

Memorandum of Understanding

1. INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the understanding between (a) **Vivekananda Sevakendra-O-Sishu Uddyan (VSSU)**, (b) **Environment Conservation Society (Switch ON)** and (c) **Society for Appropriate Rural Technology for Sustainability (ARTS)**, in order to work together for the sustainable development of village-based communities and rural households in India, in general, and the rural people in the South 24 Parganas/Sunderbans area in particular, by joining together under the unifying banner of the “**coalition of Moral Forces for Sustainability**” (cMFS).

Vivekananda Sevakendra-O-Sishu Uddyan (VSSU) is a non profit organization located in Ullon, Post Office, Ramlochanpur, District, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, and was created to empower remote riverine villages, vulnerable rural communities of South 24 Parganas. It works on livelihood improvement and economic enhancement through various programs such for example education for children, community empowerment, health promotion, or sustainable livelihood creation.

Environment Conservation Society (Switch ON) is a registered non-profit society at 1A DL Khan Road, Kolkata 700027—passionate about sustainable development and equity in India. Switch ON is committed to environment advocacy and to deploy appropriate renewable energy solutions across rural India, to find solutions to inter-related problems of development-health-education-water & food security. The society also runs a Kolkata cycling club and promotes an environment news portal.

Society for Appropriate Rural Technology for Sustainability (ARTS) is a knowledge-based and technology driven non-profit NGO (formed by **Sankalpa Trust**, a ‘Think Tank’) at P6 Cluster 2, Purbachal, Salt Lake, Kolkata 700097 which focuses on the design, development and implementation of appropriate technologies for the dissemination of products, processes and services in programs relating to sustainable livelihoods, energy, shelter, information systems and other fields of common interest to village-based communities.

This MOU formalizes a carefully considered, good faith expression of the intention to collaborate between (a) VSSU (Vivekananda Sevakendra-O-Sishu Uddyan), (b) Switch ON (Environment Conservation Society) and (c) ARTS (Society for Appropriate Rural Technology for Sustainability) for the benefit of a common target group. However, it is not a legally binding document nor does it create any liability for any partner. The partnership is aimed at assisting both organizations to combine their capacities to improve the lives of communities in India.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the partnership and this Memorandum are:

- (a) Primarily, to create a coalition of like-minded, non-profit NGOs that can work together as an efficient organizational system that can assist village-based communities in India, in general, and the rural people in the South 24 Parganas/Sunderbans area in particular, who lack access to micro-finance, clean energy, sustainable livelihoods, shelter and information and communications technologies, and thereby facilitate their efforts to gain access to affordable but high quality products, services and effective technologies that best reflect the needs of the target beneficiary communities and households in need.
- (b) To create a measurable benefit to VSSU, including but not limited to: diversifying income streams and improving the financial sustainability of the organization through low cost diversification. Strengthening relationships with existing micro-credit clients and attracting new clients.
- (c) To create a measurable benefit to Switch ON, including but not limited to: Increase the financial sustainability from distributing renewable energy technologies that will also impact the creation of livelihoods and shelter products and services to rural households. Create a brand in rural communities for Environment Conservation Society in line with our ambition to deploy all appropriate rural development solutions across rural India.
- (d) To create a measurable benefit to ARTS, including but not limited to: The ability to participate in the implementation and dissemination of appropriate 'hard' and 'soft' technologies and promotion of products, processes and services in programs relating to sustainable livelihoods, energy, shelter, knowledge products and services and other fields of interest to the target beneficiary communities—through appropriate technology transfer protocols, management systems and mechanisms.

3. PARTNERSHIP ROLES

This MOU formalizes a methodology for the coalition partners to build on the strengths of each partner, so that the coalition as a whole presents a formidable coalition of forces that can bring to bear the collective wisdom, experience, knowledge and resources of each partnering organization, the objective being to solve the problems of the target beneficiaries and provide for their needs.

Each coalition partner shall propose rural development projects that best reflect their strength areas, and which will satisfy the 'Purpose' of this MOU as defined in Section 2 above, and the coalition partners as a whole will join together to collaboratively develop the projects towards successful completion for the benefit of the target beneficiaries.

VSSU's role in the partnership is outlined below:

- Provide access to VSSU's physical infrastructure.
- Provide access to the network of micro-credit client's.
- Disseminate knowledge and resources related to micro-credit .

Switch ON's role in the partnership is outlined below:

- Establish a structure for the management of the project
- Provide training to Small Scale Energy Entrepreneurs (SSEs) with other stakeholder.
- Supervise and Monitor activities of SSE's and project
- Overall, to provide the necessary resources to achieve the goals of the partnership.

ARTS's role in the partnership is outlined below:

Provide technology transfer inputs, management and consultancy support for the design, implementation and dissemination of appropriate 'hard' and 'soft' technologies that best reflect the needs of the target beneficiary communities and village-based groups in need, in particular with reference to:

- (a) Dissemination of Spirulina production and other technologies that enhance food security and promote agricultural productivity, especially as a means for sustainable livelihoods/benefit of women and children;
- (b) Implementation of an 'IT-Enabled Community Center' (ITECC) for the dissemination of knowledge-based products and services and promotion of Sankalpa's 'Total Rural Development' (TRD) Project at the VSSU campus, using available infrastructural support and resources;
- (c) Applying to funding agencies for grants and financial assistance and organizing fundraising projects for managing transfer of technologies for products and services and the building of models related to:
 - i. Renewable Energy Technologies, including models that promote gasifier and biomethanation technologies;
 - ii. Shelter technologies, including models that promote Eco Kilns (VSBK), Microconcrete Roofing Tiles (MCRT), Ferrocement Doors and Windows (FCDW), Compressed Earth Block (CEB);
 - iii. Sustainable livelihoods including handmade paper products, jute and bamboo handicrafts, and social entrepreneurship models emerging from i. Energy and ii. Shelter technologies.

In addition, all parties agree to:

- Provide feedback to MOU partners of the lessons learned,
- Acknowledge the partnership by appropriate use of the names and logos of the other parties in publications and marketing,
- Respect good operational and transparent practices, putting in place measures to assure the maximum possible development of economic and environmental gains, and offering high standards of quality, redressal and transparency to beneficiaries end users of the coalition's products and services.

4. AGREEMENT

The undersigned agree to the above terms to work together in establishing an effective coalition. All parties recognize that this agreement is **legally non-binding**, and provides only an outline of expectations by each party in the partnership.

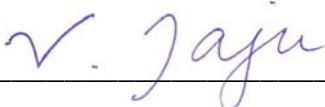
The partnership can be terminated within one (1) month by any party at any time, with notice given in writing (email included) to all other parties, and one (1) month allowed for dispute resolution.



January 16, 2010

Mr. Kapilananda Mondal, VSSU

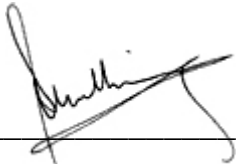
Date



January 16, 2010

Mr. Vinay Jaju, Switch ON

Date



January 16, 2010

Dr. Subhrankar Mukherjee, ARTS

Date