

**PRE RETREAT  
OF  
CUTS CENTRE FOR COMPETITION, INVESTMENT & ECONOMIC  
REGULATION**

Date: Tuesday, 09<sup>th</sup> August, 2016

Venue: CUTS Conference Hall

Time: 10:00 – 17:30 hours

**AGENDA**

<b>10:00 – 10:30</b>	Global developments, contribution of CUTS and thought process at organisational level <b>Pradeep S Mehta</b>
<b>10:30 – 11:30</b>	<b>Session I: Setting the Theme, Expectations of the Colleagues and Discussion on “Strategic Business Plan CUTS CCIER 2013-17”</b>  - Where we stand today? Evaluating the progress made since the Strategic Business Plan CUTS CCIER 2013-17 - Identifying Interests, Strengths, Opportunities and Designing the Strategic Business Plan CUTS CCIER 2018-22  <b>Udai S Mehta</b>
<b>11:30 – 11:45</b>	<b>Tea Break</b>
<b>11:45 – 12:30</b>	<b>Session II: CIRC &amp; CCIER (Convergence and Divergence)</b>  <b>Radha Krishna Tripathy</b>
<b>12:30 – 13:00</b>	<b>Session III: Ongoing projects, implementation challenges faced and measures undertake to address them, lessons for the future, opportunities, challenges, etc</b>  • Surbhi Singhvi (Energy Sector) • Rohit Singh (Information Technology, Competition, IP, etc) <b>Moderated by Amol Kulkarni</b>
<b>13:00 – 13:30</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>
<b>13:30 – 14:30</b>	Interactive discussion on Session III: Opportunities, challenges and recommending a way forward  <b>Moderated by Amol Kulkarni</b>
<b>14:30 – 15:00</b>	<b>Session on Team Building</b>  <b>Moderated by Amit Gordon</b>
<b>15:00 – 15:15</b>	<b>Tea Break</b>
<b>15:15 – 16:00</b>	<b>Session IV: Ongoing projects, implementation challenges faced and measures undertake to address them, lessons for the future, opportunities, challenges, etc</b>  • Amol Kulkarni (Financial Sector) • Ujjwal Kumar (Health/Pharmaceutical) • Neha Tomar (Agriculture Reforms) <b>Moderated by Abhishek Kumar</b>
<b>16:00 – 17:00</b>	Interactive discussion on Session IV: Opportunities, challenges and recommending a way forward  <b>Moderated by Abhishek Kumar</b>
<b>17:00 – 17:15</b>	<b>Feedback from the Colleagues</b>
<b>17:15 – 17:30</b>	<b>Consolidation and Way Forward</b>  • Amol Kulkarni • Udai Mehta

## REPORT OF PRE-RETREAT

### CUTS CENTRE FOR COMPETITION, INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC REGULATION

DATE: TUESDAY, 09 AUGUST, 2016

VENUE: CUTS CONFERENCE HALL, BHASKAR MARG, BANI PARK, JAIPUR

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#### PARTICIPANTS

- CCIER (Pradeep Mehta, Udai Mehta, Amol Kulkarni, Ujjwal Kumar, Rohit Singh, Surbhi Singhvi, Neha Tomar, Kanika Balani, Shaurya Tandon, Abhishek Kumar and Parveer Ghuman)
- CIRC (Radha Krishna Tripathy and Shaktiki Sharma)

#### BACKGROUND

The pre-retreat for CUTS Centre for Competition, Investment and Economic Regulation (CCIER) was organised to review the Strategic Business Plan (SBP) of CCIER. Existing and potential areas of work were discussed, including related challenges and mechanisms to address them. The pre-retreat was also expected to aid in formulating inputs for Senior Managers' retreat of CUTS.

#### **Opening Session: Global developments, contribution of CUTS and thought process at organisational level (PSM)**

PSM spoke about the developments and national and global level, their impact on CUTS, and the manner in which they have shaped CUTS agenda over the years. He spoke about evolution of organisation from a consumer advocacy group to a global independent evidence based policy research and outreach organisation that it has become today.

He emphasised on the need to work in line with the CUTS' Vision and Mission, keeping in mind the larger societal welfare, and the objective of poverty reduction. He highlighted some of the contributions made by the Centre at the national front, such as the Draft National Competition Policy, Competition Impact Assessment toolkit and Regulatory Impact Assessment. He also spoke about the sectors where CCIER can find scope for further intervention and work, such as internal market distortions and issues related to free trade between states in India, through engagements with the traditional partners of CUTS.

PSM cautioned the team not to miss the woods for the trees i.e. one should not miss the bigger picture and developments, while focusing on processes and sector specific issues. The need to take into account the interest of the poor and underserved was also emphasised.

On the issues of changing donor preferences and increasing government scrutiny of NGOs, he mentioned that NGOs supporting extreme agendas against the government or allegedly misusing funds have come under scrutiny. CUTS always had a centrist vision, an all-inclusive and transparent approach, which needs to be retained. On the issue of accepting support from private sector, he mentioned that we have to selectively choose private sector partners without compromising our own agenda and independence.

It was also noted that we have traditionally been advocacy and outreach focused organisation, with outcomes being more important than outputs and we will continue to be so. Thus, the practice of relying on external expertise for in-depth research and technical expertise was intentionally adopted, which the skill of managing research has been developed within the organisation.

## **Session I: Setting the Theme, Expectations of the Colleagues and Discussion on “Strategic Business Plan CUTS CCIER 2013-17” (USM)**

USM spoke about objective of the Pre-Retreat and the need to understand and internalise the Strategic Business Plan of the Centre and how it fits with CUTS vision. He delivered a presentation summarising the targets set in previous SBP, activities/ projects undertaken, the extent to which targets have been met and what remains to be done. He also spoke about the importance of ‘theory of change’ which is essential to understand the Centre’s approach to our work and appreciate reasons for Centre’s funded and pro bono initiatives (why we do- what we do).

USM highlighted the change in donor preferences and how the same has impacted the Centre’s work, and need to remain true to our core values of pro-consumer and pro-market reforms, despite and the changing environment. He also touched upon the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats at the Centre, and the need to devise the future work agenda in collaboration with the colleagues.

## **Session II: CIRC & CCIER - Convergence and Divergence (RKT)**

RKT mentioned that CIRC was primarily conceived as a public education and capacity building unit on regulatory and competition issues, and over the years it has become a premier institute in this regard. Most projects at CCIER have a capacity building component which has traditionally be taken up by CIRC. There have been projects wherein CCIER and CIRC have worked on research and outreach as well. It was suggested that CIRC could be involved in project development and conceptualization stage, to facilitate clarity on roles and responsibilities between CCIER and CIRC.

RKT pointed out that with new team at CIRC, and Dr. Mayaram as Chair, CIRC will be focusing on public private partnerships, urban infrastructure, natural resource management and related issues. It was suggested that it would be useful for CIRC to prioritise its focus areas and then look for partnerships. It was also highlighted that there is scope to develop joint products by CCIER and CIRC on training and capacity building which can be commercialized. CCIER colleagues could be invited to deliver lectures at CIRC’s ongoing training programmes, in order to leverage expertise of CCIER colleagues.

It was advised that joint efforts should be undertaken by CCIER and CUTS to find out common areas of interest and approach funding agency together leveraging on each other’s strength. Similar approach could be used for reaching out to policy makers and legislators at central and state level for generating awareness and capacity on policy, regulatory and competition reforms.

The need to create data driven decision support systems and backing the research by more data centric models was also highlighted. Also, RKT proposed that RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed) structure could be applied in research projects, which should involve continuous interaction with the external experts and advisors. USM emphasised the need for greater interaction between colleagues at all levels and the requirement to leverage the expertise and experience of Dr. Mayaram.

## **Session III: Ongoing projects, implementation challenges faced and measures undertake to address them, lessons for the future, opportunities, challenges, etc**

### *Energy sector (SBS and KBK)*

SBS and KBK made presentations on ongoing projects in energy sector at the Centre, implementation challenges faced and possible solutions to address the same. They emphasised on the need to build internal capacity, ensure engagement with project advisory committee members

throughout the life of the project, conducting periodic review of project timelines and implementing mid-term course correction, wherever required.

It was pointed out that the Centre has developed an 'Energy Vision Document' and USM emphasized its importance for outreach and collaboration. Similar documents could be formulated for other sectors as well. Also, there is a need to leverage our strengths at grassroots by designing projects that promote clean energy initiatives among rural populace. The need to undertake competition assessment in energy sector to highlight benefits of competition could also be pointed out. The outreach capability and network of CUTS should also be leveraged by designing projects involving outreach and advocacy components. The need to develop cross-sectoral projects linking areas like energy, finance, agriculture, etc and involving different Centres of CUTS was also highlighted.

#### *Information Technology and Intellectual Property (RHS)*

RHS highlighted the ongoing initiatives at Centre in internet and mobile handset sectors. It was emphasised that internet and mobile consumers fall within the target consumers for the benefit of which the organisation is working. India has a large and growing middle class consumer base, and global organisations are aiming to enter Indian markets. Such private sector organisations could be willing to support projects which review competition/ market access and regulatory issues in relevant sectors.

Challenges related to outreach the importance of writing op-eds and utilizing social media for outreach purposes was emphasised. Also, it was pointed out that completion of projects ought not to stop the Centre from connecting with likeminded institutions, and such collaborations could continue beyond the life of the projects. The importance of time management and meeting project deadlines was emphasised.

#### *Financial Sector (AMK)*

AMK delivered a brief presentation on past and ongoing projects in the financial sector. He highlighted that the Centre has developed internal capacity to undertake Regulatory Impact Assessment and this learning could be applied across sectors. The challenges highlighted related to stakeholder interaction and the unwillingness of industry to come at common platform, and provide insights. Also, reluctance of financial sector regulators (SEBI and RBI) to work together on regulatory reforms was pointed out. The need to undertake periodic outreach and advocacy programmes to stress importance of regulatory reforms and engagement with industry champions/ senior experts to bridge the gap between stakeholders/ regulators and civil society was highlighted.

It was pointed out that the Centre is known to represent consumer voice which industry does not and which regulators are looking for. This strength could be leveraged with the expertise of understanding of regulation and markets. AMK pointed out that CCIER needs to tap opportunities in emerging areas such as digital finance, payments, linkage between finance and other sectors, and sustainable finance/ investment. However, to leverage these opportunities, there is a need to build internal capacity, understanding and interest on issues related to financial sector. Also, the Centre needs to regularly publish research outputs in financial sector to increase visibility and credibility.

#### *Health and Pharmaceutical sector (VB and UJK)*

VB spoke projects implemented by the Centre in the health and pharmaceutical sector, and pointed out that the Centre has rich experience in the area of business responsibility. It was pointed out the lack of expertise and focus on these areas has led to limited progress in this sector. UJK briefed about potential areas of work and emerging issues in the sector, and made a presentation on competition, regulation and investment related issues in the health and pharmaceutical sector.

It was pointed out there is a need to undertake comprehensive donor mapping to understand donor priorities in the sector. On the basis of such exercise and prioritisation, customised idea notes could be designed to approach relevant donors.

### *Agriculture sector (NT)*

NT explained CREW project implemented by the Centre in the agriculture sector. She explained the challenges during this project, such as lack of political will and unreliability of data. The importance of preparing and using the operational strategy framework for projects and reviewing the same periodically was highlighted. Need for continuous engagement with key champions and stakeholders, building information symmetry among team members and encouraging cross learning between CUTS' centres was also emphasised.

It was pointed that CITEE is conducting lot of work in agriculture sector and possesses relevant expertise. There is a need to leverage on such expertise and design project ideas with CITEE. Also, the Centre has conducted competition assessment of APMC Act which could be showcased and funding could be leveraged for the same. The importance of engaging with a government not only for funding but also to build credibility was also pointed out.

### **Consolidated and Way Forward**

The following were the key take away from the deliberations at the CCIER Pre-Retreat:

- Keep consumer welfare at the core of Centre's work.
- Develop project ideas involving multiple sectors and different centres of CUTS.
- Focus on improving collaboration with likeminded institutions.
- Undertake comprehensive donor mapping, prioritisation and designing customised project ideas.
- Develop internal understanding and capacity of prevailing and emerging trends.
- Improve visibility through effective communication and media management.
- Review project deliverables and ensure quality outputs within the prescribed time frame.
- Periodically publish high quality research outputs.
- Highlight industry champions and experts and ensure continuous engagement throughout the life of project.

### **Developments post Pre-Retreat**

CUTS Senior Managers' retreat was organised wherein the USM presented the select observations from the CCIER Pre-Retreat. The feedback received from Senior Managers' retreat was also communicated to the team.

As different colleagues had made sector specific presentations during the pre-retreat, including opportunities in the relevant sectors, it was decided that the colleagues would undertake in-depth research on potential donors in the sector, their priorities and identify key project ideas for pursuing with the donors. Such ideas would initially be discussed in an internal meeting subsequent to which idea notes for engagement with donors will be prepared.

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