

BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India



The Future of the Third Pole and the Eastern Himalaya

REIMAGINING GROWTH: SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Host Institution: Assam Royal Global University, Guwahati

I. Rationale and Context

The Eastern Himalaya stands at a crucial inflection point—caught between mounting ecological fragility and growing developmental aspirations. Decades of extractive growth have led to deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and community displacement. Yet, the region's immense natural capital - its forests, rivers, biodiversity, and traditional ecological knowledge remains an underutilized foundation for a regenerative economy.

To chart a sustainable path forward, there is an urgent need to reimagine businesses not as extractive agents, but as custodians of ecosystems. Valuing nature's services and embedding them into business and policy frameworks can unlock economic models that serve both people and planet.

In this context, Assam Royal Global University, in collaboration with the Balipara Foundation, will host a dedicated session on Sustainable Businesses and Social Entrepreneurship during the 13th Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum (EHNf) 2025. The session will explore how businesses rooted in nature, community, and equity can lead the way in transforming the Eastern Himalayan economy.

II. Focus Areas of the Session

This session will bring together entrepreneurs, researchers, students, investors and policymakers to chart a roadmap for inclusive, ecological enterprise in the Eastern Himalaya. The focus will be on models that regenerate ecosystems, create green livelihoods, and build resilience against climate and economic shocks.

Key Discussion Points:

1. Nature-based Enterprises

- Business models around bamboo, medicinal plants, wild edibles, and NTFPs
- Upcycling and bio-based alternatives to plastic, wood, and fuel
- Monetising ecosystem services such as carbon storage and biodiversity offsets
- Value chains anchored in community-led conservation

2. Youth Entrepreneurship and Green Skills

- Skilling programmes to prepare youth for eco-enterprises
- Innovation labs transforming traditional knowledge into business solutions
- Incubation and mentorship support within university ecosystems



3. Circular and Regenerative Economies

- Local enterprises focused on composting, recycling, and zero-waste systems
- Reuse, repair, and reimagination of traditional crafts and products
- Bioconversion and sustainable packaging using bio-resources

4. Finance for Nature and Inclusion

- Blending climate finance with natural capital accounting
- Ecosystem service payments and nature-based funds for conservation-linked businesses
- Enabling microfinance and access to credit for women and tribal entrepreneurs

5. Institutional and Policy Innovation

- Integrating natural capital in academic curricula and business strategy
- University-government-industry collaborations to scale nature-positive businesses
- Developing frameworks to measure triple-bottom-line success (People–Planet–Profit)

III. Outcomes & Collaboration Opportunities

This session will serve as a springboard for catalyzing collaboration around:

1. Natural Capital in Business Education – Embedding ecological thinking in business curricula and entrepreneurship programs.
2. University-based Incubators – Establishing platforms to support and scale nature-aligned student-led enterprises.
3. Policy & Metrics Development – Creating region-specific impact metrics for ecological and social enterprise models.
4. Community-Business Collaborations – Building market access and value chains that reward community conservation.
5. Cultural Narratives for Market Building – Using local storytelling, food, art, and textiles to promote eco-ethical consumerism.

IV. Participation Audience

- Government & Policy Institutions: Ministries and departments of MSME, Environment, Rural Development, and Commerce
- Business and Startup Ecosystem: Green entrepreneurs, social enterprises, financial institutions, and incubation hubs
- Academic Institutions: Assam Royal Global University, IIMs, IITs, and management departments from regional universities
- Civil Society & Indigenous Innovators: SHGs, tribal entrepreneurs, and grassroots conservation-business initiatives
- Funding & Development Agencies: NABARD, SIDBI, UNDP, GIZ, and CSR foundations investing in nature-positive enterprises

V. Venue & Engagement at Assam Royal Global University, Guwahati

Assam Royal Global University will host this session as a key pillar of EHNF 2025, leveraging its leadership in business education and youth engagement to spark new dialogues and partnerships that centre sustainability and entrepreneurship as tools for regenerative growth in the Eastern Himalayas.

VI. Proposed Format

- **Opening Keynote:** Vision for Regenerative Economies in the Eastern Himalayas



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- **Panel Discussions:** Nature-positive business models, youth innovation, and inclusive financing
- **Workshops:** Mentoring sessions with entrepreneurs, valuing natural capital, and building regenerative start-ups
- **Case Presentations:** Success stories of sustainable business in forest-fringe and riverine economies
- **Naturenomics™ Pavilion:** Cultural showcases of art, craft, food, and heritage by community-led enterprises.