

CUTS CCIER ACTIVITIES REPORT



JANUARY-MARCH
2024

Workshop on 6G Technology, Standards and Regulation

A research consortium led by Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS), the International Institute of Information Technology, Bangalore (IIIT-Bangalore), and Australian Risk Policy Institute (ARPI)

undertook a project titled 'Ethical 6G – Identifying Elements of Ethical Framework for 6G and Creating Opportunities for India and Australia'.

Supported by the

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) under the Australia-India Cyber and Critical Technology Partnership (AICCTP) Grant, the project explored the emerging 6G ecosystem from technological, standardisation, ethical, and regulatory perspectives, including privacy, security, trust, sustainability, consumer protection, and competition.

This workshop was convened on February 01, 2024 to present the findings from the project and bring together diverse

expertise, including policymakers, academics, and industry representatives, to discuss various aspects of 6G.

Special attention was given to identifying potential risks stemming

from vulnerabilities in the 6G network.

The Panellists were Milind Gandhe, CEO, COMET Foundation; V Sridhar, Professor, IIIT-Bangalore; Ekant Sharma, Professor, IIT-Roorkee;

Amrita Mishra, Professor, IIIT-Bangalore; Jishnu Aravindakshan, Principal Product Architect, Tejas Networks; Bharat Bhatia, President, ITU APT Foundation of India; Payal Malik, Professor, ICRIER; Isha Suri, Centre for Internet and Society; Amrita Choudhury, Cyber Cafe Association of India (CCAIO); Meenakshi Agarwal, MeitY and Ujjwal Kumar, Associate Director, CUTS.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/workshop-on-6g-technology-standards-and-regulation/>



Beyond EODB

Enabling Ease of Running a Business by Bridging Trust Deficit

CUTS released a Discussion Paper titled "Bridging Trust Deficit: Enabling Ease of Running Business in India" on February 21, 2024. Following the release there was a Panel Discussion that emphasised on facilitating business operations which is beyond enabling business establishments to prioritise smooth business operations.

Rishi Agarwal, Co-founder & CEO, Teamlease Regtech; Bhuvana Anand, Co-founder, Prosperity; Angira Singhvi Lodha, Partner, Khaitan & Khaitan; Danish A Hashim, Chief – EoDB, MNCs & GVCs, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII); Anil Bhardwaj, Secretary General, FISME; and Jacob Crasta, Founder & Chairman, CM Envirosystems Pvt. Ltd and Lsqare Eco Products Pvt. Ltd. were the Panellists in the session which was moderated by Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS. Amol Kulkarni, Director Research, CUTS delivered the Welcome Remarks.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/enabling-ease-of-running-a-business-by-bridging-trust-deficit/>

Secured 6G: Australia-India Cooperation

CUTS, in collaboration with the University of Queensland, International Institute of Information Technology, Bangalore (IIITB) and Australian Risk Policy Institute (ARPI) organised an online Panel Discussion on “Cyber Secured 6G: Technology, Standard and Regulation” on February 22, 2024. This event was a part of “Ethical 6G” project supported by DFAT. The discussion surrounded the cyber security aspects of 6G.

Ryan Ko, Chair & Director – Cyber Security, University of Queensland; David Ross, Adjunct Associate Professor, UQ Cyber; Rajeev Shorey, Professor, IIT Delhi; Gillian Savage, Fellow and Vice-President, Global ARPI; Salman Waris, Partner, Tech Legis; and Allan Asher, Fellow, Vice-President, Competition and Consumer Policy, ARPI were the Panellists in the session which was moderated by Priyanka Singh, Lecturer in Cyber Security, University of Queensland. Tony Charge, President, ARPI delivered the Welcome Address whereas Ujjwal Kumar, Associate Director, CUTS delivered the Vote of Thanks.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/secured-6g-australia-india-cooperation/>

Gig Workers’ Welfare in India: Concerns and Solutions

CUTS, in collaboration with GIZ, co-hosted a Webinar “Gig Workers’ Welfare in India: Concerns and Solutions” on March 15, 2024. The aim of this discussion was to review the status of regulation around the gig economy and gig workers. The webinar also reviewed the capacity-building efforts of stakeholders in the gig ecosystem, including GIZ’s online course modules on the gig economy.

It also delved into the potential and limits of competition laws in enhancing gig workers’ rights for better working conditions in India, and policy solutions that aimed at improving gig workers’ rights to achieve better working conditions in India and beyond were deliberated during the webinar.

The Panel included Aruna Sharma, former Secretary, Ministry of Steel and Distinguished Fellow, CUTS; Sarah Wanger, Project Manager, GIZ, Germany; Shubhashis Gangopadhyay, Research Director, Indian Development Foundation; Gayathri Vasudevan, CEO, Labour Net India; Badal Malick CBO & Founder, KarmaLife AI; Sanchita Chatterjee, Fellow, CUTS; Bornali Bhandari, Professor, NCAER; Vellah Kedogo Kigwiru, Doctoral Research Fellow, Technical University of Munich, Germany; and Ujjwal Kumar, Associate Director, CUTS. Bipul Chattopadhyay, Executive Director, CUTS moderated the discussion.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/gig-workers-welfare-in-india-concerns-and-solutions/>





Publications

Reports

Strategic Opportunities for Australia and India from 6G

This research report is part of the project “Ethical 6G: Identifying Elements of an Ethical Framework for 6G and Creating Opportunities for India and Australia”. The report discusses the status of collaboration between Australia and India in technology and telecom sectors. These include trade and investment opportunities in the technology and telecom sectors, cyber security and related skill development, semiconductor manufacturing, and quantum technology capabilities.

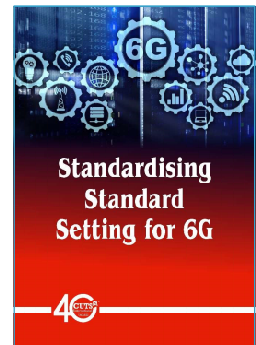
<https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/report-strategic-opportunities-for-australia-and-india-from-6g.pdf>



Standardising Standard Setting for 6G

The report deconstructs the standardisation process for 6G which is complex and involves different stakeholders with competing interests and needs. It also promotes standards that are open and consensus-driven based on rules, protocols, and technical specifications which govern how devices and networks communicate with each other. This report is part of the project “Ethical 6G: Identifying Elements of an Ethical Framework for 6G and Creating Opportunities for India and Australia”.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/report-standardising-standard-setting-for-6g.pdf>



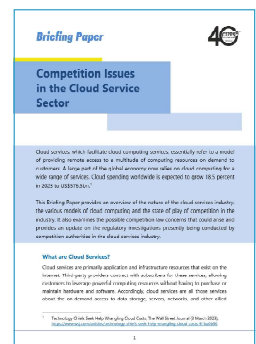
Briefing Papers

Competition Issues in the Cloud Service Sector

Cloud services, which facilitate cloud computing services, essentially refer to a model of providing remote access to a multitude of computing resources on demand to customers. A large part of the global economy now relies on cloud computing for a wide range of services. Cloud spending worldwide is expected to grow 18.5 percent in 2023 to US\$576.5bn.

This Briefing Paper provides an overview of the nature of the cloud services industry, the various models of cloud computing and the state of play of competition in the industry. It also examines the possible competition law concerns that could arise and provides an update on the regulatory investigations presently being conducted by competition authorities in the cloud services industry.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/bp-competition-issues-in-cloud-service-sector.pdf>

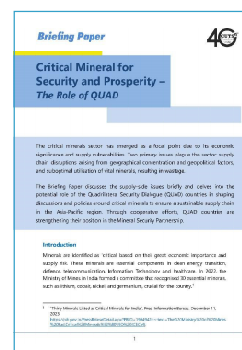


Critical Mineral for Security and Prosperity – The Role of QUAD

The critical minerals sector has emerged as a focal point due to its economic significance and supply vulnerabilities. Two primary issues plague the sector: supply chain disruptions arising from geographical concentration and geopolitical factors and suboptimal utilisation of vital minerals, resulting in wastage.

This Briefing Paper discusses the supply-side issues briefly and delves into the potential role of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) countries in shaping discussions and policies around critical minerals to ensure a sustainable supply chain in the Asia-Pacific region. Through cooperative efforts, QUAD countries are strengthening their position in the Mineral Security Partnership.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/bp-critical-minerals-for-security-and-prosperity.pdf>

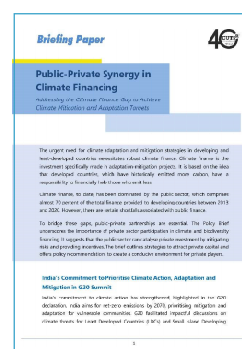


Public-Private Synergy in Climate Financing

The urgent need for climate adaptation and mitigation strategies in developing and least-developed countries necessitates robust climate finance. Climate finance is the investment specifically made in adaptation-mitigation projects. It is based on the idea that developed countries, which have historically emitted more carbon, have a responsibility to financially help those who emit less.

Climate finance, to date, has been dominated by the public sector, which comprises almost 70 percent of the total finance provided to developing countries between 2013 and 2020. However, there are certain shortfalls associated with public finance. To bridge these gaps, public-private partnerships are essential. The Paper underscores the importance of private sector participation in climate and biodiversity financing.

<https://cuts-international.org/PDF/bp-public-private-synergy-in-climate-financing.pdf>



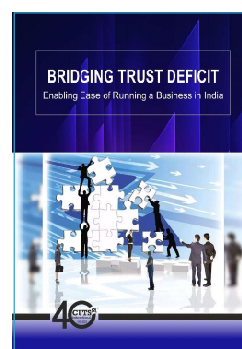
Discussion Paper

Bridging Trust Deficit: Enabling Ease of Running a Business in India

This Discussion Paper argues that to bridge the trust deficit, the government needs to focus on reducing such discretionary interactions and abuse of power by government officials, by revisiting legal provisions that bestow unfettered powers on government officials. The deliberately ambiguous laws need to clearly define situations and processes for invoking such powers, substantive and procedural safeguards while exercising them, and accountability and deterrence mechanisms to prevent abuse.

To this end, existing and proposed business-facing laws need to be subject to a three-step test of legitimacy, suitability, and proportionality. Only provisions passing all the tests should be retained, while others would either need to be scrapped or amended.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/dp-bridging-trust-deficit-enabling-ease-of-running-a-business-in-india.pdf>





Advocacy

CUTS Comments on The Draft Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, 2023

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) invited comments on the [draft Broadcasting Services \(Regulation\) Bill, 2023](#). CUTS put forward the following suggestions, among others: a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) should be conducted to assess the direct and indirect impacts of the bill on small businesses and consumers; a legislative framework should be drafted after the conclusion of ongoing TRAI consultation on a National Broadcasting Policy to maintain policy certainty; definitions and regulations, particularly for terms like ‘public interest,’ ‘good taste or decency,’ and ‘public and moral life, should be clear; and greater awareness generation among consumers is required.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/comments-on-draft-broadcasting-services-bill-2023.pdf>



Representations

- **Amol Kulkarni** participated in a programme on ‘Platform Accountability’ organised by the Media Democracy Fund in Kenya on January 22-26, 2024.
- **Ujjwal Kumar** participated in a workshop on ‘Food Value Chain’ organised by the BRICS Competition Centre, FAS Russia and the Egyptian Competition Authority in Cairo, Egypt on February 21-22, 2024.
- **Varidhi Singh** and **Tasmitta Sengupta** attended the ‘Logistic Summit- Rajasthan’ organised by ET Government in partnership with RIICO in Jaipur on February 29, 2024.
- **Akash Sharma** attended the two-day ‘Electric Mobility Initiative’ workshop organised by the Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation in Hyderabad from February 29 to March 01, 2024.
- **Ujjwal Kumar** participated in a workshop on ‘Ensuring Access to Biological Drugs for the Developing World’ organised by the BRICS Competition Centre, Institute of Chemical Technology, BioPharma International Exhibition & Conference, and FAS Russia in Mumbai on March 06, 2024.
- **Sanobar Imam** attended the two-day ‘8th FICCI International Sustainability Conclave’ organised by FICCI in New Delhi on March 20-21, 2024.
- **Krishank Jugiani** attended the Tech Talk on ‘Regional Cybersecurity Challenges’ organised by the Australian High Commission in New Delhi on March 20, 2024.



Advocacy through Media

Climate Finance: A Closer Look Reveals Gaping Holes

Policy Circle, January 03, 2024

By Pradeep S Mehta and Sanobar Imam

The urgency of climate action grows with each passing year. Yet, amid warnings and promises, one crucial question remains: how to convert ambition into action? Climate finance is the lifeblood of the collective pursuit of a sustainable future. Global climate finance touched US\$1.4 tn in 2022. Although this figure appears impressive at first glance, a closer examination reveals its limitations. A significant portion of this funding is in the form of debt, placing an additional burden on poorer countries.

<https://www.policycircle.org/opinion/climate-finance-sustainability-2/>

A national litigation policy will improve the ease of doing business

Livemint, January 30, 2024

By Vijay L Kelkar and Pradeep S Mehta

In the Doing Business rankings of the World Bank (now stopped), India fared very poorly on its component of contract enforcement—i.e. adjudication. In this context, the judiciary has called out the government's dichotomous approach in blaming courts for restricting 'ease of doing business' despite being the biggest litigant itself and seeking needless adjournments repeatedly. There is no litigation policy formulated by the government, while talks have been going on for over 13 years. If Viksit Bharat is our goal, a developed India, we need to get our act together. This includes the government reducing unnecessary litigation.

<https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/a-national-litigation-policy-will-improve-the-ease-of-doing-business-11706620183771.html>

State-level litigation policies present a dismal picture

Livemint, March 05, 2024

By Vijay L Kelkar and Pradeep S Mehta

Last time (tinyurl.com/y58cfcny), we wrote about the need of a national litigation policy so that state agencies in India curb their endless filing of appeals, which acts as a barrier to the ease of running a business and adds to delays in our justice system. The challenge is for the Centre and states to cut down litigation and unclog our adjudicatory system. Following recommendations of the 13th Finance Commission and National Consultation on Strengthening the Judiciary in 2009, it was resolved that a national litigation policy would be formulated and state governments encouraged to draft their own.

<https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/statelevel-litigation-policies-present-a-dismal-picture-11709565738014.html>

Why fair and responsible AI is non-negotiable for consumer welfare

The Economic Times, March 16, 2024

By Pradeep S Mehta

Artificial Intelligence has transcended its mere buzzword status; now reshaping industries and societies. Its innovative applications across sectors, including healthcare, finance, transportation, and entertainment, benefit consumers. Generative AI especially, enhances grievance redressal, consumer care, and access to affordable services, fostering economic growth opportunities.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/why-fair-and-responsible-ai-is-non-negotiable-for-consumer-welfare/>

Anchoring Trust within MSMEs: Making Significant Contribution to Resolving Business Challenges

Financial Express, March 20, 2024

By Pradeep S Mehta and Mehak Sharma

The challenges of running a business persist regardless of its scale, affecting big businesses and small or medium-sized enterprises alike. Issues like corruption and bureaucratic delays disrupt the daily lives of individuals as well. While big businesses can deal with such hurdles because they have the resources, small businesses find it more difficult to cope with them due to their limited resources and even connections. Added to dealing with difficult bureaucratic processes, they get further handicapped due to a lack of finances.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/anchoring-trust-within-msmes-making-significant-contribution-to-resolving-business-challenges/>