

Hamara Grid Annual Stakeholders Meet on Scaling Rural Development through Solar Mini Grids in Nagaland

**Hyatt Centric, Kolkata, India
25th February, 2026**

The cohort of partners for the 'Nagaland Rural Development through Mini Grids' project met at Hotel Hyatt Centric Kolkata for the second meet to take stock of the project progress, learnings and prepare the roadmap to go to scale in Mon district and districts of Eastern Nagaland, India. The meeting was attended by Hamara Grid partners Caterpillar Foundation, Assist International, GEAPP, DOEN Foundation, Power Trust and Hamara Grid Governing Board's independent directors.

The following participated:

- Rebecca Symington – Independent Director, Hamara Grid
- Tiakala Ao – Independent Director, Hamara Grid
- Samit Mitra- Managing Director, GEAPP, India
- Amanda Hiligas– Vice President Caterpillar Foundation & CSR Strategy Leader Caterpillar Inc
- Smitha R- Senior CSR Advisor, Caterpillar Inc
- Maarten Derksen – Program Manager, DOEN Foundation (virtual attendee)
- Cheri Reynolds- Vice President Programs and Strategy, Assist International
- Nathan Rummage- Senior Program Manager, Assist International
- Sarah Longwell – Program Manager, Assist International
- Drushti Joshi- India Country Manager, Assist International
- Girish Narang- Head - Project Sourcing, Powertrust
- Col Vijay Bhaskar- Managing Director, Hamara Grid
- Sudeshna Mukherjee-Operations Director, Hamara Grid
- Arunava Ray Chaudhuri- Head - Finance, Hamara Grid
- Himangshu Chetia – Analyst- Operations & Energy, Hamara Grid



The meeting started with a welcome address by Col. Vijay Bhaskar, Managing Director, Hamara Grid. He welcomed all the partners to the meet and brought out the valuable contribution of each of the partners/

investors to the Mon project in terms of making the project sustainable, scalable and achieving its transformational social impact the grassroots. He, along with the Hamara Grid team members then shared a detailed presentation on the following:

- *Regional Context of Eastern Nagaland with a particular focus on Mon district*
- *Overview of the Scaling Rural Development through Mini Grids Project in Mon*
- *Business Level Results*

During this presentation, as part of the recent developments in Nagaland, Ms. Tiakala Ao presented details of the 'Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority' (FNTA) as an administrative unit to provide more autonomy to the six districts of Eastern Nagaland, including Mon district. She also explained the likely impact of FNTA on the regional context of Eastern Nagaland and on the Solar Mini-Grid Electrification Project in Particular.

Next, Sudeshna shared a detailed presentation on the following:

- *Uniqueness of the Private- Public – People's Partnership (PPPP) model and its adoption by the district administration*
- *Impact of the Mon Project in terms of strengthening local livelihoods, creating economic opportunities, catalyzing financial inclusion and sustainability*
- *Training Center at Totokchingnyu village*



As part of elaborating the impact aspect of the Mon Project, Sarah Longwell from Assist International presented the key findings of the impact survey conducted by a third-party who specializes in energy surveys - 60 Decibels. The survey was conducted in the three CAT pilot mini grids of Lapalampong, Totokchingnyu and Ukha in Mon district in September 2025. She presented the key survey observations in terms of:

- *Objectives & Background of the survey – goals, methodology adopted and approach*
- *Snapshot of the key findings in terms of improved quality of life, reaching the underserved and PUE uptake, customer trust and feedback loops*
- *Data Driven actionables*

In continuation of the impact and sustainability discussions, Drushti Joshi from Assist International presented a detailed overview of the 'Center for Entrepreneurship and Skill Development' at Totokchingnyu mini grid village and discussed the following:

- *The Vision and goals for the training Center*
- *Training Center Strategy*
- *Linkages for Sustainability*
- *First Training conducted in January in 2026.*

This was followed by a lunch break.

Post Lunch, Nathan Rummage from Assist International shared the following through a detailed presentation highlighting the strategic importance of the CAT Electrification Initiative-Phase II at Monyakshu and Changlangshu villages in Upper Mon:

- *Key Learnings from CAT Electrification Initiative - Phase I*
- *The objectives behind the CAT Electrification Initiative – Phase II*

- *Technology and optimization journey*
- *Way Forward*

This was followed by an engaging session by Girish Narang from PowerTrust on the innovative approaches in carbon finance mechanisms, globally. He discussed that they *are piloting the pre-purchase of RECs as an innovative mechanism in India for the first time and announced that they have selected Hamara Grid as the only partner in India to pilot this innovative pre-purchase instrument* as Hamara Grid has a high impact program in North-East India.

This was followed by a detailed presentation by Samit Mitra from GEAPP on the *formation and strengthening of LEAP (Livelihood, Empowerment and Action Platform) supported by GEAPP, SHELL Foundations, NABARD, HSBC etc.* He announced that this platform will go a long way in promoting renewable-energy powered entrepreneurship and skill-building in India. He requested Hamara Grid to connect with this platform for scaling rural entrepreneurship in North-East India.

Next, Maarten Derksen from Doen Foundation brought out the value of this partnership between Hamara Grid and Doen in terms of *impacting local lives and livelihoods through renewable powered productive use of energy (PUE) in one of the remotest parts of Nagaland.* He mentioned that though Doen is gradually looking more at Europe and Africa, they have committed their support for Hamara Grid's Totokchingnyu Training Center until the year 2027.



Col. Vijay Bhaskar and team then presented the Key Challenges to Scale and Sustainability faced by Hamara Grid in terms of operational sustainability, scalability and highlighted the steps taken by team Hamara Grid to address some of the issues. The team also presented the opportunities in terms of connecting the telecom towers and charging of Electric Vehicles in the plain areas in Mon district through the solar mini grid platform.

Next, Col. Vijay presented the thoughts on building the platform to scale (from 50 mini grids to 75 mini grids).

This was followed by a vibrant and insightful discussion amongst the Partners/ Investors and Directors, moderated by Rebecca on strengthening the scaling sustainability potential of the Mon project in the next two to three years. Following were the key points that emerged from the partners:

- Explore a mix of mini grid solutions and commercial and institutional (C&I)-based solar installations to strengthen the commercial viability of the model.
- Focus on onboarding more telecom towers to ramp up utilisation and revenues.
- Review the capex assumptions – start small and increase the capacity of the mini grid plant modularly based on actual demand.
- Deeper analysis of capex cost reduction vis-à-vis freight/ logistics costs, over the past years
- Activate more partners on the capex / infra side of the project.
- Explore CSR funding for supporting the infra and softer aspects of the Mon project, particularly the Training Center. Samit mentioned that he would introduce Hamara to HSBC CSR.
- Girish stressed on reviewing pricing strategies including the ones with telecom tower companies

- Focus on improving community livelihood and incomes to amplify project impact. Amanda requested team Hamara to also explore coffee cultivation in Upper Mon communities, leveraging the solar mini grid platform. Focus on communities and scale makes the project impactful.
- PPAs with commercial players like Airtel will support Hamara to access commercial financing, beyond 75 mini grids ecosystem.
- On the impact side, partners suggested Hamara identify and survey control villages (non-mini grid villages) alongside operational villages to measure impact better
- Enhance project visibility by re-vamping Hamara and MRDF websites and overall project level communications. Include some bytes from the customers like rural bank branches, fuel stations, rice huller entrepreneurs etc to make it impactful.

The Annual Stakeholders Meet 2025 ended with the Naga tradition - presenting hand-crafted Konyak bags and Tizit tea. Hamara Grid Board Members and team thanked all the Stakeholders for their contribution at the meet to make it productive and fruitful and promised to stay engaged with them to make the Rural Development through Solar Mini Grid project in Nagaland more impactful, scalable and sustainable.

