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Gelephu Mindfulness City

The Starter Brief

Everything you need to understand the world's first mindfulness city - the vision, the opportunity, and how to get there - in one place.

An independent guide · 2026 edition

What is Gelephu Mindfulness City?

Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC) is a special administrative region spanning roughly 2,500 km² in southern Bhutan, on the border with India. Announced by His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck in December 2023, it is being built from a blank canvas around the principles of mindfulness, sustainability, and human flourishing.

Unlike conventional smart cities, GMC embeds Bhutan's philosophy of Gross National Happiness - which measures progress by collective wellbeing, not just economic output - into the city's design itself.

Five things to know

- **A special administrative zone.**
Independent legal and regulatory framework built for international business.
- **A gateway location.**
On the Indian border, positioned between South and Southeast Asia, with a new airport and rail links planned.
- **100% renewable energy.**
Powered by Bhutan's abundant hydropower - clean and competitively priced.
- **Values-led.**
Wellbeing, nature, and culture are treated as design requirements, not afterthoughts.
- **A multi-decade build.**
Infrastructure is underway in 2025-26; Phase 1 targets the 2030s.

The investment opportunity

GMC is a rare chance to invest at the very start of a city built from scratch. Its master plan identifies focus sectors aligned with Bhutan's strengths and global demand.

- **Wellness & mindfulness**
Retreats, preventive healthcare, and wellbeing programmes.
- **Sustainable agriculture**
Organic farming, agri-tech, and premium food processing.
- **Healthcare & life sciences**
Medical tourism and research; traditional and modern medicine.
- **Education & research**
Universities and institutions focused on sustainability and innovation.
- **Technology & digital**
Tech campuses and a regulatory sandbox for emerging technologies.
- **Culture & creative**
Arts, crafts, and creative industries rooted in Bhutanese heritage.

GMC has also moved early on regulated finance, introducing fast-track licensing for international financial and digital-asset firms.

How to visit Gelephu

- **Getting there**
Fly to Paro and travel overland, or train to Hasimara (India) then drive ~45 min to the border. A new Gelephu airport is under development.
- **Visas**
Most foreign nationals need a Bhutan visa and pay the Sustainable Development Fee, arranged via a licensed tour operator. Indian, Bangladeshi, and Maldivian nationals have eased entry.
- **Best time**
October to April for dry, clear weather. Avoid the monsoon (June-September).
- **Don't miss**
Royal Manas National Park, sub-tropical river valleys, and Bhutan's monasteries and dzongs.

Your next steps

- **1. Go to the source**
Visit gmc.bt for official frameworks and contacts.
- **2. Define your thesis**
Clarify how your sector aligns with GMC's priorities.
- **3. Get advisors**
Engage licensed legal and financial advisors familiar with Bhutan.
- **4. Stay current**
The regulatory picture evolves monthly - follow the news closely.

Stay ahead of GMC

This brief is a starting point. For the latest developments, live news, and in-depth guides on investing in and visiting Gelephu, visit visitgelephu.com and subscribe to The GMC Briefing.

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