

Regional Meeting Multimodal Connectivity in the BBIN Subregion

Thursday, March 02, 2023

India International Centre, New Delhi

Time: 09:30 to 17:10 (IST)

(Also virtually on Zoom)

Background Note

Seamless transport and transit connectivity among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) subregion can be a catalyst for greater intra- and inter-regional trade. This connectivity needs to encompass all modes of transportation, viz. roadways, railways, waterways and airways, including their alignments with each other. This is particularly true in the context of achieving resilience and robustness of post-covid economic recovery.

Cross-border multimodal connectivity can reduce logistic costs and establish robust supply chains, along with addressing infrastructural gaps. Through increased investments and trade, it can also help address broader development issues including poverty, unemployment, women's economic empowerment, particularly for those from marginalised sections of the society.

As BBIN countries are considering multimodal connectivity initiatives such as multimodal Integrated Check Posts, it is necessary to create a well-informed political economy discourse for their benefits to outweigh costs.

CUTS International, with support from the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is implementing the project entitled '**Enabling a Political Economy Discourse for Multimodal Connectivity in the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal Subregion (M-Connect)**' in partnership with Unnayan Shamannay, (Bangladesh), Bodhi Media and Communications Institute, (Bhutan), and Nepal Economic Forum.

Under this project CUTS is organising a Regional Meeting in New Delhi on Thursday, March 02, 2023 that seeks to deliberate on and disseminate the project's findings among the key stakeholders, particularly policy-makers, with the aim of paving the way for achieving positive impacts in respect to both "ease of doing business" and "ease of living" through necessary project, policy, process and delivery interventions for not only making the subregion better integrated in terms of having functional transport corridors but also transforming them to economic corridors.

The meeting will have three informative panel discussions chaired by experts from BBIN countries including government agencies, private sector, policy think-tanks, multilateral agencies etc. The panel discussions will focus on engaging recent initiatives on multimodal connectivity in the BBIN subregion, the political economy challenges, and the future of connectivity opportunities in the BBIN subregion.