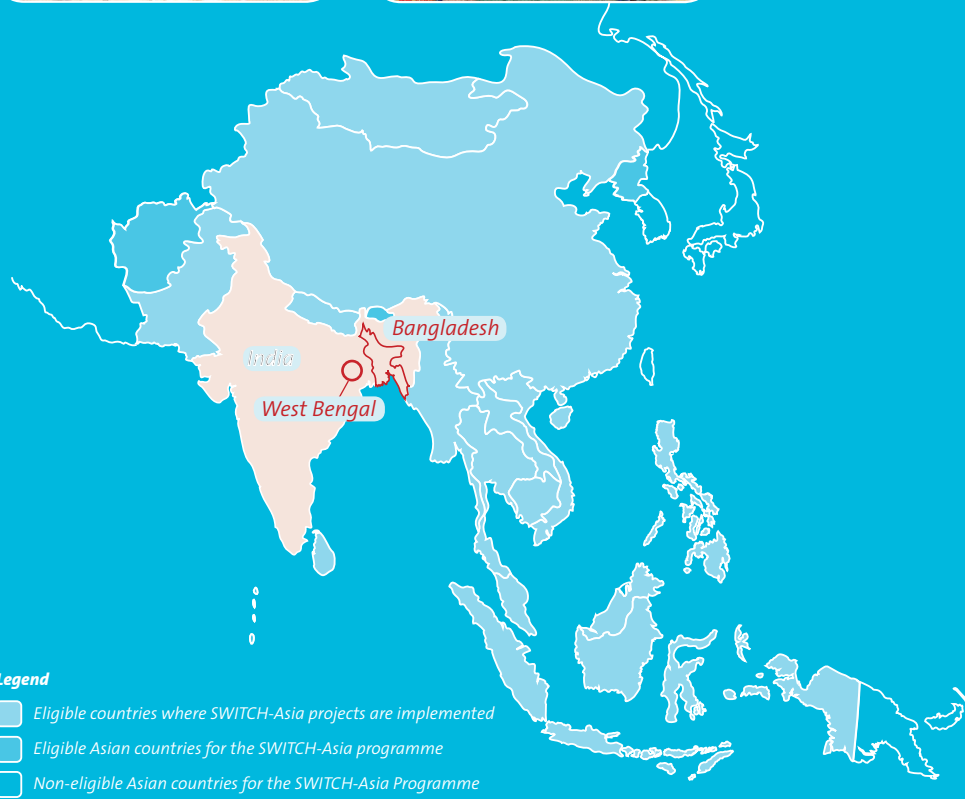




PROJECT PROGRESS SHEET

JUTE: AN ECO-FRIENDLY ALTERNATIVE FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



- Legend**
- Eligible countries where SWITCH-Asia projects are implemented
 - Eligible Asian countries for the SWITCH-Asia programme
 - Non-eligible Asian countries for the SWITCH-Asia Programme
- Project implementation area
- City
 - Region
 - Country

The boundaries shown on this map do not imply on the part of the European Union any judgment on the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.



BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The SWITCH-Asia project Jute: An eco-friendly alternative for a sustainable future seeks to promote economic prosperity and reduce poverty in Bangladesh and India by encouraging a switch to more environmentally sustainable practices in the jute industry.

The project encourages the sustainable production and consumption of eco-friendly jute diversified products (JDP) in Bangladesh and India. The project focuses on increasing awareness of sustainable production & consumption practices, improving business capacity to produce more market-driven products, ensure that service providers have the right set of skills to work with SMEs, establish a match making service through Business Facilitation Units to support sustainable service provision, and campaign for increasing demand for eco-friendly products as well as supportive policies for the sector.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Traidcraft Exchange (TX); Margdarshak Development Services; Training, Assistance and Rural Advancement Non-Government Organization (TARANGO)

PROJECT DURATION

2009 - 2014

TARGET GROUPS

- 500 SMEs producing various Jute Diversified Products (300 in Bangladesh and 200 in India)
- 30 local business service providers. Service providers will cover services such as business planning, product development, financial services, quality assurance, efficient production, marketing and sales support and cost and pricing. They will be trained on business service and counselling skills.
- At least 200,000 poor people (this includes the 25,000 SME workers and their 100,000 family members as well as the workers and family members of producer groups who supply SMEs).
- 35 million people in the wider jute industry in Bangladesh and India who will benefit from more supportive government policies and enhanced international market profile
- Our 2 local partners.
- 50-60 bulk buyers. The project staff will network with at least 50 bulk buyers (institutional buyers, whole-sellers, retailers, etc.) to provide a sustainable market for eco-friendly jute and JDPs.
- The project will undertake mass consumer campaign targeting consumers and consumer organizations in India and Bangladesh who will have the information they need to make more sustainable purchasing decisions.
- Civil society organizations and NGOs who will have more information on the problems facing communities producing JDPs and be able to develop more appropriate support and interventions.
- Governments in India and Bangladesh who will have the information they need to develop more relevant policies to support the jute sector and JDP SMEs

PROJECT MANAGER ORGANIZATION ADDRESS

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OUTPUTS UNTIL DECEMBER 2010 TO BE SHARED WITH WIDER AUDIENCE

The project website will be launched later in 2011. It will then act as a good platform to share project information and outputs with wider audience. The project has recruited all staff and completed office set-ups in both countries. Two PCC meetings have taken place in India while the CMT members in both countries have met at regular intervals for reviewing the project performance and plan for the future. Both countries have undertaken mapping exercises and prepared separate reports in order to identify current status of JDP SMEs, network with relevant stakeholders and to gain further insights into the sector.



A series of research including baseline study, domestic market research and service assessment was outsourced to qualified 3rd party consultants in both countries. The project team in India has identified 20 potential service providers from different backgrounds such as designer, exporter, technical service provider, business management skill providers. In Bangladesh, the project team is networking with potential service providers. These identified service providers will attend the first BDS training in March, from where the number of service providers will be pruned to 34 (12 in India and 22 in Bangladesh).

RESULTS ACHIEVED TILL JANUARY 2011

The project team identified and interacted with 32 JDP enterprises in India, out of which 20 will be actively worked with in the first phase of the project. In Bangladesh, the project team has visited and interacted with 90 JDP producing SMEs, out of which 40 have been selected for pilot activities in the first phase. Detailed information of these pilot SMEs has been collected through mapping exercise followed by a baseline study. Networking with potential bulk buyers has also started in Bangladesh and a linkage has already been built between a major telecommunication company named ROBI with one of the JDP SME beneficiary under the project. The company has replaced paper bags with jute bags and intends to procure such jute items on a regular basis.

The project has a built-in SCP replication mechanism. A key element will be the use of multiplier approaches. 30 Service providers will be selected and trained on business skill and counselling in order to ensure development and provision of sustainable services. Training and information will be disseminated to a wide range of SMEs. Two Business Facilitation Units (BFUs) will support and encourage sharing of learning amongst SMEs on an ongoing basis. In Phase I, support and services (from the BFUs and service providers) will be piloted with a group of 60 selected SMEs (40 in Bangladesh and 20 in India). Once the services of the service providers and BFUs have been piloted, Phase II will then roll them out to a larger group of at least 440 SMEs in Bangladesh



and India. The project is still at an early stage to ensure any direct sustainability gains or to play a role in update of SCP policies yet. However, at a later stage in the project, advocacy activities will lobby for policies supporting increased jute consumption, thus supporting the development of an enabling policy environment

LESSONS LEARNT SO FAR

During this initial phase, the interactions with the target groups have shown that they have myriad problems and needs. It is becoming very clear that the level and extent of the problem varies which will require a substantial effort in part of the project to address. This feedback is making the project team realize that it should be very careful that the needs of the target group are clearly defined so as to be addressed. It is expected that the findings of the baseline survey, domestic research and consultative need assessment workshop will help in finalising the inputs



and the tools that are required to be designed to meet the needs of the target group.

As of now, the project has received a positive response from various stakeholders. Even government bodies involved in JDPs has shown their keenness in working together. This also to a large extent is raising the expectations of the potential beneficiaries. Clear defined inputs planned before the project launch workshop will to some extent probably present a realistic picture and this will help in weeding out fence sitters.

OUTREACH AND SYNERGIES

The project has a well-planned outreach strategy in place. The BFU will provide market & technical information and match-making services to all JDP SMEs. Trained service providers will ultimately reach huge number of SMEs by providing affordable quality services. Consumer campaigns will reach a larger segment of consumers which will increase market demand for JDPs. Policy change will impact the entire jute sector.

The project team in both countries has interacted and are in regular touch with various Institutions working on Jute and Jute Diversified

Products. Various institutions namely the National Jute Board, Jute Manufacturers Development Council (JMDC), Indian Jute Institute (IJI), Jute Diversification Promotion Centre (JDPC), Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI), Bangladesh Jute Goods Association etc have been approached in order to create synergies with their projects and gain their support and cooperation in our activities. Positive response has been received with some of them willing to be part of the service providers proposed in the project such as EXIM Bank, National Jute Board, National



Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), JDPC, BJRI and Bangladesh Skills Development Institute (BSDI) among others.

In Bangladesh, a multi-donor funded project KATALYST is also working on Jute. As there are grounds of common interest, Katalyst and Traidcraft agreed to pool resources and work together to achieve their shared goal. So both the organizations signed a broad MoU to cooperate and collaborate in their work following their individual mandate. We hope that it will have synergic effects on promoting the overall jute sector in Bangladesh.

The project as such has interacted with number of NGOs promoting JDPs informally in addition to Jute promotional bodies. Through networking with relevant stakeholders in the sector, there already exists awareness about the project to a good extent. In Bangladesh, the project team has networked extensively with potential bulk buyers as a result of which institutional buyers are well aware of the project. A formal launch workshop is scheduled in March after the findings of the research are available with the project. This will create further awareness about the project among local population and authorities.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROJECT

The project has only recently started so it is too early to measure impact or state highlights. However, we expect the impact to include:

- Increased capacity of small businesses to produce and market eco-friendly jute products
- Increased sales of eco-friendly jute products
- Increased income for poor producers

