

Government of India
Ministry of Tourism
(Niche Tourism Division)

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

No. NT-1502/2/2019-M&C

Dated: 08th December 2021

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: **National Strategy and Roadmap for Development of Rural Tourism in India - An initiative towards Atmanirbhar Bharat.**

Recognizing the immense potential of Rural Tourism in the country, the Ministry of Tourism has formulated a **National Strategy and Roadmap for Development of Rural Tourism in India - An initiative towards Atmanirbhar Bharat**. A copy of the Strategy and Roadmap is enclosed for ready reference and further action, as appropriate.



(Om Prakash)

Under Secretary to the Government of India
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To

1. CEO, NITI Aayog
2. Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development
3. Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
4. Secretary, Ministry of Culture
5. Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs
6. Secretary, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region
7. Secretary, Ministry of Textiles
8. Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj
9. Secretary, Ministry of Ayush
10. Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
11. Secretary, Ministry of Jal Shakti
12. Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs
13. Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development
14. Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare
15. Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs

contd.....

Copy for information and necessary action to:-

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

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4. PS to ADG(T) / PS to EA(T) / PS to ADG(MR)
5. All Regional Directors, Ministry of Tourism
6. e-office Notice Board



(Om Prakash)

Under Secretary to the Government of India



Government of India
Ministry of Tourism

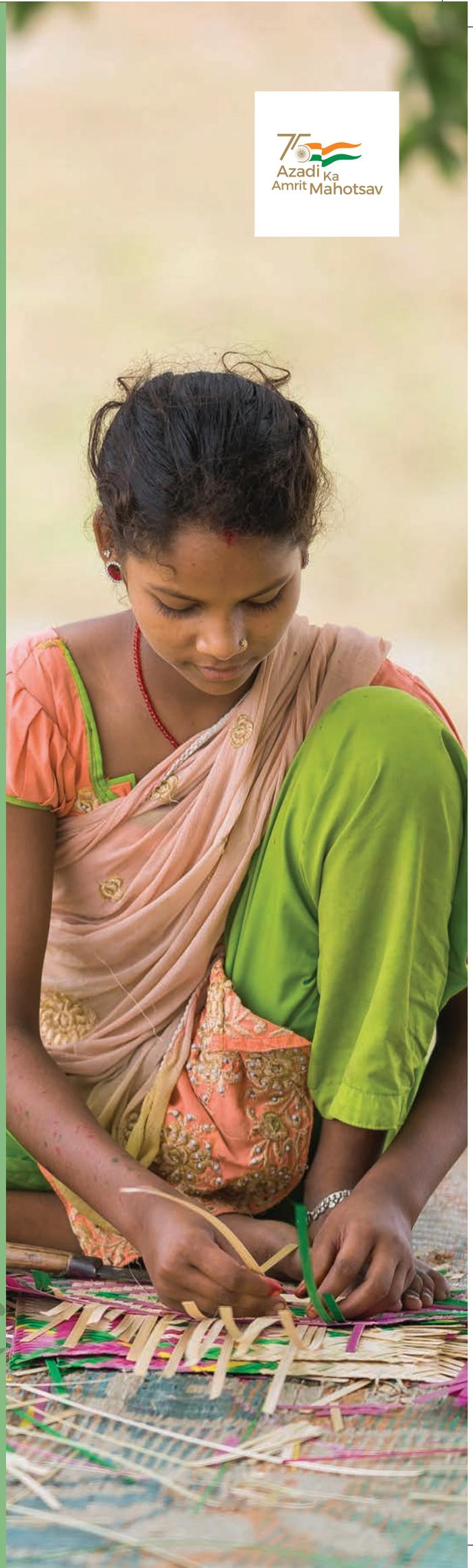


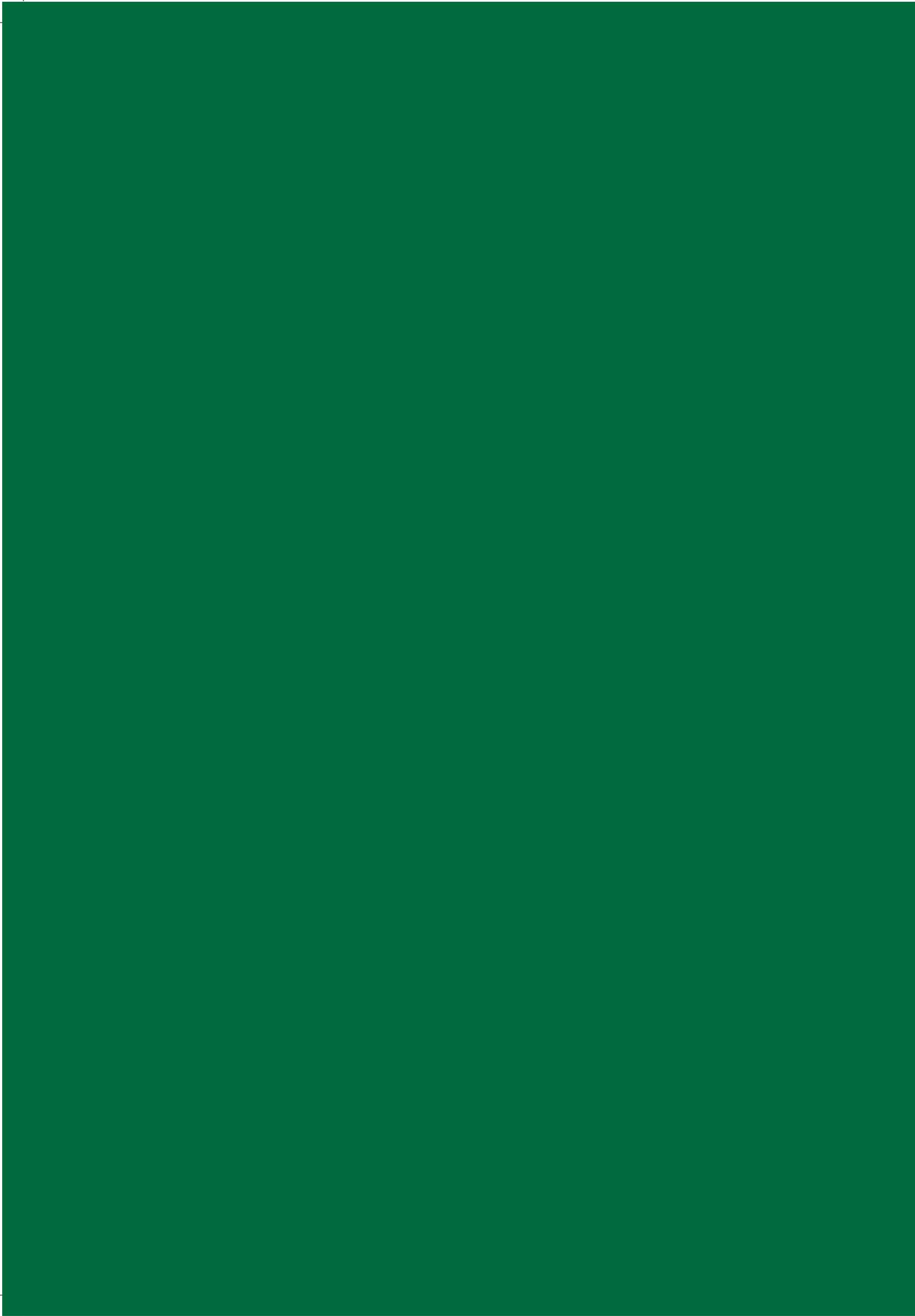
NATIONAL STRATEGY & ROADMAP FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM IN INDIA

AN INITIATIVE TOWARDS
AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT

DECEMBER 2021

Incredible India







NATIONAL STRATEGY & ROADMAP FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM IN INDIA

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Ministry of Tourism**

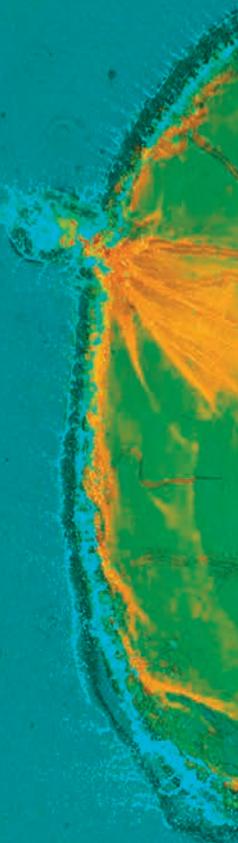


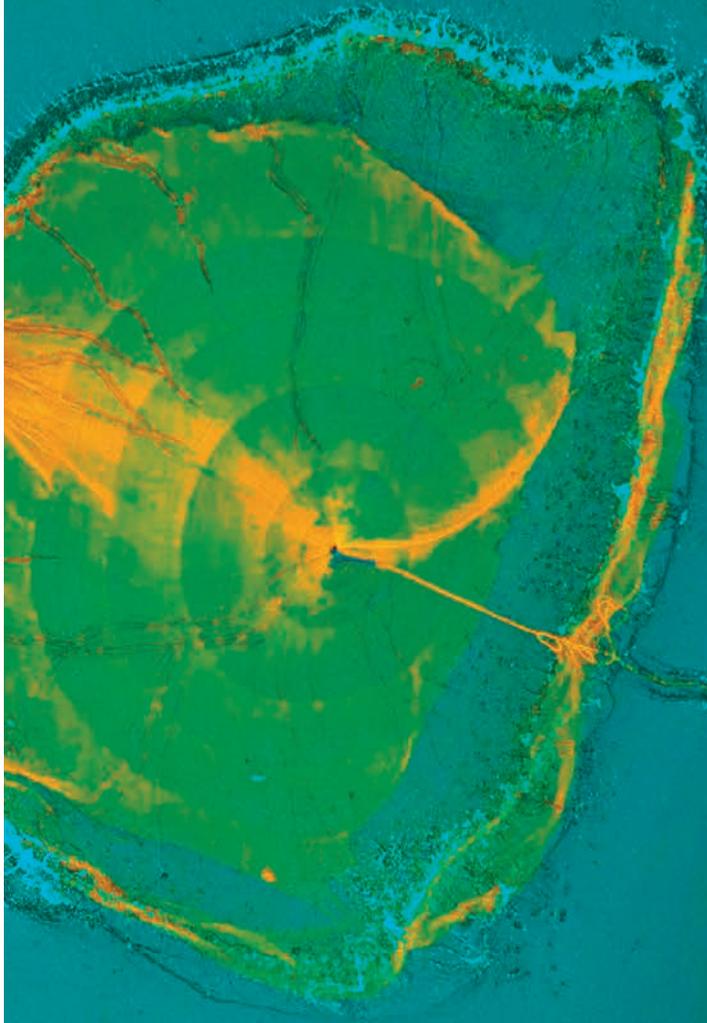
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1

CHAPTER





INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

1.1. Rural Tourism – The Definition

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

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

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

1.2. Rural Tourism – An Opportunity to Promote Sustainable and Responsible Tourism

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

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

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

1.3. Rural Tourism – Fulfilling the Vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat

Prime Minister has given a call for self-reliant India. “Aatmanirbhar Bharat” is a call to become vocal for local products. It rests on the five pillars of the economy, infrastructure, systems, demography and demand. Aatmanirbhar Bharat is about empowering individuals and enterprises to grow and make India prosperous and strong.

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

1.4. National Strategy and Roadmap for Development of Rural Tourism

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

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

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







2

CHAPTER

SWOT ANALYSIS & STAKEHOLDERS



SWOT ANALYSIS & STAKEHOLDERS

2.1. SWOT Analysis of Rural Tourism

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

2.1.1. Strengths

Rural tourism in India has the following strengths:

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

2.1.2. Weaknesses

Rural tourism has the following weaknesses:

- (i) Lack of prioritization for rural tourism at the State and National level
- (ii) Poor profiling of rural product offerings
- (iii) Poor tourism supporting infrastructure including ICT in rural areas
- (iv) Lack of tourism awareness and skills in rural areas,
- (v) Poor resource allocation and lack of inclusive planning and community involvement,

- (vi) Poor coordination of tourism initiatives,
- (vii) Capacity gap at the Panchayati Raj Institutions to promote rural tourism
- (viii) Poor service delivery and lack of implementation

2.1.3. Opportunities

The Rural Tourism offers a wide range of opportunities:

- (i) Creation of jobs, retention of jobs and new business opportunities
- (ii) Rural tourism can lead the way for sustainable and responsible tourism
- (iii) Sustainable exploitation of untapped rural culture and heritage offerings
- (iv) Unspoiled natural and rural tranquility,
- (v) Indigenous knowledge systems,
- (vi) Promoting Agri-tourism,
- (vii) Promoting Eco-tourism,
- (viii) Promoting Adventure-tourism,
- (ix) Promoting Leisure tourism,
- (x) Promoting Marine tourism,
- (xi) Volunteer tourism,
- (xii) Rural Tourism Circuits

2.1.4. Threats

Rural tourism also faces the following threats:

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

2.2. Stakeholders

2.2.1. Key Stakeholders

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

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

The role and responsibilities of the stakeholders are given below.

2.2.2. Central Ministries

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

(i) Ministry of Tourism

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

(ii) Ministry of Rural Development

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

(iii) Ministry of Environment and Forests

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

(iv) Ministry of Culture

The 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 organizations involved in the field of art and culture. The Ministry can contribute to the promotion of culture and heritage in rural areas and help in attracting tourists.

(v) Ministry of Development of North-East Region

The Ministry of Development of the 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 the development of Rural Tourism in the North East region.

(vi) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

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

(vii) Ministry of Textiles

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

(viii) Department of Panchayati Raj

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

(ix) Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Ministry of Tribal Affairs is involved in coordinating, supporting and implementing a number of initiatives for the welfare and development of Scheduled Tribes in the country. Ministry can contribute through various programs to promote tribal tourism, which can lead to the socio-economic development of STs.

(x) Ministry of Ayush

India has a well established system of traditional medicine and the same can be combined for wellness and rural tourism. Ministry of Ayush can identify areas which have well established practices and the same can be promoted to the visitors.

(xi) NITI Aayog

NITI Aayog as a policy think tank of the Central Government has extensive experience of supporting policies and programmes across the sectors and can provide guidance and feedback for developing successful models for rural tourism.

(xii) Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare

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

(xiii) Department of Youth Affairs

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

(xiv) Ministry of Home Affairs

Ministry of Tourism will work with the Ministry of Home Affairs towards the promotion and development of tourism in border areas.

(xv) Ministry of Women & Child Development

Ministry of Women & Child Development formulates plans, policies and programmes for the empowerment of women, both economically and socially. Tourism provides a lot of opportunities to work for the livelihood and empowerment of women. Ministry of Tourism can work with the Ministry of Women & Child Development towards ensuring that the opportunities in rural tourism are availed by women and tourism is able to act as a vehicle for development and empowerment of women.

2.2.3. State Governments

State Governments have a number of schemes for development of rural areas including tourism related infrastructure, rural culture, heritage and handicrafts. State Governments have the primary role in creating momentum for rural tourism by formulating suitable policies and supporting rural tourism projects.

2.2.4. Panchayati Raj Institutions

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

2.2.5. Industry

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

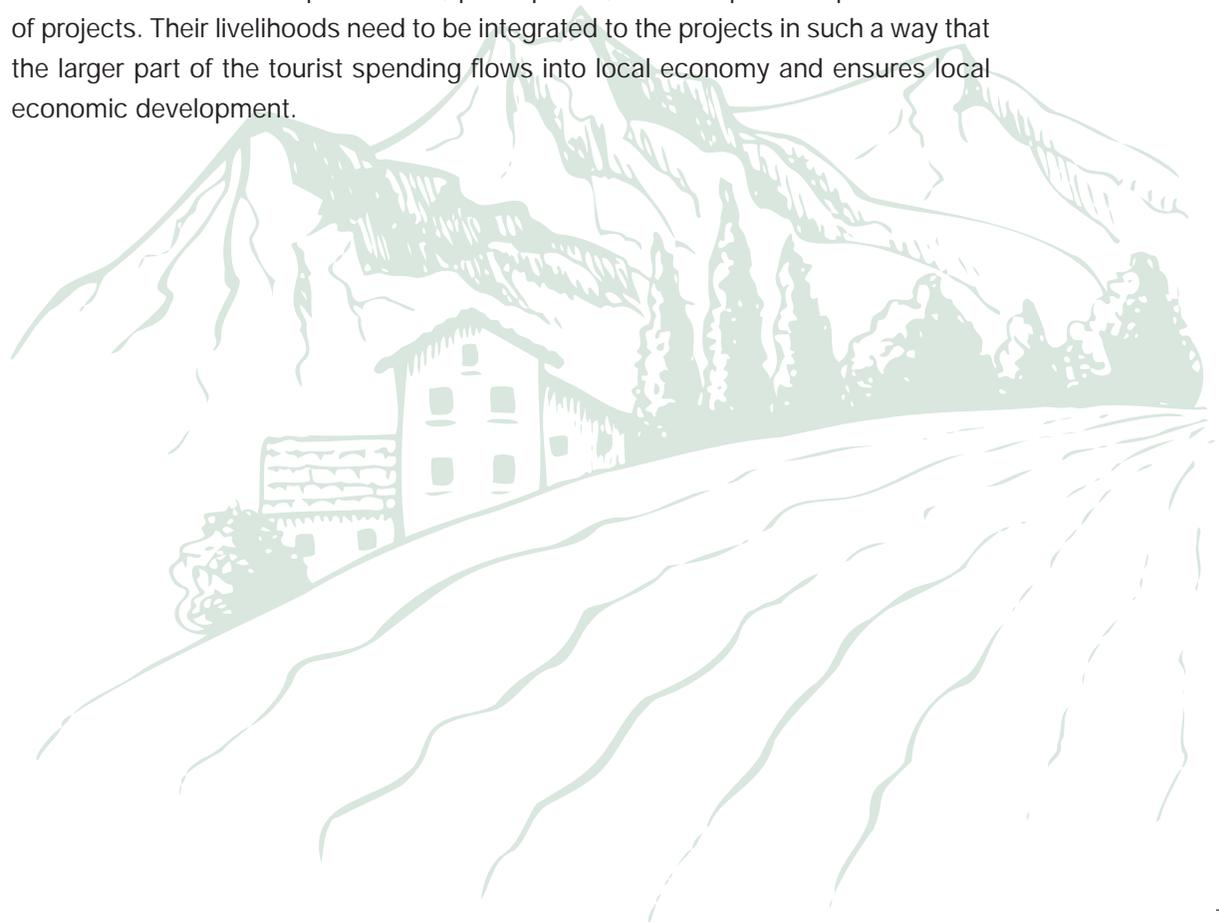
2.2.6. Non-Governmental Organizations

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 greater role in forging community linkages.

2.2.7. Local Community

Local communities have an important role in creating livelihoods for rural households by preservation of culture and heritage and connecting travellers with unique, differentiated experiences. Local community is a key stakeholder and has to be taken on board. The Community has to be made aware of the benefits of rural tourism, their apprehensions, if any have to be allayed and they have to be encouraged to participate and be a part of the value chain.

In order to ensure inclusive and responsible tourism, the local communities have to be involved in the conceptualization, participation, ownership and implementation of projects. Their livelihoods need to be integrated to the projects in such a way that the larger part of the tourist spending flows into local economy and ensures local economic development.



3

CHAPTER





**VISION, MISSION
AND OBJECTIVES**



VISION, MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

3.1. Vision

To leverage India's rural heritage in creating a vibrant and responsible tourism segment by creating engaging rural experiences thereby promoting indigenous jobs, and preserving local culture and heritage.

3.2. Mission

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

3.3. Objectives

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

3.4. Key Strategic Pillars

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

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







4

CHAPTER

STATE ASSESSMENT AND RANKING ON RURAL TOURISM



STATE ASSESSMENT AND RANKING ON RURAL TOURISM

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

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

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

4.2. Model policies for rural tourism

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

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

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

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

4.3. National and Global best practices for rural tourism

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

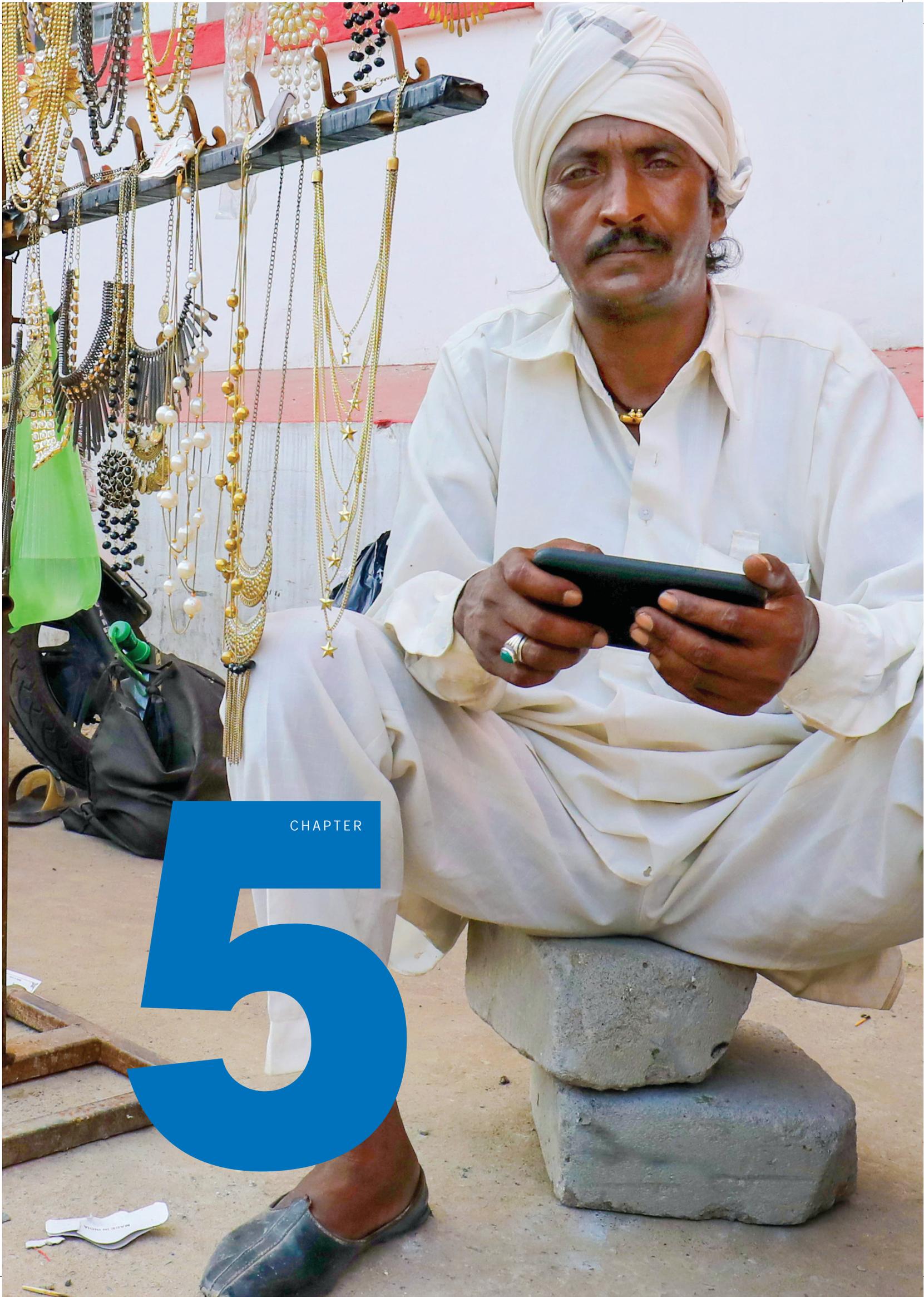
The toolkit should provide a broad overview of rural tourism and steps required to plan and develop community based rural tourism initiatives.

4.4. Public, Private and Community Partnership Models

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

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





CHAPTER

5



**DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES
FOR RURAL TOURISM**



DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR RURAL TOURISM

5.1. Role of digital technologies in tourism

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

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

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

5.2. Facilitating Adoption of Digital Technologies for Rural Tourism

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

- (i) Enabling broadband internet infrastructure to rural areas having tourism potential,
- (ii) Capacity building of various segments such as accommodations (including Homestays, Farmstays etc.), transport operators, rural attractions, tour operators etc. Capacity building will include creating awareness of benefits of digitalization and providing digital skills to the rural communities.

- (iii) Providing financial, technical and networking support for adoption of digital technologies and platforms to the rural enterprises engaged in tourism activities, particularly small and medium enterprises.
- (iv) State Governments / Union Territory Administrations would help to make a database of all the tourism service providers in rural tourism and related aspects such as Farm Tourism, Eco-Tourism, Agro Tourism, etc., rural tourism attractions, products and related amenities such as hotels, lodges, homestays, Farmstays etc.



6

CHAPTER





**DEVELOPING CLUSTERS
FOR RURAL TOURISM**



DEVELOPING CLUSTERS FOR RURAL TOURISM

6.1. Need for Clusters for rural tourism

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

6.2. Identification of Clusters for rural tourism

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

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

- 6.2.2. The process of identification of rural tourism clusters (destinations) should be broad-based involving stakeholders from Government, Industry, NGOs, Rural Communities and local businesses. Local entrepreneurs supporting homestays, Farmstays, handicraft shops, other tourism products and experiences must also be consulted.
- 6.2.3. Ministry of Rural Development is implementing Rurban Mission where a cluster of villages are identified, which have the potential for growth, have economic drivers and derive locational and competitive advantages. These clusters are called 'Rurban'. These clusters are being strengthened with the required amenities, with convergence of various schemes of the Government, and a Critical Gap Funding (CGF) provided under this Mission.
- 6.2.4. The identified "Rurban Clusters" may be examined for their potential of tourism based on the activities identified above and the shortlisted clusters can be taken for development and promotion of rural tourism. Ministry of Rural Development will provide the necessary details for prioritizing tourism Rurban clusters. Ministry of Rural Development can also contribute under MGNREGA in creating assets underwater conservation, plantation and other such works.
- 6.2.5. Ministry of Agriculture has also developed organic agriculture areas under Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojna (PKVY) and Mission Organic Value Chain Development in North East Region (MOVCDNER), which may be examined.
- 6.2.6. In addition to Rurban Clusters, other clusters of 5-7 villages can be identified by the State Governments, having potential for tourism. The State Governments will prioritize the identified clusters to be taken up for development of rural tourism.

6.3. Tourism Development Plans for the Rural Cluster

- 6.3.1. Development plans for identified rural tourism clusters should be prepared by exploring convergence and synergy with various other Central and State programs and schemes. The development plan must be based on detailed consultation involving stakeholders from Government, Industry, NGOs, Rural Communities and local businesses including homestays, Farmstays, handicraft shops, other tourism products and experiences.
- 6.3.2. Tourism Development Plan must be based on detailed assessment of current tourism assets and experiences. A detailed gap assessment in partnership with all the stakeholders shall be carried out and then plans for tourism development of the cluster should be prepared. A toolkit for gap assessment and preparation of development plan for rural tourism clusters will be prepared by the Ministry.

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

(i) Physical Infrastructure

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

(ii) Digital Infrastructure

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

(iii) Social Infrastructure

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

(iv) Tourism Products and Activities

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

(v) Local Entrepreneurship

There is a need to develop local entrepreneurship from among the local communities. It will entail a series of steps like identification of potential entrepreneurs, training and capacity building, capital support, ecosystem for supporting entrepreneurs.

(vi) Marketing and Promotion

Marketing and promotion of the cluster as rural tourism destination is an essential part of the development plan. There has to be a business plan for the destination to make it a viable and sustainable proposition. Digital platforms must be utilized apart from other traditional government and private channels for marketing. The marketing plan should primarily be led by private sector with support from the Central and State Government agencies.

(vii) Capacity Building

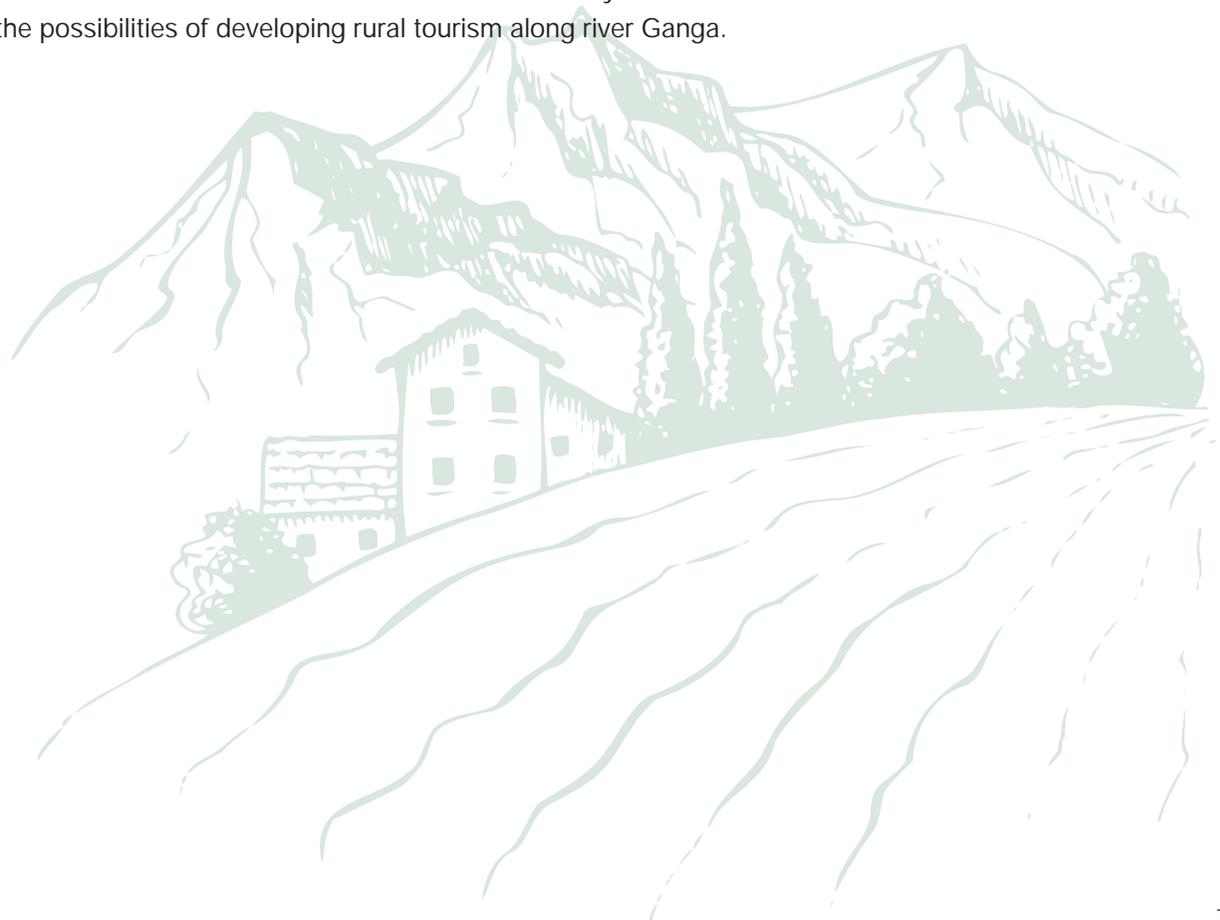
Capacity building for various segments of rural tourism and stakeholders is crucial to promote rural tourism. The plan may incorporate various relevant capacity building programs of Central and State Governments.

6.4. Funding for Development of Rural Tourism

- 6.4.1. Apart from the existing Central and State schemes, which can be used in convergence to meet the requirement of implementation of development plans for rural tourism, suitable public private partnership models will also be developed to encourage private sector to join hands for development of rural tourism.
- 6.4.2. Given the tremendous benefits of rural tourism for job creation, conservation of art, culture and craft, conservation of environment, social and community development, the Ministry of Tourism will plan a dedicated scheme for comprehensive development of rural tourism in the country to provide funding. The scheme will be implemented in partnership with States, Industry, Non-Governmental organizations and rural communities. Till such a time, a dedicated scheme is formulated, funds may be provided from the existing schemes.

6.5. Arth Ganga – Tourism

National Mission on Clean Ganga is presently carrying out detailed documentation of intangible cultural heritage, architectural heritage and natural heritage in a corridor of 5 Kilometers. width on either bank of the mainstream of river Ganga. The information has revealed plentiful opportunities in the field of tourism and culture. The Ministry will work with NMCG to further explore the possibilities of developing rural tourism along river Ganga.







7

CHAPTER

MARKETING SUPPORT FOR RURAL TOURISM



MARKETING SUPPORT FOR RURAL TOURISM

7.1. Marketing and promotion

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

The States in consultation with industry may particularly identify travel itineraries, guided walking farm/ agro tours, experiential village stay, tribal tours, adventure tours and other rural experiences.

7.2. Digital Marketing

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

7.3. Overseas Marketing

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

7.4. Domestic Marketing

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

7.5. Market Development Assistance

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

7.6. Partnership with Industry Stakeholders

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

7.7. Fam Tours

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



8

CHAPTER





**CAPACITY BUILDING
FOR RURAL TOURISM**



CAPACITY BUILDING FOR RURAL TOURISM

8.1. Resource Centre for Capacity Building of the Stakeholders

- 8.1.1. There is a need to create greater awareness and understanding about rural tourism amongst the multiple stakeholders from Central Government Ministries to the local communities. Each stakeholder such as Government, NGOs, Industry, Local community has a distinct role in promoting rural tourism. Institutional capacity of the Central and State Governments has to be strengthened and Industry and local communities including Bed and Breakfast/ Farmstays/ Homestays have to be enlightened about the opportunities and how they can benefit from it, in a sustainable manner.
- 8.1.2. There is a need to build the capacity of all the stakeholders involved in rural tourism namely:
- (i) Local Communities
 - (ii) Tourism service providers
 - (iii) Tourism Industry (particularly, the unorganized sector)
 - (iv) NGOs on the ground
 - (v) Travellers
 - (vi) Relevant Central and State Government agencies
- 8.1.3. In order to build the capacity and provide long term sustenance to rural tourism and responsible tourism, Capacity building resource centres need to be set up at National, State and Cluster level. These resource centres will provide a platform for stakeholders to enable knowledge exchange and interaction with practitioners, Education institutes, Government agencies and volunteers.

- 8.1.4. These will also act as repository of knowledge for sustainable tourism practices, best practices and experiences. This knowledge will be adapted to local conditions and converted into
- (i) Palatable modules/ solution-sets for the local community and MSME tourism service providers.
 - (ii) Contextualize the modules/ solution-sets for regional and cluster-level adaptation and dissemination keeping in mind the learning profile of the stakeholders.
 - (iii) Develop standards towards more responsible and sustainable tourism for a range of stakeholders.
 - (iv) Support local community-based tourism in an endeavour to make communities resilient in the face of climate change and other threats.
 - (v) Capacity building of stakeholders for responsible and sustainable tourism.
 - (vi) Demonstrate that collaboration pays more than competition – pool purchasing and selling power of communities / rural tourism service providers.
- 8.1.5. The Ministry will provide necessary support for setting up of such Resource Centres at National, State and Cluster level.

8.2. Areas for Capacity Building

- 8.2.1. Rural Tourism in India takes multiple forms. Rural and small-town India has tourism existing in many garbs such as Community based tourism, Agritourism, Ecotourism etc. Typically, these businesses are small and medium-sized and fall under unorganized sector. Research shows that these enterprises suffer from multiple issues that obstruct their progress to becoming a successful Tourism enterprises.
- 8.2.2. Deep diving into the issues has revealed seven areas that the rural tourism practitioners need assistance in;
- (i) Built heritage and maintenance
 - (ii) Hygiene and basic service standards
 - (iii) Special experiences and value-added services
 - (iv) Community participation
 - (v) Environmental impact
 - (vi) Destination sustainability
 - (vii) Responsible Tourism Sales and Marketing
- 8.2.3. Study tours to various successful models of rural tourism by local communities and stakeholders will encourage them to adopt the model in their community.

8.3. Skills and entrepreneurship development programs

- 8.3.1. In order to provide quality services and an enriching experience to the visitors, there is a need to provide skill training in the relevant vocations for rural tourism with particular focus on soft skills. Entrepreneurship development programs will also be organized for rural youth so that they can develop and market various rural tourism products. Various schemes for skill development and entrepreneurship will be leveraged for the same.
- 8.3.2. The skill training in relevant vocations of rural tourism will be provided as far as possible as per NSQF – aligned job roles. Where such job roles do not exist, efforts will be made to get the job roles/ trades approved from NCEVT, the unified skills regulator. Skill training centres may be set up in rural locations where rural tourism clusters are envisaged using physical infrastructure of public facilities so that rural youth does not have to go to urban areas for skill training.
- 8.3.3. The Ministry of Tourism will also coordinate with Tourism and Hospitality Sector Skill Council (THSSC) to develop much needed skills and capacities for youth engaging in rural tourism. THSSC is working on developing qualification packs for skills such as Guest House caretaker, Tour/ Heritage Guide, Nature Guide etc., and also on various adventure tourism skills such as High-altitude trekking, low altitude trekking, camp cook etc.
- 8.3.4. The Ministry will encourage rural homestays around local textile and rural handicraft clusters, which will open up new opportunities for rural youth to start franchisee and retail to boost entrepreneurial opportunities in rural areas including rural women entrepreneurship.
- 8.3.5. The Ministry of Tourism will utilize the services of the Indian Institute Of Tourism & Travel Management (IITTM), Gwalior under the Ministry of Tourism and National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD), NOIDA and Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati under Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
- 8.3.6. In addition, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) and Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI) schemes of Ministry of Rural Development will be leveraged to provide skill training to rural youth.





9

CHAPTER



**GOVERNANCE AND
INSTITUTIONAL
FRAMEWORK**



GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

9.1. Governance

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

9.1.2. A broad institutional structure is laid down here:

(i) Vision Group under Union Minister for Tourism

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

(ii) Task Force under Secretary (Tourism)

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

(iii) State Steering Committee under Chief Secretary

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

(iv) District level Committee

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

(v) Cluster level monitoring and Coordination Committee

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

9.2. National Nodal Agency

- 9.2.1. Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management will be the National Nodal Agency to support the Ministry of Tourism in coordinating and evolving strategy and actionable plans and schemes for promotion and development of Rural Tourism in the Country.
- 9.2.2. 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) Identify national and global best practices and prepare tool kits for their replication by the States and Rural Tourism Destinations
 - (iii) Benchmarking State policies and standards and prepare model policies and minimum standards for rural tourism including B&B, Farm Stays, Homestays etc.
 - (iv) Capacity building measures including setting up of Resource Centres and Centres of Excellence
 - (v) Toolkits and guidelines for identification of clusters for rural tourism and preparation of development plans for the cluster
 - (vi) Facilitating adoption of digital technologies for rural tourism
 - (vii) Formulation of dedicated scheme to support development of rural tourism in the country
 - (viii) Any other support, which can facilitate the Ministry of Tourism in development of rural tourism in the country
- 9.2.3. The Nodal agency will set up appropriate structures and professional staffing for supporting the Ministry of Tourism in implementation of the strategy. The Ministry will provide necessary budgetary support to the Nodal Agency through various schemes for promotion and development of tourism.

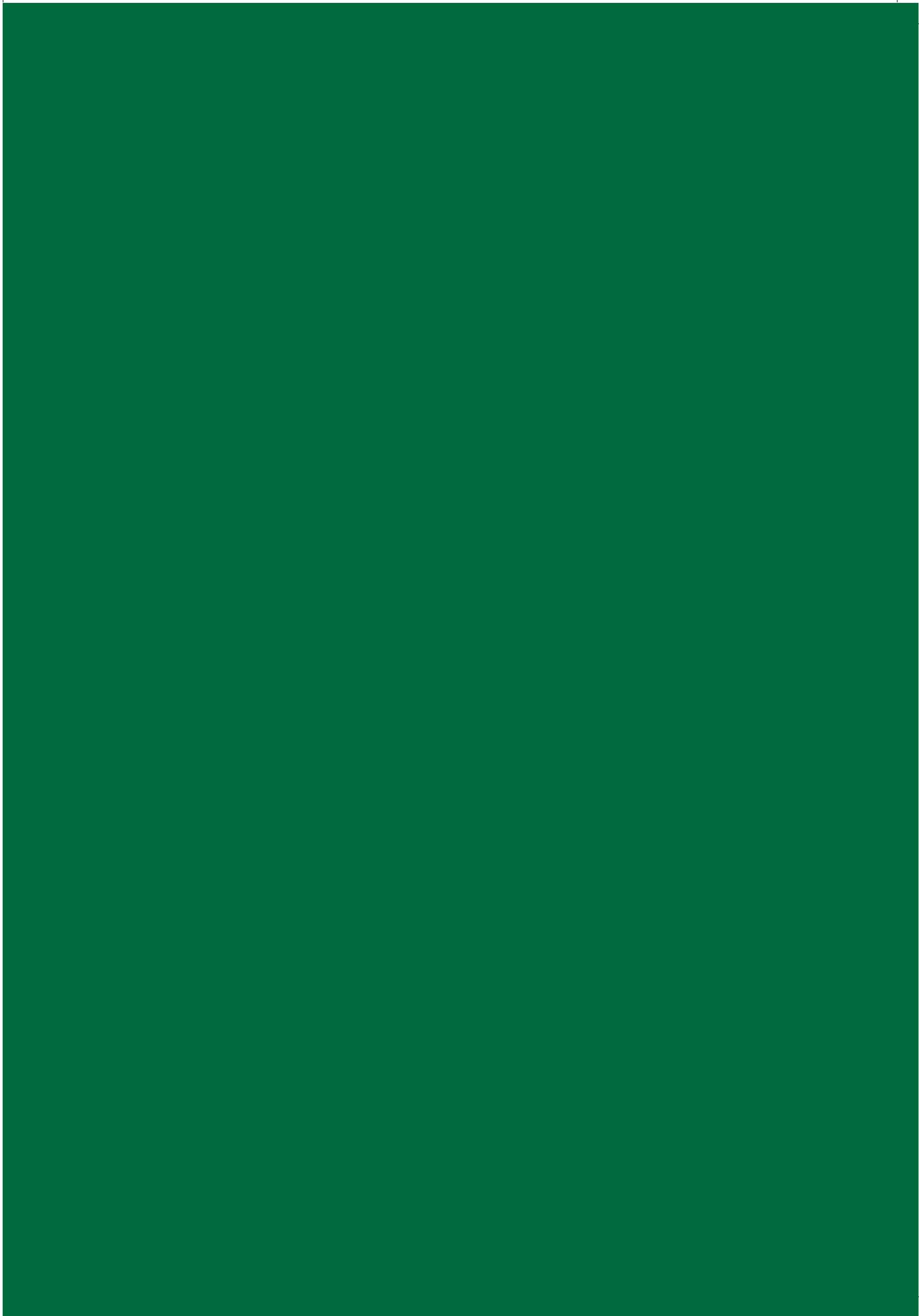
9.3. State Nodal Agency

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

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

9.4. Action Plan

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





सत्यमेव जयते

Government of India
Ministry of Tourism

