

# CUTS CITEE IN ACTION

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2019



## EVENTS

### Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal Connectivity and Trade Facilitation

CUTS International along with Asian Development Bank organised a side event during 'Aid for Trade Global Review 2019' at Geneva on July 04, 2019. Bipul Chatterjee moderated the session on 'Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN): Connectivity and Trade Facilitation'. This session deliberated on good policies and practices for sustained trade by addressing related to women empowerment, youth, livelihood development, resilient infrastructure, digital connectivity and skill development.

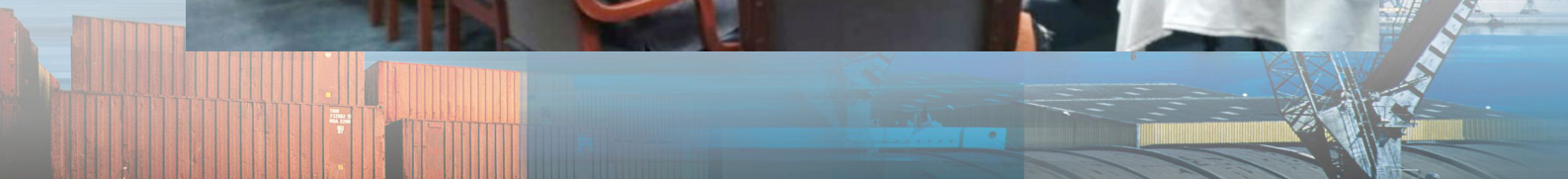


### Connectivity and Trade Facilitation in the Bay of Bengal Region

CUTS International organised a Roundtable Discussion on Connectivity and Trade Facilitation in the Bay of Bengal Region: *Role of the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement* at New Delhi on August 13, 2019.

The main objective of this event was to deliberate on key findings of the survey and stakeholder consultations conducted in eight BBIN corridors and chalk out an action agenda to further boost connectivity and trade facilitation in the BBIN sub-region.

[www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/](http://www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/)





## EVENTS

## Connectivity and Trade Facilitation in BBIN sub-region of the Indo-Pacific

CUTS International organised a Regional Policy Dialogue on Connectivity and Trade Facilitation in BBIN sub-region of the Indo-Pacific at Dhaka, Bangladesh on September 04, 2019.

More than 40 participants comprising government officials, policy experts, civil society representatives and media personnel participated in the deliberation. The event also underlined that digital connectivity including the use of new technologies, such as blockchains should be effectively used to develop an online trade facilitation platform and appropriate risk management system to facilitate faster cargo clearance at border crossings.

[www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/](http://www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/)



## Promoting Women Traders in North-East India

This event was organised as part of the project 'Women Traders in the Borders of North-East India' funded by the Australian High Commission, at New Delhi on August 28, 2019. The objective of the project was to understand opportunities, prospects and capacity needs of women entrepreneurs as well as aspiring traders in five states of the North-East (Meghalaya, Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland).

The purpose of the event was to bring government officials, civil society, women entrepreneurs in business chambers and other relevant stakeholders from the North-East states to deliberate further on the outcomes of National Dissemination Meeting organised at New Delhi on May 29, 2019. The deliberations focussed on developing an action agenda for the promotion of women traders in the North East.



<https://cuts-citee.org/mainstreaming-gender-in-international-trade/>



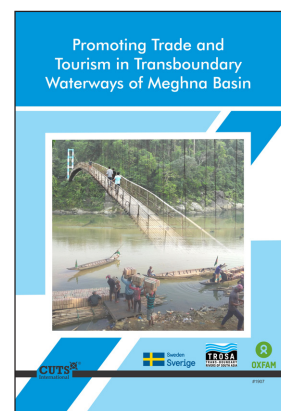


## PUBLICATION

## Promoting Trade and Tourism in Transboundary Waterways of Meghna Basin

This report captures the findings of a project titled “Inclusive cross-border trade in Meghna basin in South Asia” that was initiated under Transboundary Rivers of South Asia (TROSA) programme as part of a series of short-term research to co-produce knowledge and evidence on different issues which will inform the programme’s evidence-based influencing and advocacy work in the region. The study primarily focussed on Kushiya, Gumti and Haora rivers of India for the prospects of cross-border trade with Bangladesh as well as Umngot river and upstream of Gumti for exploring tourism potential. The study explored on how the riverine communities can benefit from inclusive inland water transport and sustainable river tourism.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/promoting-trade-and-tourism-in-transboundary-waterways-of-meghna-basin.pdf>



## Reviving Riverine Livelihoods through Short Haul Trade and Tourism

This report is unique in bringing the BBIN perspective of inland navigation and larger connectivity in the sub-region complemented with an angle of livelihood of riverine communities. As we strive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of building sustainable resilient infrastructure, protecting water related ecosystems and creating decent jobs, inland water transport sector seems promising in achieving them. This report is a milestone in this trajectory as it looks at the prospects of inland water transport as an ecosystem service and how its sustainable management can realise economic growth and improve livelihoods.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/reviving-riverine-livelihoods-through-short-haul-trade-and-tourism.pdf>



## PARTICIPATION

- Bipul Chatterjee participated in the 9<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum organised by the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Confederation of Indian Industry and the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India at New Delhi on September 17-18, 2019. The theme of this year's Forum was 'Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation for Regional Prosperity'. He was a panellist in a session entitled '*Aligning Trade Facilitation with Sustainable Development Goals: Good practices for trade facilitation for agriculture, SMEs and women*'.
- Veena Vidyadharan participated in the Review and Planning Meeting of TROSA programme organised by Oxfam India, at Guwahati on July 25-26, 2019. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the planned activities for third year of TROSA programme and identify areas of convergence among partners. She also participated in the Annual Learning Forum of TROSA programme at TERI School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi on August 21-23, 2019. The objective of the workshop was to facilitate learning and sharing among TROSA partners and key stakeholders, such as governments, civil society, businesses, research and academia and the media as well as to foster long term engagement and synergies. Vidyadharan presented a poster on CUTS work on inland waterways in the Meghna basin.



## The art of deploying diplomacy to advance our trade interests

*Live Mint, September 23, 2019, by Pradeep S. Mehta*

India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar recently said that trade interests, and not diplomacy, will decide India's participation in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement. While it is obvious that any trade agreement must be decided on its merits, smart diplomacy can aid in advancing our overall trade and strategic interests.

<https://cuts-citee.org/the-art-of-deploying-diplomacy-to-advance-our-trade-interests/>

## Local trade between India and Bangladesh in the Meghna Basin

*The Third Pole, July 24, 2019, by Bipul Chatterjee and Veena Vidyadharan*

With the declaration of river Barak as National Waterway-16 (NW-16) by the Inland Waterways Authority of India, the navigational prospects of the Meghna river system have come to limelight. The Meghna basin supports the lives of local riverine communities with its extensive systems of wetlands, flood plains and fisheries. Inland navigation in these rivers would not only improve hinterland connectivity of this isolated landscape but would also integrate it with mainland India through the Bangladesh-India Inland Waterways Protocol Routes.

<https://cuts-citee.org/local-trade-between-india-and-bangladesh-in-the-meghna-basin/>

## Waterways can boost India-Bangladesh ties

*The Third Pole, September 30, 2019*

*by Bipul Chatterjee, Veena Vidyadharan and Pauline Taylor McKeown*

Bangladesh is one of India's closest friends in South Asia. As a part of its Neighbourhood First Policy and Act East Policy, in April, 2017, India offered a line of credit worth US\$4.5bn to Bangladesh for its infrastructure development related to ports, rail and roads, power supply and civil nuclear energy.

<https://cuts-citee.org/waterways-can-boost-india-bangladesh-ties/>