

**North Eastern Council Secretariat, Shillong  
Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region**

**PRESS NOTE**

**NEC and IIM Calcutta Innovation Park launch NEEDP for NE India startups**

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**Shillong, September 02, 2022:** The North Eastern Council, in collaboration with B-School Incubator IIM Calcutta Innovation Park, has launched a first-of-its-kind North East Entrepreneurship Development Programme (NEEDP) today here at NEC Secretariat, Nongrim Hills in Shillong. Deemed as a pioneering initiative encompassing beneficiaries from all the eight states of the region, the initiative envisages identifying and empowering 270 promising entrepreneurs from North East India with well-laid incubation and pre-incubation programs.

The program, NEEDP was launched by Secretary, NEC, Shri K. Moses Chalai, IAS. The event witnessed the presence of top officials from North Eastern Council including representatives from IIM Calcutta Innovation Park, Mr. Pranjal Konwar, COO, IIMCIP, Mr. Rajarshi Sarma, Program Head, NEEDP & Flo Oberhofer, Program Head, Prime Hub Meghalaya was also on the occasion. Smt. R. Lalrodingi, Advisor, BIT detailed about the program.

Addressing the gathering, the Secretary, Shri K. Moses Chalai mentioned about the importance of infusing innovation and technology in Startups & Small businesses to scale it up to a higher level. Also, he showed high degree of optimism in creating highly successful startups, including unicorns from North East India. “The region has a lot of untapped young talent and their brilliance always enthralls. Providing them a right platform and opportunities will not only brighten their career but, boost the economy of the NE region”, he added.

The first phase of the initiative, the NE Entrepreneurship Challenge (Hunt) was also formally launched during the inauguration ceremony. The Hunt is a combination of multiple initiatives aimed at identifying top 270 startup ideas from the region. It would culminate with a Reward and Recognition Summit, wherein the 270 selected startups will be awarded with cash prizes, certificates and enrollment into the Incubation and Pre-Incubation programs.

The Pre-Incubation program aims at grooming 150 idea/prototype stage startups towards enabling them to structure an initial business plan with all the key components of a viable and sustainable venture. They will also be awarded a

prototype grant of Rs. 1 lakh each, with an additional Rs. 4 lakhs for top 25 performers by the end of the pre-incubation program.

The Incubation program will be run in parallel lines for 120 startups having a Proof of Concept or early revenue. The program is aimed at consolidating the startups' knowledge of the business nuances towards helping them commercialize/scale up their ventures. These startups will be awarded Rs. 3 lakhs each as commercialization grant, with an additional Rs. 7 lakhs for top 20 performers at the end of the program.

The buzz around startup entrepreneurship has slowly but certainly gripped the region over the last five years. The region has woken up to the enormous prospects of entrepreneurship that could resolve a gamut of problems, including unemployment and lack of national exposure to the local culture and resources. While a number of entrepreneurship development initiatives have been introduced state-wise by the respective state governments, this is for the first time that a big-scale program has been launched for entrepreneurs from the entire Northeastern region.

Given the scale and coverage of the initiative, the North East Entrepreneurship Development Programme is expected to create a far-reaching impact in terms of spurring the rise of a new breed of first generation entrepreneurs and consolidating the overall entrepreneurship ecosystem in the region.