



**Webinar
On
Cross-Border Trade and Navigation through Trans-boundary Inland Waterways
between India and Bangladesh**

Monday, February 28, 2022

Time: 11:00-13:00 (IST)

(Virtually on Zoom)

Background Note

India and Bangladesh share 54 trans-boundary rivers. These rivers can generate opportunities for the local communities in the sub-region through economic, political and socio-cultural interactions between the two countries. Cross-border trade and connectivity between these two countries through these rivers and inland waterways hold immense socio-economic potential. However, these have not been utilised to their fullest potential owing to several political, navigational and regulatory challenges.

On September 29, 2021, CUTS International organised a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on 'Promoting Cross-border Trade through Transboundary Waterways between Bangladesh, Bhutan and India' in Guwahati, Assam, India. It was recommended in the dialogue that the inland waterways has a potential to be the backbone of development and cross-border trade leading to creation of jobs and increased livelihood opportunities. It was also suggested in the dialogue that it is essential to consider the perspectives of relevant stakeholders for effective trans-boundary water governance along with increased and active participation of youth and local indigenous communities particularly in the decision-making process.

In this context, CUTS International is organising this virtual meeting with relevant stakeholders particularly with traders of India and Bangladesh, with an aim to "build consensus among private sector and various government institutions at local, subnational and national levels".

This virtual meeting is being organised under a regional project titled "Trans-boundary Rivers of South Asia" (TROSA), which is supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and managed by Oxfam. The project aims to reduce poverty of marginalized and vulnerable river basin communities through increased access to, and control over, water resources, over which their livelihoods depend. The details of the project can be accessed [here](#).

Objectives of the consultation:

- To build consensus among stakeholders in Bangladesh and India so that a Memorandum can be prepared and submitted to relevant authorities in both the countries on having an inclusive approach in cross-border trade via trans-boundary waterways;

- To identify the scope for future interventions based on the stakeholders feedback.

Expected outcomes of the consultation:

- Government policies and practices in trans-boundary water resources management become more inclusive of local community and traders concerns and meet national and international standards;
- A Memorandum endorsed by traders, chambers and associations of commerce and industry and other relevant stakeholders in India and Bangladesh to create an enabling environment for inclusive approach in cross-border trade via trans-boundary waterways.