



Dialogue on Advancing Sustainability and Responsible Business in the North Eastern region

9th July 2022

SUMMARY REPORT

1. Background

Centre for Responsible Business (CRB – www.c4rb.org) and Media Management Group for Literacy & Development (MMGLD - www.mmglld.in) are keen to facilitate dialogue and actions on *Sustainability and Responsible Business in the North Eastern region of India*, to meet the interest of the local people, economy and the environment. Pursuing this objective, the two organisations invited a select group of senior experts and practitioners from the region to initiate this dialogue on 9th July 2022 in New Delhi. The idea was to have a dialogue on the following points:

- (i) *Key Sustainability Challenges and/or Opportunities in a particular N E Region State*
- (ii) *What could be done, especially driven by the Private Sector either as a Collaborator or through their Value Chain interventions, especially to benefit People and Nature in the region?*
- (iii) *What kind of external support might be needed (and from who)?*

2. Brief Summary of the Discussions

2.1 Opportunities and Challenges

Based on the inputs received from the experts (comprising Parliamentarians, private sector representatives, academicians, civil society organisations), the following sustainability related opportunities and challenges were identified.

Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Connecting the disconnected (ii) Skilling of Youth especially women (iii) Market-linkages for FPOs/Producer Collectives (iv) Organic Agriculture (v) Responsible Sourcing and Management of Natural Resources (water, forests, commodities, local culture, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Environmental fragility inspite of resource richness (ii) Rapid and unplanned urbanisation (iii) Water security and availability (iv) Climate change impacts on livelihoods (v) Skills on Environment Abatement Technology (vi) Development model not in sync with local realities (vii) Lack of coordination across agencies

2.2 Priority Areas

Further discussions and brainstorming by the group led to the identification of the following *priority areas* where business engagement could lead to positive impacts on people and nature:

- (i) Deforestation and Biodiversity Loss
- (ii) Water Availability & Conservation
- (iii) Agri-based Livelihoods



- (iv) Youth Skills and Employment
- (v) Market Linkages for SMEs/Smallholders
- (vi) Climate Resilient Agriculture
- (vii) Urban Planning and Resilient Infra
- (viii) Sustainable and Eco-friendly Tourism

3. Way Forward

CRB and MMGLD have analysed the discussions¹, and developed the following *draft strategy* that provides some ideas of how business responsibility/sustainability could be promoted on the priority topics/areas in the North East region. Each of the (initial) activities identified below would be undertaken in partnership with interested organisations.

The organisations are planning to follow up this initial dialogue in Delhi, with face-to-face discussions with stakeholders in select States of the North Eastern region. CRB and MMGLD therefore would like to invite organisations interested in further continuing these dialogues for their inputs/suggestions.

It was also suggested by some participants that a network of experts and organisations across domains and disciplines from the region be created to further Sustainability/Responsible Business related dialogues and action. The two organisations therefore propose the development of a **North East Sustainable Business Network** going forward. This network could further refine/consolidate the proposed draft 'strategy' below and design appropriate collaborative sustainability initiatives.

Draft Strategy for Initiating Actions

Outcomes	Outputs	Activities
Business & Social/Community Institution Partner on Sustainability	Partnerships initiated involving Businesses and local Community Institutions on select Priority Areas	State-level multi-stakeholder dialogues on specific Priority Areas are organised and common roadmap for achieving sustainability (SDG indicators) is developed
Better informed Stakeholders on Future-proofing (Resilient Communities, Resilient Supply/Value Chains)	Evidence-base of 'good practices' and local Champions (Inspiration)	Good practices are documented into an annual dossier - <i>North East Chronicles on Responsible Business and SDGs</i>

¹ Recording of the meeting in Delhi is available on request. Please write to secretary-general@mmgld.in and siya@c4rb.in



Outcomes	Outputs	Activities
Businesses demonstrate Leadership and Inspiration on Sustainability (incl. SMEs, Producer Collectives)	Possible Solutions/Pathways developed through Multi-stakeholder Dialogues on Priority Areas	Capacity building on businesses, industry actors and other stakeholders on responsible business conduct, sustainable value chain (specific commodities), circular economy, climate resilient agriculture, etc. organised
Informed policy environment (Sustainability Principles mainstreaming)	Evidence based policy engagement with State level policymakers on Priority Areas	State level multi-stakeholder networks/platforms are developed involving - business, industry association, academia, CSOs, local authorities, experts

Please send your inputs to:

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