

Project Brief

Cyber Security Capacity Building Programme for MSMEs in India

Background

The rapid advancement of technology has bolstered businesses to a significant extent, particularly Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), by providing them greater access to markets and opportunities within the digital economy. At the same time, digital integration exposes them to cyber threats. As businesses in India increasingly adopt digital technologies, they confront a growing threat of cyberattacks in addition to the usual vulnerabilities present in the offline world. Therefore, a greater focus on cybersecurity is vital for protecting networks, applications, and resources.

According to data from the National Crime Records Bureau of India, 65,893 cybercrime cases were registered in 2022 compared to the 52,974 cases reported in 2021, reflecting a 24.4 per cent increase. This surge underscores the urgent need for robust cybersecurity, especially for MSMEs, which often lack adequate cyber-attack protection systems and awareness. Strengthening the cybersecurity framework for MSMEs is critical to ensure their safe participation in the digital landscape.

CUTS International recognises the unique challenges faced by MSMEs in the digital space and seeks to provide targeted support to help them navigate the complexities of the digital economy.



In response to these challenges, CUTS International has joined an initiative undertaken by **The Asia Foundation (TAF)** titled 'the **APAC Cybersecurity Fund**', with support from **Google.org**. The initiative endeavours to fortify the cybersecurity ecosystem in the Asia-Pacific region. It aims to equip micro and small businesses, nonprofits, and social enterprises with the skills necessary to navigate the internet safely and confidently through a training programme.

CUTS International will implement the training programme in states, viz Rajasthan, West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Nagaland and Tripura.

To implement the programme, CUTS International is building on its longstanding expertise in the domains of digital literacy, policy advocacy, and capacity building. In the recent past, CUTS International conducted various workshops on cyber security among MSMEs and women entrepreneurs to enable them to combat cyber threats in Northeast India.

Objectives

- To enhance the cybersecurity resilience of MSMEs by providing comprehensive training, increasing awareness, and promoting the adoption of cyber-resilient practices while establishing a sustainable framework for ongoing support.
- To equip MSMEs with capabilities to address challenges related to their use of digital technologies, and devise strategies to improve their cybersecurity capabilities

Activities

The training programme will include the following activities over two years (2024-2026)

- Training sessions for 20,600 participants across 10 states through a series of in-person workshops and virtual trainings.
- A total of 160 in-person workshops will be conducted, each targeting 100 participants, reaching approximately 16,000 people.
- The remaining participants (6,600) will receive training in virtual mode through self-paced courses offered via the web portal developed by CUTS International.

Expected Outcome

- Enhanced cyber resilience of MSMEs, by capacitating them to guard against cyber threats while empowering them to thrive in the digital economy.
- Greater collaboration among government, industry, and civil society, while simultaneously strengthening the nation's cybersecurity framework and advancing the goals of Digital India.

Web Portal

CUTS International has developed a web portal to register both in-person and virtual participants and allow participants to register themselves and access the training modules. The portal will offer self-paced online courses, enabling MSMEs to participate in the training at their convenience, thereby ensuring flexible and widespread learning opportunities.

The web portal will also track the progress of the training sessions and monitor the program's outreach to ensure effective implementation and impact across the regions.

Project Duration: May, 2024 - June, 2026