



PROMOTING MULTIMODALITY IN BBIN CONNECTIVITY

LEVERAGING DIVERSITY TO MAXIMIZE EFFICIENCY



REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY CORRIDORS STUDIED

Kathmandu to Chattogram or Mongla via Banglabandha

Kathmandu to Vishakapatnam via Kolkata- Haldia

Bhutan/NE to Mongla or Chattogram via Jogigopa, Tamabil

Kolkata to Agartala via Benapole, Chattogram, Ashuganj, Akhaura

ALTERNATIVE CONNECTIVITY CORRIDORS

Bhutan to Jogigopa/Dhubri via Roadways then from Chilmari to Dhaka through inland waterways.

From rest of India to Kolkata via Rail or Roadways and then onwards to Chattogram via waterways and then in the final leg from Chattogram to Tripura via Roadways.

BANGLADESH

NEED FOR MULTIMODALITY IN TRANSPORT

For the BBIN group of countries to embark upon large-scale multi-modal connectivity initiatives, it is necessary for creation of an enabling environment for a well-informed political economy discourse. In that context, the key is to understand the conditions and factors responsible for successful regional multi-modal connectivity initiatives in this sub-region, combining roadways with inland waterways, coastal shipping and railways. That, in turn, will require clear understanding of ground level challenges in terms of infrastructure, policy and regulatory gaps and also the extent of ownership at the subnational and national levels for larger connectivity plans.

Our project which is titled '**Enabling a Political Economy Discourse for Multi-modal Connectivity in the BBIN Sub-region or (M-Connect)**' has produced a repository of knowledge to commence and guide this discourse. Unnayan Shamannay in association with Bhutan Media and Communications Institute, CUTS International and Nepal Economic Forum have undertaken this project in partnership with UKaid and ADB.



KEY FINDINGS

M-connect has allowed the production of a comprehensive documentation and analysis of integration readiness of the key transport hubs of Bangladesh. These findings can be boiled down to some key areas of interest.



Focus on infrastructure

Government is prioritizing infrastructure development to facilitate regional and international trade which becomes apparent with the fact that all the connectivity hubs are continuously receiving funds to improve infrastructure



Maximized capacity utilization

Nearly all the connectivity infrastructures of Bangladesh (except Mongla, Pangaon ICT, Akhaura LP) has been reported to have been running at max capacity and any further increase in trade volume is not possible without capacity enhancement.



Lack of container handling capacity

Excluding Chattogram, Mongla and Pangaon ICT, none of the transport hubs currently possess container handling capacity.



Paperless trade still in nascent stage

Effective implementation of Paperless Trade initiatives and adoption of the National Single Window requires stronger implementation support. All the stakeholders voiced their support for incremental progress in port and customs automation.



Dominance of manual labour

Land Ports and River Ports face a shortage of transshipment infrastructure as the process is still heavily dependent on manual labour adding to the cost of doing business. Any attempt at mechanizing the process will need to take labourers into confidence.



Coordination and Consultation

Nearly all the stakeholder felt that interagency coordination has scope for improvement. Moreover, calls were raised for a systematic mechanism for stakeholder identification and consultation were.

STAKEHOLDER SUGGESTIONS

Multimodal Transport Protocol

Stakeholder felt a need for a integrated BBIN multimodal transport protocol to promote multimodal transport in region. The institutional and policy support required for the move should be advocated further.

Attention for existing routes

Focus on the infrastructural development of existing routes is preferred. New routes should be identified and included in the MVA agreement. More routes should be made operational and incentivized.

Promoting IWT usage

Pangaon ICT, Ashuganj IWT and Payra Sea Port should be used frequently to achieve full potential of these ports. Dredging of waterways should be done considering the return of the investment

Capacity enhancements of all ports

Treatment and lab facilities should be established in all ports. Private sectors can be involved in the administration and infrastructure of ports. Benapole port should be expanded.



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