

CUTS Philosophy

Partnerships, Advocacy and Development

Focus on CUTS CITEE

The mission of CUTS is ‘pursuing economic equity and social justice within and across borders by persuading governments and empowering people’. Correspondingly, the objective of CUTS CITEE (CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment) is to pursue this goal through research, articulation and advocacy relating to relevant developmental issues concerning the international trading and economic system.

This implies not only looking at development, access and equity within developing countries but also the promotion of equity across countries – within the developing world and between the developed and developing world. The tools used primarily are evidence based research, networking and advocacy.

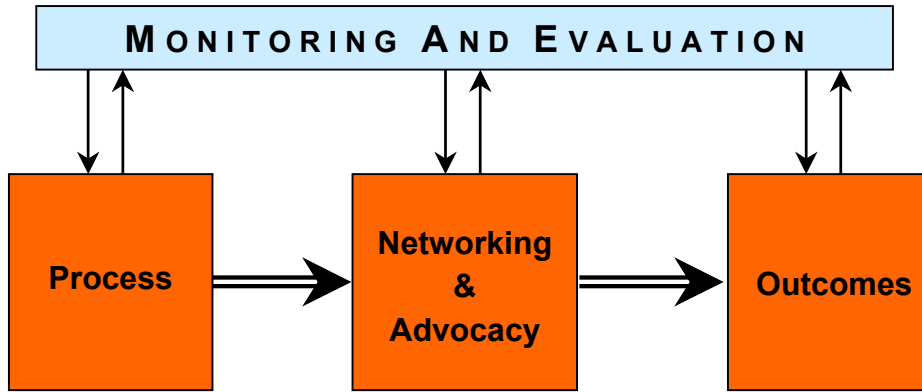
The above methodology has been implemented through partnerships and alliances as sustainability/receptivity of/to development initiatives calls for local ownership of appropriate approaches to development. Moreover, partnerships also facilitate use of the diverse research specialisations of various organisations. In both research and advocacy, partnerships facilitate common use of capacities and thus help to economise on the use of scarce resources. Leveraging synergies and complementarities for maximising impact on national/international economic and trade policy, therefore, holds the key to the attainment of the CUTS mission.

CUTS work mantra in evolving partnerships is straightforward. It places equal emphasis on top-down and bottom-up approaches to make its voice heard across the globe – the former to influence policy by national governments and inter-governmental organisations and the latter to elicit feedback from the grassroots to existent national and international policies/rules, as well as suggestions for improvement.

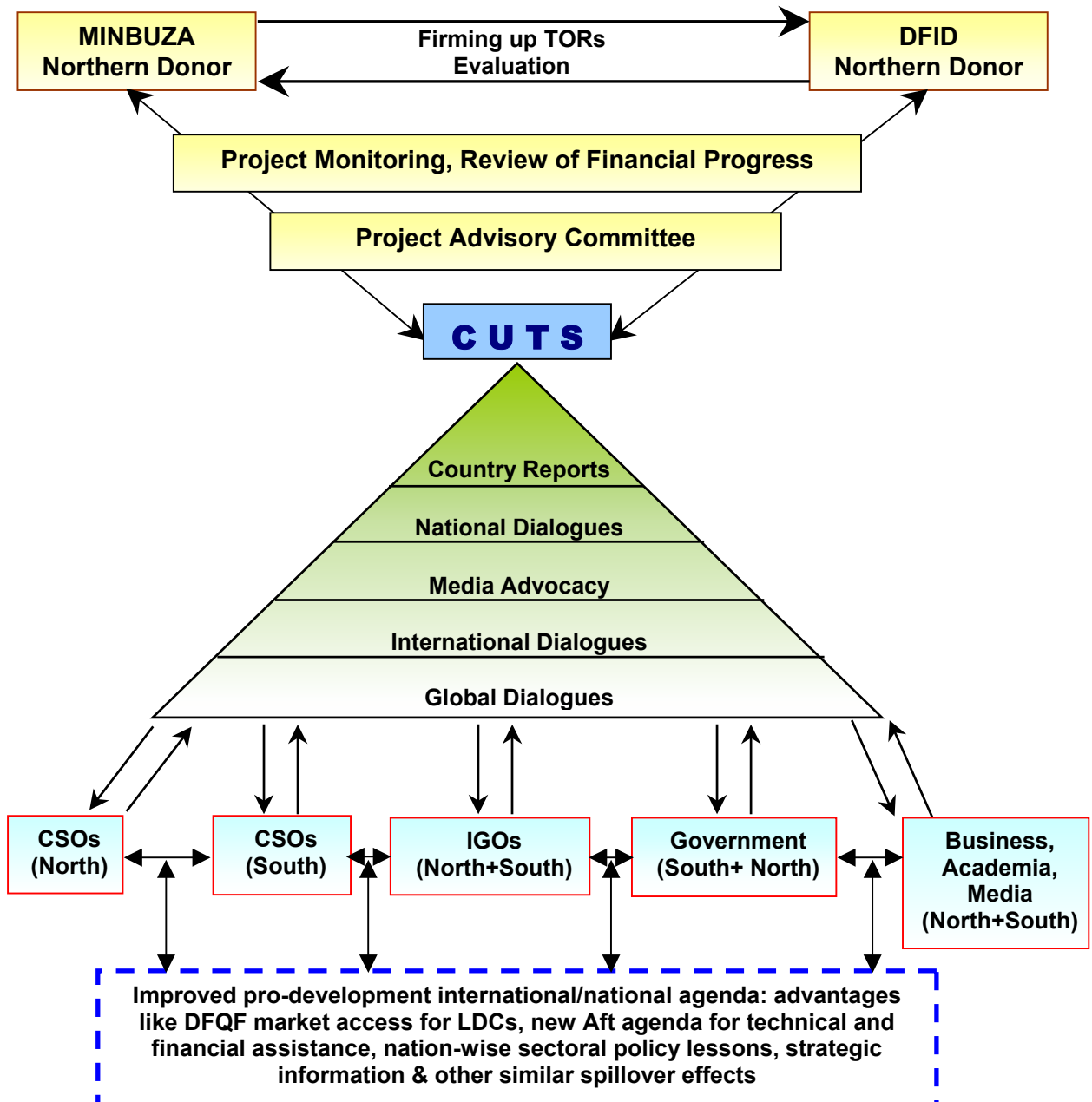
The gamut of partnerships evolved by CUTS over the years illustrates its reliance on the two mentioned approaches. *Unnayan Shanmmanay* (UNSY), an NGO (<http://www.shamunnaybd.org/>) involved in rural development in Bangladesh, has been a CUTS partner for over 7 years on diverse issues such as the effects of international trade on livelihoods and consumer participation in electricity regulation. On the other hand, CUTS’ partnership with the Evian Group (<http://www.eviangroup.org/>) – a network which attempts to foster a global open market economy and inclusive community – illustrates the use of the top-down approach as it has been based on the stimulation of high level policy dialogues.

CUTS philosophy behind partnerships involves developing the strengths of its partners as well as empowering its own mission through these. For example, in an *OXFAM Novib* and *Royal Norwegian Embassy* funded project entitled *Grassroot Reachout and Networking in India in Trade and Economics* (GRANITE), through which CUTS has tried to foster awareness/participation of the grassroots about/in national/international trade policy formulation, we have helped evolve regional organisations with deep connections to the grassroots to further the project agenda. The creation and empowerment of these organisations have added strength to the civil society working on economic issues, with an agenda not limited to that pursued by CUTS.

CUTS' PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION: THE CASE OF TDP



DETAILED VIEW OF PROCESS, ADVOCACY & OUTCOMES



The approach has yielded rich dividends for CUTS as partner organisations involved through a particular project have often resurfaced as partners in a different context. For example, NEED (www.indev.nic.in/need), an NGO previously involved only in social uplift, developed its capacity for advocacy on trade issues during the GRANITE Project. The same capacity came in handy during the Trade-Development-Poverty Linkages (TDP) project.

The partnerships evolved by CUTS over the years involve different geographical dimensions – South-South, South-North and North-North (see Figure for exposition). Such use of variety helps CUTS to leverage the maximum support for its mission through enabling movements for policy change. The TDP project itself has been marked by the confluence of such varied types of partnerships. The project was funded by two Northern donors, *MINBUZA* and *DFID*, while the primary implementing organisation was CUTS International, a Southern NGO. The interaction between the donors which facilitated the implementation of this project exemplifies North-North interaction whereas the interaction of CUTS with the donors individually and jointly typifies North-South interaction.

Further, CUTS itself developed partnerships with 19 Southern NGOs (examples being *Institute for Global Dialogue*, South Africa; *Organisation, Development and Community Management Trust*, Zambia; *Economic Institute of Cambodia*; *Sustainable Development Policy Institute*, Pakistan) which interacted with each other at regional meetings etc – an example of South-South interaction for the leveraging of policy outcomes.

Other examples of South-South and South-North interactions can be found in the participation of representatives of both Southern and Northern governments, Southern Intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), and a varied mix of academia, business interests and media from the South as well as the North at meetings organised by CUTS during the course of the project on subjects such as aid for trade, trade-development linkages etc.

As mentioned above, the thrust of the advocacy effort was directed significantly towards government officials who were involved in the policy making process in their respective countries. These officials were invited for the meetings and dialogues mentioned above. These meetings also served as a medium for dissemination of project outputs such as research volumes, advocacy documents and briefing papers. While these constituted direct forms of advocacy used to influence government officials, there were indirect forms as well – articles in the media and mobilisation of media persons and academia to the cause of the project.

The TDP project exemplified CUTS action oriented research – research was geared towards the mission oriented production of outputs to influence policy makers in the North and South through a variety of interactions and use of indirect and direct means. The implementation of the project was also consistent with standard norms of project management – constant monitoring by CUTS, guidance sought from members of a distinguished project advisory committee, facilitation of periodic reviews through the submission of progress reports, and financial reviews. In other words, the TDP project encapsulates CUTS philosophy as well as functioning.

Moreover, such national and international projects should be viewed in a dynamic perspective. Many unanticipated developments can often influence project outcomes – the ability of the project management to deal with these as well as more routine matters determines the success of the project. CUTS believes in retrospective evaluation for the purpose of forward looking planning – we believe in a flexible approach to project management/ implementation which moulds itself on the basis of past lessons. The CUTS mission is time invariant – the approaches used are a function of time, culture and geographical location.