



## CUTS Dossier on Enhancing Connectivity through Inland/Coastal Waterways and Sea Routes

### About CUTS

CUTS International (Consumer Unity & Trust Society) began in 1983 from a rural development communication initiative, a wall newspaper, Gram Gadar (Village Revolution). Gram Gadar is published regularly and reaches every nook and corner of Rajasthan, including remote villages. It has been instrumental in providing a forum for the oppressed classes to get justice. The mission of the organisation is: *Consumer Sovereignty in the Framework of Social Justice, Economic Equality and Environmental Balance Within and Across Borders.*



CUTS is an international research, public education and networking organisation working in various fields, including international trade, competition policy and law, economic regulation, consumer protection and sustainable development issues. From a humble beginning in 1983-84, the organisation now has three resource centres in Jaipur, each in Calcutta, Chittorgarh and New Delhi in India. It works internationally, especially in the developing world, through its resource centres based in Kenya, USA, Vietnam, Switzerland, Zambia and Ghana. More information about the organisation and its centres can be accessed here: <http://www.cuts-international.org>.

## CUTS work related to Ports, Shipping and Waterways

India's network of waterways extends to about 14500 km across the country and comprises rivers, lakes, canals, backwaters, and estuaries. 5685 km of this network is navigable by mechanised vessels. Additionally, it has a coastline of about 7,516.6 km. Together the waterway connectivity and coastline provide tremendous opportunities for a cheaper and environment-friendly transportation system, better people-to-people connectivity, and enhanced trade by improving connectivity in South Asia and between North East India and mainland India.

The Government of India is also taking various initiatives to enable and encourage transportation through the sea and inland/coastal waterways. These include declaring 111 waterways as national waterways, launching Sagarmala Project, and signing different agreements with Bangladesh (such as Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT), Coastal Shipping Agreement, etc.).

Given this background, CUTS has/is implemented/implementing various projects to promote and facilitate connectivity and trade through inland waterways, coastal waterways and sea; by the means of research, dialogue and evidence based advocacy. The projects also try to comprehend the scope of livelihood generation from improved connectivity through waterways.

This Dossier captures some highlights of CUTS' work in the area of connectivity (both trade and people-to-people) through inland/coastal waterways and sea.

### Projects Implemented by CUTS

#### **Pre-Feasibility Study for Creating Multimodal Freight Village Hub at Balagarh, West Bengal**

Duration: January-December 2022

Location: India

Client: U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and PSE Support

The project aims to assess the feasibility of creating a freight village (multimodal hub) in Balagarh, West Bengal, to promote infrastructure investment. This includes creating an action plan for developing the proposed Freight Village for the benefit of potential investors and policymakers.



## **Enabling a Political Economy Discourse for Multimodal Connectivity in the BBIN Sub-region**

Duration: March 2020- December 2022

Location: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal

Client: Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, UK



This project aims to create an enabling environment for a political economy discourse on multimodal connectivity in the BBIN sub-region. It addresses the implementation challenges of the BBIN MVA in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. It identifies gaps in infrastructure, policy and regulations, which can act as potential hurdles to achieving multimodal connectivity in this sub-region. It also explores possible livelihood generation opportunities that can be gained through

developing regional/sub-regional/bilateral value chains and their facilitation through multimodal connectivity.

<https://cuts-citee.org/enabling-a-political-economy-discourse-for-multi-modal-connectivity-in-the-bbin-bangladesh-bhutan-india-nepal-sub-region/>

## **Understanding Technical, Economic and Political Economy Implications of Traffic Diversion from Roadways to Waterways: From Petrapole-Benapole Land Border Route to Tribeni-Kolkata/Haldia Port in India to Dhaka in Bangladesh via Mongla**



Duration: August 10, 2020-January 31, 2021

Location: India and Bangladesh

Client: The World Bank

The study aimed to collect and analyse relevant secondary and primary data to understand better technical, economic, and political economy implications of traffic diversion from the Petrapole-Benapole and Ghojadanga-Bhomra land route to Tribeni-Kolkata/Haldia ports to the Mongla port in Bangladesh, and to Tribeni-Kolkata/Haldia ports to Chittagong and further to Agartala.

**Traffic Diversion from Roadways to Waterways: Understanding Technical, Economic and Political Economy Implications of diverting freight traffic from *Sahibganj to Jogighopa; and Sahibganj to Dhaka via Farakka, Dhulian, and Rajshahi***

Duration: October 2020-March 2021

Location: India

Client: The World Bank

The project aimed at understanding the feasibility of diverting inbound and outbound freight to and from Bangladesh via Mahadipur and Hili land border routes to Sahibganj-Dhaka and Sahibganj-Jogighopa routes via Dhulian-Rajshahi (IBP 5&6). Further, it aimed to provide practical and innovative solutions on ‘whether’ and ‘how’ such traffic diversion strategies should be framed, considering national and regional contexts and their political economy aspects/factors.

**Organising Outreach Programme for the Promotion of Jal Marg Vikas Project – National Waterways 1 (NW 1)**

Duration: July-August 2018

Location: India

Client: Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)

The project aimed to disseminate information about the projects under implementation by IWAI, eliminate misinformation that may work against the project being accepted by the community, and provide information about IWAI programmes that have been planned to minimise the impact upon the local population.



<https://cuts-crc.org/community-outreach-programme-for-the-promotion-of-jal-marg-vikas-project-nw-1/>

**Trans-boundary Rivers of South Asia**

Duration: November 2018-March 2022

Location: Bangladesh and India

Client: Oxfam Novib



This project aimed to understand and address challenges related to transboundary rivers and work together to create conditions to reduce poverty of marginalised and vulnerable river basin communities through increased access to, and control over, riverine water resources on which their livelihoods depend.

The study identified opportunities and challenges for operating river cruise tourism through the Bangladesh-India protocol route and the transboundary rivers and also assessed the implication of cruise tourism at the local level, including the development of local livelihood opportunities linked to such tourism through transboundary rivers and the protocol route.

<https://cuts-citee.org/trans-boundary-rivers-of-south-asia-trosa/>

*The study's recommendations were adopted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> addendum to the India-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT).*

### **Small Haul River Cruise Tourism along Kolkata-Dhaka River Routes**

Duration: March-August 2018

Location: India and Bangladesh

Client: The World Bank

The objectives of the project were to understand the scope of the community-based cruise tourism along and near the Bangladesh-India protocol route; identify the most feasible route of cruise tourism between India and Bangladesh through the Bangladesh-India protocol route, and identify opportunities and challenges for operating river cruise tourism in the identified route.



<https://cuts-crc.org/conceptual-plan-for-integrating-community-based-tourism-along-the-bangladesh-india-protocol-route-for-inland-navigation/>

### **Expanding Tradable Benefits of Trans-Boundary Water: Promoting Navigational Usage of Inland in Ganga and Brahmaputra Basins**

Duration: 2016-2018

Location: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal

Client: The Asia Foundation

The project's objective was to explore the prospect and challenges of using inland waterways in the Ganga and Brahmaputra Basins. The study tried to promote inland waterways as a mode of transport, especially between India's NER & Bangladesh and suggest policies to facilitate the same.



The study proposed an alternative policy discourse for enabling reform measures between governments and civil society and sharing knowledge that would contribute to improving institutions for inland waterways governance in the BBIN region. It was envisaged by conducting institutional analysis on the management of policies, laws and regulations to the management of inland waterways in the Ganga and Brahmaputra basins and organising small discussions and participatory meetings with key stakeholders engaged in/with inland waterways.

<https://cuts-citee.org/iw-about-the-project/>

*The suggestions provided by CUTS International were taken into account while identifying the port of call along the Protocol Inland Waterway Trade and Transit route between India and Bangladesh. These were discussed at the inter-ministerial meeting between the two countries in October 2018.*