

National Advocacy Dialogue

Enabling a Political Economy Discourse for Multi-modal Connectivity in the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) Sub-region (M-Connect Project)

Date: February 08, 2022 (Tuesday)

Time: 11:00 AM – 01:00 PM, IST

Virtually, *Zoom Meetings* Platform

The need for a seamlessly connected Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal (BBIN) sub-region is becoming more important for enhanced regional cooperation, growth, and economic development. Particularly in the context post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery, it is imperative to establish multi-modal connectivity to reduce logistics costs and establish robust supply chains. This can be achieved through a participatory approach of all stakeholders, which can help address broader development issues of poverty, infrastructural development, and unemployment.

Before embarking on such large-scale multi-modal connectivity initiatives, a political economy discourse is to be enabled in the BBIN sub-region. It is also important to comprehend the current political discourse, and identify gaps in infrastructure, policies, and regulations that can obstruct multi-modal connectivity in the sub-region.

In this context, since January 2020, CUTS International, with support from the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office is implementing a project entitled 'Enabling a Political Economy Discourse for Multi-modal Connectivity in the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal Sub-region (M-Connect)' in partnership with Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh, Bhutan Media and Communications Institute, and Nepal Economic Forum. The Asian Development Bank is a knowledge partner.

CUTS and its partners have identified four critical transportation corridors in the BBIN sub-region and carried out primary and secondary research at more than 50 strategic locations as part of the project. This research provides vital information on the current state of infrastructure and connectivity in the four corridors, the existing infrastructure and policy gaps, stakeholder perceptions and concerns, and ways to fill the gaps in the sub-region of BBIN to promote multimodal connectivity initiatives.

The project has now reached a critical phase of disseminating the findings and suggestions to the policy makers and other stakeholders in the sub-region. In this regard, the National Advocacy Dialogue of the M-Connect project in India is looking forward to discuss a few critical connectivity infrastructure initiatives in India for forming multi-modal connectivity in the BBIN sub-region.

Agenda

10:45 - 11:00 AM	Login Time, <i>Zoom Meetings</i>
11:00 - 11:15 AM	Welcome Remarks and Presentation of Project Outcomes, Bipul Chatterjee, Executive Director, CUTS International
11:15 - 11:30 AM	Keynote Address, Aditya Mishra, Chairman, Land Ports Authority of India
11:30 AM - 12:50 PM	Panel Discussion, Chair: Gopal Krishna, Former Shipping Secretary of India
12.50 - 01:00 PM	Concluding the Discussion by Chair

Panel Discussion

1. Jayant Singh, Vice-Chairman, Inland Waterways Authority of India
2. Paresh Kumar Goel, Director, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, GoI
3. Harish Pokhriyal, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, GoI
4. Avinash Chandra, Deputy Secretary, Logistics Division, Ministry of Commerce, GoI
5. Ajit Kumar Mishra, General Manager, Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited, GOI
6. Duncan Overfield, Deputy Development Director at Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom, New Delhi
7. A. Didar Singh, Former Secretary, GoI, Former Secretary General, FICCI, and Distinguished Fellow, CUTS International
8. Kuancheng Huang, Professor, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University, Former Senior Transport Specialist, Asian Development Bank
9. Arnab Bandyopadhyay, Lead Transport Specialist, Transport & ICT, World Bank
10. Mary Tyler Holmes, Deputy Director, Indo-Pacific Office, USAID India
11. Emily Gunning, EPAP | Economic Growth Unit, U.S. Embassy, New Delhi
12. Mohit Sippy, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom, New Delhi
13. Pritam Banerjee, Logistics Sector Specialist, Asian Development Bank
14. Sunil Kumar Singh, Adviser, Statistics, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, GoI*

**To be confirmed*