

Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio (SDIP)

Minutes of the Review Meeting

Date: 30 January, 2014 (09.30 hr onwards)

Location: Australian High Commission, New Delhi

Present: Ryan Thew, First Secretary, DFAT

Bipul Chatterjee, Deputy Executive Director, CUTS International

Archana Jatkar, Coordinator & Deputy Head, CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment

Agenda of the Review Meeting

- (1) Review of IOD PARC /CUTS /DFAT workshop
 - a. views and plans going forward
- (2) Review of partnering arrangements
 - a. DFAT views on status of partnership
 - b. CUTS views on status of partnership
 - c. Agreed action items
- (3) Update on the broader worlds of DFAT and CUTS
 - a. Current priorities and issues affecting each party
 - b. Implications for SDIP

Major points of Discussion

- ✚ Both DFAT & CUTS reviewed IOD PARC/CUTS/DFAT workshop held on 16 & 17th January, 2014 and agreed that it was a useful exercise in terms of exploring the roles of each of these organisation in SDIP. IOD PARC will engage in monitoring and evaluation of the entire portfolio by looking at this partnership narrative from the perspective of development outcomes as well as through organisational outcomes i.e. evaluation of the success and non-successes of this new partnership approach. While, CUTS role is to engage in advocacy for policy and governance reforms at trans-boundary levels and thereby support regional networks for policy dialogues and collaborations on the subject.
- ✚ CUTS role in SDIP thus is to engage in policy research and advocacy, generating policy dialogues, to conduct CSO & media mapping and outreach and to undertake/organise annual SDIP Partnership Dialogues meetings in consultation with DFAT and IOD PARC.
- ✚ CUTS has prepared a draft Activity Plan that will be available for discussion at the SDIP inception meeting to be held in Canberra. The activity plan contains proposed project activities in a sequential manner keeping in view CUTS overall role in SDIP and potential engagement in the Trade Facilitation Investment Portfolio (TFIP). There was a detailed discussion on how best the shared space between the two pillars of SDIP and TFIP can be explored vis-à-vis role of CUTS and its strength on trade issues, although CUTS' initial efforts must focus on the SDIP.
- ✚ The activity plan will therefore be developed in a way that explores the interface between these two pillars the inter-linkages and importance of garnering maximum & effective benefits from this.

There was a brief discussion on proposed structure of planned activities budget i.e. approximately 50 per cent of the budget will be spent on planned activities, 20 per cent of the budget will be utilised for salaries/honorariums, 10 per cent as Overheads, and remaining 20 per cent will be flexible so that it allows participation of team members in relevant conferences such as South Asia Economic Summit, Sustainable Development Conference.

- ✚ It was also discussed that CUTS will engage in policy research to the extent of finding the existing gaps/hotspots in the focused areas of food, energy and water in South Asia. This will be a diagnostic study which will help to understand the conditions necessary for trans-boundary cooperation and will identify the channels which can potentially influence reforms. During the discussion it came up that it is relatively easy to identify the precise entry points at grass root level in case of agriculture and energy, however, a deep thinking needs to be done for identifying the correct entry point for water as it is a politically sensitive issue in the context of trans-boundary sharing in South Asia. In other words, CUTS will produce quick and dirty snapshots of South Asia's food, water and energy sectors based on desk research and perception analysis of different stakeholders spread across the major three river basins viz Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra.
- ✚ Regarding CSO and Media mapping and outreach activities, it was agreed that the initial focus will be on educating/understanding the CSO perspective on the subject so as to reap maximum benefit at the portfolio level. In this context, it was discussed that CUTS will engage with CSOs right from the inception of SDIP. For instance, CUTS already have one strategic partner each in Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan and is in the process of identifying one in Bhutan while in India it will engage three or more organisations. Besides, CUTS will also identify more CSO partners working on trans-boundary issues related to food, water and energy through its respective strategic partners.
- ✚ The discussion also emphasised that this selection will need to be based on the understanding of CSOs on trans-boundary issues and also their network profile at various levels. Such a process will not only allow CUTS to learn from other CSOs but will also enhance CSO's capacity in key issues so that it is a win-win cooperative game. Policy briefs, discussion papers among others would be the tools for policy advocacy and media outreach. In this context, the outcomes/results of applied research conducted by other portfolio partners will also be utilised for advocacy purposes and to create better understanding on the subject with relevant stakeholders and advocacy in South Asia.
- ✚ Accordingly, CUTS will conduct a comprehensive brainstorming meeting with its strategic partners in April, 2014, to which DFAT and IOD PARC will be invited. This meeting will be organised in Kathmandu, Nepal. The meeting will be attended by strategic partners in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and from some specific regions of India keeping in mind the three river basins on which SDIP's activities will focus upon. Few other strategic players will attend this meeting. CUTS will share the objective, purpose of this meeting, inter alia. It was agreed that opportunities to use Julie Mundy as a partnership broker at this meeting should be explored.

- ✚ It was highlighted in the meeting that the partnership approach followed in SDIP is flexible and therefore is useful for both DFAT and CUTS in establishing their footprints on the subject in South Asia. Since CUTS is better known for its work on trade policy, this portfolio programme presents it with a unique opportunity to effectively work on the issues of sustainable development while looping it with shared space of TFIP under the portfolio. Thus the intention is to create a strong voice for SDIP.
- ✚ The review meeting further discussed that knowledge sharing, transfer of technology besides trade and investment, should be the tools to focus on while working on the subjects of SDIP i.e. agriculture, energy and water. Such an effort will enhance trans-boundary cooperation in South Asia.
- ✚ In regards to the partnership agreement between DFAT and CUTS, it was decided that this can be visited during the partnership ‘health check’ meeting due in June/July 2014. It is possible that this will be clubbed with the annual meeting to be held in August 2014.
- ✚ Since both CUTS and DFAT are seeking opportunities to move beyond a traditional, transactional grant-based relationship and move to a more equitable footing with the potential for greater flexibility and responsiveness, SDIP offers unique opportunity given the portfolio approach undertaken. In this context, two immediate action points were highlighted:
 - a) DFAT will continue its conversation with other agencies working in the same space (as SDIP) such as the DFID, World Bank among others in order to better focus its resources at a strategic level and to realise synergies and linkages across South Asia. It will further help CUTS to get into relatively new areas of work especially in water security in this case given that it is a politically sensitive subject i.e. it will facilitate CUTS entry point on relevant topics by understanding the potential role of CUTS.
 - b) Secondly, CUTS will further utilise the potential role of DFAT activities in South Asia so as to leverage partnership in the region i.e. through strategic partners and at institutional level. CUTS will prepare a small piece on ‘partnership approach’ and share with DFAT with a view to it being used at the inception workshop. The ultimate aim of this exercise is to facilitate a collective voice on sustainable development in South Asia.
- ✚ It was mutually agreed that inception meeting to be held on 4th February, 2014 in Canberra, Australia, will help in bringing more clarity about the activities, roles and responsibilities of the partners. This meeting will further clarify the shape /scope of TFIP and the shared space between TFIP & SDIP.

Note: Next meeting date is to be decided at a mutually convenient time in next quarter.