

# CUTS CRC Activity Report

January-March, 2015

ONGOING  
PROJECT

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

With support of the US Consulate, CUTS Calcutta Resource Centre (CUTS CRC) along with CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment (CUTS CITEE) undertook the study to examine 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 was to frame policy recommendations for: a) signing and operationalising of the Motor Vehicles Agreement and drafting/signing of a SPS Agreement between India and Bangladesh, hence to benefit and ease the efforts of the 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 concluded on December 31, 2014.

### Advocacy & Networking

- CUTS organised a roundtable discussion on 'India Bangladesh Trade Potentiality' in association with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry at New Delhi on January 21, 2015 and March 18, 2015 respectively. The purposes of these meetings were to develop a broad consensus on some implementation aspects of the proposed bilateral/regional transport facilitation (motor vehicle) agreement and also the need for exploring a bilateral agreement on mutual recognition of standards.
- CUTS in association with the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (Eastern Region) organised the '2nd Technical Barriers to Trade between India and Bangladesh Stakeholder Consultation Meeting' on at Kolkata, West Bengal January 29, 2015. The objective was to prepare a memorandum of recommendations with regards to TBT issues between India and Bangladesh for further dissemination to the respective governments and at the regional level so that a cohesive mechanism is established. The Memorandum comprises of key policy and procedural remedies to address technical barriers to trade between India and Bangladesh focussing on selected products, in particular, and other products, in general.



Roundtable Discussion on India-Bangladesh Trade Potentiality

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## Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio (SDIP)

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 the stakeholders' perceptions on the same.
- To strengthen the networking capacity and engagement in more advocacies and dialogues.
- To engage in policy research, media and CSO mapping.

Sucharita Bhattacharjee and Sayantan Sengupta undertook an exercise on civil society and energy policy mapping. Sucharita Bhattacharjee helped CITEE team to write a paper on 'Water-energy-food nexus in South Asia: Mainstreaming Sustainable Development for Food Security in South Asia'. This paper has been selected by SDPI, Pakistan for publication as a literary piece. A draft literature review for the focus study on small scale RE deployment in Eastern South Asia undertaken by CRC has been prepared. Field visits are expected to start from end-April/early-May after firming up the action plan. Presently, SDIP team is working on the Detailed Perception Survey Methodology and Partners' Workshop scheduled to be held at New Delhi, on May 01, 2015.

## Bureau of Indian Standards Programme

CUTS 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 other Eastern and North Eastern states of India. A few such awareness programmes have been conducted in West Bengal, Tripura, Assam and Bihar.

CRC organised four general consumer awareness programmes and one awareness generation programme on hallmarking in Murshidabad district of West Bengal during March 21-23, 2015. Huge participation in all the four events (minimum participation being 50-60) and the interest of participants made all the events successful.



BIS Awareness Generation Programme at Berhampur, Murshidabad

BIS Awareness Generation Programme at Nabagram, Murshidabad



## REPRESENTATIONS



- Sayantan Sengupta attended a Panel Discussion on '*Changing Behaviour, Enabling Conservation*' organised by The Bengal Chamber of Commerce & Industries (BCC&I) at Kolkata on January 20, 2015. It also marked and celebrated the first year anniversary of '*Watt Guru*', a web portal designed for dissemination of knowledge on basic energy saving measures and activities.
- Sayantan Sengupta attended a National Level Dissemination cum Advocacy Meeting on 'The issue of Sales incentives/Mis-selling of Financial Products, Affecting Consumer's Rights' organised by CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) at Jaipur on February 20, 2015.
- Sucharita Bhattacharjee attended a seminar on 'Myanmar: Moving Towards Elections 2015', organised by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata on February 19-20, 2015. This event was graced by his Excellency ThanHwte, Consul-General, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Kolkata
- Sayantan Sengupta and Sucharita Bhattacharjee participated in IPCC Dissemination Workshop on Fifth Assessment Report organised by Jadavpur University at Kolkata on March 09, 2015.
- Sucharita Bhattacharjee attended a Training Programme on Regulatory Impact Assessment at New Delhi during March 25-28, 2015.
- Sumanta Biswas and Prithviraj Nath participated in the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) meeting at Calcutta University on March 28, 2015. Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General of CUTS International, gave the key note address and Prithviraj Nath presented a paper on '*India Bangladesh Trade Transport & Transit Facilities*'.

## OUTREACH

- Prithviraj Nath on behalf of CUTS signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with ID-EEE and HNU- Germany on January 15, 2015. This was to ensure that both the organisations will jointly undertake activities in research in area of Rural Electrification/Renewable Energy impacting economies, social and environmental bottom-line for Rural Development. The MoUs have already been uploaded on CUTS CRC website.
- CRC participated in the 39<sup>th</sup> International Kolkata Book Fair for the purpose of public dissemination of knowledge during January 27, 2015-February 08, 2015.



- The Centre with support from West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Limited and Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation Limited organised a one-day *'Knowledge Exchange Workshop on Net Metering Based SPV Systems in West Bengal'* at Kolkata on January 16, 2015. Manish Gupta, Minister of Power, West Bengal was the Chief Guest. Resource persons – Omkar Jani, Principal Research Scientist, Gujarat Energy Research & Management Institute, Research, Innovation Incubation Centre and from Toine Van Megen, Co-Founder, Auroville Consulting shared their experiences.

Representatives from the State and Kolkata City power utilities, various educational institutes, beneficiaries, private solar project developers, manufacturers of energy meters, other equipment manufacturers and media participated in the workshop.

The workshop had news coverage in local vernacular leading dailies. Later, a report of this event was published in February publication of the state utility magazine, *Vidyut Barta* under the title *'SPV Net Metering Alochona Shibir'*.



CUTS Event on 16<sup>th</sup> January at Vidyut Bhawan, Saltlake

- CRC organised the '1st India-Nepal Dialogue on Trade Facilitation through Panitanki-Kakarvitta' at Panitanki, West Bengal on February 20, 2015. This dialogue aimed at validating findings and recommendations of a study entitled 'Trade Consignment Mapping in South Asia' undertaken by CUTS on trade facilitation issues through ground level consultations with practitioners and officials at that border point.



Meeting at Panitanki, Siliguri