



Country Level Workshop

China

Transnational Policy Dialogue for Improved Water Governance of the
Brahmaputra River- Phase 3



6th and 7th July, 2016

China

The Brahmaputra River Basin in South Asia is home to 130 million people and is one of the most critical transboundary river systems. However, the absence of integrated management of water resources and lack of coordination among the riparian states poses a considerable threat to the future development plans within the basin. It was realised that there is a strong need for dialogue and discussion across multiple stakeholders (government, civil society organizations, funding agencies, academia, scientific community and media) to encourage integrated and coordinated basin management. The project titled “Transnational Policy Dialogue for Improved Water Governance in Brahmaputra River” is an initiative by SaciWATERS which aims to create a platform for the discussion of the issues, challenges, and opportunities towards improved co-management of the river basin. The project was started by a group of researchers from India and Bangladesh in 2013 as a bilateral dialogue initiative between India and Bangladesh which later became a multilateral dialogue with the involvement of China and Bhutan. The project which is currently in its third phase (2015-2017), aims to develop a basin level institutional framework for strengthening the co-management of the Brahmaputra Basin.

Keeping in view the aim of the project, South Asia Consortium for Interdisciplinary Water Resources Studies (SaciWATERS) organized a country level workshop with Yunnan University on 6th and 7th July 2016. The workshop not only helped in establishing a point of contact in China but also helped in identifying key people who can play an important role in the project. The workshop was attended by Dr. Anamika Barua (SaciWATERS), Dr. Poulomi Banerjee (SaciWATERS) and Mr. A.K. Mitra (Water Resources Department, Government of Assam) from *India*; and by Dr. Monowar Hossain (Institute of Water Modelling, Bangladesh) from *Bangladesh*.

The key highlights of the workshop are:

6th July 2017

The first day of the workshop was organized in Yunnan University and along with the participants from *India* and *Bangladesh* mentioned above, was attended by following representatives from Yunnan University:

- Dr. He Daming, Director, Asian International Rivers Centre, Yunnan University
- Dr. Yan Feng, Professor, Asian International Rivers Centre, Yunnan University

- Dr. Wenling Wang, Assistant Professor, Asian International Rivers Centre, Yunnan University

The workshop started with Dr. Barua giving a brief presentation about the project “Transnational Policy Dialogue for Improved Water Governance in Brahmaputra River”. Also following points were highlighted in the end which indicated the kind of support that would be needed from China in the project:

- Helping in connecting to the local level NGOs and CSOs to build their capacity.
- Participate in the dialogue process
- Nominate a member from China for the Advisory Committee
- Publishing Joint Policy Briefs and Publications

They agreed to each point and also Prof. De Haming agreed to be a part of the Advisory Committee. Prof. Haming who is the director of Asian International Rivers Centre (AIRC), Yunnan University has worked extensively with the government of China, especially on projects related to hydropower development. He will be able to get us in contact with Chinese bureaucrats, academicians and CSOs.

Further Yunnan University has a vast experience of working on Transboundary Rivers, especially the Mekong River. They have developed certain tools to build the capacity of the CSOs in the Mekong Basin. Although their experience of working on Yarlung Tsangpo is quite limited, they have agreed to share their tools which can be used in other riparian countries for building the capacity of the local communities.

They also showed a keen interest in organizing a regional level workshop in 2017 in China which would bring the representatives of all the four riparian countries together and would provide them with a platform to share their concerns and ideas.

7th July 2016

The second day of the workshop was organized in Kunming Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences since they conduct a lot of studies in the transboundary river systems from the biodiversity perspective. Apart from the above mentioned participants, the second day meeting was also attended by Su Yufang, Deputy Director of Kunming Institute of Botany. She

gave a presentation regarding the ongoing projects in the department related to water and climate change.

They have worked extensively on the implications on the biodiversity and cultural diversity as a result of the interventions being carried out in the transboundary river systems. They have also worked extensively on Mekong River Basin but very less on Yarlung Tsangpo and acknowledged that here is a huge knowledge gap in this region. They believe that this knowledge gap can be bridged through this project.

Moreover they also assured that they would invite SaciWATERS in the future in case of any workshop or conference being organized regarding the transboundary river systems. This would provide a good platform for knowledge sharing and the exchange of ideas.

Overall the meeting helped in establishing point of contacts in China and provided with good opportunities to create a platform for the sharing of knowledge, exchange of ideas, concerns and issues.