

CUTS CITEE IN ACTION

JANUARY-MARCH 2019



FORTHCOMING EVENT

Future of Regional Connectivity in South Asia

CUTS International in partnership with the U.S. Department of State organised an event entitled 'Regional Connectivity Conference: South Asia in the Indo-Pacific Context' at New Delhi, on November 01-02, 2018. Following this event, CUTS is continuing its efforts to support the strategic goal of bringing together key interlocutors to discuss challenges and solutions to economic, investment, and security issues relevant to South Asia and the U.S.

This final closed-door roundtable to be held at New Delhi on April 29, 2019 is part of a series of meetings that CUTS has conducted across Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka to deliberate on emerging investment opportunities in this part of the Indo-Pacific region. The objectives are to connect and generate discussion on emerging infrastructure investments among relevant stakeholders of the South Asian region, the U.S.; and leverage existing and possible partnerships and collaborations to promote greater connectivity and advance new policies.

www.cuts-citee.org/SARCC/index.htm



PARTICIPATION

- Veena Vidyadharan participated in a workshop on 'Gender-based Trade and Investment Policy' organised by International Institute for Trade and Development (ITD) at Bangkok on March 25-26, 2019. She shared case studies on '*Enhancing Women's Participation in Cross-border Trade in BBIN Countries*'. She also attended the Advisory Group Meeting on 'Benefit Sharing Strategy for the Meghna Basin' organised by International Union for Conservation of Nature at North East Hill University, Shillong on January 17-19, 2019.
- Sarbjit Singh participated in the Regional Quality Conclave organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry at Jaipur on March 27, 2019. He also attended a Regional Workshop entitled, 'Digital Trade and Future Commerce' organised by ITD at Bangkok on February 25-28, 2019. The objectives of the workshop were to understand the building blocks of digital trade and e-commerce; and comprehend the evolving policy development trends and challenges of fostering e-commerce and future digital trade.



PUBLICATIONS

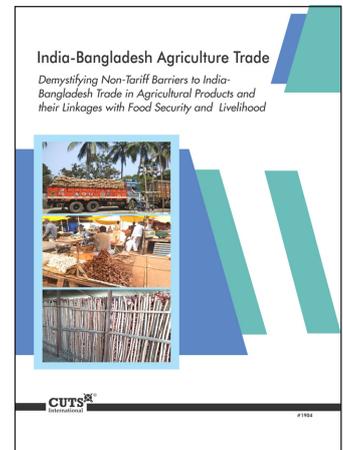
REPORTS

India-Bangladesh Agriculture Trade

Demystifying Non-Tariff Barriers to India-Bangladesh Trade in Agricultural Products and their Linkages with Food Security and Livelihood

This Report attempts to identify existing non-tariff barriers (NTBs) that are restricting agriculture trade between India and Bangladesh and provides feasible recommendations to address them. It focussed on seven land ports in West Bengal and Tripura, and examined 15 agricultural commodities that are traded through these ports. It highlighted some key NTBs that must be addressed and proposes recommendations on short, medium and long term basis to improve the volume of bilateral trade.

www.cuts-citee.org/ntbagr/pdf/project_report-ntbagr.pdf

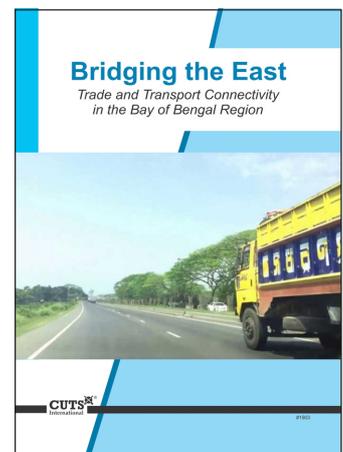


Bridging the East

Trade and Transport Connectivity in the Bay of Bengal Region

This Report aims to assess the impact of cross-border trade, transit and their related protocols on local economic parameters, particularly relating to the livelihoods of direct stakeholders of such cross-border trade and transit with the sub-region. The study is largely based on data and evidence collected through primary work in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar and Nepal, and presents analysis of the views taken from differentiated group of stakeholders involved in and having deep interest on issues of Trade, Transport and Transit Facilitation within these countries.

www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/pdf/Project_Report_on_Bridging_the_EastTrade_and_Transport_Connectivity_in_the_Bay_of_Bengal_Region.pdf

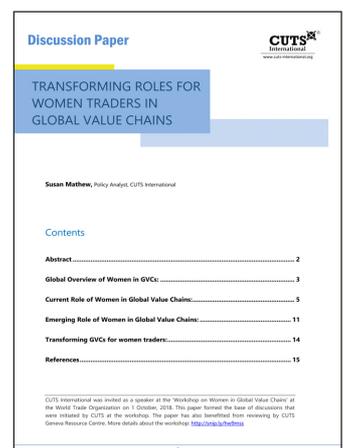


DISCUSSION PAPER

Transforming Roles for Women Traders in Global Value Chains

This Discussion Paper attempts to present the data trends regarding the current role of women in global value chains (GVCs). The paper goes ahead to highlight specific case studies from around the world to highlight the emerging avenues in GVCs, which women traders are creating for themselves as well as their counterparts.

www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Transforming_roles_for_women_traders_in_global_value_chains.pdf





PUBLICATIONS

BRIEFS

Non-Tariff Barriers to India-Bangladesh Agriculture Trade

This Policy Brief provides new insights to NTBs between India-Bangladesh that hamper their bilateral trade in agricultural products. As per our extensive fieldwork conducted in seven selected land ports in West Bengal and Tripura states of India, they can be clubbed under four broad categories. It concludes with issue- and time-specific recommendations to address them.

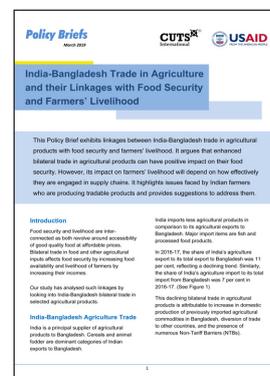
www.cuts-citee.org/ntbagr/pdf/Policy_Brief-Non-Tariff_Barriers_to_India-Bangladesh_Agriculture_Trade.pdf



India-Bangladesh Trade in Agriculture and their Linkages with Food Security and Farmers' Livelihood

This Policy Brief exhibits linkages between India-Bangladesh trade in agricultural products with food security and farmers' livelihood. It argues that enhanced bilateral trade in agricultural products can have positive impact on their food security. However, its impact on farmers' livelihood will depend on how effectively they are engaged in supply chains. It highlights issues faced by Indian farmers who are producing tradable products and provides suggestions to address them.

www.cuts-citee.org/ntbagr/pdf/Policy_Brief-India-Bangladesh_Trade_in_Agriculture_and_their_Linkages_with_Food_Security_and_Farmers_Livelihood.pdf



United we stand, divided we fall

Infrastructural Impediments to Better Connectivity in South Asia

The Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement (BBIN MVA) is an initiative to integrate the BBIN region by facilitating smooth movement of passenger and commercial vehicles across countries in the region. CUTS International carried out a series of rigorous field surveys to get a first-hand perspective on the infrastructure in the region and major impediments to smooth trade. This Policy Brief presents these issues and also proposes the way forward to create an enabling environment for the successful implementation of MVA.

www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/pdf/United_we_stand_divided_we_fall_Infrastructural_Impediments_to_Better_Connectivity_in_South_Asia.pdf



In search of harmony

Strengthening Connectivity among the BBIN Countries

To increase the speed of connectivity, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal have signed a BBIN MVA. This initiative will integrate the BBIN sub-region by facilitating smooth movement of passenger and commercial vehicles across member countries. CUTS International undertook a series of field surveys to understand the political economic scenario in the BBIN region and its impact on cross-border trade. This Policy Brief identifies several political and procedural issues that may hinder trade and suggested remedial measures that could help to create an enabling environment for the successful implementation of MVA.

www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/pdf/In_search_of_harmony_Strengthening_Connectivity_among_the_BBIN_Countries.pdf





PUBLICATIONS

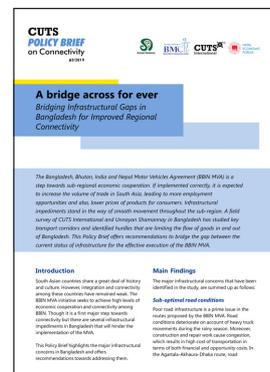
A bridge across for ever

Bridging Infrastructural Gaps in Bangladesh for Improved Regional Connectivity

The BBIN MVA is a step towards sub-regional economic cooperation. If implemented correctly, it is expected to increase the volume of trade in South Asia, leading to more employment opportunities and also, lower prices of products for consumers. Infrastructural impediments stand in the way of smooth movement throughout the sub-region. This Policy Brief offers recommendations to bridge the gap between the current status of infrastructure for the effective execution of the BBIN MVA.

www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/pdf/A_bridge_across_for_ever_Bridging_Infrastructural_Gaps_in_Bangladesh_for_Improved_Regional_Connectivity.pdf

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



Where there is a will, there is a way

Overcoming Politico-Economic Obstacles in Bangladesh for Better Regional Connectivity

Effective enhancement of regional economic cooperation and trade volumes require strong and stable political institutions. This Policy Brief discusses political barriers in Bangladesh identified through a field survey conducted by CUTS International with Unnayan Shamannay. It also offers recommendations to overcome these political obstacles, which will act as a border for the effective implementation of the BBIN MVA.

www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/pdf/Where_there_is_a_will_there_is_a_way_Overcoming_Political_Economic_Obstacles_in_Bangladesh_for_Better_Regional_Connectivity.pdf

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



The good earth

Landlocked Bhutan Identifies Infrastructural Obstacles to Improved Regional Connectivity

Bhutan, being a landlocked nation, needs to develop its infrastructure urgently because the present state of infrastructure in Bhutan is at sub-optimal level. This infrastructural development will be helpful for Bhutan in ideally utilising its economic potential. Further, this development will impact the livelihood of the local economy, women and ultimately resulting in reduction of poverty. Therefore, this Policy Brief brings out issues related to hard infrastructure in Bhutan affecting connectivity, and offers suggestions to overcome them.

www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/pdf/The_good_earth_Landlocked_Bhutan_Identifies_Infrastructural_Obstacles_to_Improved_Regional_Connectivity.pdf

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





PUBLICATIONS

To be or not to be – that is the question

Bhutan's Concerns with Political Economy Pertaining to Regional Connectivity

The effectiveness of a regional connectivity initiative lies in the strength of individual country's political efficacy and institutions. The member countries of the BBIN MVA must trust each other and also win the trust of their citizens in order to successfully implement it. This Policy Brief identifies issues relating to political economy that are existent in Bhutan and suggests necessary interventions by the government to successfully implement the BBIN MVA.

www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/pdf/

[To_be_or_not_to_be_that_is_the_question_Bhutan_Concerns_with_Political_Economy_Pertaining_to_Regional_Connectivity.pdf](#)



For the greater common good

Addressing Infrastructural Inadequacies in India for Improved Regional Connectivity

Availability of infrastructure – both hard and soft – is an essential prerequisite for the successful implementation of connectivity initiatives, such as BBIN MVA. The field survey of CUTS International has identified key infrastructural obstacles in Indian context that are hindering the flow of goods in and among the BBIN nations. This Policy Brief highlights possible remedies to these infrastructural impediments which will help to create an enabling environment for the successful implementation of the BBIN MVA.

www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/pdf/

[For_the_greater_common_good_Addressng_Infrastructural_Inadequacies_in_India_for_Improved_Regional_Connectivity.pdf](#)



Love thy neighbour as thy self

India's Politico-Economic Dilemmas with Regional Connectivity

The BBIN MVA is an initiative to integrate the BBIN region by facilitating smooth movement of passenger and commercial vehicles across the countries in the region. With an objective to create an enabling and inclusive environment for trade, transport and transit facilitation, CUTS International undertook field surveys to understand the political economic scenario in the BBIN sub-region and its impact on cross-border trade. This Policy Brief identifies several political and procedural issues that may hinder trade and highlighted possible remedies to these impediments to stimulate smoother and successful implementation of the MVA.

www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/pdf/Love_thy_neighbor_as_thy_self_India_Political-Economic_Dilemmas_with_Regional_Connectivity.pdf

[Love_thy_neighbor_as_thy_self_India_Political-Economic_Dilemmas_with_Regional_Connectivity.pdf](#)





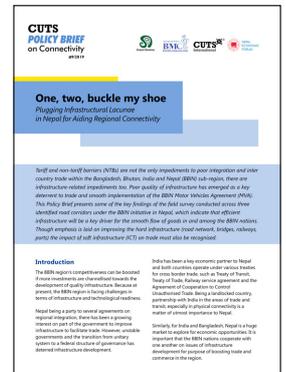
PUBLICATIONS

One, two, buckle my shoe Plugging Infrastructural Lacunae in Nepal for Aiding Regional Connectivity

Poor quality of infrastructure has emerged as a key deterrent to trade and smooth implementation of the BBIN MVA. This Policy Brief presents some of the key findings of the field survey conducted across three identified road corridors under the BBIN initiative in Nepal, which indicate that efficient infrastructure will be a key driver for the smooth flow of goods in and among the BBIN nations. Though emphasis is laid on improving the hard infrastructure (road network, bridges, railways, ports) the impact of soft infrastructure (ICT) on trade must also be recognised.

www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/pdf/One_two_buckle_my_shoe_Plugging_Infrastructural_Lacunae_in_Nepal_for_Aiding_Regional_Connectivity.pdf

One_two_buckle_my_shoe_Plugging_Infrastructural_Lacunae_in_Nepal_for_Aiding_Regional_Connectivity.pdf



Charity begins at home Nepal's Politico-Economic Concerns Regarding Improved Regional Connectivity

Despite various challenges and differences, countries in this region are looking beyond SAARC by establishing its own sub-regional grouping having various facets to it. Implementation of BBIN MVA is one such initiative that is projected to benefit all, until and unless conflicting issues are resolved bilaterally and/or multilaterally. This Policy Brief brings out several political and procedural issues that may hinder trade and restrict Nepal's participation in BBIN MVA and pinpoints possible remedies to these impediments to stimulate smoother and successful implementation of MVA.

www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/pdf/Charity_begins_at_home_Nepal_Politico-Economic_Concerns_Regarding_Improved_Regional_Connectivity.pdf

Charity_begins_at_home_Nepal_Politico-Economic_Concerns_Regarding_Improved_Regional_Connectivity.pdf



A bridge not too far Exploring Opportunities for Strengthening Regional Connectivity through Infrastructural Improvements in Myanmar

This Policy Brief identifies several key infrastructure gaps along the studied corridors in Myanmar that hinder the effective implementation of regional road connectivity initiatives. These gaps are not only limited to hard infrastructure, but also related to soft infrastructure. It highlights possible measures to develop infrastructure in Myanmar for its successful integration with Bangladesh and India.

www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/pdf/A_bridge_not_too_far.pdf





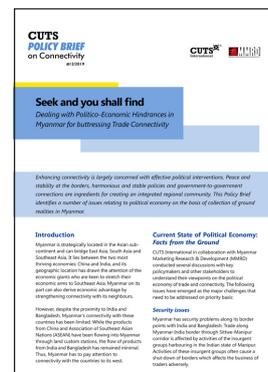
PUBLICATIONS

Seek and you shall find

Dealing with Politico-Economic Hindrances in Myanmar for buttressing Trade Connectivity

Enhancing connectivity is largely concerned with effective political interventions. Peace and stability at the borders, harmonious and stable policies and government-to-government connections are ingredients for creating an integrated regional community. This Policy Brief identifies a number of issues relating to political economy on the basis of collection of ground realities in Myanmar.

www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/pdf/Seek_and_you_shall_find.pdf



IN MEDIA

Need a Fresh Strategy to Let Economics Trump Politics

Mint, January 31, 2019, By Pradeep S Mehta

A lot has been written about the recently released Strategy For New India @ 75 NITI Aayog. For the uninitiated, it outlines economic priorities of the government with an ambitious goal of transforming India to a US\$4tn economy by 2022-23 from US\$2.7tn in 2017-18. It sets the target of increasing investment rate to 35 per cent from 29 per cent, doubling exports to US\$800bn, and the share of manufacturing to 25 per cent from 15 per cent in the next five years. This essentially means the economy has to expand at a compounded annual growth rate of 8.5-9 per cent during the coming years. This cannot happen in a business-as-usual approach. It would require fresh thinking.

www.cuts-citee.org/article-need_a_fresh_strategy_to_let_economics_trump_politics.htm

Leveraging India's Trade Competitiveness

Asian Age, February 14, 2019, By Pradeep S Mehta

Job creation and farmers' welfare are among the key contemporary challenges of our country. Thanks to the 'Make in India' campaign, more than 120 new manufacturing units have created about 4,50,000 jobs in the mobile phone industry over the past four years. Similarly, a new agriculture export policy envisages the establishment of agro-specific zones to enable farmers to gain from international markets. Undoubtedly attention is being focused on these critical issues which will help us to move forward.

www.cuts-citee.org/article-Leveraging_Indias_trade_competitiveness.htm