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Trade Facilitation Measures to Enhance Participation of Women in Cross-border Trade in BBIN

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BBIN	Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal
BSF	Border Security Force
CBT	Cross Border Trade
CBEC	Central Board of Excise and Custom
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DTIS	Diagnostic Trade Integration Study
EIF	Enhanced Integrated Framework
FLFP	Female Labour Force Participation
GATT	General Agreement on tariffs and Trade
GEOAT	Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool
HMC	Haat Management Committee
ICP	Integrated Check Post
ICRIER	Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LCS	Land Customs Stations
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MVA	Motor Vehicle Agreement
NER	North East Region
NTFC	National Trade Facilitation Committees
PTA	Preferential Trading Agreement
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDT	Special and Differential Treatment
TTFA	Trade and Transport Facilitation Assessment
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
USD	United States Dollars
WCO	World Customs Organization
WMSME	Women Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
WTO	World Trade Organization

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ABSTRACT

Trade facilitation measures improve the trading environment by reducing transaction costs and thereby increasing the gains from trade. Although the use of trade facilitation measures for tackling trade bottlenecks has gained traction in recent times in South Asia, one aspect which remains largely unexplored is the importance of gender sensitivity in trade facilitation. Not much attention has been given to analyze the impact of services involved in trade facilitation like customs and border management, logistic services, trade infrastructure and transportation on women entrepreneurs and traders. This report suggests that this neglect of gender specific constraints and impediments within the overall frame of trade facilitation has serious implications not just for women's empowerment but also for productivity and the growth potential of the South Asian economies.

The report is part of a systematic initiative to develop an analytical framework to identify the challenges and impediments faced by women engaging in cross-border trade, with particular emphasis on demonstrating the importance of gender mainstreaming for trade facilitation measures in South Asia. The focus of the study is on the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) region – specifically on the North-East region of India and Northern region of West Bengal and its cross-border trade with Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. In this regional context it is useful to base the analysis on a classification of cross border trade into three categories - formal trade through Land Customs Stations (LCS); formal trade through border haats and informal trade transactions. The extent of participation of women in these categories of trade has been examined and the major impediments and barriers that hinder the participation of women in cross-border trade identified through field surveys. Subsequently gender responsiveness trade facilitation measures are recommended in each category.

1. Introduction

Trade facilitation measures improve the trading environment by reducing transaction costs thereby increasing the gains from trade. Although the use of trade facilitation measures for tackling trade bottlenecks has gained traction in recent times in South Asia, one aspect which remains largely unexplored is the importance of gender sensitivity in trade facilitation. The gender dimensions of trade facilitation and cross-border trade have been well researched in sub-Saharan Africa. In South Asia, however, little attempt has been made to purposefully identify and address the needs of women in trade particularly the gender impact of services involved in trade facilitation like customs and border management, logistic services, trade infrastructure and transportation. The practice of employing gender differentiated filters on trade policies, port-level procedures, infrastructure planning, and design of trade promotion programs is almost non-existent in South Asia.

The neglect of gender specific constraints and impediments within the overall frame of trade facilitation has serious implications not just for women’s empowerment but also for productivity and growth potential of the South Asian economies.

This report is part of a systematic initiative to develop an analytical framework to identify the challenges and impediments faced by women engaging in cross-border trade, with particular emphasis on demonstrating the importance of gender mainstreaming for trade facilitation measures in South Asia. The focus is on the Bangladesh- Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) region – specifically on the North-East region (NER)¹ of India and Northern region of West Bengal (henceforth referred to as North Bengal) and its cross-border trade with Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.

Map: India’s Northeast States and the Bordering Countries



¹ Northeast India comprises the 8 states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

2. Importance of Examining Gender Dimensions of Trade Facilitation in BBIN

The Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) sub-regional initiative is envisioned to improve economic cooperation and connectivity among the member countries². It was established to expedite measures to enhance cross-border trade and interconnectivity in South Asia. A gender analysis is especially important for the BBIN region for three key reasons:

- **First**, trade facilitation has become an important reform agenda for the BBIN countries as Bangladesh, India and Nepal are signatories to the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The TFA contains provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit. How women traders might effectively participate in and benefit from TFA technical assistance and capacity building measures is an important factor for further consideration.
- **Secondly**, sub-regional integration in South Asia between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal has assumed considerable importance since 2015 with all of the BBIN countries signing the Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA). Trade facilitation is at the core of this arrangement with the objective to allow a smooth, seamless and predictable movement of passengers and cargo in the sub-region. It is expected that the BBIN MVA could increase intra-regional trade within South Asia by 60 percent and with the rest of the world by 30 percent (MEA 2015).

The process of designing protocols for the implementation of the MVA in the BBIN sub-region is underway and to this end, governments are actively engaging with stakeholders to gather feedback on the design of the protocols. It is therefore, vital that there should be adequate representation of women entrepreneurs and small-scale traders in these consultations so that their interests and requirements are considered before finalising the protocols and policies. Moreover, the domestic policy measures taken by each country can further be integrated into a synchronized regional agenda for gender responsive trade facilitation measures.

- **Thirdly**, the emphasis on gender dimension in trade facilitation assumes even greater significance in the context of the host of initiatives that most South Asian countries have unveiled in recent years to promote women entrepreneurship along with talk of forming a SAARC Convention on Promoting Women Entrepreneurship. Including the gender dimension in trade facilitation would complement these initiatives and in fact has the potential to be a key driver for women's socio-economic empowerment.

Theory of Change



² Bhutan, Nepal, North Bengal and NER are landlocked. Four North- Eastern states – Tripura, Mizoram, Assam, and Meghalaya share a common border with Bangladesh. Assam and Arunachal Pradesh share a common border with Bhutan. North Bengal shares a common border with Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. Assam and Sikkim in the North-Eastern region Nepal and Bangladesh through North Bengal in India.

3. Diagnostic Tools To Identify Gender Differentiated Constraints In Trade Facilitation

There are a number of diagnostic tools which help in identifying trade facilitation and logistics bottlenecks in global supply chains.

- The World Bank has developed the *Trade and Transport Facilitation Assessment (TTFA)* tool to identify factors that contribute to transaction costs on the basis of which trade facilitation measures are suggested. Similarly, corridor diagnostic studies and border audits have been conducted to cover areas such as corridor transit and transport cost, physical impediments, process constraints and institutional and regulatory constraints. However, these tools do not take into account gender differentiated constraints.
- The *Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies (DTIS) designed under the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF)* is perhaps one of the few diagnostic tools which make explicit references to challenges faced by women when assessing trade facilitation supply chains in terms of infrastructure support, non-infrastructure support and transport policies.
- More recently, in a bid to highlight the gender-dimension in the ease of doing business for women entrepreneurs and workers, the *2017 Doing Business Report* by the World Bank has for the first time added a gender perspective to 3 of the 11 indicators that are used to measure the distance to frontier score and ease of doing business rankings. These three indicators are - starting a business, registering property and enforcing contracts.
- Similarly UNCTAD has developed a *Trade and Gender Toolbox* to provide a systematic framework to evaluate the impact of trade reforms on women and gender inequalities prior to implementation of those reforms. The toolbox has four main components: (i) descriptive analysis of gender inequalities and the economic context of the country at stake; (ii) quantitative analysis of the expected consequences of the trade reform on the economy (e.g., exports, GDP, sectoral labor demand) and on women's participation in the economy in particular; (iii) a checklist for gender-sensitive accompanying measures and monitoring indicators; and (iv) a Trade and Gender Index.

From the standpoint of trade facilitation, however, perhaps the most significant initiative has come from the World Customs Organization (WCO) which has prepared a *Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool (GEOAT)* for Customs administrations to assess their current policies, practices and activities to address gender equality issues. The WCO has been at the forefront of designing Conventions and other tools standards to simplify customs policies and procedures- the most prominent of them being the Revised Kyoto Convention.

There is a compelling case for the BBIN countries to adopt the toolkit designed by WCO to help members mainstream gender equality in customs reform and the modernization process since BBIN countries are members of the WCO and signatories to the Revised Kyoto Convention.

The assessment tool examines five key principles related to organizational development which contribute to gender equality, including Employment and Compensation; Work-life Balance and Career Development; Health, Safety, and Freedom from Violence; Governance and Leadership; and Customs Administration and Stakeholder Relations. For our study, we base our analysis on the 5th principle related to customs administration and stakeholder consultations, which has three elements – Customs Policies and Procedures, Border Operations and Stakeholder Relations. The GEOAT provides indicators in each of these three elements that would guide customs authorities. We have selected the ones directly relevant to this study as below:

A. Customs Policies and Procedures

Even though the custom policies and procedures have been simplified by many countries, they are not fully understood by small informal traders who are mostly women. Most customs administration authorities make little attempt to communicate this information effectively to these small traders in a transparent way.

Customs Policies and Procedures Indicators

Are all the men and women, regardless of the background, treated equally with respect to custom policies and procedures?

Does the customs administration make effective use of technology and address the differentiated impacts of technological reforms in custom procedures on women and men?

Is it made sure that women traders, through various associations of women traders, are provided with relevant and updated information on custom policies and procedures?

Are customs procedures simplified according to national legislation, to enable the informal cross border women traders to carry out trade without any hindrance?

Are these small traders encouraged to make use of the exemptions and preferential tariff bands, if there are any?

Are there any efforts being made to organize training and familiarization workshops on all the custom policies and procedures for women traders?

B. Border Operations

Border management consists of customs, immigration, police and military officials who are mostly men, thereby creating an intimidating environment for women traders as well as increasing risks of sexual harassment.

Border Operations Indicators

Are men both men and women treated with equal respect and dignity at the border? Are there any safe means for women and men to report any wrongdoings at the border?

Does the administration make any effort to make the border a safe place for both men and women? Is it made sure that physical inspections are carried out by female customs officials on women traders?

Does the administration make sure that all service standards and key information on custom procedures is clearly visible at the border and that it does not contain any gender or diversity bias?

Do constructive and structured dialogues take place with the private sector regarding gender equity policies, programs and activities?

Is there a provision to enable the employees to undertake their functions such as inspection procedures in a gender sensitive manner?

Is there provision of proper infrastructure (also accessible to public) at the border for female customs officials like accommodation, changing rooms and toilets?

C. Stakeholder Relations

It is required that the customs administration should hold consultation with customs brokers, leading importers/exporters, industry/trade associations, logistics firms and cross-border traders in order to factor in the various concerns and interest of women in trade.

Stakeholder Relations Indicators

Are there consultations held with a broad range of stakeholders especially those representing the interest of women traders?

Are efforts being made to ensure that customs and women's associations interact frequently and constructively? Does the administration support the work of women traders' associations through information, education and communication campaigns?

Is there a provision for an unbiased, non-retaliatory complaints policy and procedure for all the suppliers, customers and third parties with 24/7 access and anonymity of the person making complaints?

Also, are the complaints grouped into categories using gender and diversity group disaggregated data?

Are the gender-related issues, which generate from the interaction between the stakeholders and customs, addressed properly to avoid harassment and intimidation of customs officers or by customs officials?

Is there an active cooperation and engagement between the other government institutions working at the border for the harmonization of gender related policies within the border operations?

4. Cross-Border Movement of goods in the BBIN region and Issues that Hinder Greater Women's Participation

Trade across borders from India's Northeast region and North Bengal takes place largely by road. In the regional context on which we are focussed, it is useful to base the analysis on a classification of cross border trade into three categories - formal trade through Land Customs Stations (LCS); formal trade through border haats and informal trade. The extent of participation of women in different categories of trade was examined through by collecting the field surveys. The major impediments and barriers that hinder the participation of women in cross-border trade in the region are identified and subsequently gender responsiveness trade facilitation measures are recommended in each category.

4.1 Participation of Women in Formal Trade through Land Customs Stations (LCS)

Formal trade is officially recorded trade which is included in the national trade statics. It takes place through Land Customs Stations (LCS) along the North-eastern and North Bengal border and through inland waterways.

In total, India has 136 notified LCSs . The table below provides a list of functional LCSs in the North-Eastern Region and North Bengal through which cross border trade with Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal is taking place presently (Table 1).

Table 1: Functional LCS in NER & North Bengal on borders with Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal

State	LCS in India	
BANGLADESH BORDER		
Assam	Dhubri Steamerghat	Golakganj
	Guwahati Steamerghat	Karimganj Steamerghat
	Mankachar	Sutarkandi
Tripura	Agartala	Dhalaighat
	Khowaighat	Manu
	Muhurighat	Old Ragnabazar
	Srimantapur	
Meghalaya	Baghmara	Bholaganj
	Borsora	Dalu
	Dawki	Ghasuapara
	Mahendraganj	Shellabazar
West Bengal	Phulbari	Changrabandha
BHUTAN BORDER		
Assam	Darranga	Hatisar
West Bengal	Jaigaon	
NEPAL BORDER		
West Bengal	Panitanki	

However, despite the large number of trading points for cross border trade there are several impediments (Taneja, Bimal and Dayal, 2016; ICRIER Survey 2017; ADB 2014; Roy 2013). The regional governments are undertaking reform measures but several of these measures are yet to be implemented at the land borders.

The surveys identified the following impediments that women traders face:

- **Starting a Business is Cumbersome** - Women involved in the early stages of setting up a trade business often struggle at the entry level itself to procure an export-import code number which gives them the license to export. Even though this system has been made online, it is still very inefficient and combined with poor internet connectivity makes it difficult for the women to get through the first step.

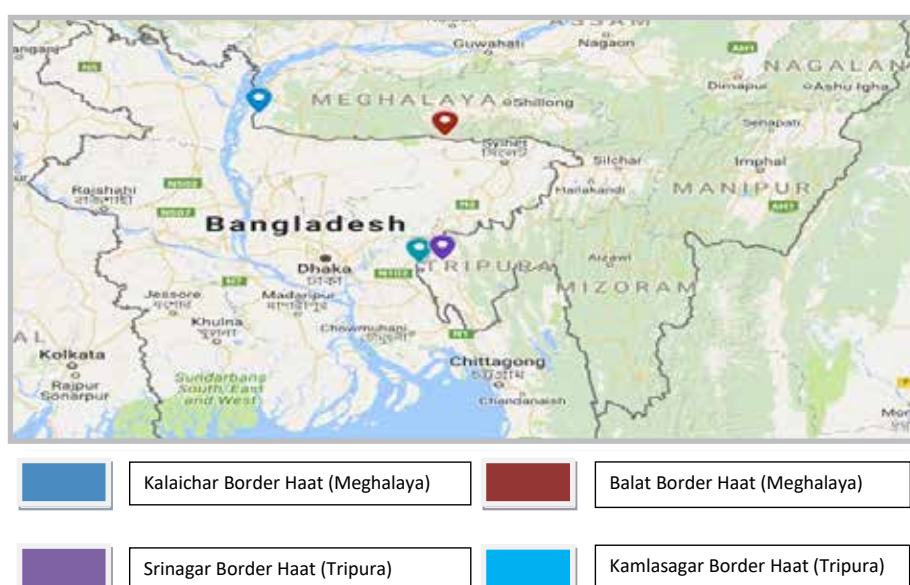
³ Notification No. 63/1994-Cus (NT), dated 21/11/1994

- **Lack of Information** - Another reason why women are reluctant to participate in cross-border trading is that they do not have information on trade procedures and rules and regulations related to international trade. In fact, we found that women traders were not aware of the BBIN MVA, its implementation and its benefits.
- **Dealing with Male Officials** - Women also faced considerable difficulties dealing with customs and trade officials, who are usually males⁴. The need to pay bribes to officials is quite prevalent, especially since most women lack knowledge about the rules and their rights; they are forced to make additional payments to the officials for processing their trade related documents.
- **Accessing Cross-border Markets** - Women face many problems when attempting to sell goods across borders. For instance, women are also not able to find ways of marketing their goods across borders, especially because of the difficulty they face in making marketing trips across the border. They also find it difficult to process payments.
- **Need for Intermediaries** - To avoid the above stated problems, female traders and entrepreneurs tend to hire intermediaries, who are mostly men. Dealing with them adds to the costs as well as the hassles. The additional fee that has to be paid to the intermediaries often cuts into the profits of these women traders.
- **Women Traders are Not Organised** - Business and traders associations around the border areas are largely male dominated and women entrepreneurs and traders are not organized enough to be able to jointly voice their concerns.

4.2 Participation of Women in Formal Trade through Border Haats

Formal trade also takes place through border haats (markets) - once-a-week makeshift bazaars/market enterprises at certain specified points on zero lines of the India-Bangladesh border to allow people residing near the border of both the countries to trade with each other without having to pay any customs duties. They are established as per a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India and Bangladesh in 2010. Traders are issued legal permits to trade in border haats, however, even though trade is recorded it does not enter the national trade statistics.

Map: Operational Border Haats on India-Bangladesh border



⁴ Though, at the better equipped LCSs a woman constable is on duty especially for frisking.

Four border haats are currently in operation - Kalaichar and Balat at the Meghalaya-Bangladesh border and Kamlasagar and Srinagar at the Tripura-Bangladesh border. In 2016 both Governments have agreed to establish two more border haats in Tripura and four more border haats in Meghalaya on the India-Bangladesh border.

Table 2: Vendors and Vendees: Comparison of the Four Border Haats

Operating Guidelines		Kamalasagar	Srinagar	Kalaichar	Balat
Licensing of Vendors (Sellers)	No. of licensed vendors	22	27	25	25
	No. of women	None	None	1	8
Licensing of Vendees (Buyers)	No. of licensed vendees	1002	3971	200	3513
	No. of women	300	800-1000	26	1862

The survey revealed the following set of hurdles which if addressed would enhance participation of women at the border haats:

- **Selection Process for Granting Licences**

In terms of the selection process notably the Haat Management Committees at 3 out of 4 places - Kamlasagar, Srinagar, and Balat had no women members. Only at Kalaichar the designated district administration officer at the time of the survey happened to be a woman. Moreover, the process of selection of vendors and vendees is quite opaque and in all the haats the bureaucracy appears to defer to the recommendations of the village headmen or panchayat samitis (elected representatives at the village level). The lists of the participants (vendors and vendees) have been renewed from time to time but the majority of the vendors and vendees in the lists has remained the same every year.

- **Infrastructure Deficit**

The physical connectivity to the border haats is extremely poor. The access roads are narrow and in bad shape with worsening conditions during rains. At Kamasagar, transportation is available only up to the first gate of the haat and goods have to carry manually to the haat and from the haat back to the gate. Most haats do not have separate toilets for women. The haats have no electricity which means the trading sheds have no fans. There is poor mobile and internet connectivity at the haats. As a result, the idea of not being able to be in touch with family members due to poor network connectivity deters women from coming to the haats. The banking facilities at the haats are either poor or non-existent. For example at Kalaichar on many market days there is no bank official present on the Indian side due to the short staffing at the main branch of the bank. This poor management puts the women traders in a vulnerable position as they are forced to make use of the informal network for foreign currency transactions that is essentially controlled by men.

- **Predominance of Male Officials Supervising the Functioning of the Haats**

Barring the presence of a couple of women constables from the local police and the border security force whose role is confined to the physical frisking of women entrants into the haat there are hardly any women personnel from other government departments (district administration, customs, banking) at the haat. Rather, even though the MoU clearly states that security forces personnel will not be allowed to enter in the haat area except in case of emergency determined by the District Magistrate, adherence to this provision was found to be quite flexible on the ground.

Table 3: Comparison of the Four Border Haats from a Gender Perspective.

	Kamalasagar	Srinagar	Kalaichar	Balat
Female Security Personnel	Manual registrations at time of entry and exit by customs and the BSF officials. Women personnel from the local police and BSF deployed only for physical frisking of female entrants.			
Other Female Government Personnel	None	None	Currently the District Administration Supervising Official is a woman.	One customs staff at the entry gate is a woman.
Access to haat	Transportation is available up only till the first gate of the haat. From there on goods have to be carried manually.	Brick soiled access road.	Poor condition of access road leading to Haat.	Poor condition of access road leading to Haat.
Separate Toilet for Women	No	No	No	Separate toilet for women but without water supply and no roof.
Common Facility Centre	Yes but used primarily for HMC meetings.	Yes but used primarily for HMC meetings.	No	Yes but used primarily for HMC meetings.
Running Water supply	Available.	Available	Not available	Not available
Electricity Supply	No	Available only in the common facility centre	No	No
Storage/Warehouse Facility	No	No	No	No
Banking Facilities	No	Manual banking service is provided by Bangladesh in common facility centre	Limited banking and foreign exchange facilities	Limited banking and foreign exchange facilities
Phone and Internet Connectivity	Poor mobile phone connectivity. No internet connectivity.	Poor mobile phone connectivity. No internet connectivity	Poor mobile phone connectivity. No internet connectivity	Poor mobile phone connectivity. No internet connectivity

4.3 Women's Participation in Informal Trade

Cross border informal trade is in the nature of extra-legal trading, tolerated in practice even if illegal in the letter of law⁵. Notably informal trade takes place because the transaction costs of trading formally are higher than those incurred in informal trading due to the costly and quite complex trade procedures involved in formal trade. What lies at the core of the functioning of informal trading markets are strong ethnic ties among traders that ensure that payments are made and also reduce risk and transaction costs (Taneja 1999; Taneja 2001; Taneja 2004; Taneja and Pohit 2002; Chaudhuri 1995; Rahman and Razaqque 1998; Karmacharya 2010; Rao et al 1997).

Typically informal cross border trade takes place through

- informal markets along the border
- carriers using formal channels, and
- unguarded points along the long and porous borders.

Women participate in informal trading primarily as carriers transporting goods for exporters/importers through the LCSs taking advantage of the fact that passengers are allowed to carry duty-free goods worth Rs 25,000 in accompanying baggage. They travel across the borders frequently as passengers on rickshaws, buses and trains and also on foot. Often goods are carried as head loads by women. Small women entrepreneurs engage in "suitcase trade" – a term used for women who carry a suitcase load of goods as accompanied baggage in their vehicles to participate in exhibitions or to sell their goods to retailers/wholesalers across the border. Women engage in this kind of trade to avoid navigating through the bureaucratic processes of the formal channel and/or to avoid customs duties. Women are also seen selling goods in the informal border haats that are situated close to the border. At the Mizoram-Bangladesh border there are 16 informal border haats. In fact, during our survey at the LCS in Dawki, some respondents felt that 80-90% of the women residing in that area are involved in informal cross-border trade through the haats.

Informal traders are likely to shift to formal channels if the impediments of trading formally are reduced. The four border haats under operation have successfully drawn informal traders. Our survey revealed that informal traders had shifted to trading through border haats at Kalaichar and Balat.

5. The Road Ahead – Measures to Make Trade Facilitation Gender Responsive

Women's participation in cross-border trade in BBIN region is miniscule and continues to stagnate at low levels. Women entrepreneurs and traders are deeply constrained by the huge information deficit with regard to the regulations and procedures and see little incentive in engaging in cross-border commerce. Their mobility across borders remains compromised by infrastructure deficits, safety related challenges and socio-cultural barriers all of which combine to perpetuate an unwelcoming trading environment.

⁵ Informal trade is differentiated from smuggling through border posts of illicit goods such as weapons or drugs.

Recommendation 1 - Mainstream Gender in the Implementation of Multilateral and Regional Trade Facilitation Measures

Area of Intervention	Measures	Implementation Horizon
Gender Responsive Implementation of TFA	• Include women in consultative process.	Short term
	• More women members in NTFCs.	Short term
	• Donor funds directed towards assisting women to comply with customs & take advantage of PTAs.	Medium term
Incorporate Gender Perspectives to BBIN trade Facilitation Initiatives	• Adopt GEOAT toolkit.	Short term
	• Include women in consultations on protocols.	Short term
	• Consider problems of head loading and non-containerized CBT.	Medium term
	• Create a network of women entrepreneurs and traders in BBIN.	Long term

* Short term (0-6 months); Medium term (6-18 months); Long term (18-36 months)

Recommendation 2 - Address Hurdles Faced by Women Engaged in Formal Cross-border Trade

Area of Intervention	Measures	Implementation Horizon
Women Friendly Border Crossing Points	• Infrastructure like separate toilets for women, common areas and better roads.	Medium term
	• Efficient and helpful banking and foreign exchange facilities.	Medium term
	• Training and sensitization of border level agents and officials.	Medium term
	• Help and monitoring desks for women.	Short term
	• Discounted warehousing and storage facilities for women.	Short term
	• Digitization of processes and introduction of a single window electronic interface.	Medium term
Information Outreach Activities Targeted Towards Women	• Periodic media campaigns.	Medium term
	• Readily available information booklets and pamphlets.	Medium term
	• Women help and monitoring desks in relevant government offices.	Short term
	• Information sessions through business chambers and associations.	Medium term
Marketing and Support Services to Women for Accessing Cross-border Markets	• Assistance to women to effectively market their products in the foreign markets.	Medium term
	• Facilitate women traders to cooperate and pool goods and logistics services to take advantages of scale and avoid market hassles in the cross-border markets.	Medium term
	• Integrate e-commerce in the BBIN sub-region.	Long term
Gender Disaggregated Database	• Government agencies that collect and compile data on international trade induced to collect gender disaggregated data for different parameters.	Long term
	• Qualitative information regularly collected via consultative dialogues between authorities responsible for trade facilitation and women's business associations and groups.	Long term

* Short term (0-6 months); Medium term (6-18 months); Long term (18-36 months)

Recommendation 3 - Adopt Measures to Enhance Participation of Women in Border Haat

Area of Intervention	Measures	Implementation Horizon
Gender Affirmative Action for Haat Licences	• Women's quota in vendor and vendee licences approved by the Haat Management Committee.	Short term
	• Time period of Vendor and vendee licences to be one year only.	Short term
	• Gap of one year before the successful applicants can reapply for license.	Short term
	• Consideration of innovative measures such as granting of double the number of stipulated licences but following a rotational entry procedure in order to enable greater number of participants take part in the haat.	Short term
Transparent Selection Process	• Make information about the application process readily available – using mobile text; bulletin boards at the panchayat offices; leaflets distributed in local markets etc.	Short term
	• Eliminate discretion in the approval process and make selection random by drawing lots.	Short term
Gender Responsive Infrastructure	• Separate toilets for women with regular water supply.	Short term
	• Common Facility Centre with earmarked sitting area for women.	Medium term
	• Regular maintenance of access roads.	Medium term
	• Support desk manned preferably by woman officials.	Short term
	• Improved communication network.	Medium term
	• Efficient banking and foreign exchange facilities.	Medium term

* Short term (0-6 months); Medium term (6-18 months); Long term (18-36 months)

Recommendation 4 - Channel Informal Trade to Formal Routes

Area of Intervention	Measures	Implementation Horizon
Incentivize Formal Routes	• Make formal trade more facilitative and less cumbersome.	Medium term
	• Establish more border haats.	Medium term

* Short term (0-6 months); Medium term (6-18 months); Long term (18-36 months)

Recommendation 5 - Conduct New & Systematic Studies on Informal Trade

Area of Intervention	Measures	Implementation Horizon
Use the Gender Lens to Conduct New & Systematic Studies on Informal Trade in South Asia	• Focus should be on the Northeast States of India and the role of women should be specifically examined.	Medium term
	• Undertake studies at the same point in time (the same years).	Medium term
	• Collect data on similar parameters.	Medium term

* Short term (0-6 months); Medium term (6-18 months); Long term (18-36 months)

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