

**Draft**  
**National Strategy& Roadmap**  
**for**  
**Development of Rural Tourism in India**

***An initiative towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat***



**June 12,2021**

**Government of India**  
**Ministry of Tourism**

**National Strategy & Roadmap**  
*for*  
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**An initiative towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat**

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## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

### **1.1. Rural Tourism – the definition**

Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture, and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience can be termed as rural tourism.

Rural Tourism focuses on the visitor actively participating in a rural lifestyle. The tourist travels to a rural location and experiences the life while taking part in the daily activities of the village. The tourist also gets a chance to imbibe the traditions and culture of the area. Rural tourism may also include overnight stay in which the visitor also gets to know the unique lifestyle of the village at much closer quarters.

Rural tourism is multi-faceted and entails agricultural tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure and ecotourism, which are all closely aligned.

### **1.2. Rural Tourism – an opportunity to promote sustainable and responsible tourism**

There is an increasing trend of '*experiential tourism*' to know new things and experiencing cultures, cuisine, traditions, etc. Today, the discerning traveller is prepared to go great distances and to previously unknown places to get the unique experience. The tourist is also looking at being a responsible traveller and about giving back to the host communities.

The slow pace of life in the village, far away from the hustle and bustle of the big city, is an experience that can rejuvenate oneself. The villages and the rural economies also have practitioners of unique arts and crafts in their original forms that are hard to come by in the cities. Rural tourism exhibiting the unique experiences of Indian villages and closely related niche areas of tourism such as eco-tourism, farm-tourism, adventure tourism etc. provides a great opportunity to promote sustainable and responsible tourism in the Country.

Rural Tourism can revitalize local art and crafts and prevent viable traditional occupations from being displaced. It will help redevelop rural areas and rejuvenate rural life. The interaction with the visitors will expand their knowledge and horizons.

### **1.3. Rural Tourism –fulfilling the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat**

Prime Minister has given a call for self-reliant India. "*Aatmanirbhar Bharat*" is a call to become vocal for local products. It rests on the five pillars of economy, infrastructure, systems, demography and demand. Aatmanirbhar Bharat is about

empowering individuals and enterprises to grow and make India prosperous and strong.

A large part of the Country is rural and a large population resides in rural areas. The village life in India is where you meet the 'real India'. Developing rural economy and creating jobs and opportunities in rural areas is therefore essential for "*Aatmanirbhar Bharat*". The villages are also repositories of the country's culture, tradition, crafts, heritage and agri-practices. Developing and promoting these local products through tourism can generate income and jobs in rural areas and empower local communities, youth and women, fulfilling the vision of ***Aatmanirbhar Bharat***. This will help in reducing the migration from rural areas, poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

#### **1.4. National Strategy and Roadmap for Development of Rural Tourism**

National strategy and roadmap for development of rural tourism aims at prioritization of rural tourism at national level. It further aims at convergence of various schemes addressing issues such as poverty, empowerment of women and strengthening the economic status of the rural people.

The strategy is based on overarching theme of sustainable and responsible tourism, which will be supported by the following strategic pillars:

- (i). Benchmarking of state policies and best practices
- (ii). Digital technologies and platforms for rural tourism
- (iii). Developing clusters for rural tourism
- (iv). Marketing support for rural tourism
- (v). Capacity building of stakeholders
- (vi). Governance and Institutional Framework

## **Chapter 2 – SWOT Analysis & Stakeholders**

### **2.1. SWOT Analysis of Rural Tourism**

In order to recommend strategies for development of rural tourism, it is important to carry out SWOT analysis of rural tourism.

#### **2.1.1. Strengths**

Rural tourism in India has the following strengths

- (i). Indian villages have unparalleled culture, craft, music, dance and heritage to offer to the visitors
- (ii). Expansion of road infrastructure has made most of the rural areas accessible,
- (iii). Well-developed agriculture and farms to provide stay facilities and experiences
- (iv). Beautiful climate conditions and Bio-diversity
- (v). Apart from the mainland rural areas, India has coastal, Himalayan, desert, forest and tribal areas amongst others for tourists
- (vi). India has huge potential for related areas such as Eco-tourism, Nature Reserves, Wildlife tourism

#### **2.1.2. Weaknesses**

Rural tourism has the following weaknesses:

- (i). Lack of prioritization for rural tourism at the State and National level
- (ii). Poor profiling of rural product offerings
- (iii). Poor tourism supporting infrastructure including ICT in rural areas
- (iv). Lack of tourism awareness and skills in rural areas,
- (v). Poor resource allocation and lack of inclusive planning and community involvement,
- (vi). Poor coordination of tourism initiatives,
- (vii). Capacity gap at the Panchayati Raj Institutions to promote rural tourism
- (viii). Poor service delivery and lack of implementation

#### **2.1.3. Opportunities**

The Rural Tourism offers a wide range of opportunities:

- (i). Creation of jobs, retention of jobs and new business opportunities
- (ii). Rural tourism can lead the way for sustainable and responsible tourism
- (iii). Sustainable exploitation of untapped rural culture and heritage offerings
- (iv). Unspoilt natural and rural tranquility,

- (v). Indigenous knowledge systems,
- (vi). Promoting Agri-tourism,
- (vii). Promoting Eco-tourism,
- (viii). Promoting Adventure-tourism,
- (ix). Promoting Leisure tourism,
- (x). Promoting Marine tourism,
- (xi). Volunteer tourism,
- (xii). Rural Tourism Circuits

#### **2.1.4. Threats**

Rural tourism also faces following threats

- (i). Lack of reliable data and statistics,
- (ii). Lack of well-planned approach,
- (iii). Environmental degradation
- (iv). Social and cultural influences

### **2.2. Stakeholders**

#### **2.2.1. Key Stakeholders**

Promotion and development of rural tourism will involve a diverse set of stakeholders, whose role will be crucial for the success of the Strategy. The key stakeholders are:

- (i). Central Ministries
- (ii). State Governments
- (iii). Panchayati Raj Institutions
- (iv). Industry
- (v). Non-government organizations
- (vi). Local community

The role and responsibilities of the stakeholders are given below.

#### **2.2.2. Central Ministries**

Various Central Ministries are involved in the development of Rural Areas. Rural Tourism should be seen as Integrated Rural Development with tourism as a component rather than merely tourism activities going to rural areas. In order to develop tourism potential of rural areas, various Central and State Schemes must be converged and synergy created for major impact. Programs and initiatives of the following Ministries need to be studied in detail and utilized for rural tourism:

**(i). Ministry of Tourism**

Ministry of Tourism is responsible for promotion of Tourism in the Country. The Ministry implements various schemes for creation of infrastructure, marketing and promotion and skill development initiatives for tourism, which can be leveraged for promotion and development of Rural Tourism. The Ministry will coordinate and spearhead the strategy at the National level.

**(ii). Ministry of Rural Development**

The Ministry of Rural Development is working towards sustainable and inclusive growth of rural India through a multipronged strategy for eradication of poverty by increasing livelihoods opportunities, providing social safety net and developing infrastructure for growth. The Ministry of Rural Development is an important stakeholder in the development of Rural Tourism in the Country and contribute towards the objective through various schemes being implemented by the Ministry.

**(iii). Ministry of Environment and Forests**

The Ministry is responsible for implementation of policies and programmes relating to conservation of the country's natural resources including its lakes and rivers, its biodiversity, forests and wildlife. Ministry of Environment has to be a partner for development of various aspects of rural tourism such as eco- tourism, wild life tourism, national parks and other related areas. The Ministry can provide valuable guidance and direction for utilizing natural resources for sustainable and responsible tourism in rural areas.

**(iv). Ministry of Culture**

Ministry of Culture is responsible to preserve, promote and disseminate all forms of art and culture in the Country and has a large number of Institutions and organization involved in the field of art and culture. The Ministry can contribute in the promotion of culture and heritage in rural areas and help in attracting tourists.

**(v). Ministry of Development of North East Region**

The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region is responsible for the matters relating to the planning, execution and monitoring of development schemes and projects in the North Eastern Region. Its vision is to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development of the Region so that it may enjoy growth parity with the rest of the country. Ministry can help development of Rural Tourism in north east region.



**(vi). Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is responsible for providing and facilitating skill training initiatives. The Ministry and National Skill Development Council can help with various skill development initiatives for rural tourism including promotion of rural entrepreneurship.

**(vii). Ministry of Textiles**

Ministry of Textiles is responsible for promotion of handicrafts and handlooms and these activities are concentrated in rural areas. The Ministry aims to develop ten craft and handloom villages in the country so that tourists from across the globe can visit them and learn the rich legacy of Indian weavers, and lend support to the Make in India initiative.

**(viii). Department of Panchayati Raj**

Department of Panchayati Raj being the nodal department for Panchayati Raj institutions can assist in alignment of Panchayats with the objectives of rural tourism through various schemes and initiatives of the Department.

**(ix). Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare**

Department of Agriculture is responsible for agriculture, cooperation and farmers welfare. The Department implements various schemes, which impact the farming activities and communities in rural areas. The Department may facilitate linking of existing organic areas developed under Paramparagat Krish Vikas Yojna (PKVY) and Mission Organic Value Chain Development in North East Region (MOVCDNER). Tourists will be demonstrated organic practices and they can buy authentic organic products also. Department may provide support for developing Model Organic Agro-Tourism Clusters.

**(x). Department of Youth Affairs**

Department of Youth Affairs pursues the twin objectives of personality building and nation building, i.e. developing the personality of youth and involving them in various nation-building activities to channelize the constructive and creative energies of the youth. The Department can help mobilizing youth for rural tourism.

**2.2.3. State Governments**

State Governments have a number of schemes for development of rural areas including tourism related infrastructure, rural culture, heritage and handicraft. State

Governments have the primary role in creating momentum for rural tourism by formulating suitable policies and supporting rural tourism projects.

#### **2.2.4. Panchayati Raj Institutions**

Panchayati Raj Institutions have a strong influence on local communities and their support is vital to the success of rural tourism. Village Panchayats and other institutions have to be consulted and involved in the preparation of plans for developing rural tourism in their villages. Panchayats can help in coordination and facilitation, protection of natural resources, promotion of socio-economic development and provision of infrastructure.

#### **2.2.5. Industry**

Industry players, who specialize in rural tourism and tour operators apart from accommodation providers such as hotel, B&B, Farm Stay owners and tourist guides are important stakeholders. Most of the tourism service providers for rural tourism may be from local community but there is a need to involve industry players, who may be willing to be part of developing rural tourism destinations. They may have existing business or may set up new business. A business plan for the destination (cluster) vetted by Industry is important for the sustainability.

#### **2.2.6. Non-Government Organizations**

Non-Government Organizations involved in the areas of sustainable and responsible tourism, integrated rural development, livelihood promotion in rural areas, community development in rural areas can play a great role in forging community linkages.

#### **2.2.7. Local Community**

Local community is a key stakeholder and has to be taken on board. The Community has to be made aware of the benefits of rural tourism, their apprehensions, if any have to be allayed and they have to be encouraged to participate and be part of the value chain. In order to ensure inclusive and responsible tourism, most of the supplies and services must be sourced from local providers. Their capacity building will have to be done to ensure they become part of the supply chain.

## **Chapter 3 –Vision, Mission and Goals**

### **3.1. Vision**

To make tourism an important driver for rural economy and jobs while promoting sustainable and responsible tourism.

### **3.2. Mission**

To facilitate an enabling environment comprising of Government, Industry, NGO, Community for development and promotion of rural tourism in the Country.

### **3.3. Objectives**

- (i). To identify strategies for development of Rural Tourism and stimulate job creation;
- (ii). To bring synergy and convergence in the Central and State programs for development and promotion of Rural Tourism in the Country;
- (iii). To facilitate coordination of rural tourism development initiatives amongst relevant stakeholders;
- (iv). To create a platform to share knowledge of best practices, development opportunities and challenges in rural areas for tourism development;
- (v). To identify and recommend strategic areas/ clusters for tourism development in rural areas within the sector;

### **3.4. Key Strategic Pillars**

In order to develop rural tourism in the country, the strategy focuses on the following key pillars:

- (i). Model policies and best practices for rural tourism
- (ii). Digital technologies and platforms for rural tourism
- (iii). Developing clusters for rural tourism
- (iv). Marketing support for rural tourism
- (v). Capacity building of stakeholders
- (vi). Governance and Institutional Framework

## **Chapter 4 – State Assessment and Ranking on Rural Tourism**

### **4.1. State Assessment and Ranking as a tool for Capacity Building**

The Ministry of Tourism will conduct ranking of the States on Rural Tourism, with the key objective to foster competitiveness and encourage States to work proactively towards developing rural tourism with the overarching objective of promoting sustainable and responsible tourism. It will be implemented as a capacity development exercise to encourage mutual learning among all states and to provide support in policy formulation and implementation.

The ranking exercise will be carried out with professional support and through independent experts from various Institutions both Government and Private. The Ministry of tourism will provide necessary training to the officials and other stakeholders and handhold the States for their participation in the exercise.

### **4.2. Model policies for rural tourism**

The assessment and ranking will also help prepare a State Specific Report containing analysis of respective ecosystems for promotion of rural tourism, strengths and priority areas for future and best practices adopted by the States.

Many States have formulated the policies for related to rural tourism and related aspects such as:

- (i). Agri tourism/ Farm stays
- (ii). B&B/ Homestays
- (iii). Eco-tourism
- (iv). Wild-life tourism
- (v). Tribal tourism

The policies cover the processes for registration of units, standards and incentives etc. The Ministry will benchmark various policies and prepare model policies, which can be used by the States/ UTs for promoting rural tourism and related aspects.

### **4.3. National and Global best practices for rural tourism**

There are several success stories in rural tourism in the country, which will be document as part of the State Assessment and Ranking. Many other countries have also developed successful rural tourism models. The Ministry will study and benchmark these models and practices and prepare a tool kit for replication and adoption of such practices by various States and rural tourism destinations.

The toolkit should provide a broad overview of rural tourism and steps required to plan and develop community based rural tourism initiatives.

#### **4.4. Public, Private and Community Partnership Models**

There is need to develop effective models for public private and community partnerships for rural tourism based on successful case studies in the country and globally. Community Partnership is key to inclusive, sustainable and responsible tourism. Public Institutions are required to fund infrastructure, hygiene and safety and Private sector can bring the requisite business dynamism, efficient management and investment.

The Ministry will work with the States to implement successful models for private sector and community partnership.

## **Chapter 5 - Digital Technologies for Rural Tourism**

### **5.1. Role of digital technologies in tourism**

Digital technologies and platforms offer global access to consumers and allow service providers to enhance the development of the tourism sector and its competitive standards. Peer reviews and other forms of user-generated content (UGC), facilitated by digital platforms, have become the most important sources of travel information globally—more important than tourism boards and traditional outlets.

Digital technologies and platforms provide new opportunities for rural entrepreneurs to improve their market access and financial inclusion. Digital technologies allow the rural entrepreneurs to overcome the geographic disadvantages and lack of other marketing channels by utilizing the power of internet, cloud computing, social media etc.

However, rural communities have limited knowledge on how to take advantage of digital platforms and mitigate risks. Either constrained by the lack of understanding or knowhow and resources, they are not able to leverage digital tools to grow their tourism.

### **5.2. Facilitating Adoption of Digital Technologies for Rural Tourism**

The Government will facilitate adoption of digital technologies and platforms for rural tourism through various measures:

- (i). Enabling broadband internet infrastructure to rural areas having tourism potential,
- (ii). Capacity Building of various segments such as accommodations (including Homestays, Farmstays etc.), transport operators, rural attractions, tour operators etc. Capacity building will include creating awareness of benefits of digitalization and providing digital skills to the rural communities.
- (iii). Providing financial, technical and networking support for adoption of digital technologies and platforms to the rural enterprises engaged in tourism activities particularly small and medium enterprises.
- (iv). State governments / UTs would help to make database of all the tourism service providers in rural tourism and related aspects such as Farm Tourism, Eco Tourism, Agro Tourism etc, rural tourism attractions, products and related amenities such as hotels, lodges, homestays, Farmstays etc.



## **Chapter 6 – Developing Clusters for Rural Tourism**

### **6.1. Need for Clusters for rural tourism**

There is need to identify suitable clusters of 5-7 villages in close vicinity for promoting rural tourism. A cluster will offer more tourist attractions than rural tourism projects of individual villages separated by long distances. Further, marketing of local products of a group of villages can be facilitated by holding Craft Bazaars/ Haats. The clusters can also converge other programs for skills, capacity building, marketing etc.

### **6.2. Identification of Clusters for rural tourism**

6.2.1. The States should identify clusters of villages having high potential for tourism development. There are several themes around which rural tourism can be developed in different parts of the Country. The themes can broadly include:

- (i). Local crafts and cuisines
- (ii). Folk music, dance, puppet shows, theatre/street dramas,
- (iii). Agri tourism, Organic farming, Farm stays, herbal products, tea estates
- (iv). Yoga and meditation centers,
- (v). Eco zones within or around the village,
- (vi). Rural sports and cultural events
- (vii). National parks, wildlife sanctuaries
- (viii). Unique tribal culture
- (ix). Proximity to existing tourism circuits

6.2.2. The process of identification of rural tourism clusters (destinations) should be broad based involving Stakeholders from Government, Industry, NGOs, Rural Community and local businesses. Local entrepreneurs supporting homestays, Farmstays, handicraft shops, other tourism products and experiences must also be consulted.

6.2.3. Ministry of Rural Development is implementing Rurban Mission where a cluster of villages are identified, which have potential for growth, have economic drivers and derive locational and competitive advantages. These clusters are called 'Rurban'. These clusters are being strengthened with the required amenities, with convergence of various schemes of the Government, and a Critical Gap Funding (CGF) provided under this Mission. The identified "Rurban Clusters" may be examined for their potential of tourism based on the activities identified above and the shortlisted clusters can be taken for development and promotion of rural tourism.



6.2.4. Ministry of Agriculture has also developed organic agriculture areas under Paramparagat Krish Vikas Yojna (PKVY) and Mission Organic Value Chain Development in North East Region (MOVCDNER), which may be examined.

6.2.5. In addition to Rurban Clusters, other clusters of 5-7 villages can be identified by the State Governments, having potential for tourism. The State Governments will prioritize the identified clusters to be taken up for development of rural tourism.

### **6.3. Tourism Development Plans for the Rural Cluster**

6.3.1. Development plans for identified rural tourism cluster should be prepared by exploring convergence and synergy with various other Central and State programs and schemes. The development plan must be based on detailed consultation involving Stakeholders from Government, Industry, NGOs, Rural Community and local businesses including homestays, Farmstays, handicraft shops, other tourism products and experiences.

6.3.2. Tourism Development Plan must be based on detailed assessment of current tourism assets and experiences. A detailed gap assessment in partnership with all the stakeholders shall be carried out and then plans for tourism development of the cluster should be prepared. A toolkit for gap assessment and preparation of development plan for rural tourism cluster will be prepared by the Ministry.

6.3.3. Development Plan for the rural tourism cluster, which may also be called as destination management plan may cover the following component

#### **(i). Physical Infrastructure**

It must be ensured that cluster is easily accessible and it may require last mile connectivity to be strengthened. Internal streets of the villages also need to be strengthened and improved particularly the main street having major attractions. The effort should be made to use the local material and practices while carrying out street improvement so as to maintain the rural and ethnic character of the village. Drinking Water and Sanitation Facilities also need to be built.

#### **(ii). Digital Infrastructure**

Digital infrastructure such as broadband Internet, Wi-fi, CCTV and other common digital infrastructure needs to be provided to strengthen tourism potential of the Cluster.

#### **(iii). Social Infrastructure**

Health and hygiene standards, waste management, security and safety standards are crucial for attracting tourist from outside. These facilities including their operation and maintenance need to be strengthened in the cluster.

(iv). **Tourism Products and Activities**

While there are wide variety of rural assets and activities, which can attract tourists, there is need to develop quality rural tourism products. The effort should be to create an unforgettable experience for the tourist and also increase the period of the stay. There should be activities for various age groups and different segments of tourists.

(v). **Marketing and Promotion**

Marketing and promotion of the cluster as rural tourism destination is an essential part of the development plan. There has to be a business plan for the destination to make it a viable and sustainable proposition. Digital platforms must be utilized apart from other traditional government and private channels for marketing.

(vi). **Capacity Building**

Capacity Building for various segments of rural tourism and stakeholders is crucial to promote rural tourism. The plan may incorporate various relevant capacity building programs of Central and State government.

6.3.4. Apart from the existing Central and State schemes, which can be used in convergence to meet the requirement of implementation of development plans for rural tourism. Suitable public private partnership models will also be developed to encourage private sector to join hands for development of rural tourism.

6.3.5. Given the tremendous benefits of rural tourism for job creation, conservation of art, culture and craft, conservation of environment, social and community development, there is need to develop a dedicated scheme for comprehensive development of rural tourism in the country in partnership with States, Industry, Non-government organizations and rural Communities. Till such time, a dedicated scheme is formulated, funds may be provided from the existing schemes.

## **Chapter 7 – Marketing support for rural tourism**

### **7.1. Marketing and promotion**

Rural tourism destinations need marketing support to reach the customers at regional, national and international level. The district, State and Centre will require a coordinated and synchronized approach for marketing rural tourism destinations. The funding for such initiatives could be pooled from various sources and schemes. It is difficult for individual rural entrepreneur to market his product on scale and therefore a destination-based marketing is required.

### **7.2. Digital Marketing**

Tourists are increasingly being influenced by online and social media platforms. Greater emphasis need to be placed on online campaigns, interactive / social media and other modern and innovative technology spheres. Incredible India digital platform can be utilized for promoting rural tourism destinations. There is also need to forge partnerships with OTAs and other companies running digital tourism platforms to market the destination.

### **7.3. Overseas Marketing**

Apart from digital marketing, product and theme specific rural tourism campaigns may be launched as part of incredible India campaign and through India Tourism offices in overseas markets to generate awareness about rural tourism products of the country. States may also highlight rural tourism products and destinations in their campaign.

### **7.4. Domestic Marketing**

Post COVID-19, there is increasing focus on domestic tourism and rural tourism will be a focus area under the overall “Dekho Apna Desh” campaign. India has a huge domestic market and there is need to create awareness about niche areas of rural tourism. Many city dwellers looking for authentic experience and would love to discover rural life, culture, farm practices and other rural attractions.

### **7.5. Market Development Assistance**

Market development assistance schemes may be prepared specially focused on supporting rural tourism entrepreneurs. It may support both domestic marketing and overseas marketing. It may also provide support for digital marketing of destination and individual entrepreneur.

### **7.6. Partnership with Industry Stakeholders**

Marketing must be in partnership with the travel trade, to benefit from their network and marketing expertise.

#### **7.7. Fam Tours**

Familiarization Tours to be hosted inviting tour operators, travel partners and famous travel writers / journalists to various rural tourism clusters to obtain first-hand knowledge of Rural tourism products.

## **Chapter 8–Capacity Building for Rural Tourism**

### **8.1. Resource Centre for Capacity Building of the Stakeholders**

- 8.1.1. There is need to create greater awareness and understanding about rural tourism amongst the multiple stakeholders from Central Government Ministries to the local communities. Each Stakeholder such as Government, NGOs, Industry, Local community has distinct role in promoting rural tourism. Institutional capacity of the Central and State Governments has to be strengthened and Industry and local communities including Bed and Breakfast/ Farmstays/ Homestays have to be enlightened about the opportunities and how they can benefit from it in a sustainable manner.
- 8.1.2. There is need to build the capacity of all the stakeholders involved in rural tourism namely:
- (i). Local Communities
  - (ii). Tourism service providers
  - (iii). Tourism Industry (particularly, the unorganized sector)
  - (iv). NGOs on the ground
  - (v). Travellers
  - (vi). Relevant central and state government agencies
- 8.1.3. In order to build the capacity and provide long term sustenance to rural tourism and responsible tourism, Capacity building resource centres need to be set up at National, State and Cluster level. These resource centres will provide a platform for stakeholders to enable knowledge exchange and interaction with practitioners, education institutes, government agencies and volunteers.
- 8.1.4. These will also act as repository of knowledge for sustainable tourism practices, best practices and experiences. This knowledge will be adapted to local conditions and converted into
- (i). Palatable modules/ solution-sets for the local community and MSME tourism service providers.
  - (ii). Contextualize the modules/ solution-sets for regional and cluster-level adaptation and dissemination keeping in mind the learning profile of the stakeholders.
  - (iii). Develop standards towards more responsible and sustainable tourism for a range of stakeholders.
  - (iv). Support local community-based tourism in an endeavour to make communities resilient in the face of climate change and other threats.
  - (v). Capacity building of stakeholders for responsible and sustainable tourism.

- (vi). Demonstrate that collaboration pays more than competition – pool purchasing and selling power of communities / rural tourism service providers.

## **8.2. Areas for Capacity Building**

8.2.1. Rural Tourism in India takes multiple forms. Rural and small-town India has tourism existing in many garbs such as Community based tourism, Agri tourism, Ecotourism etc. Typically, these businesses are small and medium sized and fall under unorganized sector. Research shows that these enterprises suffer from multiple issues that obstruct their progress to becoming a successful Tourism enterprise.

8.2.2. Deep diving into the issues has revealed seven areas that the rural tourism practitioners need assistance in;

- (i). Built Heritage and Maintenance
- (ii). Hygiene and basic service standards
- (iii). Special experiences and value-added services
- (iv). Community Participation
- (v). Environmental impact
- (vi). Destination sustainability
- (vii). Responsible Tourism Sales and Marketing

## **8.3. Skills and entrepreneurship development programs**

In order to provide quality services and enriching experience to the visitors, there is need to provide skill training in the relevant vocations for rural tourism. Entrepreneurship development programs will also be organized for rural youth so that they can develop and market various rural tourism products. Various schemes for skill development and entrepreneurship will be leveraged for the same.

## **Chapter 9 – Governance and Institutional Framework**

### **9.1. Governance**

9.1.1. In order to ensure continuous focus, further evolution of the strategy, development of actionable plans and schemes for rural tourism in the country, there is a need for an institutional structure and governance mechanism. The institutional structure at various levels must give representation to Government departments, Industry Stakeholders, NGOs and Rural Communities.

9.1.2. A broad institutional structure is laid down here:

(i). **Vision Group under Union Minister for Tourism**

The Vision Group on Rural Tourism under the Union Minister for Tourism will be set up to provide overall vision for the development of Rural Tourism in the Country.

(ii). **Task Force under Secretary (Tourism)**

Task Force under Secretary (Tourism) will review progress on the implementation of the Strategy and coordinate action with all the Stakeholders.

(iii). **State Steering Committee under Chief Secretary**

There will be a State Steering Committee under Chief Secretary to provide guidance, coordinate, review and resolve issues regarding implementation of strategy and action plans for rural tourism at the State level.

(iv). **District level Committee**

A district level Committee under District Collector will be set up to coordinate and review progress of rural tourism at the district level particularly identifying rural tourism clusters (destinations), tourism development plans for the Cluster and implementation in convergence with various Central and State schemes and private sector participation.

(v). **Cluster level monitoring and Coordination Committee**

Every Rural Tourism Cluster (Destination) will have a monitoring and Coordination Committee comprising of local stakeholders to review the progress and resolve bottlenecks and undertake functions of destination management organization.

## **9.2. National Nodal Agency**

9.2.1. A national nodal agency is required to support Ministry of Tourism in coordinating and evolving strategy and actionable plans and schemes for promotion and development of Rural Tourism in the Country. The Nodal agency will in particular assist the Ministry in undertaking the following functions:

- (i). Identifying national and global best practice and prepare tool kits for their replication by the States and Rural Tourism Destinations
- (ii). Benchmarking State policies and standards and prepare model policies and minimum standards for rural tourism including B&B, Farm Stays, Homestays etc.
- (iii). Capacity Building measures including setting up of Resource Centres
- (iv). Toolkits and guidelines for identification of clusters for rural tourism and preparation of development plans for the cluster
- (v). Facilitating adoption of digital technologies for rural tourism
- (vi). Formulation of dedicated scheme to support development of rural tourism in the Country

## **9.3. State Nodal Agency**

Each State/ UT may also designate a State Nodal Agency which can assist the State Department of Tourism in the promotion and development of rural tourism. The State Nodal Agency will assist the State Tourism Department in the implementation:

- (i). Collaboration with national nodal agency
- (ii). Replicating national and global best practices
- (iii). Framing State policies for rural tourism
- (iv). Identification of rural tourism clusters (destinations) and preparation of development plans for the clusters
- (v). Facilitating adoption of digital technologies for rural tourism
- (vi). Formulation of State schemes for development of rural tourism

## **9.4. Action Plan**



Ministry of Tourism will prepare a detailed National Action Plan in consultation with relevant Ministries, State Governments and Industry Stakeholders for implementation of the Strategy. The Action plan will be reviewed and monitored in accordance with the laid down governance mechanism. State Governments will prepare State specific policy and action plan for development of rural tourism. The Ministry will help with model policies and action plans for guidance of the States.

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