

# CUTS CRC Activity Report

October-December, 2024

## ONGOING PROJECTS



## Cyber Security Capacity Building Programme for MSMEs in India

CUTS International has recognised the unique challenges faced by MSMEs in the digital space and aims to provide targeted support to help them navigate the complexities of the digital economy. In response to these challenges, CUTS International has joined an initiative undertaken by The Asia Foundation (TAF) titled 'the APAC Cybersecurity Fund', with support from Google.org.

The initiative aims to increase the cybersecurity resilience of MSMEs by providing comprehensive training, raising awareness, and promoting the adoption of cyber-resilient practices. The project will be implemented in 10 Indian states 6 Rajasthan, West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Nagaland, and Tripura with the goal of training over 20,000 MSMEs.

As part of this initiative, an inception workshop was organised in Kolkata on November 05, 2024, to kick start the project. The workshop was attended by government officials from West Bengal and the North Eastern states.

During this quarter, two cyber security capacity building programmes were conducted. one in Uttarpara, Hooghly on December 17, 2024, and the other in Durgapur, West Bengal on December 24, 2024. Approximately, 170 MSMEs participated in these two workshops.



*Kolkata, West Bengal,  
on November 05, 2024*



*Hooghly, West Bengal,  
on December 17, 2024*



*Durgapur, West Bengal, on December 24, 2024*



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(India); Lusaka (Zambia); Nairobi  
(Kenya); Accra (Ghana); Hanoi  
(Vietnam); Geneva (Switzerland);  
and Washington DC (USA).



## LPAl and Land Ports: Boosting North Bengal Connectivity

The study undertaken by CUTS International focuses on assessing the transformation of five strategically located Land Customs Stations (LCSs) in North Bengal—Changrabandha, Fulbari, Hili, Jaigaon, and Panitanki—into state-of-the-art Integrated Check Posts (ICPs). This initiative seeks to optimise cross-border trade, streamline infrastructure, and enhance regional trade efficiency with neighbouring countries, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal. The transformation aims to unlock new trade opportunities and foster socio-economic growth in the region.

The study evaluates the potential of LCS-to-ICP conversions in enabling seamless cross-border trade while minimising delays and bottlenecks. It focuses on identifying opportunities to improve infrastructure and operational efficiency, measuring cargo processing capabilities through Time Release Studies (TRS), forecasting trade potential and regional growth following ICP development, and providing actionable recommendations to address logistical, procedural, and infrastructural challenges.

In this context, the CUTS team has completed field surveys at all five Land Customs Stations: Changrabandha, Fulbari, Hili, Jaigaon, and Panitanki to assess their potential for conversion into ICPs and their role in facilitating more efficient cross-border trade.



*Fulbari, West Bengal, LCS*



*Hili, West Bengal*

## River Rights and Resilience

CUTS International is conducting a study entitled 'Rivers, Rights and Resilience (RRR)' supported by the CUTS Geneva Resource Centre. The study aims to enhance cooperation in water sharing governance and to strengthen climate resilience and livelihoods for the riverine communities in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna River basins.

As part of the study, CUTS has engaged a local female fellow to continue efforts in building capacity for sustainable tourism among local homestays. In this quarter, the fellow conducted a capacity-building workshop for local homestay owners on December 12, 2024. Approximately 24 homestay owners participated in the workshop.



*Glimpses of the registered homestay owners at Kalimpong, West Bengal*

## REPRESENTATIONS



- Sohom Banerjee participated in a national-level FDP on Qualitative Research Methods organised by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Institute of Management Science, Kolkata.
- Mihir Shekhar Bhonsale participated in a Carnegie India webinar titled “West Asia Today: Actors, Interests and Prospects” on November 26, 2024.
- Sumanta Biswas and Deepmala Ghosh met with Haimanti Poddar, Senior Climate and Energy Adviser, British Deputy High Commission Kolkata on November 25, 2024, to discuss possible collaborations for CUTS.
- Sohom Banerjee presented a paper at the 2nd International Conference on “Recent Advances in Artificial Intelligence & Smart Applications (RAAISA) 2024 on December 09, 2024.
- Trisha Dey attended a webinar on the SANDEE-ICIMOD Karl-Göran Mäler Memorial Lecture: The Impacts of Heat on Output, Labour Supply, and Earnings in India on December 13, 2024.
- Sohom Banerjee attended an ICSSR-sponsored One-Day National seminar on Enhancing Quality of Life and Addressing Vulnerability Issues Among India’s Elderly Population organised as part of the Research Project under Vision Viksit Bharat@2047 by ICSSR and St. Xavier’s College, Kolkata on December 14, 2024.
- Sohom Banerjee attended the 2nd International Conference on Sustainability, Entrepreneurship, Equity and Digital Strategies (SEEDS 2024) organised by Jaipuria Institute of Management, Noida and Middlesex University Dubai Campus in Dubai and also presented a paper from December 17-21, 2024. He also virtually attended the 13th Annual Conference of the Emerging Markets Conference Board on the Future of Marketing in Emerging Markets and also presented a paper from December 19-21, 2024.

## MEDIA



- **Sohom Banerjee’s article “AI regulation: India needs a blueprint for ethical innovation” was published in the policy circle.**  
<https://www.policycircle.org/policy/roadmap-for-ai-regulation-in-india/>
- **Sohom Banerjee’s article “AI acts as digital shield in India’s vision for a fraud-free digital economy” was published in the Northeast News.**  
<https://nenews.in/opinion/ai-acts-as-digital-shield-in-indias-vision-for-a-fraud-free-digital-economy/15467/>