

Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio *Promoting Water, Food and Energy Security in South Asia*

Background & Rationale

South Asia, one of the fastest growing regions in the world, is also the home to the largest number of poor population. The three river giants of South Asia viz., the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra contribute to the food, water and energy securities of the densely populated river basins, in particular, and South Asia, in general. But over the years, these vital sectors of human sustenance have been contended by regional political-economic factors in relation to the distribution/ sharing of trans-boundary water resources.

South Asia, one of the fastest growing regions in the world, is also the home to the largest number of poor population.

Unsustainable agricultural practices; over exploitation of water resources; poor value-added market chains and limited inter-regional cooperation on energy sharing, specifically hydro-power has

threatened the survival of this vulnerable region. Consequently, it becomes imperative to secure food, water and energy securities in South Asia through a sustainable development approach focusing on regional cooperation in trans-boundary resource management and knowledge sharing.

To support this narrative, Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has developed the Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio (SDIP) for South Asia. This investment strategy aims to promote water, food and energy security in South Asia. The targeted areas and the investment portfolio's objectives are broadly stated as follows:

- Confident and cooperative decision-making across jurisdictional borders for the effective and equitable management of shared water resources
- Increased access to and cooperation on energy
- Increased agricultural productivity and farm incomes through the adoption of more efficient and sustainable agricultural practices and better developed value-added market chains

DFAT will execute this Investment Strategy in partnership with a group of institutions with different areas of expertise and CUTS International has been selected as one of the portfolio partners for carrying forward a particular set of activities related to SDIP. The project will be implemented for 12 years in three phases of four years each.

Goal

Given this background and rationale, the overall Goal for CUTS in terms of its role in SDIP is *'enhancing the value of DFAT's SDIP by linking its interventions with key actors (other partner organisations) and stakeholders through local and regional networks through policy research and advocacy.'*

Objectives & Activities

a) Policy Research

- To identify the hotspots (gaps and constraints) in the existing system which limits regional cooperation in the domains of food water and energy security
- To conduct quick and dirty diagnostic study by consulting key stakeholders to come up with issues for advocacy
- To assess the perceptions and expectations of various stakeholders pertaining to specific activities of the SDIP

partner organisations using networking, perception surveys, focus group discussions and key informant interviews

It becomes imperative to secure food, water and energy securities in South Asia through a sustainable development approach focusing on regional cooperation in trans-boundary resource management and knowledge sharing.



b) CSO Mapping and Outreach

- To identify and develop linkages with strategic as well as other CSO partners with respect to SDIP issues and geographical reach
- To assist partner organisations in planning activities/interventions related to SDIP

c) Media Mapping and Outreach

- To extend out to media particularly on policy and governance reform aspects of SDIP objectives
- Capacity building of media houses/personnel for efficient use of media platform for policy advocacy

d) Policy Advocacy

- To disseminate learning and findings with partner organisations and capacity building of stakeholders on SDIP issues

- To prepare policy briefs and organise workshops and consultations at various levels; thereby acting as a platform for knowledge sharing and networking and regional cooperation

e) Support IOD PARC on portfolio

- To engage in continued policy dialogues with MPs of the sub-region so as to foster greater bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation in the region

Major outputs from the activities will be as follows:

- Policy briefs, working papers based on SDIP-related activities, field study and survey reports
- Capacity building of key strategic partners in the sub-region
- Development of a robust internal M&E strategy/plan
- Publication of articles in select newspapers, magazines on issues related to sustainable development and regional cooperation
- Impact evaluation studies
- A critical analysis of the SDIP- interventions against the established benchmarks
- Continued consultative meetings and seminars on sustainable development in the sub-region

Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has developed the Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio (SDIP) to promote water, food and energy security in South Asia.

Expected Outcomes

Following are the set of outcomes that CUTS will aim to achieve through its proposed set of activities:

- Increased understanding of issues related to SDIP intervention areas
- Understanding of stakeholders' perceptions on ground realities related to stalled bilateral and regional cooperation on water, food and energy security in the sub-region
- Strengthened networking among CSOs in the sub-region
- Efficient and effective M&E of various SDIP-related activities
- Greater awareness among policy makers of the sub-region for enhanced bilateral and multilateral cooperation in food, water and energy domains
- Advocacy of key policy messages at sub-national, national and regional levels
- Lessons learned from SDIP's past successes and non-successes
- Engagement in more policy advocacies and dialogues

CUTS will enhance the value of DFAT's SDIP by linking its interventions with key actors and stakeholders through local and regional networks through policy research and advocacy.

level M&E

- To conduct CUTS' own internal monitoring and evaluation (M&E)
- To undertake responsive and proactive research and/or evaluations arising from emerging issues in support of portfolio level M&E
- To report periodically to DFAT
- To undertake logistics of the annual SDIP Partnership Dialogue meetings in consultation with DFAT and IOD PARC

f) Policy Dialogues

- To understand the theory of change through impact assessment and undertake advocacy efforts through consultative meetings at national/regional level