

No. NT-1401/2/2021
Government of India
Ministry of Tourism
(Niche Tourism Division)

1st Floor, Transport Bhawan,
1, Parliament Street,
New Delhi-110001.

Dated: 29th April 2022

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: **National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism**

The Ministry of Tourism has formulated a **National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism**. A copy of the Strategy is enclosed for ready reference and further action, as appropriate.

2. This issues with the approval of Competent Authority.



(Sanjay Singh)

Deputy Director General

To

Secretaries of all Ministries/Departments, Government of India

Copy for information and necessary action along with a copy of the Strategy document to:-

Principal Secretaries/Secretaries/Commissioner (Tourism), all State Governments/ UT Administrations

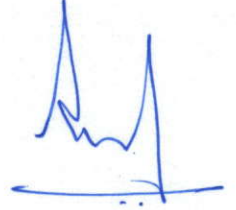
Copy for information and necessary action along with a copy of the Strategy document to:-

UNEP (India) / FICCI / CII / RTSOI / FAITH / IATO / ADTOI / TAAI / ATAIOI

contd....

Copy for information to:-

1. PS to HM(T) / PS to MoS (SYN) / PS to MoS (AB)
2. PS to Secretary (T)
3. PS to DG (T) / PS to AS (T) /
4. PS to ADG (T) / PS to EA (T) / PS to ADG (MR)
5. All Regional Directors, Ministry of Tourism



(Sanjay Singh)
Deputy Director General

National Strategy
for
Sustainable Tourism



सत्यमेव जयते

29th April, 2022

Ministry of Tourism
Government of India

National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. TOURISM – A KEY DRIVER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION	4
1.2. TOURISM – FACES SIGNIFICANT SUSTAINABILITY-RELATED CHALLENGES	4
1.3. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM – DEFINITION	4
1.4. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM – THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	4
1.5. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM – ALL TOURISM SHOULD BE MORE SUSTAINABLE	5
1.6. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM – POTENTIAL TO CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVEMENT OF 2030 SDGs	5
1.7. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM	5
CHAPTER 2 – VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGY	6
2.1. VISION.....	6
2.2. MISSION	6
2.3. STRATEGIC PILLARS	6
2.4. STAKEHOLDERS	6
CHAPTER 3 – PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	11
3.1. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	11
3.2. RESOURCE EFFICIENCY	11
3.3. ENERGY AND GHG EMISSIONS – IMPLICATIONS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE.....	11
3.4. MINIMIZING WATER CONSUMPTION BY THE TOURISM SECTOR.....	12
3.5. ENSURING THE EFFICIENT USE OF LAND AND RAW MATERIALS IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT	12
3.6. REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE APPROACH	12
3.7. MINIMIZE POLLUTION	13
CHAPTER 4 – PROTECTING BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND NATURAL HERITAGE	15
4.1. PROTECTION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY	15
4.2. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM – CAN PROVIDE RESOURCES FOR CONSERVATION	15
4.3. PHYSICAL INTEGRITY AND ATTRACTIVENESS.....	15
4.4. NATIONAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS	16
4.5. PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF ECOTOURISM	16
4.6. USING TOURISM TO ENCOURAGE LANDHOLDERS TO PRACTICE SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT.....	17
4.7. ENCOURAGE PRIVATE PARKS AND NATURE RESERVES.....	17
4.8. MINIMIZING DAMAGE TO NATURAL HERITAGE FROM TOURISM	17
4.9. RAISING SUPPORT FOR CONSERVATION FROM VISITORS AND ENTERPRISES	18
CHAPTER 5 - PROMOTING ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY.....	19
5.1. ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY	19
5.2. COMPETITIVENESS OF DESTINATIONS AND ENTERPRISES AND VISITOR SATISFACTION.....	19
5.3. MAINTAINING AND PROJECTING AN ATTRACTIVE DESTINATION	20
5.4. LOCAL PROSPERITY	20
5.5. EMPLOYMENT QUALITY	22
5.6. SOCIAL EQUITY	22
5.7. VISITOR FULFILMENT	23
5.8. MONITORING AND ADDRESSING VISITOR SATISFACTION AND THE QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE	23
CHAPTER 6 – PROMOTING SOCIO-CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY	25
6.1. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM – PROMOTES RESPECT FOR LOCAL CULTURAL	25
6.2. ENSURING EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION OF HERITAGE SITES	25

6.3.	WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES ON PROMOTION OF CULTURE AND TRADITIONS	26
6.4.	LOCAL CONTROL	26
6.5.	COMMUNITY WELLBEING	27
CHAPTER 7 – CERTIFICATION SCHEME FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM.....		29
7.1.	SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CRITERIA OF INDIA (STCI).....	29
7.2.	FINALIZATION OF SCHEME FOR CERTIFICATION AS PER STCI	29
7.3.	DIGITALIZATION AND BRANDING OF CERTIFICATION SCHEMES.....	29
7.4.	STATE SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHEME	29
7.5.	RANKING OF THE STATES ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM.....	29
CHAPTER 8 – IEC AND CAPACITY BUILDING.....		31
8.1.	INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION	31
8.2.	CAPACITY BUILDING	31
8.3.	NATIONAL AND STATE RESOURCE CENTRES	31
8.4.	EDUCATION, RESEARCH & TRAINING ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM.....	32
8.5.	DEDICATED PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN	32
8.6.	CAMPAIGN FOR RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLERS.....	32
CHAPTER 9 – GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK		33
9.1.	ACTION PLAN	33
9.2.	GOVERNANCE.....	33
9.3.	NATIONAL NODAL AGENCY.....	34
9.4.	STATE NODAL AGENCY	35
ANNEXURE		36
ANNEXURE 1 – POTENTIAL OF TOURISM TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS		37
ANNEXURE 2 – SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CRITERIA OF INDIA FOR DESTINATIONS (ILLUSTRATIVE)		41
ANNEXURE 3 – SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CRITERIA OF INDIA FOR INDUSTRY (ILLUSTRATIVE)		48

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1. **Tourism – A key driver for economic growth and job creation**

Tourism has emerged as a key driver of economic growth. It is one of the fastest growing economic sectors and has significant impact on trade, job creation, investment, infrastructure development and social inclusion. Tourism is a major source of employment. It is a labour-intensive sector and has significant multiplier effect on employment in related sectors.

1.2. **Tourism – faces significant sustainability-related challenges.**

Tourism has major impacts on the natural and built environments and on the wellbeing and culture of host populations. Tourism industry has led to pressure on fragile ecosystems and wildlife. It also puts considerable pressure on host communities and compete for the use of scarce resources, notably land and water. It has become a significant contributor to local and global pollution. It also contributes significantly to green-house gases emissions.

1.3. **Sustainable Tourism – Definition**

Sustainable Tourism is the tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

1.4. **Sustainable Tourism – the Guiding principles**

Sustainable tourism should follow the three basic principles:

(i). **Environmental Sustainability**

Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.

(ii). **Socio-cultural Sustainability**

Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.

(iii). **Economic Sustainability**

Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable

employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

1.5. Sustainable Tourism – All tourism should be more sustainable

The principles of sustainable tourism shall be applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and various niche tourism segments. Sustainable tourism is not a discrete or special form of tourism. Rather, all forms of tourism should strive to be more sustainable. Making tourism more sustainable is not only about managing the negative impacts of the industry but using tourism as a vehicle to benefit local communities, economically and socially, and to raise awareness and support for conservation of natural and cultural heritage.

1.6. Sustainable Tourism – Potential to contribute to achievement of 2030 SDGs

Tourism has been included as targets in Goals 8, 12 and 14 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources, respectively. Tourism, however, has the potential to contribute, directly or indirectly, to all of the sustainable development goals. The hiatus in the tourism sector brought about by COVID-19, provides a chance to rethink and reset the direction of tourism and the values on which its success is judged. The COVID-19 crisis is a watershed moment to align the efforts of sustaining livelihoods dependent on tourism to the Sustainable Development Goals.

1.7. National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism

National Strategy for sustainable tourism aims to mainstream sustainability in Indian tourism sector and ensure a more resilient, inclusive, carbon neutral and resource efficient tourism while safeguarding natural and cultural resources.

Chapter 2 – Vision, Mission and Strategy

2.1. **Vision**

To position India as a preferred global destination for sustainable and responsible tourism.

2.2. **Mission**

To increase the economic, social and environmental benefits to build a low carbon, inclusive and resilient tourism sector in India.

2.3. **Strategic Pillars**

Following strategic pillars have been identified for development of sustainable tourism:

- (i). Promoting Environmental Sustainability
- (ii). Protecting Biodiversity
- (iii). Promoting Economic Sustainability
- (iv). Promoting Socio-Cultural Sustainability
- (v). Scheme for Certification of Sustainable Tourism
- (vi). IEC and Capacity Building
- (vii). Governance

2.4. **Stakeholders**

2.4.1. **Key Stakeholders**

Promotion and development of sustainable 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). Local Government Institutions
- (iv). Industry
- (v). Non-government organizations
- (vi). Local community

2.4.2. **Central Ministries**

Various Central Ministries are involved in the promotion of sustainable tourism. 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 for promotion of sustainable 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. Ministry of Tourism as Nodal Ministry for Tourism will coordinate various initiatives for sustainable tourism.

(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 areas 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 is responsible for framing laws and regulations for environment and forests and has a key role in development of sustainable tourism. The Ministry can provide valuable guidance and direction for utilizing natural resources for sustainable and responsible tourism.

(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 a sustainable and responsible manner.

(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 sustainable tourism in north east region.

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

Ministry of Skills can help with various skill development initiatives for sustainable and responsible tourism including promotion of entrepreneurship.

(vii). **Ministry of Textiles**

Ministry of Textiles is responsible for promotion of handicrafts and handlooms. Tourism can help in promotion of handicraft and handlooms to the visitors and generate resources for their growth. Tourism can help promote crafts and provide opportunities for livelihood. The efforts of the Ministry can create synergy with sustainable tourism.

(viii). **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 provide support for Farmstays, agri tourism and other related activities, which have synergies with sustainable and responsible tourism.

(ix). **Ministry of Education**

Ministry of Education can provide support for incorporating sustainability in the education system at all levels. It can encourage Universities and Research Centres to carry out research on sustainable tourism and its practices in India.

(x). **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**

Ministry of Tribal Affairs can provide support to indigenous people to benefit from tourism as their alternative livelihood.

(xi). **Ministry of Commerce**

Ministry of Commerce can provide various incentives for encouraging sustainable practices in tourism sector.

(xii). **Ministry of Civil Aviation**

Ministry of Civil Aviation can provide policies for green fuels and other measures for more sustainable air transport for tourists.

(xiii). **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways can provide support for more sustainable surface transport and last mile connectivity

(xiv). **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy**

Ministry of New and Renewable Energy can provide support for greater use of renewable energy in tourism sector.

(xv). **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs can provide support by improving the urban areas, which is crucial for growth of tourism.

(xvi). **Ministry of MSME**

Ministry of MSME can provide support for promoting and developing tourism MSMEs

2.4.3. **State Governments**

State Governments have a key role for development of tourism in their respective states. Many states have taken important measures for development of sustainable and responsible tourism. State Governments will have the primary role in creating momentum for sustainable tourism.

2.4.4. **Local Government Institutions**

Local Government Institutions have a strong influence on local communities and their support is vital to the success of sustainable tourism. City Governments, Village Panchayats and other institutions have to be consulted and involved in the development of tourism and need to be education and made aware of sustainable tourism.

2.4.5. **Industry**

Industry players such as tour operators, accommodation providers, activity organisers and other sectors of Industry are important stakeholders in the promotion of sustainable tourism. Industry associations can help us create awareness, adopt sustainable practices by its members and promote sustainable tourism.

2.4.6. **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.

2.4.7. 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 sustainable 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 – Promoting Environmental Sustainability

3.1. Environmental Sustainability

The Ministry of tourism adopts environmental sustainability as one of the key principles of sustainable tourism as laid down by UNWTO. It will entail optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.

3.2. Resource Efficiency

Ministry of Tourism recognizes that tourism is a significant user of resources in many areas and efficient use of resources is important both for the wellbeing of the local environment and host community and in maintaining global resources. There is need to ensure an equitable balance between the needs of local communities and the tourism industry. Resource efficiency in tourism can be achieved largely by changing the consumption patterns of tourists and tourism enterprises. Enterprises need to establish environmental management systems to minimize impacts and drive a process of continual improvement.

3.3. Energy and GHG Emissions – Implications for Climate Change

3.3.1. Tourism a significant contributor to GHG emissions

Ministry of Tourism recognizes that tourism is a significant contributor of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The growth of energy consumption in travel, transport, accommodation and tourism related activities and the dependency on fossil fuels, increase vulnerability and uncertainty for future business growth and translate into important implications for GHG emissions and climate change. Tourism-related energy use and associated emissions of GHGs can be organized into three subsectors: transport to and from the destination, accommodation and activities.

3.3.2. Reduction in GHG emissions will demand considerable change

To achieve absolute emission reductions in tourism demand considerable change in the tourism system, with a reduction in overall energy use, and a switch to renewable energy sources. The transformation toward a low-carbon tourism economy will demand innovative research, major investments in technology, strong and integrative policies and new partnerships between governments and the tourism industry, as well as public education and enhanced consumer awareness.

3.3.3. Measures to reduce GHG emissions

Ministry of tourism will work with tourism stakeholders to capitalize on the vast opportunities to influence both sources of supply and consumption leading to emission reductions and economic gains:

- (i) Promoting the use of designs and materials for tourism facilities that maximize insulation and the use of natural heat, light and ventilation.
- (ii) Providing renewable energy sources in tourist destinations.
- (iii) Encouraging individual tourism enterprises to generate their own energy supply, or to supplement it, from renewable sources.
- (iv) Encouraging use of energy efficient plant and equipment for lighting, water heating, cooking, etc.
- (v) Promoting resource efficient transport options
- (vi) Persuading visitors to be responsible in their use of energy.

3.4. Minimizing water consumption by the tourism sector

Fresh water is a vital resource and consumption of water by the tourism sector is high. Ministry of Tourism will work with the States and Industry to minimize water consumption:

- (i) Restricting water hungry facilities such as swimming pools, golf courses etc.
- (ii) Reusing and recycling water where possible, (e.g. use of greywater to irrigate parks and gardens).
- (iii) Improving infrastructure and maintenance (e.g. reducing leakages).
- (iv) Encouraging installation of water efficient technology such as low-flow showers and toilets.
- (v) Persuading visitors to be responsible in their use of water.

3.5. Ensuring the efficient use of land and raw materials in tourism development

With growing population, land is in short supply at many destinations. It is therefore important to select sites for tourism development carefully, taking account of alternative uses and the needs of the local community. Although use of local materials can add to quality and distinctiveness, the design and construction of tourism facilities should avoid profligate use of naturally occurring materials such as timber, stone, sand and gravel, and should take account of the capacity of local supply and competing demands.

3.6. Reduce, reuse, recycle approach

Tourism enterprises will be encouraged to be efficient in all their use of materials and their use of resources and generation of waste:

- (i) Purchasing of supplies from sustainable sources. This can be facilitated by better information on local availability of such sources and ecolabelling schemes for relevant consumer products.
- (ii) Minimizing use of unnecessary packaging, for example through economic incentives to return containers such as bottles.
- (iii) Encouraging creativity in the reuse of products both within an enterprise or making them available for use in the local community.
- (iv) The creation of markets to recycle tourism supplies (paper, glass and plastic in particular).

3.7. Minimize Pollution

3.7.1. Tourism is a significant source of pollution

Tourism enterprises will be required to adhere to the norms and standards to minimize the pollution of air, water and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors. Waste and pollution control will be achieved largely by changing the consumption patterns of tourists and tourism enterprises and stricter enforcement of regulations regarding pollution norms. This should be a key component of individual environmental management systems within enterprises.

3.7.2. Promoting the use of more sustainable transport

Transport is one of the most significant sources of environmental pollution resulting from tourism, mainly through air travel and the use of individual private cars. Ministry of Transport will work in favour of low-impact forms of transport. This applies both to journeys to and from the destination, and within it. Promotion of walking and cycling will be facilitated by provision of appropriate infrastructure, including trails and public transport services, more integrated timetabling, and creative marketing. Tourists will be encouraged to offset the impact of their air travel by contributing to carbon sequestration projects.

3.7.3. Reducing the use of environmentally damaging chemicals

There will be strict enforcement of standards for the disposal of hazardous waste. Wherever possible, the use of environmentally damaging chemicals should be eliminated through careful policies.

3.7.4. Avoiding the discharge of sewage to marine and river environments

Water is an essential resource for both biological and human communities. It is essential for the tourism industry to place a high priority on reducing, managing and treating wastewater and controlling sewage disposal. Wherever possible, connection

should be made to mains sewage disposal systems that are designed to treat and discharge to the highest standards.

3.7.5. Minimizing waste and where necessary disposing of it with care

The tourism industry is a major generator of waste and disposal of non-degradable waste is an important issue. Land can be contaminated through the tipping of waste on landfill sites and landfilled biodegradable wastes can also release methane into the atmosphere. Such wastes can cause visual intrusion, habitat damage, and can threaten wildlife. Tourism enterprises will be educated on reducing waste at source and recycling wherever possible. Tourism enterprises will follow the relevant regulations and other guidelines in this regard. Construction should take place with minimum disturbance to the environment.

Chapter 4 – Protecting Biological Diversity and Natural Heritage

4.1. Protection of Biological Diversity

Protection of biological diversity is an important part of environmental sustainability. There is need to support the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and minimize damage to them. This is an area where the positive and negative impacts of tourism can be felt most strongly. All ecosystems, whether mountains, deserts, rainforests, wetlands or inland waters, have their own special sensitivities which need to be considered when planning for tourism activities.

4.2. Sustainable Tourism – can provide resources for conservation

While tourism may be a cause of loss of bio-diversity, income from tourism has proved to be a critically important component of funding for conservation in many national parks, reserves and other protected areas. Sustainable and responsible tourism can provide both resources for conservation and also ensure that it doesn't harm bio-diversity.

4.3. Physical integrity and attractiveness

4.3.1. Protection of biodiversity is closely related to physical integrity

Ministry of Tourism recognizes that the physical structure of places and their aesthetic quality and appearance is critical to long-term health of the tourism industry as the physical attractiveness of destination is a key element of their appeal to visitors. Land and coastal erosion are particular areas of concern where physical degradation is concerned.

4.3.2. Development to be in harmony with local environment and landscape

Ministry of Tourism will work with the States to ensure that new tourism development is appropriate to local environmental conditions. Encourage reuse and regeneration of existing buildings and previously used sites rather than new building on greenfield sites. The design of new buildings should be in harmony with the landscape, and where appropriate reflect traditional designs with optimum amount of open space and the retention of tree cover.

4.3.3. Minimizing the physical impact of tourist activity

Ministry of Tourism will work towards formulation of policies to minimize the adverse impact of tourist activities. It will encourage visitor management measures to reduce pressures and deflect activities to more robust sites. This can prevent erosion resulting from over-use of sites and damage to marine structures such as

coral reefs, from diving or boating activities. It will encourage educational activity to change behaviour such as not to throw litter, cause willful damage such as graffiti and develop codes of conduct for tourists.

4.3.4. Maintaining high quality rural and urban landscapes as a tourism resource

Ministry of Tourism will encourage the States and the Destinations to maintain the integrity and attractiveness of tourist destinations, including towns and rural areas, by influencing development and maintenance in general. It will further aim at controlling intrusive new development, such as unsightly buildings, activities that will damage landscapes, such as mineral extraction or destruction of forests. It will take initiatives for maintaining the fabric and facades of properties, especially historic buildings, maintaining traditional rural landscapes and features, avoiding the proliferation of advertisements and signing and maintaining the quality of public open spaces.

4.4. National Parks and Protected Areas

Ministry of Tourism will work with national parks and other protected areas to strengthen the protection from the negative impacts of tourism, and to focus on sustainable tourism that increases visitor awareness and support for conservation. Tourism provides a source of income and an opportunity for a sustainable livelihood for park-based communities. Following efforts will be made in this direction:

- (i). Preparing national guidelines on sustainable tourism in protected areas.
- (ii). Establishing structures for joint working on tourism with relevant stakeholders, including preparing sustainable tourism strategies that integrate with park management plans and link to regional and national strategies.
- (iii). Guaranteeing the availability and use of financial resources for park management.
- (iv). Optimizing the level and use of park admissions to support a range of objectives, including biodiversity conservation.
- (v). Developing partnership agreements and concession-based relationships with local communities and private sector operators that offer clear benefits to conservation and habitat management, as well as to communities and users.
- (vi). Creating networks of protected areas, and their branding for sustainable tourism.

4.5. Promoting development and management of ecotourism

Ecotourism, by definition, is a form of tourism that entails responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local

people. It should therefore be encouraged in the interests of conservation. Governments will:

- (i). Bring together tourism and conservation stakeholder for the development and careful management of ecotourism at a national and local level.
- (ii). Ensure that products or new projects that are promoted as 'ecotourism' comply with the above definition. This may require application of relevant tools such as certification.
- (iii). Encourage well planned and executed ecotourism projects in natural areas, including visitor facilities and interpretation, through technical support, marketing and other appropriate measures.

4.6. Using tourism to encourage landholders to practice sustainable land management

Rural landholders can earn additional income from tourism, either directly or indirectly. This may involve providing accommodation or other services on the land, income from the sale of produce into the tourism supply chain, or income from engagement in tourism off the land (e.g. acting as guides). Tourism can stimulate more sustainable land management by providing a new income source (as an alternative to unsustainable practices such as logging or slash and burn agriculture) and can encourage landholders to conserve wildlife or produce organic food, as these are valued by visitors. There is need to provide support, advice and other incentives to encourage landholders to manage their land more sustainably.

4.7. Encourage private parks and nature reserves

Ministry of Tourism will work with other Stakeholders to encourage private parks and nature reserves with following guidelines:

- (i). Ensuring that private parks do not siphon away resources, including tourism income, to the detriment of conservation in public parks.
- (ii). Ensuring that private parks maintain high conservation and tourism standards.
- (iii). Integrating the management of private and public parks into a single biodiversity plan.

4.8. Minimizing damage to natural heritage from tourism

Ministry of Tourism will focus on raising the awareness through education and interpretation and visitor management—controlling visitor numbers and behaviour such as physical damage, wildlife disturbance, littering etc. Following actions will help in minimizing damage:

- (i). Good quality guiding, where possible involving local people.
- (ii). Interpretative events.

- (iii). Visitor centres, where appropriate, containing creative interpretative facilities.
- (iv). Relevant information pre-arrival.
- (v). Educational activity amongst local people and potential domestic markets.
- (vi). Better knowledge amongst tourism enterprises that they can pass on to their staff and guests.

4.9. **Raising support for conservation from visitors and enterprises**

Many tourism enterprises recognize the importance of ongoing conservation activity to the visitor experience; others should be encouraged to do so. Enterprises will be encouraged to support biodiversity, through maintaining habitats on their own properties and supporting local conservation initiatives, in cash or kind. Financial support for conservation activity can also be raised from tourists and is providing an increasingly important source of income. Tourists can also become engaged in practical ways, for example through participating in conservation holidays.

Chapter 5 - Promoting Economic Sustainability

5.1. Economic Sustainability

Ministry of Tourism recognizes economic sustainability as a key principle for sustainable tourism as laid down by UNWTO. In order to achieve economic sustainability, there is need to ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

5.2. Competitiveness of destinations and enterprises and visitor satisfaction

5.2.1. Competitiveness and visitor satisfaction – essential for sustainability

Ministry of Tourism recognizes that the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises is important to ensure sustainable tourism. It will ensure that they are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term. It further recognizes that visitor experience is key to long-term viability of a destination or enterprise. Satisfied visitors return to the destinations and also recommend others to visit. This means delivering an experience that meets or exceeds expectations.

5.2.2. Identifying source markets

Ministry of Tourism will carry out market research on an ongoing basis to guide tourism development in the country. It will identify markets that will continue to deliver business in long term, needs of potential consumers, develop ability to adapt to trends and changes in source market conditions, travel patterns and tastes.

5.2.3. Delivering visitor satisfaction

Ministry of Tourism will strengthen the quality and accreditation systems for every component of the visitor experience, including mechanisms for checking, identifying and improving it. It will provide for regular feedback from the visitors. It will pay attention to value for money and the overall competitiveness of the destination.

5.2.4. Ease of doing business and overall business climate

Ministry of Tourism will work towards creating ease of doing business for tourism enterprises and provide stable business climate. It will continuously work on streamlining regulatory requirements, ease the compliance burden and rationalization of the taxation. The Ministry will particularly support MSMEs in

market access and market development including support for digital technologies for market access. Skill needs of the enterprises will also be effectively met.

5.2.5. **Delivering business support**

Ministry of Tourism will provide necessary support on training, marketing and other enterprise requirements particularly to MSMEs. The schemes will be tailored to needs and avoid a culture of dependency on financial assistance. Funding schemes will be designed to help businesses and projects towards self-sufficiency.

5.3. **Maintaining and projecting an attractive destination**

5.3.1. **Government has a key role in maintaining an attractive destination**

The Ministry of Tourism recognizes that the viability of individual enterprises is also considerably affected by how the destination as a whole is perceived by visitors. The government has a key role in maintaining an attractive destination. Three critical aspects of this are a positive and consistent image, safety and security and overall environment quality.

5.3.2. **A positive and consistent image of the destination**

Ministry of Tourism will work towards a **positive and consistent image** of India as tourist destination. It will undertake effective destination branding, promotion of the brand and ensure that the nature and quality of experience match the brand image. Media management is an important part of this.

5.3.3. **Safety and security at the destination**

Ministry of Tourism will coordinate with the States towards safety and security related issues and enhance the perception of India as a safe and secure destination. The Ministry will pay requisite attention to matters such as levels of policing, health care available to visitors, quality of information available and support services for visitors in need of assistance. Travel advice relating to safety, issued by governments in source countries, can have a considerable impact on the performance of the tourism economy in recipient countries.

5.3.4. **Overall environmental quality**

Ministry will work towards improving overall environmental quality of tourist destinations in India. The attractiveness of the natural and cultural environment in a destination and the general level of amenity and maintenance are of fundamental importance to the viability of tourism enterprises.

5.4. **Local Prosperity**

5.4.1. **Maximising contribution of tourism to local economy**

The Ministry recognizes that an important principle of sustainable development is to maximize the contribution of tourism to the economic prosperity of the host destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally. Local prosperity means ensuring that tourism is well integrated within the economy and is developed alongside other sectors. It is also important to avoid over-dependency on tourism, while ensuring that it can provide a consistent and reliable source of income. The Ministry will undertake the following measures to promote local prosperity.

5.4.2. **Reducing leakages**

Ministry will frame policies for capacity building and financial support programs for MSMEs to support locally owned businesses to retain a higher proportion of profits within the community. Strengthening access to digital technologies will provide a range of opportunities for direct contact and booking for MSMEs.

Encourage employment of local labour, which will increase local prosperity. Ministry will provide necessary training and education to make local people employable.

5.4.3. **Strengthening links between businesses**

Strengthening links between businesses means addressing the local supply chain. Ministry will work towards strengthening local service providers and products to develop local supply chains. Ministry will encourage clusters and networking of businesses thereby achieving more for themselves and for local community.

Ministry will encourage people being involved in multiple occupations including tourism. This will make them less dependent on tourism, which may be seasonal. This will be in line with the holistic principles of sustainable development.

5.4.4. **Influencing levels of visitor spending**

Local prosperity can be strengthened by demand-side policies, which seek to attract higher spending markets. Some market segments are more likely than others to spend money within destinations visited. Increase length of stay as well as the availability of spending opportunities and visitors' awareness of them. This can be achieved by promoting longer stay markets and encouraging existing visitors to stay longer, at the time or on return visits. It may involve seeking an optimum level of attractions, events and other activities and outlets to retain visitor interest.

The provision of effective local information services can increase visitors' awareness of places to visit and things to do, thereby raising the level of spending. Promote the

purchasing of local products. This means strengthening the whole retailing process as well as the quality, price, distribution and display of local products such as food, drink and handicrafts.

5.5. Employment Quality

5.5.1. Promote Year-round, full-time jobs

Ministry will work towards quality of employment by increasing employment opportunities and the proportion of year-round, full-time jobs. Ministry will work with Industry to extend the season through measures such as: targeting markets most likely to travel in the offseason; discounted seasonal offers; organizing events at less busy times of the year; encouraging attractions to stay open longer etc.

5.5.2. Setting realistic Labour standards

It is important to set labour standards that can be realistically attained by both domestic and international operators, providing a level playing field between them and ensuring maximum compliance by everyone.

5.5.3. Skill training and career advancement

Encouraging enterprises to provide skills training programmes and career advancement. Ministry of Tourism will encourage tourism enterprises to provide training to their employees and the Ministry will provide requisite support. Ministry of Tourism will also strengthen human resource development and training programmes, in local destinations or for groups of enterprises. The Ministry will also encourage enterprises to offer formal employment contracts to their employees and focus on long term development of tourism enterprises.

5.5.4. Minimum age, safety and health standards

The Ministry of Tourism will also work towards ensuring the minimum age for admission to employment or work in order to secure the effective abolition of child labour. Enterprises will also have to provide adequate safety and health standards and programmes for employees.

5.6. Social Equity

5.6.1. Socio-economic opportunities to disadvantaged people

Ministry of Tourism will promote tourism policies to benefit disadvantaged people by delivering economic and social benefits to them. Tourism is well placed to reach disadvantaged people, mainly because it is a labour-intensive service industry with relatively low entry barriers and an activity that takes place in situ within

communities. In addition to bringing income, the interaction it entails between people can bolster dignity and self-esteem.

5.6.2. Education and training to disadvantaged people

Providing education and training that is relevant and accessible to disadvantaged people will make them employable and open up opportunities. Tourism enterprises will be encouraged to pay particular attention to the nature of their sources, and to work with poor communities (e.g. marginal farming communities) on developing reliable supply streams for the tourism industry.

5.6.3. Supporting development of enterprises by disadvantaged people

Disadvantaged people often gain access to visitors and seek to earn income from them through activities such as street trading, personal guiding services or providing simple accommodation, etc. This can be strengthened through capacity building, attention to quality, licensing, better information for tourists, and supporting the development of enterprises by disadvantaged people.

5.7. Visitor Fulfilment

5.7.1. A safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience to all without discrimination

Sustainable tourism will require to provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways. Social dimension and equity principles make visitor satisfaction and fulfilment to be viewed as an aim in its own right, rather than simply as a means to economic benefit. It is also about the responsibilities that destinations have towards the wellbeing of their guests. Improving access for all means ensuring that tourism facilities and infrastructure are accessible and usable by people with special needs.

5.7.2. Maintaining a duty of care to visitors

Duty of care to visitors means being concerned for their safety and security in the destination and in enterprises. Issues include fire prevention, health and hygiene, awareness raising, prevention and preparedness for disasters (natural and industrial) adaptation to the effects of natural hazards and protection from crime and terrorism. There should also be clear procedures for registering and handling visitors' complaints and for solving problems that they encounter such as loss of possessions or the need for emergency medical attention.

5.8. Monitoring and addressing visitor satisfaction and the quality of experience

Regular survey of visitors to destinations and encouraging enterprises to obtain feedback from their guests. Although tourists' motivations for travel vary, particular attention should be paid to encouraging and enabling them to learn about and appreciate the cultures and environments they visit. This is an important part of meeting the aim of visitor fulfilment; it also assists in meeting other aims relating to social and environmental impact within the host destination.

Chapter 6 – Promoting Socio-Cultural Sustainability

6.1. Sustainable Tourism – promotes respect for local cultural

6.1.1. Sustainable tourism aims to respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities. Respect for, and understanding of, cultural diversity between nations and peoples is a key principle of sustainable development. Tourism can be a considerable force for the conservation of historic and cultural heritage and can stimulate arts, crafts and other creative activities within communities.

6.1.2. By providing a source of income based around local culture, tourism can encourage communities to value their cultural heritage more highly. However, it is important to guard against the falsification and degradation of culture and heritage in the way they are promoted to tourists.

6.2. Ensuring effective management and conservation of heritage sites

Significant historic and cultural sites are a major component of visitor appeal. Although such sites are often dependent on visitor income for their management and conservation, many are also suffering from visitor pressure that threatens to damage their fabric and devalue the quality of the visitor experience. Following measures will be taken in this regard:

(i). Conserving historic and cultural heritage features

Conserving historic and cultural heritage features will be important for sustainability. Promoting the inclusion of sites on the World Heritage Convention list is appropriate in certain situations.

(ii). Effective visitor management

Effective visitor management will include a range of techniques such as spreading and deflecting demand, physical site management etc. to reduce any adverse impact on the destination.

(iii). Avoiding or managing intrusive collateral activities

Effective management of various informal markets, street sellers and vendors whether local or from outside the destination needs to be ensured.

(iv). Securing more money from visitors for conservation

Destinations can enhance income by promoting greater use, management of admission income, provision of well managed retail outlets, encouraging voluntary donations, etc.

(v). **Seeking ways to benefit local communities living close to heritage sites**

This will help towards conservation as well as improving local livelihoods.

6.3. **Working with communities on promotion of culture and traditions**

Cultural richness can be strengthened and interpreted in a variety of creative ways. Greater respect and understanding for local cultures can be achieved through improved information for guests and hosts and interaction between them. However, in all these activities, sensitivity is required and commodification or devaluing of local culture must be avoided. The focus would be on the following:

- (i). Developing interpretative programmes and events based on the heritage and distinctiveness of the area.
- (ii). Conceiving creative, sensitive and viable visitor attractions where local culture and traditions can be showcased.
- (iii). Incorporating aspects of local cultural heritage and distinctiveness into various elements of visitor experience, such as furnishing in tourism establishments, local cuisine in restaurants, traditional designs in architecture, and art and sculpture in public spaces.
- (iv). Capacity building with local communities regarding visitor interpretation and issues of quality and authenticity.
- (v). Capacity building with the private sector to help them and their guests to bridge potential culture gaps.
- (vi). Informing tourists about local traditions and local culture before and during the trip.
- (vii). Informing local communities about the culture of their potential visitors.
- (viii). Guarding against the sale and purchase of items of cultural value as souvenirs.

6.4. **Local Control**

Fully engage the local community in the development of tourism policies and plans. This should involve local government institutions and there should be a process of wider consultation and participation for the community and other stakeholders.

Strengthen the capacity of local governance bodies and improve their knowledge of tourism and its sustainability. Raise public awareness of the ways in which tourism can affect communities. Respect and recognise traditional tribal empowerment, backing this up with legal empowerment. Respect for indigenous people's beliefs and traditions and consulting with them on how to portray their culture to tourists.

6.5. Community Wellbeing

6.5.1. Strengthen quality of life in local communities

Sustainable tourism requires to maintain and strengthen the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social or environmental degradation or exploitation.

6.5.2. Enhance positive impact of tourism on communities

Tourism can impact the social wellbeing of communities in many ways, both positively and negatively. Tourism can provide jobs, bring the additional investment and spending brought by tourism can support a wide variety of amenities that add to the quality of local people's lives. These include essential services such as water and energy, roads and transport services, health services, shops, garages, leisure and entertainment facilities, and outdoor amenities.

6.5.3. Reduce negative impact of tourism on communities

Conversely, the presence of visitors can put pressure on facilities and services, adding to the cost of their provision and maintenance, reducing the enjoyment of them by local people and making access to them difficult or even impossible. Tourism developments and activity also sometimes interfere with other sources of livelihood and disrupt access to them.

6.5.4. Getting the balance right in the volume, timing and location of visits

The difference between a negative and a positive community reaction to tourism depends to a significant extent on the volume of visitors in an area at any one time and how this relates to the size of the local population. It may also be affected by the degree of concentration or geographical spread. The concept of the social carrying capacity of a destination is relevant here, and policies should maintain an optimum number of visitors. This can be done by keeping abreast of community reactions and using appropriate indicators such as volume of visits, traffic counts, number of complaints from local people, level of litter, etc.

6.5.5. Reducing congestion

Congestion, especially at peak times, caused by the volume of visitors and/or their vehicles, can be a primary threat to community wellbeing. It is important to have effective visitor management policies and actions. There is need for managing demand and reducing seasonality by marketing and pricing techniques to promote off-season visits, or by promoting alternative locations to spread visits within and outside of the destination. Improving traffic management through physical changes, signage, information, and promotion of alternative transport options.

6.5.6. Careful planning and management of tourism enterprises and infrastructure

Planning the scale, design and siting of new tourism development, to take account of the overall amenity of the destination and the location of residential areas and other activities within the community. Planning the development of infrastructure, including transport, water and energy supplies, which should be designed to meet the combined needs of visitors and the community. Maximizing the availability of open space and other amenity areas, including beaches, that are accessible for use by residents and visitors.

6.5.7. Promoting mutual use of facilities and services by residents and tourists

Where possible, facilities and amenities developed for tourists should also be made available to members of the local community. In some locations, visitor spending can make the difference in ensuring viability of community services and facilities, such as local shops and village halls. Use of such services by tourists should be encouraged through information, events, etc.

6.5.8. Influencing the behaviour of tourists towards local communities

In order to avoid problems faced by communities as a result of tourism due to behaviour of individual tourists or particular groups, there is need to provide information to the tourists on the nature of host community, their values and any particular sensitivities that should be respected. There is need to regulate certain aspects of visitor behaviour, such as noise and littering and maintaining an appropriate level of policing. Physical control measures to facilitate good behaviour, such as provision of litter bins and information boards in several languages, if necessary are also required.

Chapter 7 – Certification Scheme for Sustainable Tourism

7.1. Sustainable Tourism Criteria of India (STCI)

In order to mainstream sustainability in tourism sector, it is important to measure the adoption of principles of sustainable tourism in various destinations, products and industry whether accommodation providers or tour operators. Ministry of Tourism has adopted Sustainable Tourism Criteria of India based on global practices adopted to the needs of the country.

7.2. Finalization of Scheme for Certification as per STCI

The Ministry will finalize the Scheme for Certification for sustainable tourism as per STCI principles and indicators for destinations, accommodation sector and tour operators in consultation with Industry. The Ministry will work with Industry and reputed non-government organizations in seeking their technical expertise for promotion of sustainable tourism.

The Ministry will also initiate action to create Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India and Indicators for other tourism service providers, which have not been covered so far.

7.3. Digitalization and branding of Certification Schemes

The entire process of STCI certification shall be end to end digital. The Certification will have an attractive branding and it will be aggressively promoted by the Ministry of Tourism through all its channels including incredible India website and mobile application.

7.4. State Support for Implementation of the Scheme

The Ministry of Tourism will work with the State Governments to build capacity of the industry to prepare them for certification. The State governments will be encouraged to prioritize destinations for certification of sustainability.

7.5. Ranking of the States on Sustainable Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism will conduct ranking of the States, with the key objective to foster competitiveness and encourage States to work proactively towards developing sustainable 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 States may be suitably classified into leaders, aspiring leaders and emerging States. 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.

Chapter 8 – IEC and Capacity Building

8.1. Information, Education and Communication

8.1.1. The need for IEC

Sustainable and responsible tourism is an evolving area and there is great need for a well-planned Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign to create awareness, understanding and acceptance of sustainable tourism amongst all stakeholders. The campaign will have to be spearheaded by the Central Government and State Governments will full support of the industry and other Stakeholders including local government functionaries, forest and wildlife officials, local communities and non-government organizations working in the field.

8.1.2. Development of IEC material

Ministry of Tourism with the assistance from technical experts will devise overall IEC material, which can be customised and expanded by the State Governments keeping in view their specific needs and requirements. The material will be both digital and print and will be made available on websites, social media and other channels.

8.1.3. State support for sensitization and training

In addition to IEC material being made available through various channels, the Ministry will work with the States to organize sensitization and training workshops for various stakeholders including Government and Private Sector officials, NGOs and local communities/ institutions. Apart from various aspects of sustainable and responsible tourism, it will also cover the need for enhancing the visitor experience and value chain enhancement for competitive advantage. This tourism focus should be an essential component of each destination.

8.2. Capacity Building

The Ministry of Tourism will support the State Governments in building the capacity of the industry and government agencies for sustainable tourism. Ministry of Tourism will support State Governments in undertaking various skill development and entrepreneurship development activities as identified for meeting the needs of the local community. The State Government will also facilitate them in placement and starting their own venture.

8.3. National and State Resource Centres

The Ministry of Tourism will set up a National Resource Centre as a source of capacity and expertise at the National level for sustainable tourism, adventure tourism and

ecotourism. Similarly, the Ministry will also encourage the State Governments to set up State Resource Centres. These resource centres along with other identified institutions will help in developing adequate material, preparing a pool of master trainers, training of trainers and other capacity building initiatives.

8.4. Education, Research & Training on Sustainable Tourism

Education and Skill training will cover various aspects of sustainable Tourism such as awareness of over tourism impacts, environmental impact and concept of carrying capacity, community participation, indigenous solutions and tourism offerings, entrepreneurship and community development initiatives at local level (Vocal for Local).

8.5. Dedicated Promotional Campaign

There is a need to have a dedicated promotional campaign for positioning India as a sustainable and responsible tourism destination. India has to focus on utilising its natural heritage. These campaigns should be planned in partnership with Industry Stakeholders. Every State has its own unique offerings and therefore the States have to plan their own campaign to popularise the State as sustainable tourism destination.

8.6. Campaign for Responsible Travellers

While supply side interventions are required, there is also a need to work on demand side by making the traveller aware of sustainable and responsible tourism. Responsible behaviour by travellers and demand for more sustainable tourism will greatly influence the industry to adopt sustainability in their businesses. The Ministry in partnership with the States, Industry and Destinations will launch a campaign for responsible traveller.

Chapter 9 – Governance and Institutional Framework

9.1. 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 for the same. State Governments will prepare State specific policy and action plan for development of sustainable tourism. The Ministry will help with model policies and action plans for guidance of the States.

9.2. Governance

In order to ensure that the Strategy is effectively implemented, there is need to review the progress and resolve the issues. Following institutional structure will be followed for the same.

(i). Vision Group under Union Minister for Tourism

A Vision Group on Sustainable Tourism under the Union Minister for Tourism will be set up. The Vision Group will include all the Stakeholder Ministries, States, Industry, NGO and Experts. It will provide overall vision and guidance for the development of Sustainable Tourism in the Country.

(ii). IMCCT

Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee under Cabinet Secretary, already in place, will review and resolve inter-Ministerial issues, which may arise and provide guidance for greater convergence of Central Schemes.

(iii). National Board on Sustainable Tourism under Secretary (Tourism)

National Board on Sustainable Tourism under Secretary (Tourism) will be set up. The National Board will include the representatives of the Key Ministries, leading States in sustainable tourism and representatives from Industry, NGO and Experts.

The Board will guide the operationalisation and implementation of various strategic initiatives to strengthen the ecosystem for development of sustainable tourism in the Country:

- (i) Certification Schemes
- (ii) Safety guidelines
- (iii) Capacity building
- (iv) Marketing and promotion
- (v) Private Sector Participation

- (vi) Specific strategies
- (vii) Any other measures for sustainable tourism

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

The States will set up a State Steering Committee under Chief Secretary. The Committee will have representation from all the relevant Departments at the State level, representatives of Industry, NGOs and Experts.

The Committee will coordinate, review and resolve issues regarding implementation of strategy and other State specific issues for development and promotion of sustainable tourism.

(v). **District level Committee**

The States will set up a district level Committee under District Collector to coordinate and review progress and provide impetus to development of sustainable and responsible tourism at the district level.

9.3. **National Nodal Agency**

Ministry of Tourism will designate National Nodal Agency to support the Ministry of Tourism in coordinating and evolving strategy and actionable plans and schemes for promotion and development of Sustainable Tourism in the Country. The Nodal agency will in particular assist the Ministry in undertaking the following functions:

- (i). Preparation of detailed Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy.
- (ii). Identifying national and global best practice and prepare tool kits for their replication by the States
- (iii). Benchmarking State policies and standards and prepare model policies and standards
- (iv). Capacity Building measures including setting up of Resource Centres and Centres of Excellence
- (v). Facilitating adoption of digital technologies for sustainable tourism
- (vi). Formulation of dedicated scheme to support development of sustainable tourism in the Country
- (vii). Any other support, which can facilitate the Ministry of Tourism in development of sustainable tourism in the Country.

The Nodal agency will set up appropriate structures and professional staffing for supporting the Ministry of Tourism in the implementation of the strategy. The Ministry will provide necessary budgetary support to the Nodal Agency through various schemes for promotion and development of tourism.

9.4. **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 Sustainable 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 sustainable tourism
- (iv). Facilitating adoption of digital technologies for sustainable tourism
- (v). Formulation of State schemes for development of sustainable tourism

The Ministry of Tourism will work with the States and designated State Nodal Agency to provide necessary financial and technical support under various schemes of the Ministry.

Annexure

Annexure 1 – Potential of Tourism to achieve Sustainable Development Goals

1. SDG 1: No Poverty

As one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world, tourism is well-positioned to foster economic growth and development at all levels and provide income through job creation. Sustainable tourism development, and its impact at community level, can be linked with national poverty reduction goals, those related to promoting entrepreneurship and small businesses, and empowering less favoured groups, particularly youth and women.

2. SDG 2: Zero Hunger

Tourism can spur agricultural productivity by promoting the production, use and sale of local produce in tourist destinations and its full integration in the tourism value chain. In addition, agro-tourism, a growing tourism segment, can complement traditional agricultural activities. The resulting rise of income in local communities can lead to a more resilient agriculture while enhancing the value of the tourism experience.

3. SDG 3: Good health and well being

Tourism's contribution to economic growth and development can also have a knock-on effect on health and well-being. Foreign earnings and tax income from tourism can be reinvested in health care and services, which should aim to improve maternal health, reduce child mortality and prevent diseases, among others.

4. SDG 4: Quality education

A well-trained and skilful workforce is crucial for tourism to prosper. The sector can provide incentives to invest in education and vocational training and assist labour mobility through cross-border agreements on qualifications, standards and certifications. In particular youth, women, senior citizens, indigenous peoples and those with special needs should benefit through educational means, where tourism has the potential to promote inclusiveness, the values of a culture of tolerance, peace and non-violence, and all aspects of global exchange and citizenship.

5. SDG 5: Gender Equality

Tourism can empower women in multiple ways, particularly through the provision of jobs and through income-generating opportunities in small and larger-scale tourism and hospitality related enterprises. As one of the sectors with the highest share of women employed and entrepreneurs, tourism can be a tool for women to unlock their potential, helping them to become fully engaged and lead in every aspect of society.

6. SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Tourism can play a critical role in achieving water access and security, as well as hygiene and sanitation for all. The efficient use of water in the tourism sector, coupled with appropriate safety measures, wastewater management, pollution control and technology efficiency can be key to safeguarding our most precious resource.

7. SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

As a sector that requires substantial energy input, tourism can accelerate the shift toward renewable energy and increase its share in the global energy mix. Consequently, by promoting sound and long-term investments in sustainable energy sources, tourism can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate climate change and contribute to innovative and new energy solutions in urban, regional and remote areas.

8. SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Tourism is one of the driving forces of global economic growth and currently provides for 1 in 11 jobs worldwide. By giving access to decent work opportunities in the tourism sector, society –particularly youth and women – can benefit from increased skills and professional development. The sector’s contribution to job creation is recognized in Target 8.9 “By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products”.

9. SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Tourism development relies on good public and privately supplied infrastructure and an innovative environment. The sector can also incentivize national governments to upgrade their infrastructure and retrofit their industries, making them more sustainable, resource-efficient and clean, as a means to attract tourists and other sources of foreign investment. This should also facilitate further sustainable industrialization, necessary for economic growth, development and innovation.

10. SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

Tourism can be a powerful tool for community development and reducing inequalities if it engages local populations and all key stakeholders in its development. Tourism can contribute to urban renewal and rural development and reduce regional imbalances by giving communities the opportunity to prosper in their place of origin. Tourism is also an effective means for developing countries to take part in the global economy. In 2014, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) received US\$ 16.4 billion in exports from international tourism, up from US\$ 2.6 billion in 2000, making the sector

an important pillar of their economies (7% of total exports) and helping some to graduate from the LDC status.

11. SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

A city that is not good for its citizens is not good for tourists. Sustainable tourism has the potential to advance urban infrastructure and universal accessibility, promote regeneration of areas in decay and preserve cultural and natural heritage, assets on which tourism depends. Greater investment in green infrastructure (more efficient transport facilities, reduced air pollution, conservation of heritage sites and open spaces, etc.) should result in smarter and greener cities from which not only residents, but also tourists, can benefit.

12. SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

A tourism sector that adopts sustainable consumption and production (SCP) practices can play a significant role in accelerating the global shift towards sustainability. To do so, as set in Target 12.b of Goal 12, it is imperative to “Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism which creates jobs, promotes local culture and products”. The Sustainable Tourism Programme (STP) of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP) aims at developing such SCP practices, including resource efficient initiatives that result in enhanced economic, social and environmental outcomes.

13. SDG 13: Climate Action

Tourism contributes to and is affected by climate change. It is, therefore, in the sector’s own interest to play a leading role in the global response to climate change. By lowering energy consumption and shifting to renewable energy sources, especially in the transport and accommodation sector, tourism can help tackle one of the most pressing challenges of our time.

14. SDG 14: Life Below Water

Coastal and maritime tourism, tourism’s biggest segments, particularly for Small Island Developing States’ (SIDS), rely on healthy marine ecosystems. Tourism development must be a part of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in order to help conserve and preserve fragile marine ecosystems and serve as a vehicle to promote a blue economy, in line with Target 14.7: “by 2030 increase the economic benefits to SIDS and LDCs from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism”.

15. SDG 15: Life on Land

Majestic landscapes, pristine forests, rich biodiversity, and natural heritage sites are often main reasons why tourists visit a destination. Sustainable tourism can play a major role, not only in conserving and preserving biodiversity, but also in respecting terrestrial ecosystems, owing to its efforts towards the reduction of waste and consumption, the conservation of native flora and fauna, and its awareness-raising activities.

16. SDG 16: Peace and Justice

As tourism revolves around billions of encounters between people of diverse cultural backgrounds, the sector can foster multicultural and inter-faith tolerance and understanding, laying the foundation for more peaceful societies. Sustainable tourism, which benefits and engages local communities, can also provide a source of livelihood, strengthen cultural identities and spur entrepreneurial activities, thereby helping to prevent violence and conflict to take root and consolidate peace in post-conflict societies.

17. SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals

Due to its cross-sectorial nature tourism has the ability to strengthen private/ public partnerships and engage multiple stakeholders – international, national, regional and local – to work together to achieve the SDGs and other common goals. Indeed, public/public cooperation and public/private partnerships are a necessary and core foundation for tourism development, as is an increased awareness in the role of tourism in the delivery on the post-2015 Development Agenda.

Annexure 2 – Sustainable Tourism Criteria of India for Destinations (Illustrative)

1. Sustainable Management

1.1. Management structure and framework

1.1.1. Destination management responsibility

In order to promote sustainable tourism at any destination, existence of a destination management organization is essential, which could be responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism. The DMO should ensure involvement of the private sector, public sector and civil society. The DMO should be given the responsibility for the management of socio- economic, cultural and environmental issues. It should be provided requisite funding, staff and capability for sustainable tourism.

1.1.2. Destination management strategy and action plan

There should be a multi-year destination management strategy and action plan based on sustainability principles. The strategy includes an identification and assessment of tourism assets and considers socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues and risks.

1.1.3. Monitoring and reporting

The destination should put in a place a system to monitor and respond to socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues and impacts arising from tourism. There should be regular monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the actions and outcomes.

1.2. Stakeholder engagement

1.2.1. Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards

Tourism-related enterprises should be regularly informed about sustainability issues and encouraged in making their operations more sustainable. Adoption of sustainability standards should be encouraged and a list of sustainability certified enterprises should be published.

1.2.2. Resident engagement and feedback

Public participation in sustainable destination planning and management should be enabled and promoted. Satisfaction of local residents with tourism sustainability should be monitored. There should also be a system for enhancing local understanding of sustainable tourism opportunities.

1.2.3. Visitor engagement and feedback

Visitor satisfaction with the quality and sustainability of the destination experience should be monitored and reported. Visitors are informed about sustainability issues in the destination and the part that they can play in addressing them.

1.2.4. Promotion and information

Promotion and visitor information material about the destination should be accurate with regard to sustainability claims.

1.3. **Managing pressure and change**

1.3.1. Managing visitor volumes and activities

There should be a system of visitor management and manage the volume and activities of visitors and to reduce or increase them as necessary at certain times and in certain locations, working to balance the needs of the local economy, community, cultural heritage and environment.

1.3.2. Planning regulations and development control

There is need to have planning guidelines, regulations and/or policies which control the location and nature of development, require environmental, economic, and socio-cultural impact assessment and integrate sustainable land use, design, construction, and demolition. These are widely communicated and enforced.

1.3.3. Climate change adaptation

The risks and opportunities associated with climate change should be identified and climate change adaptation strategies are pursued for the siting, design, development and management of tourism facilities.

1.3.4. Risk and crisis management

A crisis management and emergency response plan that is appropriate to the destination must be prepared. Key elements are communicated to residents, visitors, and enterprises.

2. **Socio Economic Stability**

2.1. **Delivering local economic benefits**

2.1.1. Measuring the economic contribution of tourism

The direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism to the destination's economy is monitored and publicly reported. Appropriate measures may include levels of visitor volume, visitor expenditure, employment and investment and evidence on the distribution of economic benefits.

2.1.2. Decent work and career opportunities

Career opportunities and training in tourism should be encouraged. The destination's tourism enterprises commit to providing equality of opportunity for local employment, training and advancement, a safe and secure working environment, and a living wage for all.

2.1.3. Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade

Retention of tourism spending in the local economy should be encouraged through supporting local enterprises, supply chains and sustainable investment. Development and purchase of local sustainable products based on fair trade principles should be encouraged. These may include food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.

2.2. Social wellbeing and impacts

2.2.1. Support for community

A system to enable and encourage enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute to community and sustainability initiatives in a responsible manner.

2.2.2. Preventing exploitation and discrimination

There should be established code of conduct to prevent and report on human trafficking, modern slavery and commercial, sexual, or any other form of exploitation, discrimination and harassment of or against anyone, particularly children, adolescents or women.

2.2.3. Safety and security

A system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, safety, and health hazards that addresses the needs of both visitors and residents.

2.2.4. Access for all

Where practical, sites, facilities and services, including those of natural and cultural importance, are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities and others who have specific access requirements or other special needs. Information is made available on the accessibility of sites, facilities and services.

3. Cultural Sustainability

3.1. Protecting cultural heritage

3.1.1. Protection of cultural assets

A policy and system to be put in place to evaluate, rehabilitate, and conserve cultural assets, including built heritage and cultural landscapes.

3.1.2. Cultural artefacts

Compliance with the laws governing the proper sale, trade, display, or gifting of historical and archaeological artefacts. The laws are enforced and publicly communicated, including to tourism enterprises and visitors.

3.1.3. Intangible heritage

There should be encouragement to intangible cultural heritage, including local traditions, arts, music, language, gastronomy and other aspects of local identity and distinctiveness. The presentation, replication and interpretation of living culture and traditions is sensitive and respectful, seeks to involve and benefit local communities, and provides visitors with an authentic and genuine experience.

3.1.4. Traditional access

Local community should have access to natural and cultural sites.

3.1.5. Intellectual property

Protection and preservation of intellectual property rights of communities and individuals should be encouraged.

3.2. Visiting cultural sites

3.2.1. Visitor management at cultural sites

A system for the management of visitors should be developed within and around cultural sites, which takes account of their characteristics, capacity and sensitivity and seeks to optimize visitor flow and minimize adverse impacts. Guidelines for visitor behaviour at sensitive sites and cultural events should be made available to visitors, tour operators and guides before and at the time of the visit.

3.2.2. Site interpretation

Accurate interpretative material is provided which informs visitors of the significance of the cultural and natural aspects of the sites they visit. The information is culturally

appropriate, developed with host community collaboration, and clearly communicated in languages pertinent to visitors and residents.

4. Environment Sustainability

4.1. Conservation of natural heritage

4.1.1. Protection of sensitive environments

There should be a system to monitor, measure and respond to the impacts of tourism on the natural environment, conserve ecosystems, habitats and species, and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.

4.1.2. Visitor management at natural sites

There should be a system for the management of visitors within and around natural sites, which takes account of their characteristics, capacity and sensitivity and seeks to optimize visitor flow and minimize adverse impacts. Guidelines for visitor behaviour at sensitive sites should be made available to visitors, tour operators and guides before and at the time of the visit.

4.1.3. Wildlife interaction

Compliance with applicable laws and standards for wildlife interactions should be ensured. Interactions with free roaming wildlife, taking into account cumulative impacts, are non-invasive and responsibly managed to avoid adverse impacts on the animals concerned and, on the viability, and behaviour of populations in the wild.

4.1.4. Species exploitation and animal welfare

Compliance with applicable laws and standards that seek to ensure animal welfare and conservation of species (animals, plants and all living organisms).

4.2. Resource management

4.2.1. Energy conservation

There should be a target to reduce energy consumption, improve efficiency in its use, as well as increase the use of renewable energy. A system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report their contribution to these targets.

4.2.2. Water stewardship

Encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, publicly report and manage water usage. Water risk in the destination is assessed and documented. In cases of high-

water risk, water stewardship goals are identified and actively pursued with enterprises, to ensure that tourism use does not conflict with the needs of local communities and ecosystems.

4.2.3. Water quality

Water quality should be monitored for drinking, recreational and ecological purposes using quality standards. The monitoring results are publicly available, and there is a system to respond in a timely manner to water quality issues.

4.3. Management of waste and emissions

4.3.1. Wastewater

There should be clear and enforced guidelines in place for the siting, maintenance and testing of discharge from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems.

4.3.2. Solid waste

The destination measures and reports on its generation of waste and sets targets for its reduction. It ensures solid waste is properly treated and diverted from landfill, with provision of a multiple-stream collection and recycling system which effectively separates waste by type. The destination encourages enterprises to avoid, reduce, reuse, and recycle solid waste, including food waste. Action is taken to eliminate or reduce single-use items, especially plastics. Any residual solid waste that is not reused or recycled is disposed of safely and sustainably.

4.3.3. GHG emissions and climate change mitigation

The destination has targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and implements and reports on mitigation policies and actions. Enterprises are encouraged to measure, monitor, reduce or minimise, publicly report and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects of their operation (including from suppliers and service providers). Offsetting of any remaining emissions is encouraged.

4.3.4. Low-impact transportation

The destination has targets to reduce transport emissions from travel to and within the destination. An increase in the use of sustainable, low-emissions vehicles and public transport and active travel (e.g., walking and cycling) is sought in order to reduce the contribution of tourism to air pollution, congestion and climate change.

4.3.5. Light and noise pollution

The destination has guidelines and regulations to minimize light and noise pollution.
The destination encourages enterprises to follow these guidelines and regulations.

Annexure 3 – Sustainable Tourism Criteria of India for Industry (Illustrative)

1. Demonstrate Effective Sustainable Management

- 1.1. The organisation has implemented a long-term sustainability management system that is suitable to its reality and scale, and that considers environmental, sociocultural, quality, health and safety issues.
- 1.2. The organisation is in compliance with all relevant national legislation and regulations
- 1.3. All personnel receive periodic training in the management of environmental, socio-cultural, quality health and safety practices.
- 1.4. Customer satisfaction is measured and corrective action taken, where appropriate.
- 1.5. Promotional materials are accurate and complete and do not promise more than can be delivered by the organisation.

2. Design and construction of buildings and infrastructure

- 2.1. Comply with land usage and protected or heritage area requirements
- 2.2. Respect the natural, cultural, social, built and heritage surroundings in siting, design, impact assessment, land rights and acquisition in, so far as new construction, including additions and extensions to property, is concerned.
- 2.3. Use locally appropriate principles of sustainable construction, including local styles, skills and materials for new construction and additions or extensions to property.
- 2.4. Provide access and facilities for persons with special needs in accordance with principles of universal design.
- 2.5. Information about and interpretation of the natural surroundings, customs, local culture and cultural heritage is provided to visitors, as well as explanations of appropriate behaviour while visiting natural areas, living cultures and cultural heritage sites.

3. Maximise social and economic benefits to the local community and minimise negative impacts

- 3.1. The organisation actively supports initiatives for social and community participation and development, including, among others, infrastructure, education, health, and sanitation

- 3.2. Local residents are employed, including in management positions, wherever feasible. Training is offered, as necessary.
- 3.3. Local and fair trade services and goods, particularly from MSMEs, are purchased by the organisation, where available.
- 3.4. The organisation encourages the means for local small entrepreneurs to develop and sell sustainable products that are based on the area's nature, history, and culture (including food and drink, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products).
- 3.5. A code of behaviour for activities in indigenous and local communities has been developed, with the consent of, and in collaboration with the community and/or neighbourhood
- 3.6. The organisation has implemented a policy against commercial exploitation, particularly of children and adolescents, including sexual exploitation.
- 3.7. The organisation should provide equal opportunities in recruitment and career growth to all segments of society, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, ethnicity and gender, while completely shunning child labour.
- 3.8. All employees, including contractual labour, are treated in accordance with national legislation and are paid a fair wage, with the minimum being in accordance with the law
- 3.9. The activities of the organisation do not jeopardise the provision of basic services such as water, energy or sanitation to neighbouring communities.
- 4. Maximise benefits to cultural and historical heritage and minimise negative impacts**
- 4.1. The organisation follows established guidelines or a code of behaviour at culturally, ecologically or historically sensitive sites, in order to minimise visitor impact and maximise satisfaction
- 4.2. Historical and archaeological artifacts are not sold, traded or displayed, except as permitted by law.
- 4.3. The organisation contributes to the protection of local, historical, archaeological, culturally and spiritually important properties and sites, as well as natural phenomena, and does not impede access to them by local residents.
- 4.4. The intellectual property rights of local communities will be respected whenever the organisation uses elements of local art and tradition, architecture, or cultural heritage in its operations, design, decoration, food or shops.

5. Maximise benefits to the environment and minimise negative impacts

5.1. Conserving Resources

- 5.1.1. Purchasing policy favours environmentally responsible and eco-friendly products for building materials, capital goods, food and consumables.
- 5.1.2. The purchase of disposable and consumer goods is measured, and the organisation actively seeks ways to reduce their use.
- 5.1.3. Energy consumption should be measured, sources indicated, and measures to decrease overall consumption should be adopted, while encouraging the use of renewable energy.
- 5.1.4. Water consumption should be measured, sources indicated and measures to decrease overall consumption, should be adopted. The organisation practices rainwater harvesting wherever water tables have been receding.

5.2. Reducing Pollution

- 5.2.1. The organisation implements a step-by-step plan to identify, and then quantify, sources of greenhouse gas emissions under its control, and activate measures to offset climate change in a time-bound manner.
- 5.2.2. Wastewater, including gray water, is treated effectively and reused, where possible.
- 5.2.3. A solid waste management plan is implemented, with quantitative goals to minimise waste that is non-biodegradable, not reused or recycled.
- 5.2.4. The use of harmful substances including pesticides, harmful chemicals, swimming pool disinfectants and cleaning material is minimised; substituted, when available, by innocuous products, and all chemical use is properly managed.
- 5.2.5. The organisation implements practices to reduce pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds and air and soil contaminants.

5.3. Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes

- 5.3.1. The organisation does not participate in, accept, allow or encourage the use of, or display or trade in endangered species of flora and fauna, except trophy displays, as permitted under the law.
- 5.3.2. No wildlife is held in captivity.

- 5.3.3. The organisation uses endemic native species for landscaping and restoration and takes measures to avoid the introduction of invasive alien species.
- 5.3.4. The organisation supports biodiversity conservation, including supporting natural protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value.
- 5.3.5. Interactions with wildlife must not produce adverse effects on the viability of populations in the wild. Any disturbance of natural ecosystems is minimised, and, if it occurs inadvertently, steps are taken for immediate rehabilitation and/or compensatory contribution to conservation management.