

CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment

Strategic Business Plan

2013-17



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Contents

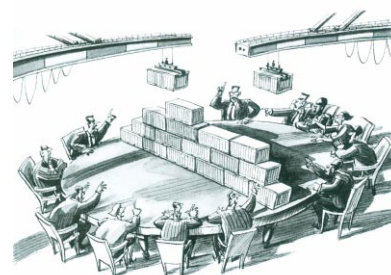
Introduction – A Brief History of the Centre	1
Mission, Goals & Objectives	3
Programme Areas	5
• <i>WTO Issues</i>	5
• <i>Regional Economic Cooperation</i>	6
• <i>Developmental Issues</i>	7
• <i>Cross-Cutting Issues including Capacity Building</i>	8
Strengths, Limitations, Opportunities & Threats	9
Future Strategy – A 10-Point Agenda	10
Human Resource Development/Management	11
Financial Resources	12

Introduction – A Brief History of the Centre

In 1983, Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) was established as a consumer protection organisation (www.cuts-international.org) in traditional sense. Over the last three decades, CUTS has experienced organic growth and its agenda is not just limited to 'Consumer Protection' but enhancement of 'Consumer Welfare.' With its headquarters in Jaipur, India and five overseas centres: Geneva (Switzerland), Hanoi (Vietnam), Nairobi (Kenya), Lusaka (Zambia) and Accra (Ghana), the organisation has evolved as a unique policy action- and think-tank working on cognate areas of *Good Governance*, *Effective Regulation* and *Rules-based Trade* (www.cuts-international.org/pdf/A_Brief_History_of_CUTS.pdf).

CUTS involvement with trade and development issues began in early 1990s, when the negotiations under the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) were at its peak. In 1995, CUTS initiated the formation of a network of like-minded organisations from South Asian countries – South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment (SAWTEE) – in order to build capacity of civil society organisations in South Asia to better understand trade and development linkages. In 1996, CUTS joined a group of international organisations to help establish the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) in Geneva, Switzerland.

In 1996, CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment (CUTS CITEE: www.cuts-citee.org) was established as a programme centre of CUTS International (www.cuts-international.org) to focus its activities on understanding the issues and implications of an emerging



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The first Indian 'Globalised' NGO



CUTS has developed from a modest NGO, addressing mainly domestic consumer issues, to a pre-eminent position as an international NGO, dealing with issues relating to the world trading system and related issues. CUTS is now on the frontline of research and advocacy on global trade issues. It also brings to the NGO policy space a distinct and independent developing-country perspective, which does not mirror simply what the rich-country NGOs and governments want done. This is necessary as we have to have our own and independent NGOs instead of relying on hugely-financed mega NGOs headquartered in the rich countries.

Jagdish Bhagwati
Noted Trade Economist



***South-South cooperation
such as between and among
the BRICS group and other
emerging economies***

international trade regime under the aegis of the World Trade Organisation and bilateral/regional free trade agreements.

The first few years of the Centre were dedicated to understand the implications of developmental aspects of multilateral trade negotiations, following which the Centre's work was diversified into issues relating to regional economic cooperation and on larger issues of linkages between trade, development and poverty including issues of development cooperation:

- South-South cooperation such as between and among the BRICS group and other emerging economies
- South-North cooperation, for example sustainability impact assessment of EU-India free trade agreement, Economic Partnership Agreement between the European Union and Africa-Caribbean-Pacific countries
- Trilateral development cooperation among northern donors (and also emerging economies), southern implementers and recipients in poorer countries

In short, over a decade and half, the Centre has consolidated its work on cognate issues of trade and development under three programme areas:

- WTO Issues
- Regional Economic Cooperation
- Developmental Issues

Major Achievements

Some major achievements over the period are as follows:

- Close working relationship with several governments in Asia and Africa and in Geneva on trade and trade-related developmental issues
- Developed a vibrant network of civil society organisations and other stakeholders working on trade and developmental issues
- Served on various trade and trade-related committees of the Government of India and represented at the WTO Director-General's Informal NGO Advisory Body and Stakeholders Panel on the Future of Trade
- Accredited to many inter-governmental and multilateral bodies such as WTO, UNCTAD, UNESCAP, UNDP, UNEP
- Received support from development cooperation partners and inter-governmental/multilateral bodies working on trade and development issues

Mission, Goals & Objectives

Keeping in mind the Vision of CUTS “Consumer sovereignty in the framework of social justice and economic equality, within and across borders”, the aim of this Strategic Business Plan is to present how, in partnership with the overseas centres of CUTS International, CUTS CITEE will continue to achieve its mission of:

“Pursuing economic equity and social justice within and across borders by persuading governments and empowering people”

Goals

The goals of CUTS CITEE are to:

- enable and empower representatives of the civil society and governments, from developing countries in particular, to articulate and advocate on relevant and contemporary issues of trade and development at appropriate fora
- create a questioning society through empowerment of civil society representatives to promote transparency and accountability in the system of trade governance
- promote equity between and among the developed and developing countries through well-argued policy research and advocacy on emerging and relevant issues of trade and development



Promote equity between and among the developed and developing countries through well-argued policy research and advocacy on emerging and relevant issues of trade and development

Objectives

The objectives of conducting action/applied research are to:

- present an independent political economic viewpoint on trade and trade-related economic, social and environmental issues from the perspective of Southern countries
- sensitise policy-makers about trade and development issues confronted by the people at the grassroots

Built-up a Formidable Position in Research and Advocacy



The unrivalled ability to bring opinion-leaders together to discuss key topics is a major advantage for CUTS. Also, there is a key role in alliance building by CUTS. It is now in a position where it can sit at the hub of networks, rather than just being a member of them. The key challenge in strengthening research and advocacy is, thus, much more an issue of recognising the emerging nature of CUTS as the centre of a network. The opportunity to turn CUTS into a key player in some of the most important debates ahead of us is a great one.

Phil Evans

Noted Consumer Activist

Curved Out a Special Niche in the Areas of Advocacy and Networking



CUTS thinks and acts both globally and locally. It has emerged as one of the three leading centres of India on international trade issues, the other two being the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations and the Research & Information System for Developing Countries. CUTS, however, has its own distinctive profile by virtue of being basically a civil society organisation. It is able to use the civil society for getting inputs from the micro level as well as a forum for disseminating its outputs.

Muchkund Dubey

Former Foreign Secretary of India

- empower civil society and government representatives to understand issues of priority for better welfare of Southern countries
- juxtapose counterfactuals in debates on trade and trade-related developmental issues on a scientific basis
- strengthen the capacity of developing country representatives in international trade negotiations and implementation of trade agreements
- raise awareness in developed countries on trade and trade-related developmental issues for a better understanding of the concerns of Southern countries
- assist representatives of inter-governmental/multilateral organisations to better understand trade and trade-related developmental issues from Southern perspectives



Modus Operandi

CITEE follows Research, Advocacy, Networking and Capacity Building methodology. The objectives of Advocacy, networking and capacity building are to

- Translating policy research outputs to policy outcomes through evidence-based advocacy
- Collaborating with research institutions and civil society organisations conduct action research on trade and trade-related economic, social and environmental issues, especially highlighting Southern perspectives on such issues
- Exchanging regularly on programmes, activities and projects of mutual interest with a view to ensuring coordination, complementarity and mutually supportive cooperation, and where appropriate, joint action
- cooperating and coordinating with like-minded organisations in conducting training and exchange programmes to enhance capacities and understanding of relevant actors on trade and trade-related developmental issues.

Programme Areas

WTO Issues

Since mid-1990s, the Centre has been actively working on WTO issues. It participates in global debates on the effectiveness of the multilateral trading system and in particular how it is affecting the lives of people, especially the poor and consumers. The Centre carries out high-level political economic analyses of multilateral trade issues, advocates at appropriate fora and strengthens capacities of the civil society and governments in developing countries. It is closely following up the current round of multilateral trade negotiations at the WTO, the Bali package and the post Bali ministerial scenario that would emerge after December 2013, with an objective of providing necessary inputs to trade negotiators from developmental perspectives.

In future, the Centre will focus its work on new and emerging issues in international trade issues that may emerge post Bali Ministerial especially on issues such as Trade Facilitation and other development dimensions that may become pertinent regardless of success of Bali ministerial, 2013. These topics will be explored and analysed to understand their implications in developing and least developed countries.

This programme area will further engage in analysing issues where developing countries would have interest but are covered by plurilateral agreements at the WTO such as the Government Procurement or coalitions/groups such as G-20 etc that have potential to influence global trading system.

Besides, it will engage into capacity building exercise in order to develop the government officials' capacities on economic diplomacy, on pertinent subjects not limited to trade negotiations, not just in India but also in other developing countries.



A Highly Respected and Internationally Recognised Outfit

Finding the balance between needs and challenges has always been key to the success of CUTS. Decades ago no one would have imagined CUTS where it is now. Thanks to continuous high quality research and effective networking and advocacy, CUTS has grown. The WTO, too, has benefited from CUTS' knowledge of the trade challenges and limited capacity of developing countries.

Pascal Lamy

Director-General, World Trade Organisation (2005-2013)





Competing with Itself

CUTS is among the pioneers of regional collaboration of policy think-tanks in South Asia. Our partnership with CUTS is a practical example of promoting peace between Pakistan and India through research on challenges facing both countries.

Abid Qaiyum Suleri

Executive Director

Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad



Regional Economic Cooperation

Since last decade, there has been an increasing thrust on regional economic cooperation and exceeding proliferation of preferential trade agreements. Keeping the dynamics of changing landscape and geopolitical situation, the Centre has engaged in research, advocacy, networking and capacity building on pertinent subjects such as to study cost of economic non-cooperation to consumers in South Asia. It is extensively working on larger issues of regional economic cooperation in South Asia and Eastern Africa including signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the East African Community Secretariat to do joint work.

In future, the Centre will not only focus but further expand its work on preferential trade agreements negotiated/ implemented by India and regional economic cooperation/ integration in South and South East Asia and Eastern and Southern Africa. It will engage in carrying out impact assessment on India with respect to third party free trade agreements where India is not a party such as the Trans-

Making the Goals of the Civil Society Aligned

The characteristics that make 'CUTS' are its constructive and well-reasoned approaches to analyses of development topics and trade-related issues. The fact that the organisation is 'owned' by developing-country representatives is important for giving the views of developing countries a clear voice in international dialogues on trade-related issues. I see a great value in continued attempts to involve civil society both in developed and developed countries in an advocacy role in support of trade liberalisation. A particular challenge is how to ensure that civil society organisations in developed countries work towards the same goal as the civil society organisations and the poor population in developing countries.



Anders Ahnlid

*Sweden's Permanent Representative to the Organisation
for Economic Cooperation and Development*

Pacific Partnership (TPP), Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. However, this is not limited to TTIP or TPP but attention will be paid to emerging issues related to regional economic cooperation.

Developmental Issues

CITEE strongly follows its credo of looking at developmental issues with the motto of 'Liberalisation Yes but with Safety Nets'. The experience and learning from its work on developmental issues at grassroot level, demonstrate and makes the Centre believe that poverty is the biggest obstacle to sustainable development and therefore requires a holistic approach by creating appropriate environment through growth. The Centre has been consistently working towards devising an all - inclusive growth strategy through its work on linkages between trade, poverty alleviation and growth. For instance, from its work on the relationship between trade and labour standards and trade and environmental standards, it has been established that developing countries are not in a position to improve these standards at the domestic level unless poverty is reduced while trade sanctions can backfire. On the other hand, it is also evident from the research by the Centre that better compliance with standards reduces uncertainty in market access and enhances market access per se for niche products.

For poverty alleviation to become a reality, growth is necessary but not the only sufficient component. Thus, the Centre is exploring various means for trade to contribute more to growth and reduction in inequalities in income distribution, especially how institutions can be improved in poor countries to strengthen positive linkages between trade, development and poverty.

In future, the Centre's work will expand its focus in South and South East Asia and in Eastern and Southern Africa on some specific aspects of sustainable development such as linkages between trade, climate change and food security,



An Invaluable Partner



I confirm that many WTO delegations in Geneva from developing and least developed countries found CUTS an invaluable partner with their publications, especially on trade, regulations and development issues. The work done by CUTS in many countries is very much appreciated not only by recipient countries but by development cooperation partners who fund those projects.

Love Mtesa

Former Zambian Ambassador to the WTO

trade-related aspects of gender, environmental and other socio-economic indicators, trade and other public policy objectives such as trade adjustment programmes, inclusive trade policy-making for balancing producer and consumer interests.

Cross-Cutting Issues including Capacity Building

Capacity building is a major component and cuts across all three Programme Areas of the Centre. It is embedded in all aspects of the Centre's activities with an objective of consumer welfare. The Centre is working on South-South cooperation among state and non-state actors for cross-



fertilisation of knowledge and experience on trade and trade-related developmental issues with an aim to not only conduct research and advocacy but to also build capacities of these actors so as to be able to make informed decisions. The centre would further employ track -2

dialogues for better regional economic cooperation and also work towards enhancing the informed decision making power in order to provide right to trade for all particularly the poor and marginalised countries.

In future, particular emphasis will be placed on enhancing the capacity of various stakeholders such as consumers and other groups in South and South East Asia and in Eastern and Southern Africa to better understand developmental implications of trade and trade-related issues. Over the next five years, the Centre has been engaged by the Department of Commerce, Government of India, to conduct a long term programme to develop the capacity of Indian government officials on larger aspects of diplomacy and not just on trade negotiations. CITEE will keep engaging in such capacity building programmes through its project work and also by conducting independent training programmes in order to strengthen capacity of government officials and other relevant stakeholders on intricacies of trade and developmental issues.

SLOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal emphasis on 'content' as well as 'process' aspects of research, advocacy, networking and capacity building activities • Timely delivery of quality outputs – a large number of research and advocacy outputs have been published and appreciated by a wide range of stakeholders • Niche areas where a vacuum exists are identified and acted upon on a dynamic basis • Wide networking and effective outreach: more than 60 network partners (research institutions and civil society organisations) all over the world and targeted outreach to diverse stakeholders through two electronic platforms – more than 10,000 subscribers in CUTS Trade Forum and more than 2,000 subscribers in CUTS South Asia E-Group • Targeted communication with trade policy-makers, trade negotiators and other stakeholder groups through publications and advocacy/networking efforts 	<p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to core support from development cooperation partners although it has been increasing over the years • Organisational assessment by external agencies • Evidence-based advocacy to achieve more and better policy outcomes • Recruitment and retaining of good quality staff
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversification into new emerging areas together with other centres under the ambit of multilateral trade negotiations • Responding to growing stakeholders concerns in the area of regional economic cooperation and thereby enhancing scope of work on regional economic cooperation/integration in South Asia and India's deeper engagement with preferential trade agreements • Increasing recognition of the role of trade in addressing developmental concerns • Increasing role of emerging economies in global economic governance – South-South cooperation and South-North cooperation • Scope to develop a multi-disciplinary human resource base located in different places 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregularities in continued support from development cooperation partners • Effectiveness of policy advocacy efforts – co-option by stakeholder groups • Continuation of senior level project managers



Milestones

The following milestones are defined to measure how the Centre is expected to accomplish its mission and achieve its goals and objectives over the next five years.

- To become a core partner of development cooperation organisations in each programme area – one of the major policy action- and think-tanks and Southern voices on the subject of trade and development. For instance, recently the Australian Agency for International

Development has committed a long term support to do a longitudinal research, advocacy, networking and capacity building on Food, Energy and Water Security for Sustainable Development in South Asia and so also for enhancing Regional Connectivity in South Asia.

- Recognition at national, regional and international level:
 - ◆ representation at governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental bodies
 - ◆ presentation of outputs and results at major conferences
 - ◆ to be approached by reputed organisations for partnership on specific projects

This is aptly demonstrated in that the centre has served on various trade and trade-related committees of the Government of India and represented at the WTO Director-General's Informal NGO Advisory Body and Stakeholders Panel on the Future of Trade.

- Bridging macro-micro gaps in trade policy-making: to have at least 100 civil society organisations from South and South East Asia and Eastern and Southern Africa within its network and linking them with trade policy-makers and other stakeholders. It has been a founder member of some of the vital networks in the field such as the SAWTEE and the ICTSD, which essentially are engaged in developing world.
- Implement at least 10 major, multi-year, multi-stakeholder, multi-country projects through network- and fieldwork-based action research so as to achieve policy outcomes through evidence-based advocacy

Future Strategy – The Agenda

Given the Mission, Goals and Objectives of the Centre, keeping in mind its Strengths, Limitations, Opportunities and Threats, and in order to achieve its Milestones, future strategy of the Centre will focus on the following 10-point agenda:

- The Centre will focus its activities in in the area of regional economic cooperation especially in South and South East Asia and in Eastern and Southern Africa. International and regional/national activities will be conducted in partnership with overseas centres of CUTS International.
- Identification of new areas on trade and development issues where a vacuum exists will be regularly done by analysing their Political, Economic, Social and Technological implications.



Future strategy of the Centre will focus on 10-point agenda

- More emphasis will be placed on network- and fieldwork-based action research so as to collect and analyse ground level evidence on trade and trade-related developmental issues.
- Evidence-based advocacy targeting policy and practice changes – subject- and issue-specific policy environment will be analysed to identify policy gaps and policy tasks and advocate for how policies are to be treated in future. The process of doing stakeholder and institutional mapping will be strengthened for more focused policy advocacy and networking.
- Dynamic outreach to multiple stakeholder groups by organising discussions and debates on emerging and contemporary issues on trade and development – the subscriber base of CUTS Trade Forum and CUTS South Asia E-Group will be used for this purpose.
- International Advisory Board of the Centre will be reconstituted and more emphasis will be placed on dynamically engaging them with the Centre's activities.
- Organisational assessment – at least one assessment will be held during the next five years and there will be in-house appraisal on an annual basis.
- Project assessment – development cooperation partners will be requested to assess all major, long-term projects in respect to their Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability, and in terms of their Value for Money.
- More emphasis will be placed on human resource development/management through in-house capacity building, especially on policy advocacy and networking and by team-building and retaining good quality staff, particularly at the managerial level, through monetary and non-monetary incentives.
- Efforts will be made to get more number of regular and long-term support from development cooperation partners including programme area wise core support.

Human Resource Development/Management

In order to achieve the above-stated agenda, it is essential that human resources are dynamically productive and motivated. Taking into account the relevant expertise and experience, project implementation and other tasks will be managed more efficiently with delegation of power and responsibilities. The objectives of human resource development/management are to:



Human resources are dynamically productive and motivated

- accomplish delegation of work in a scientific manner and on the basis of motivating human resources to act as agents of change
- build capacity through internal and external training
- focus on team building and retention of good quality staff, particularly at managerial level

At present, the Centre has 20 staff and ten of them are female including one at the senior level and three at the middle level. The composition of its human resource capacity is as follows:

- Senior (managerial as well as research/advocacy/networking): 5
- Middle: 6
- Junior: 9

The composition of the human resources of the Centre is bottom-heavy given the nature of its work – overall it is relatively more intensive to network-based action research along with advocacy so as to achieve results and outcomes. Keeping in mind gender and other factors relating to diversity of human resources, over time, human resources capacity will be increased appropriately.

More emphasis will be placed on programme area wise team-building and their development, and gender and other dimensions of diversity in human resources. A separate team for policy advocacy, networking and outreach, and capacity building will be developed. There will be programme area wise consolidation of human resources.

It is noteworthy that the Centre will focus on consolidation and expansion of activities in the three programmatic areas of WTO Issues, Regional Economic Cooperation and Developmental Issues, and on Cross Cutting Issue of Capacity Building. However, with current trend of proliferation of preferential trade agreements greater emphasis will be on the regional economic cooperation area without losing the importance of other functional areas.

Network-based action research along with advocacy



Financial Position and Projection

Over the last five years, the Centre has received short- and long-term support from the following governmental and non-governmental sources:

- Government of India – Department of Commerce, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Ministry of Textiles
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland
- Department for International Development, UK
- British High Commission, New Delhi
- Royal Norwegian Embassy, New Delhi
- Commonwealth Secretariat, London
- Oxfam Novib, The Netherlands
- Oxfam India
- The Ford Foundation, USA
- The Asia Foundation, USA
- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, USA
- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, USA
- ClimateWorks Foundation, USA
- TradeMark East Africa
- The Australian Agency for International Development, Australia



In future, many of these development cooperation partners are expected to continue their support to the Centre's activities and some new sources such as SAARC Development Fund are likely to extend support on a long term basis. Furthermore, efforts will be made to partner with internationally-reputed project implementation agencies such as Adam Smith International and universities/ research institutions to access and bid for large-scale trade and trade-related developmental programmes.

From 2013-14 financial year the Centre is expected to receive some major, long-term support including core grant, for its work on regional economic cooperation and developmental issues. Efforts will be made to consolidate this increase in expected turnover and achieve a steady growth over the next five years.

