

Report on  
**CUTS Strategic Partner's Workshop**  
**Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio (SDIP) Project**  
January 29-30, 2016, Hotel Metropolitan and Spa, New Delhi

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## 1. Background

1.1 Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) with the support of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Government of Australia organised a two-day workshop with its strategic partner organisations under Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio (SDIP) Project in New Delhi at Hotel Metropolitan and Spa on 29-30 January, 2016.

1.2 This workshop was a follow-up of the two previous partner workshops conducted at Kathmandu on May 15-16, 2014, and at Delhi on May 01, 2015. More details of these workshops are available at: <http://www.cuts-citee.org/SDIP/Advocacy.htm>

### 1.3 Objectives of the Workshop

- Share the key findings of perception survey, CUTS' advocacy messages and operational strategy with partners;
- Discuss partners' advocacy messages and strategy for each location and at basin level;
- Identify the shared goals and develop a joint operational strategy for advocacy and
- Discuss CUTS' monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework and the linkages of partners' activities to portfolio objective and goals of SDIP.



## 2. Highlights and Proceedings

2.1 Broadly, the workshop was undertaken to look at, firstly, how the advocacy messages will be taken forward at various policy making levels. These messages will be on two levels: Firstly, is higher-level messages (at national or regional-level) done mostly by CUTS and the other is local-level messages (state-level or district-level) done by the partners. Secondly, to frame a strategy for a strong media outreach and civil society organisations' (CSOs') outreach. Thirdly, to present the initial findings of the perception survey study of selected variables to make a strong case for advocacy purpose. Fourthly, to extract interesting but important stories from the field study. Finally, to balance and coherent the advocacy messages with all above components.

2.2 CUTS' team had already shared its advocacy messages and plans with the partners. Based on the CUTS' advocacy messages, country partners shared the selected advocacy messages relevant to their locations from the project pillars viz. agriculture, water and energy, which will be undertaken in the coming five months. All the partners selected

their messages based on the area of expertise and local requirements. Along with key advocacy messages, CUTS' team also shared the change agents, operational strategy and potential tangible outcomes of the project.

- 2.3 SDIP's country and state-level partners shared their local-level advocacy messages and strategies to achieve those targets. They also discussed different issues related to the primary survey (perception survey) of the study and some interesting case studies, such as in the context of ground water issues in Assam. CUTS team also shared broad national-level advocacy messages and preliminary findings from the survey and study. It was observed and pointed out in the workshop that the survey data was not showing the comprehensive picture and inclusion of qualitative data from key informant interviews (KII) will make a value addition to it.
- 2.4 Major discussion focussed on the concept of knowledge sharing as it was pointed out from Uttar Pradesh partner (NEFORD) that cross-border trading is more difficult than sharing knowledge in South Asia. CUTS' initiative of rice seeds trade and knowledge sharing was also highlighted and appreciated by the partners. This was achieved through a different initiative called 'addressing barriers to rice seeds trade between India and Bangladesh' with the support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. It was considered as the stepping stone towards knowledge sharing in agricultural products for SDIP project.
- 2.5 It was suggested during the workshop that national-level advocacy messages should be framed in coherence with the local-level advocacy messages. Other major issues discussed in the workshop included:
- Connecting small and marginal farmers to markets and major role of Farmer Producer Organisation (FPOs);
  - Need to look at political problems of the countries and establish more small dams or check dams to manage the flow of water;
  - Need for crop diversification to establish inter FPOs' network;
  - Need to follow initiatives like conversion of land less labourers into cultivators;
  - Need for biomass energy generation in Bangladesh through cow dung; and
  - Need to generate wind energy in Bhutan to take policies from papers to effective implementation.
- 2.6 The agenda of cross country water sharing was also flagged as the major component of the workshop. Nepal partner (South Asian Watch on Trade Economics and Environment or SAWTEE) highlighted the rapid degradation of Chure region ground water due to excessive extraction of soil and water. It was pointed out that traditional water sharing is losing the importance these days; it should be documented and given more attention for better results. Bhutan partner (SNV) emphasised to establish paid water services as it has been initiated recently in Bhutan.

2.7 It was also suggested in the workshop that validation of data should be done and disaggregated data should also include gender dimensions. The report of the project and advocacy meetings will focus on gender dimension.

2.8 It was also ensured in the meeting that a formal network of like-minded CSOs will be created. Each partner will suggest some prominent CSOs working in their areas on the domains of change of SDIP and a joint statement will be released with then cooperation of those CSOs in the final regional-level workshop, which is supposed to be held in New Delhi.



2.9 Besides, an M&E activity was conducted to gather partner perspectives on SDIP and CUTS' partnership. During this activity, a graphic on the linkages between CUTS' activities, advocacy messages, SDIP goals, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was presented.

### **3. Way Forward**

Largely, the activities/work to be undertaken in the remaining period (five months) of the project comprise:

#### **3.1 Publications**

- Perception survey data (quantitative and qualitative) and details of key informant interviews will be compiled and final report will be published by the end of February.
- Four discussion papers, respectively on agriculture value chain, hydro water politics, ground water and renewable energy will be published by the end of February.
- Two Compendiums on case studies on sustainable agriculture practices and successful business models in renewable energy will be published by the end of February.

#### **3.2 Media advocacy**

- Media workshops along with publications of series of op-eds and newspaper articles will be published. Publication has already started while workshops will be organised from March onwards.

#### **3.3 Advocacy meetings**

- All the partners will organise advocacy events on selected advocacy messages in their respective states/countries in cooperation with CUTS and other relevant partners. CUTS will organise a regional workshop/meeting in New Delhi in May-June, 2016 for national and regional-level advocacy.

### **3.4 Other major initiatives**

- SDIP internal M&E has already started off. It will also include partners and their activities and report of M&E will be shared with partners and DFAT in May-June, 2016.
- Advocacy messages will be revised keeping in mind the messages of partners and these will be used in various one to one meetings and workshops for advocacy purposes.
- CUTS has proposed to prepare a joint statement from supporting civil society organisations (CSOs), which is supposed to be released in regional meeting to be held in New Delhi. The draft version of this statement will be prepared by the end of February and it will be shared with the partners for their inputs.

**Coordinates of Participants**

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