



# BRIDGE GBM

Building River Dialogue and Governance for civil society organisations in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river basins



## The GBM River Basins

The Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) is a trans-boundary river system with a total area of over 1.7 million km<sup>2</sup> distributed among five countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India and Nepal.

The management of water resources in the GBM region faces many challenges, stemming from its very diverse socio-ecological context, the lack of basin-level thinking in planning processes and the absence of common legal and institutional frameworks to support cooperative water governance. All of these factors contribute to a low level of trust and cooperation among the riparian coun-

tries when it comes to participating in water-related dialogues and policy discourse.

In the GBM region, a large number of local civil society organisations (CSOs) have the potential to play a much greater role in promoting cooperative hydro-diplomacy and sustainable transboundary water management.

Unfortunately, because most CSOs do not have the capacity or the technical knowledge to constructively engage with and influence decisions, relatively little impact has been made on regional water dialogues.

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE



## BRIDGE GBM

Funded by The Asia Foundation, the Building River Dialogue and Governance for civil society organisations in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river basins (BRIDGE GBM) is a 14-month-long project which started in July 2016. The project aims to build the capacity of a network of CSOs in the GBM basins to improve their engagement in transboundary water management issues. The project works closely with 30 CSOs working on water governance issues in Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India and Nepal.



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BRIDGE GBM regional water governance workshop, November 2016 Bangkok

## BRIDGE GBM Objectives

The project aims to strengthen the capacities and 'voice' of CSOs through the development of two main outputs:

- A regional CSO vision for cooperative transboundary water resource management in the GBM
- A roadmap for sustainable management of inland navigation and fisheries resources between Bangladesh and India

Since its launch, the project has organised one regional water governance workshop in Bangkok in November 2016 and one regional visioning workshop in Kathmandu in March 2017. It has also established a Drafting Committee of CSOs from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and India to anchor and lead the process of regional CSO vision development.

To develop the roadmap for sustainable management of inland navigation and fisheries resources, the project launched the first first-ever joint dialogue for Bangladesh and India in November 2016 in Dhaka. The project also facilitated community consultations, in partnership with CSOs at six different locations along the Bangladesh-

India border, including Dhubri and Namkhana in India and Sirajganj, Chilmari, Khulna and Rowmari in Bangladesh. These consultations have provided strategic community perspectives for further development of the roadmap.

The roadmap will serve as a guidance document for those interested in the inclusive and environmentally sound development of inland navigation and will provide common points of reference around which cross-border communities can cooperate with each other.

The final project outcomes will be shared with government officials and media personnel during the project dissemination workshop planned in August 2017.



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Consultation with river fishing community from Ghewmari village, February 2017 in Dhubri District, Assam, India

*"The BRIDGE GBM project will help strengthen the voice of the GBM CSO community through the development of a structured and coordinated set of key messages on water management."*

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