

**A PILOT PROJECT ON CAPACITY BUILDING ON ELECTRICITY
REFORMS IN NEPAL, BANGLADESH AND INDIA
(WEST BENGAL & RAJASTHAN) - RESA Project
- Regional Conference**

Date: Friday, 9 April, 2010 – Saturday, 10 April, 2010

Venue: Hotel Hyatt, Regency, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Objective

Encourage regional co-operation on key issues relevant to power sector reforms in Asia

Context

For the last one and half decade, most of the Asian countries have undertaken radical and structural changes in the power sector. The key objective of power sector reforms across Asia has been to promote competition, encourage private sector investment and ensure effective consumer participation in the sector to provide better quality of service to the consumers. Broadly, three different initiatives have been implemented as a part of reforms- i) unbundling of the integrated supply system, ii) corporatisation/ privatisation and iii) establishment of independent regulatory agencies.

In the changing regulatory environment, consumers are expected to play a vital role to ensure protection of their rights and interest. Their active participation in the policy formulation and regulatory decision-making process is critical to ensure pro-consumer decisions. Appreciating their role in the decision-making, electricity statues and policy enforced in most of the Asian countries require regulators to take consumers' view into consideration while passing important regulatory decisions. However, consumer participation has been lacking or is absent in most countries. One of the reasons for poor participation is the inadequate capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) to intervene in the decision-making process given issues are quite complex.

Given this background, CUTS International with support from Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) launched the RESA Project in March 2008. The key focus of the project was to build the capacity of consumers as well as CSOs to ensure their effective participation in electricity sector.

The Regional Conference being organised with support from West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (WBSEDCL) marks the end of the RESA pilot project and is being organised to share the experience gained during the implementation of the project to a larger audience and to sustain the initiative through strengthening the regional network. About 50 participants comprising policy makers, regulators, ex-regulators, academia, civil society organisations, service providers, media etc. from different Asian countries would participate in the event and share their experiences. Key findings of RESA would be shared and discussed with participants.

Key Outcome

It aims to come out with an action plan to implement RESA model in other Asian countries.

AGENDA

FRIDAY, 9TH APRIL 2010

- 09:30 – 10:00 Registration and Tea/Coffee
- 10:00 – 11:00 Opening Session
- 11:00 – 11:15 Tea Break
- 11:15 – 13:00 **Session I: Panel discussion on “Power sector reforms in Asia”**
Panel discussion would focus on economic, legal and political issues pertaining to power sector reforms in Asia. Representatives from Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Thailand and Sri Lanka would be invited as panellists to share their views.
- 13:00 – 14:00 **Lunch**
- 14:00 – 16:00 **Session II: Key findings of the RESA project (Research, Advocacy, Capacity Building and Networking)**
Three project country presentations (India, Nepal and Bangladesh) would be delivered by project partners sharing the key findings of the RESA project.
- 16:00 – 16:15 Tea Break
- 16:15 – 18:00 **Session III: Consumer Empowerment in Power Sector Reforms**
This session will focus on relevant case studies on effective consumer empowerment in the power sector highlighting international as well as regional best practices. Representatives from Bangladesh, Philippines and Sri Lanka would be invited to share their views based on case studies.

SATURDAY, 10TH APRIL 2010

- 09:30 – 11:00 **Session IV: Emerging issues in the power sector and the Consumer**
The session will have two separate presentations on energy efficiency (technology, capacity building, etc) and renewable resources (opportunities, regulatory environment, investment, etc) with the key focus on the role of consumers.
- 11:00 – 11:15 Tea Break
- 11:15 – 13:00 **Session V: Panel discussion on “Role of institutions in Power Sector Reforms in Asia”**
The panel discussion will comprise of representatives (IGOs, private sector, CSOs, donor agencies, media, regulatory commission, utilities, etc) and will focus on the importance of institutions in facilitating power sector reforms in Asia.
- 13:00 – 13:30 **Closing Session**
- 13:30 – 14:30 Lunch and departures