

CUTS CRC Activity Report

January-March 2021

ONGOING PROJECTS



Border Haat and their Socio-Economic Impact

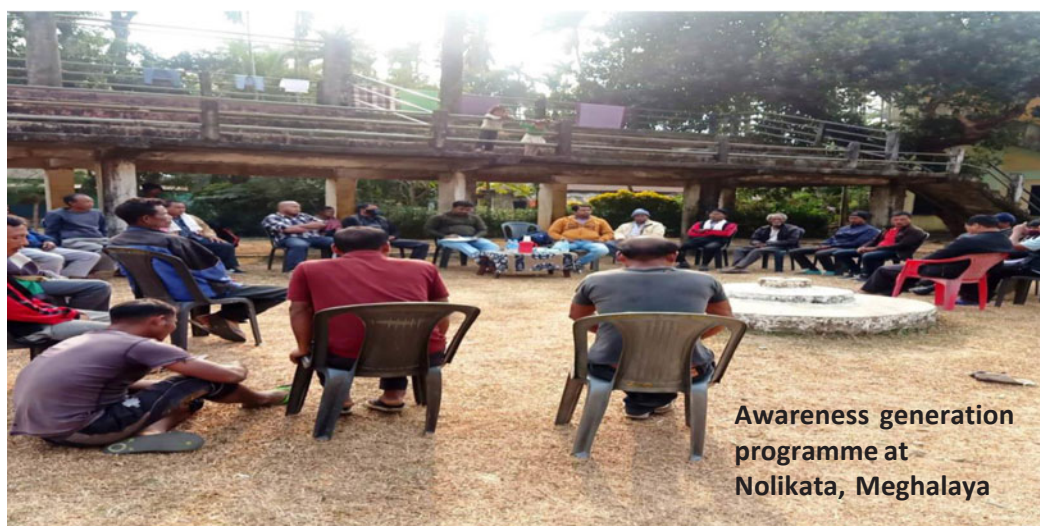
CUTS International along with its partner Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh with support from Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom is implementing a project entitled **“Border Haats between India and Bangladesh as a tool to reduce informal cross border trade.”** This project aims at understanding the prospects of establishing border haats as a tool to reduce cross-border trade between India and Bangladesh; and analysing its impact on gender and livelihood implications.

Under this project, a series of webinars were organised to explore various dimensions pertaining to Border Haats. Nine briefing papers and one discussion paper were prepared and disseminated to highlight the role and benefits of Border Haats and recommend strategies in resuming Border Haats in the post COVID era, prospects of up-scaling border haats and using the Border Haat as a forum for cultural exchange, and the possibility of developing a cross-border retail zone in India-Bangladesh border.

As a part of the webinar series, on February 11, 2021 the fourth webinar was organised with a title **“An opportunity to strengthen Cross-Border value chains between India and Bangladesh”** and the fifth webinar entitled **“Up-scaling India-Bangladesh Border Haats What, Why and How”** to disseminate the findings of the remaining briefing papers.

CUTS is preparing a video documentary under the project to capture the impact of Border Haats on local people adjacent to the Indo-Bangladesh Border, impact of COVID on different stakeholders, especially on women. The documentary is almost being completed, some final touches of editing is going on.

CUTS and its partner Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh has organised awareness generation programmes on both the sides of the border in the existing, proposed and few of the sanctioned border haat locations for better understanding of border haat proceedings, best practices, describing the current situation and other related issues. Along with the awareness generation programmes CUTS has organised few feasibility studies on border haats in few locations of North Bengal (viz. Tinbigha Corridor; Fulbari, Khurka and Doradabri) for understanding the future prospects of border haats in these areas.



Awareness generation programme at Nolikata, Meghalaya

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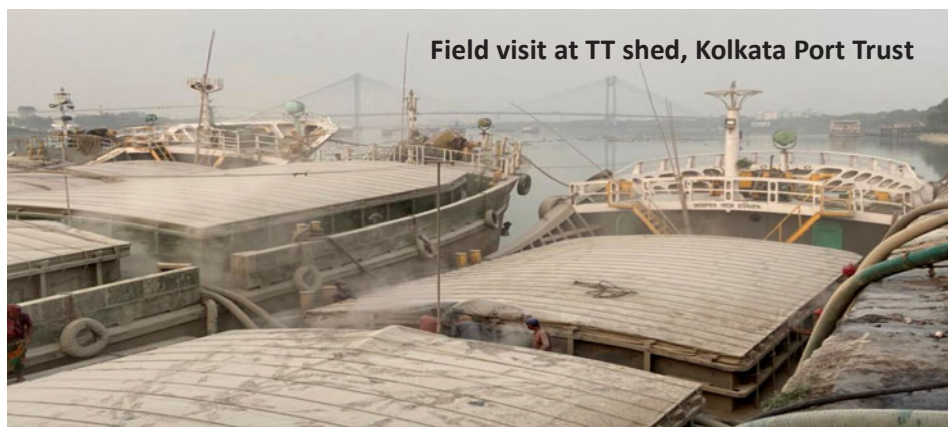


Understanding Technical, Economic and Political Economy Implications of Traffic Diversion from Roadways to Waterways

CUTS International with support from The World Bank is executing a project entitled **“Understanding Technical, Economic and Political Economy Implications of Traffic Diversion from Roadways to Waterways (ROWA-1): From Petrapole - Benapole Land Border Route to Tribeni-Kolkata / Haldia Port in India to Dhaka in Bangladesh via Mongla”**.

CUTS study aims at understanding whether (or, not) and how, part of the on-going freight traffic moving along the Petrapole-Benapole and Ghojadanga-Bhomra land border could be diverted to the PIWTT route. This also includes identifying the routes through which the modal shift could be facilitated.

All the project outputs are in its final stage of submission to the World Bank. The final stakeholder consultation under the project will be organised sometime in April 2021. Key findings from the study will be shared with some of the key logistics service providers, customs house agents, other stakeholders, and subject experts for their valued inputs.



Understanding Commercial, Strategic and Political Economy Implications of Traffic Diversion from Roadways to Waterways

CUTS International with support from The World Bank is executing a project titled **“Understanding Commercial, Strategic and Political Economy Implications of Traffic Diversion from Roadways to Waterways: Sahibganj-Narayanganj (Bangladesh) and Sahibganj-Jogighopa (Assam)”**.

CUTS study is focussing on collecting and analysing relevant primary and secondary data to better understand the commercial, technical, strategic, economic and political economy implications of facilitating movement of freight traffic from Sahibganj (Jharkhand - Eastern India) to Narayanganj (Bangladesh) and from Sahibganj (Jharkhand - Eastern India) to Jogighopa (Assam - Northeast India) via Dhulian (West Bengal, India) – Rajshahi (West Bangladesh), which are on the Indo-Bangla protocol route.

It would highlight factors that can facilitate traffic diversion from the nearby land routes of Mahadipur – Sona Masjid, Hilli – Bangla Hilli and the Siliguri corridor. The study identified potential alternative trade routes among BBIN countries using India-Bangladesh protocol route Dhulian-Rajshahi-Dhulian, established network with the relevant stakeholders across the region to understand possibilities of a modal shift through specific inland waterway routes connecting India – Bangladesh – Nepal – Bhutan.

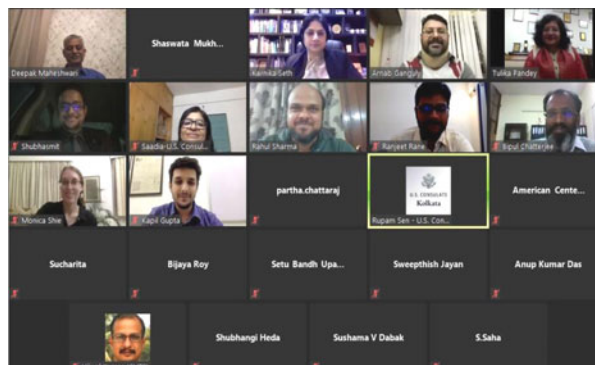
The project outputs are in process of submission to the World Bank. Final stakeholder consultation will be organised in second week of April 2021 to validate the study findings and having final inputs from different experts.



Cyber Safe East India – Workshops on Cyber Security for E-Businesses

CUTS International with the support from US Consulate, Kolkata is implementing the project entitled **Cyber Safe East India: Workshops on Cyber Security for E-Businesses**. The project aims to identify cyber-security needs of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) based on the understanding of their usage of digital technology; assess challenges faced by them; designing appropriate strategies to help them; capacitate them to effectively use cyber-security tools and showcase best practices so that they can safely navigate the cyber space.

Under this project, a briefing paper has been prepared by CUTS on “Cyber-security challenges for Indian MSMEs” to capacitate them. A webinar was organised on February 18, 2021 to disseminate the findings of the above mentioned briefing paper.



CUTS Webinar: Cyber Safety Best Practices

Three training programmes to be organised in Ranchi, Patna and Guwahati under this project in association with the MSMEs in partnership with Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME).

Formation and Promotion of Farmers Producer Organisations

CUTS is working on the project to provide holistic and broad based supportive ecosystem to form new 10,000 Farmers Producer Organisations (FPOs) to facilitate development of vibrant and sustainable income oriented farming and for overall socio-economic development up to five years from the year of creation and well-being of agrarian communities. Through this process, the providers want to enhance productivity through efficient, cost-effective and sustainable use of resource.

CUTS have initiated the scoping visit and fieldwork in North Bengal during this period. During their visit they have met different stakeholders including individual farmers, farmer’s clubs, government departments, local NGO’s, Agricultural Universities, and NABARD in five different blocks namely Dinhata – I in Cooch Behar and Alipurduar I & II, Kumargram and Falakata in Alipurduar district.

Cluster identification, farmer’s mobilisation, and the final meeting with the farmers has been done in four blocks including Dinhata – 1 in Cooch Behar, Alipurduar – 1 & 2 and in Kumargram. Baseline surveys have been done in five locations (viz. Alipurduar1, Alipurduar2, Dinhata1, Kumargram, and Falakata).



Field visit under FPO project, North Bengal