

Quarterly Progress Report-January 2015 to March 2015

Project Title: ‘Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio in South Asia’ (SDIP)

Name of the Organisation: CUTS International

Supported by: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Government of Australia

Duration: January 2015 to March 2015

1. Activities carried out by CUTS in the months of January-February 2015

1.1 In continuation of activities under CUTS Work plan, policy mapping exercise in the domains of agriculture, water and energy was conducted in the month of January-February. For the initial snapshot, the team looked into various policies and acts under each of the three domains in the five project countries-Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan. Country specific policies at National and State level are included in the preliminary snapshots. In India, apart from Central government policies, the team also looked into the policies of various states-where CUTS SDIP activity is planned to be carried out.

The output of this activity will be an open online database of relevant policies. The database will also include a brief introduction to the policies. It will additionally look at the key issues and hence contribute to the gap analysis. The database can be accessed by clicking on the following link http://www.cuts-citee.org/SDIP/Policy_Mapping.htm. It will be updated quarterly and, as and when policy changes are seen in the relevant SDIP domains.

The main objective of the activity is to provide a database of existing policies relevant to SDIP, to coin advocacy messages through gap analysis and track changes over time.

1.2 The Diagnostic study report has been prepared and is under review. The report will be shared with all the SDIP partners and other stakeholders by the month of April 2015.

Brief information about the study:

With the assistance from our partners, CUTS conducted a quick diagnostic study across the basins including all the five project countries. The objective of this study is to validate the findings of desk research with local perspectives, coin initial advocacy messages and to identify the entry points and prioritise CUTS interventions. The diagnostic study helped CUTS in identifying the broad entry points to streamline its interventions in the SDIP focus areas. In light of the preliminary findings of the study, it was decided that CUTS will undertake some focused studies on the issues of Groundwater Regulation, Sustainable Agricultural practices, Value Added Market Chains in Agriculture and Small and Micro Renewable Energy Deployment.

1.3 CUTS made on presentation on “**Water-Energy-Food Security Nexus: Mainstreaming Sustainable Development for Food Security in South Asia**” in Sustainable Development Policy Institute’s (SDPI) Seventeenth Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) in Islamabad, Pakistan. Following the presentation CUTS submitted a paper on the above mentioned topic. The paper has been accepted for publication by the SDC community and is presently being peer reviewed.

After its publication in the SDC Anthology Book, this paper will be the first output of CUTS as a part of the diagnostic study.

1.4 CUTS submitted its response to IOD PARC on the Change Pathways document. Information to provision the evidences in the document was supported through the inputs from CUTS own research and from the help of its strategic partners. Additionally, CUTS also sent a separate note on the methodology that it followed for its mapping exercises and put forth further clarification on the aspects of Change Pathways where CUTS will be able to contribute.

1.5 CIRC, New Delhi in collaboration with Chatham House conducted an event on **Valuing Vital Resources: A Reform Approach for Pricing of Water, Energy and Food in India** on 15-16 January. The objective of this event was to sensitise the policy community on linkages between the three sectors and identify reform agenda for realistic valuation of these vital resources to ensure sustainable access to these resources.

The first Open-Ed titled “**India’s Silent Spring**” as an output of this event can be accessed by clicking on the following link: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/indias-silent-spring/article7071485.ece>

The report of this event is under preparation and will be shared soon.

2. Activities carried out by CUTS in the month of March 2015

2.1 CUTS participated in the a two –day workshop on M&E focal point was organized by DFAT at Bangkok to discuss the M&E framework of SDIP. The outcomes for CUTS from this workshop are as follows:

- *Targeting significant progress in terms of activities (both CUTS & partners) before the project Mid-Term Review in July.*
- *Development of Result Frame Work on the premises of a Logical Framework Analysis.*
- *Designing of perception survey factoring in gender and social inclusion dimension.*
- *Preparation of the Annual organizational report (including SDIP and other work on energy which CCIER and CRC undertake) and Cover Brief.*
- *Finalization of venue for the second SDIP Annual Dialogue in New Delhi.*

2.2 CUTS is preparing for the 2nd Workshop with its Strategic Partners. Building on the first workshop, this second workshop aims to determine the progress of partnership between CUTS and its nine strategic partners in South Asia. It will deliberate on the activities conducted by the partners over the last year and will pave way to streamline their future activity plan.

The Workshop will be held on 1st May in New Delhi

Objectives of the Workshop:

- *Update the partners about the recent developments in SDIP and share CUTS’ work under SDIP*

- *Discuss the progress of partners' activities in respective basin and further streamline them as per the recent developments in the project*
- *Discuss the M&E framework and results framework*
- *Discuss the perception study; its objective, methodology and partners' engagement*
- *Partnership Health check-up*

3. CUTS Strategic Partners' Activity Progress Updates

S. No.	Partner Name	Progress and activity snapshots with links to reports
1.	NEFORD, Lucknow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In SDIP project, besides research and policy studies, public awareness and advocacy, field activities dealing with climate change and monsoonal uncertainties have also been included. The rain-fed agriculture in most part of U.P. suffers from frequent drought, flood, salinity and terminal heat. Diversification on on-farm is considered one of the potential approaches to reduce losses due to sudden changes in climatic parameters. In view of this, NEFORD started an activity called 'Diversification of Gene-pool on-farm'. The results obtained from these activities over the period January to March, 2015 are described below : <u>On-farm Activities :</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversification of gene-pool : Field Trials Like in Kharif 2014-15, we repeated the 'Mother' and 'Baby' trial approach also during Rabi 2014-15, as means for varietal diversification to suit farmers' targeted sub-eco-systems to reduce losses due to climate change. In this case, the farmers were provided with the seeds of large number of varieties (20) for conducting 'Mother' and 'Baby' trials. In 'Mother' trials, all the 20 varieties were grown by a farmer on a larger plot and the same set was repeated by 50 farmers. In the 'Baby' trials, a combination of 3 out of 20 varieties were grown by 1500 individual farmers. Participatory varietal selection approach is followed to rank the varieties according to farmers' own choice and need. • Seed production : The purpose of the participatory selection in this project can be fully served only if the seed production of the selected varieties is also initiated side by side. In view of this, a farm-level seed production system is being promoted, in which farmers will be trained in the process of seed-production, processing and distribution and encouraged to take up seed-production themselves. To achieve this, during Rabi 2014-15, 120 kg seeds (40 kg each) of 3 varieties PSW16, HW2045 and Raj 4120 were provided to the farmers to produce seed. The seed-fields are being regularly monitored for maintaining quality by rouging out undesirable plants and weeds. • Measurement of weather parameters : 5 <i>i</i>-buttons have been installed on 5 different farmers' fields to

collect hourly daily temperature and humidity. The weather parameters will be later on co-related with the crop productivity to see if there is significant change due to changes in these parameters.

- **Public Awareness and Advocacy :**

- **Human Resource Development :**

A two-day training on “**On-farm seed production**” was jointly organized by Narendra Dev University of Agriculture and Technology (NDUAT), Faizabad and NEFORD in village Chaanwar, Ghazipur on 24-25th February 2015. In all, there were 50 farmers from different villages of the neighboring districts – Ghazipur, Azamgarh, Ballia & Mau, who have been participating in the field related activities of the SDIP project. Six scientists from NDUAT led by Dr. R.D.S. Yadav, in assistance with, NEFORD staff conducted the training that consisted of both theory and practical. grain, pests and the precautions in seed storage.

- **Field Visits and Gosthies :**

During the period under report, a number of field visits and farmers' gosthies were organized to create awareness among the farmers about the climate change and its impact on agriculture. Some of these visits were organized to collect data on the plant growth characteristics and ranking of varieties accordingly. Total 1367 farmers, scientists and others participated in these activities.

- **District Agricultural Development Forum Meeting :**

In our earlier report (October to December, 2014), we have mentioned about the creation of District Agricultural Development Forum and its first meeting, held on 26th October, 2014. The second meeting of the forum was organized 22nd February, 2015 in which about 75 participants from various fields and organizations participated and discussed the issue of monsoonal uncertainties and its impact on crop productivities.

- **Research and policy studies :**

The following studies are under-progress

- i. Status of ground-water resource and its sustainable development in U.P.
- ii. Resource conservation technologies for sustainable agricultural development.
- iii. Water, energy, labour and cost-saving farm-machineries and implements

- During the period under report, January to March, 2015, NEFORD has been able to reach out quite a large number of stakeholders and created awareness about sustainable agriculture development, climate change and adaptation strategies. *About 2998 people were reached out through our various public awareness activities, out of which 517 i.e. 17% were the women participants.*

2. RGVN, Assam

• **Sandy Soil Cultivation**

Sandy soil cultivation technique is being piloted in Goalpara district of Assam. This is a sustainable agricultural technique used in areas which are sandy and unfit for crop cultivation. Two Self-help groups (SHG) comprising of 15 women each are doing this practice, namely Kahua SHG and Pragati SHG. Ash Gourd, Sponge Gourd, Ridge Gourd and Pumpkin are the four types of vegetables grown for Sandy Soil Vegetable cultivation in Saradarpara village, Krishnai, Goalpara.

- A study has been started on: **‘Potentiality assessment of flood resistance crops in Assam’**.

- **4 more leaflets** have been designed on sustainable agricultural practices in English language, bringing the total to six. The leaflets are being translated into Hindi and the local language for greater dissemination.

The leaflets are on: *Agriculture Water Management, System of Root Intensification, Vermicompost, Floating Bed, Sandy Soil and Pheromone Trap.*

- **A study was done by RGVN under CUTS SDIP project in Morigaon district of Assam during the last quarter.** The study covered 500 small and marginal farmers, especially women. The study was carried out by questionnaire, interview and PRA methods. The study focused mainly on water availability and Irrigational techniques used, agriculture and land holding.

It covered four different villages of Morigaon district Konwargaon, Khulagaon-Nizarapar, Bankukurajan, Monoha, Monoha-kacharigaon and Monoha-nasatra.

The study is now being finalised and will be shared with all the partners.

- **Pilot with Flood resistant water resistant seeds from IRRI** NFSM-IRRI demonstrations (100 ha each) in stress prone areas of India (2014-15)

- The main objective of the demonstration is to create awareness about stress tolerant rice Varieties (Swarna Sub-1 and Ciherang Sub-1 variety in case of RGVN) to improve and stabilize the rice productivity in stress prone environments.
- The selected site includes Barpeta district and Dhemaji district which are conducive to floods and drought.
- The demonstrations were conducted in a contiguous block to compare with farmer's practices and existing varieties. The blocks of Barpeta district are Chenga and Barpeta and Dhemaji block of Dhemaji district.
- 4 villages were covered under Chenga block, 8 villages under Barpeta block of Barpeta district.
- 4 villages were covered under Dhemaji block of Dhemaji district.
- 3.51 tonnes of Swarna Sub-1 seed variety were

distributed among 595 women farmers (348 in Barpeta district and 247 in Dhemaji district)

- 1 tonne of Ciherang Sub-1 variety were distributed among 200 women farmers in Barpeta district.
- Selection of beneficiaries was done in a participatory manner by holding meetings in the village by explaining the objectives of the demonstrations and role and responsibilities including expectations from the participating farmer.
- *100% women farmers were covered under the demonstration.*

- **Off grid energy sources:**

Due to the undergoing ethnic conflict in Baksa district in the Assam-Bhutan border, Dolatkhowa village in Assam – Meghalaya border has been recommended for knowledge dissemination on solar energy. The village is very remote and is not on the grid. There are 47 households in the village living at subsistence level. SHGs will be formed in the area and information on solar lights will be shared with people. Solar light plates have been procured and will be distributed to the SHGs.

3. IGS-BASIX, Bihar

- During this period **53 meetings were conducted in 7 districts of north and south basin of the river Ganga in Bihar** comprising of farmers, farmer groups & organization , women groups & organization, civil society organizations, experts of agriculture, water , energy and activists.
- Continuous training, exposure and institution building support is being extended to the farmers and farmers organizations towards adoption of improved practices, seed and technologies to improve the productivity and reduce the cost of cultivation.
- In Munger 392 farmers did wheat cultivation through “**Zero Tillage**” while the farmers of other areas are being exposed to the same. The training is being provided through the help of Krishi Vikas Kendras (KVKs).
- **Women farmers** have been attached to the **Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA)** and they are getting nutritional kit for doing kitchen gardening. They have also been provided with starting kit for Mushroom cultivation. All in all, *135 women of 10 groups are being benefited through this convergence in Gaya and East Champaran districts of Bihar.*
- Training regarding Animal Husbandry was also provided to the farmers of village Motihari in collaboration with KVK, Motihari to enhance milking capacity of the animal improved. The participants were awarded certificate for the 3 days training programme at KVK by KVK and IGS officials.
- 150 Farmer Interest Groups of East Champaran districts were mobilised and sent to Pusa Agriculture University, Samastipur

	for crop training and cultivation of “Moong” through convergence with ATMA.
4. SAWTEE, Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAWTEE has been carrying out extensive literature review not only on the topics to be covered—vegetable and fruits trade, and chure destruction and water resources—but also on the methodological part to carry out the research. • For the research, SAWTEE is preparing the questionnaire and pre-testing them by April 2015. It shall be ready for field study by May. Literature review will help in identifying better field sites for the research topics. • In the case of Chure, SAWTEE have identified potential site for field study, which is the Kamala River Basin. The Kamala River originates from the Churia Range and flows through Nepal and Indian state of Bihar. Kamala River joins the Saptakoshi River in India which merges into the Ganges. • SAWTEE will be conducting interviews with key informants (KI) and perception survey in the chosen site. The KI interviews will be done with few district level government officials (such as district level officers working at district development committees, watershed management office, forest office, Janakpur customs office) in Sindhuli and Dhanusha districts. This will give SAWTEE a better understanding on local level issues related to extraction and export of gravel, sand, stones and their on local livelihoods. The perception survey will be carried out with residents living on the river banks of these two districts (sample will be selected using purposive sampling).
5. US, Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research note on "Water management policy and regulation in Bangladesh" has been accomplished. It will be public soon after final reviewing process. • Data collection for "Quantifying water needs (usage) in agriculture" from secondary sources has been completed. It will be public soon after final reviewing process. • The review of HECMOTE (Heavy Circular moving Object's Triggering Energy) conversion technology and the financing mechanism of the system have been going on as novel off-grid power system in Bangladesh. • Tools have been prepared for the field survey on farmers to reveal their perception on agricultural policies and institutions in Ganges and Brahmaputra basin.
6. SDPI, Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDPI has built the work plan and detailed activity plan for the year 2015 and shared it with CUTS. Frequent skype sessions with CUTS led to finalization of this plan. • In accordance to the work plan set out SDPI held a talk show on the nexus of water, food and energy crisis, through its very own SDTV. The programme is in editing phase and will be available online on SDTV website shortly. • Furthermore, SDPI team worked to research on the matters of agricultural loans, cost of irrigation structures and its recovery

at the Federal level and in the province of Punjab. This information was provided to our CUTS as requested. SDPI is also working to provide CUTS with detailed information on agricultural policies so that the existing document shared may be updated.

- SDPI also carried out CSO and media mapping exercise. The media mapping report included local newspapers (both English and Urdu), SDPI's own journals and magazines, electronic media channels, journals as well as weekly and monthly magazines covering issues on SDIP specific themes. CSO mapping exercise is currently being updated and will be shared with partners soon.
- Articles published under the SDIP themes include:
 - [En route to climate change adaptation](#)
 - [Connecting the dots](#)
 - [Resource rich or poor](#)
 - [The gendered face of calamity](#)
 - [Dams for progress](#)
 - [Lessons from the petrol crisis](#)
 - [Energy security](#)
 - [Conventional gas for conventional minds](#)
- Papers published under the SDIP themes include:
Fund-raising-for-Energy-Projects-in-Pakistan (Working Paper - 149)
http://www.sdpi.org/publications/publication_details-668-7.html
- Events:
Climate Change, Social Vulnerability and Food Security in Pakistan
http://sdpi.org/policy_outreach/event_details491-2015.html
Pakistan's Wheat Economy and Food Security: A Review of Various Policy Perspectives (Lecture)
http://sdpi.org/policy_outreach/event_details489-2015.html

**7. SNV,
Bhutan**

- Under the Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) project, SNV structured a re-organisation and training of Water Users' Association committee (WUAC) and general awareness on water use to the Water Users Association (WUA) for Chuzagang and Sershong Gewogs under Sarpang District from 8-13 March 2015.
- The activity was organised on cost sharing basis in light of poor performance of the existing WUAC that revealed to be due to imperceptible conflicts and diverse views due to limited capacity in managing water and maintaining the irrigation scheme. The scheme crosses cuts two Gewogs with vast areas requiring water for agriculture for more than 500 beneficiaries.
- The discussions and training was held at Chuzagang, and the 1st day of the discussions and training was attended by more than 45 participants including the Gup, Administrative

officer, Tshogpas, previous members of the WUAC and the Extension officers. A review of the irrigation scheme, roles and functions of the WUAC, channel maintenance, water distributions and beneficiary's satisfaction besides endorsement and/or election of new members were tabled to move forward for the development of users friendly and climate smart Bylaws on the first day of the program.

- A total of more than 130 beneficiaries from Chuzagang and Sershong participated in the discussions meeting on the 2nd day. The general discussions meeting was discussed on the importance of managing water for agriculture, roles and responsibilities of beneficiaries in managing and protecting water for increased crop production besides election of new members of the WUAC and to record feedback from the beneficiaries. The discussions concluded as to how the WUAC should be reorganised in the context of climate-change and significance of water for increased food security. The WUACs training and bylaws drafting with the reorganised WUAC members continued and accomplished on the morning of 13 March 2015.

**8. CRRID,
Chandigarh**

- Three policy briefs have been finalised and will be published soon after final reviewing process. These are:
 - *Remodeling Water Use in Indian Punjab for Efficiency and Sustainability*
 - *Agriculture Development in Punjab: Problems and Prospects*
 - *Energy Sector in Indian Punjab: Current Issues, Problems and Future Vision (Sub-National Perspective)*