

Setting up a New Township near the Makru River Bank in Tousem Sub division, Tamenglong District, Manipur

Mapping the Prospects and Potential of developing an Eco Hub



North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Limited

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE OF THE STUDY

Setting up a new township near the Makru River bank in Tousem Sub-division, Tamenglong district, Manipur: Mapping the prospects and potential of developing an Eco-Hub

I. Background and Study Objective: The construction of the 111-km Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal Jiribam – Imphal new railway broad gauge line is one of the crucial connectivity projects for the North-eastern region that is at an advanced stage of completion. This railway line project marks a significant boost in the region's infrastructure development and once operational, promises to enhance connectivity and stimulate economic growth across the state of Manipur. Moreover, the construction work of National Highway 137 traversing the state of Manipur is in progress. Therefore, it is anticipated that the ongoing infrastructure development initiatives would significantly improve connectivity as well as unlock enormous potential of economic development of Tamenglong district of Manipur. With the said background, the Government of Manipur proposed to conduct a study entitled “Setting up a new township near the Makru River bank in Tousem Sub-division, Tamenglong district, Manipur: Mapping the prospects and potential of developing an eco-hub” under TEDF of NEDFi. This Report has been developed by NEDFi in partnership with North East Space Application Centre (NESAC) as part of the deliverable under the assignment.

II. Approach and Methodology: Referring to the primary objectives of the study, the research approach adopted by the study team is qualitative and analytical in nature. Appropriate research method has been adopted in order to satisfy the main objective and accomplish the task successfully in alignment with the scope of work under the study. The study sought to utilise the most recent data as well as reliable information to best present the existing condition and the contemporary practices. The entire study approach comprises of four phases namely Identification of Suitable Land, Survey, Analysis, Planning and Design. Each phase encompasses multiple steps that collectively contribute to the successful planning and implementation of the development. Detail literature review was carried out through extensive desk research to review concepts related to rural development and socio-economic development sector. Selected Case Studies demonstrating real-world applications have been examined by the study team in order to gain insights into the best practices, success stories and innovative solutions that can be replicated or adopted in the present context. Accordingly, the criteria for selecting the case studies examined are those cases that represented the agendas of similar nature like a) Rural Development, b) Tourism and c) Town and Urban Planning which inspired the study team in presenting the appropriate model. Primary Survey was conducted through structured interviews using a standardized Household Interview Schedule for quantitative data. Qualitative data were obtained from Focus Group Discussions with community members and interviews with key informants, including local leaders, experts, and stakeholders, to gain in-depth insights and contextual understanding of the themes emerging from the quantitative data.

III. Key Findings of the Existing Status:

- **Socio-Economic Profile:** The demographic analysis revealed a balanced gender distribution and a youthful population, with a majority engaged in agriculture as their primary occupation. High illiteracy rates and limited access to higher education and professional opportunities are notable, suggesting a focus on educational development.
- **Infrastructure:** The region suffers from inadequate infrastructure with the majority of the population experiencing irregular electricity supply, poor road connectivity and inadequate sanitation facilities, critically affecting the community's quality of life.
- **Healthcare and Education:** Access to healthcare and education is limited, with a single Primary Health Centre serving the surveyed villages and educational institutions being inadequate. This has led to high levels of dissatisfaction with healthcare services and a recognition of the need for improvement in educational infrastructure.

- **Livelihood and Economy:** The survey highlighted a diversified economy rooted in agriculture, with significant contributions from non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and livestock. The area's rich forest resources present opportunities for development. However, issues such as pest attacks, poor soil fertility and inadequate market access hinder agricultural productivity and economic growth.

IV. Opinion of Local Community about the proposed Township: A vast majority (99.00%) of the respondents are aware of and support the development of the proposed new township anticipating benefits like job opportunities and infrastructure development.

V. Possible Impact of Township on Existing Industries: From a marketing perspective, the railway bridge is seen as a key facilitator for broadening and diversifying the market reach of local industries. More accessible rail transport could allow industries to explore new territories, both domestically and internationally, thus diversifying income sources and enhancing the competitiveness of local products. This infrastructure development is expected to promote strategic partnerships, including joint ventures, supply agreements, and marketing collaborations, further strengthening the local economy.

VI. Potentiality of Entrepreneurial Ventures: The study area's emerging entrepreneurial ventures include food processing, animal husbandry, forest products, handicrafts, service-based industries and tourism-based enterprises. These ventures capitalize on the region's natural resources, traditional skills and tourism potentiality, offering opportunities for local employment, skill development, environmental conservation, cultural entrepreneurship, women's empowerment and food security. Training in design, quality control, marketing and maintenance could further enhance these opportunities.

VII. Potentiality of MSME Industries: The upcoming project of National Highway No. 137 (Tamenglong-Mahur) and the proposed new township near the Makru River in Tousem Sub-Division, Tamenglong District, Manipur, provides significant opportunities for the development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in various sectors. These opportunities, rooted in the unique geographical, cultural and natural resources of the region, are poised to catalyze socio-economic transformation for local communities. By focusing on sectors like tourism, agro-based and food processing industries, forest-based industries, handicraft, bamboo-based industries, service-based industries and animal husbandry-based industries, the region can significantly enhance livelihoods, create employment opportunities and elevate socio-economic conditions.

VIII. Feasibility of Major Economic Activities: This region thrives on agriculture, emphasizing organic cultivation of crops like rice, maize and vegetables, alongside challenges like poor road connectivity. Livestock rearing, involving poultry, pig farming and cattle rearing, plays a crucial role in food security and income, with potential for expansion through improved practices. Forest-based industries including bamboo processing offer opportunities for sustainable employment and conservation.

IX. Skill Gap Analysis: There exist a diverse range of skilled workforce within the population but gap exist in healthcare, trades, transport and technical skills indicating potential areas for vocational training and growth.

X. Desirable Interventions by the Stakeholders: The study highlights the synergistic roles of government, private institutions, banks, NGOs and collaborative efforts in sustainable development. It emphasizes infrastructure, renewable energy, financial support, education on sustainability and public-private partnerships to ensure holistic growth and address the community's needs effectively.

XI. Strategic Plan for Livelihood Opportunities with Local Resources: In order to prepare a plan for livelihood enhancement, livelihood analysis may be carried out by covering micro level scenario, macro level scenario and market opportunities. The analysis of existing livelihoods gives clear understanding of different livelihood opportunities and possible alternative livelihoods with given assets. The analysis also helps in prioritisation of livelihoods based on dependency, sustainability and productivity. From the opportunities and gaps identified through the livelihood analysis, a livelihood intervention plan has to be prepared for the learning to take form into an intervention. However, there is a need to understand, in

the beginning itself that the success of livelihood intervention depends on the fit achieved between families, livelihood plan and supporting organizations.

XII. *Recommendations:* Recommendations include prioritizing investments in sustainable infrastructure, enhancing educational and vocational training programs to reduce illiteracy, skill gaps and fostering healthcare accessibility to improve overall community wellbeing. Besides, promoting organic agriculture, livestock rearing, and forest-based industries through supportive policies, improved market access, and technological interventions could significantly boost the local economy.

XIII. *Framework for Model Township:* Based on the slope analysis and overall site characteristics, the following land use allocations has been envisaged:

- **Residential Areas:** Located on gentle slopes with easy access to amenities and infrastructure.
- **Commercial Areas:** Situated in strategic locations to serve the needs of residents and visitors.
- **Institutional Areas:** Including schools, hospitals, and government offices, placed in accessible areas.
- **Recreational Areas:** Positioned along the riverfront and on moderate slopes, offering opportunities for leisure and outdoor activities.
- **Green Spaces and Parks:** Distributed throughout the township to enhance the quality of life and provide natural buffers.
- **Forest and Agricultural Areas:** Preserved on steeper slopes to maintain ecological balance.

The proposed design for the new township offers a comprehensive and sustainable solution for urban development. By carefully considering factors such as connectivity, accessibility and environmental impact, the township aims to create a vibrant and liveable community. The implementation of these design principles will contribute to the overall well-being and prosperity of the residents.

In conclusion, the path forward requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders—government agencies, private institutions, financial entities, NGOs and the community at large. By embracing a comprehensive and integrated approach, the region can navigate the development challenges while capitalizing on its unique strengths and opportunities. This strategy not only would help address immediate needs but also aspires to lay the groundwork for enduring prosperity, environmental sustainability and cultural vibrancy, ensuring a brighter future for current and subsequent generations.