

Ensuring Consumer Well-being through Better Standards and Regulations



Under the realm of consumer protection, the 'right to safety' ensures protection against the marketing of goods and services that are hazardous to life and property. To realise this, safety standards are designed and implemented by authorities to ensure the safety of products, activities or processes. Being a consumer organisation, CUTS has undertaken several projects on standards of goods, food items and services.

CUTS interventions in the domain of standards, include policy research, advocacy, networking and awareness generation. Other than educating consumers on the significance of standards and quality products, CUTS supports policy reforms through multi-stakeholder engagement and evidence generation at ground level.

Food Safety and Standards

- Engagement with the government and key stakeholders and simultaneously generating **awareness amongst consumers about healthy eating habits**
- Expediting the **legislative amendment process related to trans-fats** in India through bottom-up demand of common consumers
- Promoting consumption of organic food by **demand and supply-side management** in the state of Rajasthan, i.e. educating consumers about the safety and quality of the food and sensitising farmers for shifting towards organic farming and advocacy with government to promote the same
- Celebrating **Green Action Week** in the month of October since 2013 with the theme 'Safer and More Sustainable Food for All' to promote sustainable consumption in India.
- Organising **awareness generation and campaigns** in schools, villages, towns and municipalities of Rajasthan on safe food, food labelling regulations etc.
- <https://cuts-cart.org/support-strong-food-labelling-regulations-and-elimination-of-trans-fats-in-india/>
- <https://cuts-cart.org/elimination-of-trans-fats-in-india/>
- <https://cuts-cart.org/developing-a-culture-of-sustainable-consumption-and-lifestyle-through-organic-production-and-consumption-in-state-of-rajasthan-proorganic-ii/>
- <https://cuts-cart.org/strengthen-consumer-safety-in-india-and-to-publish-the-state-of-consumer-safety-in-india-report-consumersup-2/>
- <https://cuts-cart.org/grassroots-reach-out-and-networking-in-rajasthan-through-consumer-action-granirca/>

STAKEHOLDERS

*Food Safety and Standards
Authority of India (FSSAI)*

*Ministry of Health & Family
Welfare (MoH&FW)*

*Ministries of Agriculture
and Farmers Welfare*

Ministry of Commerce

*Ministry of Consumer
Affairs*

*Bureau of Indian Standards
(BIS)*

*Consumers, farmers,
school children, policy
makers, local government,
business and business
associations*





Environmental Standards

STAKEHOLDERS

Indian exporters of Textiles & Clothing (T&C) products

Farmers, ginnerers, spinners, manufacturers and retailers in T&C in India

Consumer Electronics and Appliances Manufacturers Association (CEAMA)

Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII)

Ministry of Agriculture, India

Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, India

State Pollution Control Boards, India

Refrigerator-manufacturing companies

To promote dialogue on environmental standards and labels between producers in India and consumers in Europe, CUTS undertook a study on **Environmental Standards and their Trade Impact on Indian Textiles & Clothing Sector**. The outputs of the study contributed to raising awareness among stakeholders in the cotton value chain regarding environmental sustainability issues. It also highlighted the need for policy initiatives to integrate the environmental and social impact into the economic value of cotton.

<https://cuts-citee.org/a-study-of-environmental-standards-and-their-trade-impact-on-indian-textiles-clothing-sector-sesti/>

<https://cuts-citee.org/environmental-sustainability-impact-assessment-of-cotton-value-chain-in-india-esiacov/>

- CUTS conducted a study on **consumer behaviour on energy efficient (EE) products**, which set a baseline for designing future strategies for enhancing the use of EE products in India and their benefits.
<https://cuts-citee.org/assessing-consumer-behaviour-on-energy-efficient-products-in-india/>
- With the objective of improving the understanding and knowledge on EU eco-labelling diffusion, market penetration, barriers and capacity building needs of India, a series of **stakeholder dialogues** were organised by CUTS.
<https://cuts-citee.org/enabling-developing-countries-to-seize-eco-label-opportunities/>
- CUTS campaign for **environment-friendly refrigerators** led to the development of India's first Ecofrig in 2001 by Godrej Appliances Ltd.
<https://cuts-international.org/cspac-campaign-ecofridge.htm>
- Being a member of Steering Committee on Eco-mark under Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India CUTS advocate for using eco-labelling as an information tool for consumer awareness.

Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)

- As part of its work on Trade Facilitation and Regional Integration in South Asia, CUTS has been advocating for **harmonisation of standards and mutual recognition of agreements**, particularly in the case of **agricultural commodities**. As an outcome, dialogues were initiated between trade ministries and standard-setting bodies of India and Bangladesh on mutual recognition of certification methods and standards.

<https://cuts-citee.org/demystifying-non-tariff-barriers-to-india-bangladesh-trade-in-agricultural-products-and-their-linkages-with-food-security-and-livelihood/>

<https://cuts-citee.org/addressing-barriers-to-rice-seeds-trade-between-india-and-bangladesh-riste-2/>

- Our study on Women-Owned/Led/managed Micro Medium and Small Enterprises in India found that **lack of testing facilities, specifications on labelling and standards often** acted as obstacles to trade for these enterprises.
https://www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Trade_Winds_of_Change_Regional_Report.pdf
- CUTS Hanoi Resource Centre is engaged in **building capacity on standard setting and implementation** to contribute to greenhouse gas mitigation activities within the exporting sectors, particularly bio-energy sector in Vietnam as part of a regional program on South East and South Asia regions.

STAKEHOLDERS

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

South Asian Regional Standards Organization (SARSO)

Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI)

Exporters and Business Chambers

Farmer Producer Organisations

Women Enterprises

Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI)

Vietnam E-Commerce and Information Technology Agency (VECITA),

Vietnam Competition and Consumer Authority (VCCA),

Institute for International Trade and Development (ITD)

Consumer bodies



Why and How LDCs can Better Participate in WTO's SPS and TBT Committees

This discussion paper attempts to understand the specific mandates and activities of WTO TBT and SPS Committees. The paper also looked at the standards and regulations that are affecting the trade of least-developed countries and their performance in these committees.

http://www.cuts-geneva.org/pdf/STUDY%20-%20Participation_in_WTO_SPS_and_TBT_Committees.pdf

Standards in the Multilateral Trading System Implications for the EAC

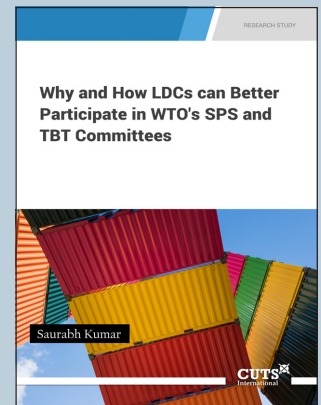
A major challenge for the EAC exporters in terms of the EU market is a lack of knowledge of EAC national standards, which are equivalent to those of the EU or other OECD countries. This paper concludes that more research and expert capacity building for EAC experts is needed to ensure they can contribute to standard development in international organisations. There is a need for better publicity for the standards and certification schemes developed in the EAC so they can be better accepted by the consumers in developed country markets.

<http://www.cuts-geneva.org/pactec/images/Documents/EAC%20Forum/Forum5/EAC%20Geneva%20Forum-%20WTO%20Note%205.pdf>

Standards and Market Access Under EPAs

Under EPAs The paper reviews the fact that there is no guarantee that mere preferential tariff treatment in the EU market under EPA will stimulate export growth in EAC or will present a new opportunity to EAC traders since the EU market has been almost fully open to EAC traders over the last four decades. The paper also reviewed the particular restrictions in the EU market arising from its punitive imposition of stringent SPS standards and technical requirements, and, the compliance capacity gaps existing among EAC traders that impede their efforts to meeting standards and hence bar their entry into the EU market.

http://www.cuts-geneva.org/pdf/BIEAC-Standards_and_Market_Access_Under_EPAs.pdf



Affiliations/Memberships

- ♦ Member of Global Think Tank Group on Sustainable Consumption of Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), since 2017.
- ♦ Member of Management System Division on Resource Management Sectional Committee of BIS.
- ♦ Member of Food and Agriculture Division on Food Hygiene, Safety Management and Other Systems under Food and Agriculture Division Council of BIS.
- ♦ Member of the sub group on Quality Infrastructure facilitated by BIS, under the working group on Consumer Protection for the 12th Five-Year Plan constituted by the Planning Commission of India.
- ♦ Member of the Standing Committee to Harmonize Labeling Requirements on Packaged Commodities under different Laws under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs of Government of India from 2010.
- ♦ Member in a Committee to see the Counterfeit/Fake Food Products formed in March 2014 under FICCI CASCADE and Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India.
- ♦ Member of the Central Consumer Protection Council (CCPC) headed by Minister of Consumer Affairs of Govt. of India, which discusses several issues of consumer protection including standards.
- ♦ Member of Consumer Policy Advisory Committee (CPAC) of BIS, in October 2014.
- ♦ Member of Regional Publicity Committee (CRO) in December, 2014.
- ♦ Granted BIS recognition as consumer organisation under its i-Care scheme in August 26, 2014.