

POLICY DIALOGUE

Expanding Tradable Benefits of Trans-boundary Water: Promoting Navigational Usage of Inland Waterways in Brahmaputra Basin

The Lily Hotel, Guwahati on Tuesday, 31st July, 2018

Background Note

Objectives:

- Share knowledge between CSOs and governments on institutional improvements for facilitating Dhubri-Chilmari cross-border local trade
- Create an alternative policy discourse between policy-makers and civil society on institutional improvements for facilitating Dhubri-Chilmari cross-border local trade

Expected Outcomes:

- Policy-makers and CSOs participating in project meetings accept institutional improvements for facilitating Dhubri-Chilmari cross-border local trade presented in the study

Background and Context:

As part of the Civil Society Fund by The Asia Foundation, CUTS International and its strategic partners are implementing the project titled 'Expanding Tradable Benefits of Trans-boundary Water: Promoting Navigational Usage of Inland Waterways in Ganga and Brahmaputra Basins'.

As part of this project, CUTS has implemented a study in partnership with Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh titled – 'Prospects of cross-border trade via small mechanised boats between Dhubri (India) and Chilmari (Bangladesh)'. More details about the project is available here: <http://www.cuts-citee.org/IW/>

Dhubri in Assam, India and Chilmari in Kurigram, Bangladesh are two economically backward areas located on the banks of river Brahmaputra, which are also along the currently functional routes No. 1 and 2 of India and Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT) routes. These two locations are the last river ports of either country, also serving as the last declared customs and immigration points of each country.

The goal of this study is to support the facilitation of cross-border local trade using small mechanised boats in the international border area of Dhubri (Assam, India) and Chilmari (Kurigram, Bangladesh) along the banks of the Brahmaputra river for improved livelihoods and local economy. The objectives of the study are as follows: i) To analyse social, economic and environmental implications of cross-border value

chains using small mechanized boats across Dhubri (Assam, India) and Chilmari (Kurigram, Bangladesh); and ii) To sensitize policy makers about the issues at grassroots and challenges at policy level to facilitate cross border movement of small mechanized boats

Taking forward the inputs from the policy dialogue, CUTS will strengthen its work on inclusive policy discourse for its regional level dialogue as well as future work on this subject.

Discussion Points:

- ✓ What are the existing regulatory provisions and challenges to enable movement of small mechanised boats route between Dhubri and Chilmari?
- ✓ What implications will it have on trade along the Indo-Bangladesh protocol route?
- ✓ What are the various type of commodities that can be traded via the Dhubri-Chilmari route?
- ✓ What are the infrastructure related requirements for facilitating this trade route?
- ✓ What are the legal requirements for facilitating this trade route?
- ✓ What are the livelihood opportunities for local people?
- ✓ What are the implications on women and other marginalised communities?