta@cuts.org
Website: www.cuts-international.org/CRC

Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australian Government has developed 'Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio' targeting the South Asian economy to promote water, food and energy security by enhancing the cooperation on and access to the trans-boundary resource base and knowledge sharing. The implementation time for this project is 12 years in three phases of four years each. CUTS International has been chosen as one of the portfolio partners for carrying forward a defined set of activities in this regard.

On the given background and rationale, the overall goal for CUTS is 'enhancing the value of DFAT's SDIP by linking its interventions with key actors and stakeholders through local and regional networks through policy research and advocacy.'

CRC jointly with CITEE team adopted the following objectives in the context of SDIP:

- To have a thorough understanding of issues related to SDIP and stakeholders' perceptions on the same;
- To strengthen the networking capacity and engagement in more advocacies and dialogues; and
- To engage in policy research, media and civil society organisation (CSO) mapping.

Bureau of Indian Standards

CRC has been organising awareness programmes on Consumer Safety, ISI marks and Hall marking in association with the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in West Bengal and North East India. A few such awareness programmes have been conducted in West Bengal, Tripura and Assam. There is an ongoing dialogue between CUTS CRC team and BIS officials about conducting more awareness programmes in the Eastern and Northeast India. CRC conducted two awareness programmes.

The first awareness programme on Jewellery Hallmarking Awareness was organised jointly by CRC and BIS at Tirupati Garden, West Boring Canal Road, in Patna on February 23, 2014. The programme was attended by 30 participants from Patna including jewellers and general consumers. Audiences were also appealed to buy only hallmarked jewellery from the market.

The second programme was also organised by CRC and BIS jointly on March 27, 2014 at Global Institute of Management and Technology, Krishanagar, West Bengal. Around 80 engineering students participated in this programme who appreciated this workshop particularly the presentation on BIS Code: Indian Standard for structural Engineering. They were also awarded prizes during the last session of quiz contest.



N K Sinha, CUTS giving presentation on Hallmark Jewellery Awareness Programme in Patna

New Town Rajarhat Programme

Keya Ghosh of CUTS CRC has been selected as one of the Solar City multi stakeholder Committee members of New Town Kolkata Development Authority (NKDA). The other members of the committee are S P Gon Chaudhuri, Renewable Energy Expert, President of N B institute for Rural Technology (NBIRT), Adviser of Department of Power & Non-Conventional Energy Sources (NES) and Sushobhan Bhattacharya, Director in Charge, West Bengal Renewable Energy Development Agency (WBREDA). Being a member of the Committee, CRC is helping NKDA to finalise the master plan. CUTS is running the Solar City Cell at NKDA during October 03, 2013 to help NKDA in the process of making New Town a solar city. Two staffs of CRC were deputed to run the office on a regular basis and send daily activities report to CRC.

CRC conducted eight awareness camps with the residents of NKDA for building general awareness among citizens about solar city and benefits of using solar. CRC is also helping to make a brochure in *Bengali*. A letter showcasing CUTS' work in the Power Sector and exploring possibilities of working together was submitted to the Power Minister, Government of West Bengal.

Capacity Building on Insurance Regulations

CUTS with the support from Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) organised a seminar entitled 'Insurance Awareness for Reaching the Un-reached' at Arunachal Pradesh on March 07, 2014. Among the delegates, Yegnapiya P Bharath, Joint Director, Consumer Affairs Department, IRDA; Nabinananda Sen, Professor, Department of Business Management, Calcutta University; N Dutta Roy, Additional Divisional Manager, Life Insurance Corporation of India, Jorhat, Assam; K C Kapoor, Vice Chancellor, Rajiv Gandhi University and R C Parida, Head, Department of Commerce, Rajiv Gandhi University were present.



Y P Bharath, Keya Ghosh and Sumanta Biswas
in Capacity Building Programme at Arunachal Pradesh on March 07, 2014

More than 142 participants, including students, professors, faculty members, CSO representatives, consumers, and media representatives actively participated. N K Sinha and Sumanta Biswas of CUTS anchored the whole programme and Keya Ghosh of CUTS and Yegnapiya Bharath of IRDA made presentations on 'General Insurance'.

REPRESENTATIONS



- Keya Ghosh and Sumanta Biswas attended the BIS Regional Committee meeting in Kolkata on February 28, 2014.
- Keya Ghosh and Annirudha Pal visited Saroj Gupta Cancer Centre and Research Institute along with Rabin Roy, CEO and MD SunCraft Energy Pvt. Ltd. to see a 50 kWp grid connected solar PV power plant installed by SunCraft Energy Pvt. Ltd. A database of manufacturers of solar products is under process for further reference.
- Keya Ghosh, N K Sinha and Sucharita Bhattacharjee attended a seminar on 'Consumer Rights' organised by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) at Kolkata on March 14, 2014. Keya Ghosh made a presentation on 'Do You Know Your Consumer Rights?'