# Sustainable Hospitality Strategies and Certification -- A Take Away From G 20

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Sustainable tourism, ecotourism or green tourism, are a form of tourism that attempts to take responsibility for its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, by looking at the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities .Multiple discussions over the necessity of more sustainable and ethical tourism practices include the global rise in greenhouse gas emissions, overcrowding, and a loss of socio-cultural authenticity in host communities have been held in the past. It is important to reiterate that World Travel and Tourism Council in their global research factsheet for 2023 has highlighted that travel and tourism sector shall be contributing 11.6% to its GDP by 2033 with CAGR(2023-2033) of 5.1% whereas travel and tourism in India shall be contributing to 7.1% of GDP by 2033 with +8.4% CAGR ( 2023-2033). Further 58.24 million jobs in the sector which shall be 10.2% of the jobs in India with generation of 19.4 million new jobs in 2033 vs 2023. Needless to mention that tourism has a huge economic impact on communities, and the industry is continuing to grow at a staggering rate. Government of India has been consistent efforts and decisions for adopting responsible and sustainable tourism as their mandate as the sector is in recovery stage from the pandemic. To promote responsible tourism and putting the country on the world's green tourism map National strategy for sustainable tourism was formulated by ministry of tourism (https://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/202205)in in 2022. India is focused on encouraging the shift towards green tourism, which is a priority area of entire global economy with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2030. To put India prominently on the green tourism map, there is a need for proactive collaboration between stakeholders within a policy framework with Developing green destinations, Collaboration amongst stake holders ,Enabling a mindset change, Training support and upskilling/reskilling as strong pillars. Multiple meeting have been held recently where Ministry of tourism played significant decisive role. Meeting were all the more crucial for all tourism stake holders as G20 economies represent around 85% of the global GDP, over 75% of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population. Further, in 2022, they welcomed 74% of international tourists and 73% of tourism exports worldwide. In 2019, pre COVID-19 pandemic the Tourism Direct GDP reached 3.7% of the G20 economies. Very Recently in June 2023 ,UNWTO with the G20 economies have developed a roadmap for making tourism a central pillar of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As the knowledge partner of India's G20 Presidency, UNWTO delivered the Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals at the meeting of the Ministers of Tourism of the world's leading economies. The Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the SD goals offers the G20 economies including India a proposed plan of action to lead the way forward

towards a better future for all. Tourism Ministers were called by UNWTO in G20 to lead the sector's contribution to accelerate the progress towards achieving the 17 SDGs. The Goa Roadmap, developed with the Tourism Working Group under aegis of MOT has been build upon the following five priority areas under India's G20 Presidency. Green tourism is Recognized as critical need ( the first among the five). and actions and good practices from G20 economies were also recommended and issues such as financing, sustainable infrastructure and resource management, integrating circular approaches in the tourism value chain and engaging visitors as key actors in sustainability were described as important factors in addition to need to Work towards climate action and environmental protection and related international cooperation which was the main thrust area Digitalization is playing the pivotal role with its wide-ranging benefits of supporting businesses and destinations embrace digitalization, including enhanced productivity, improved infrastructure management and delivering a safer and more efficient visitor experience. Skills is emphasized as key point in the road map to tourism workers, particularly foryouth and women, with the skills employers need, to future-proof tourism jobs as a UNWTO's core priorities for the sector and to make the sector a more attractive career path. Tourism MSMEs will be accounting for 80% of all tourism businesses worldwide and public policies and public-private partnerships is need of the day in addressing key challenges, including financing, marketing and skills gaps and market access to support MSMEs through the digital and sustainable transitions. Destination Management emerged as a strong pillar of The Roadmap presents a set of proposed actions to create a holistic approach that strengthens public-private-community partnerships and enhances a whole of government approach. It further shares examples of innovative programmes among G20 and invited countries. UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "As tourism bounces back close to pre-pandemic levels, we must ensure that recovery is sustainable, inclusive and resilient. The Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the SDGs offers the G20 economies a proposed plan of action to lead the way forward towards a better future for all. Shri G. Kishan Reddy, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Development of North Eastern Region, Government of India, added: "Tourism can be instrumental in addressing many of the challenges faced by our societies while transforming itself to address its socio-economic impacts. Working together on a common roadmap for recovery and long-term sustainability will unlock its immense potential to deliver on the SDGs." Towards a circular economy of plastics in tourism – the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative", a sub event of G20 with Ministry of Tourism of India had witnessed good private sector Participation and representatives (India, Indonesia), of accommodation industry (ITC Hotels, Leela Palaces Hotels & Resorts, The Indian Hotels Company Limited) and aviation (International Air Transport Association, IATA) participated in the event . The side-event provided delegates and participants with practical guidance to address plastic pollution in tourism operations. The Central Nodal Agency for Sustainable Tourism of India, a technical agency of the Ministry of Tourism, became a signatory of the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative, together with the Government of Punjab and the Responsible Tourism Society of India. Sustainable hospitality is not only an imperative for safeguarding our planet but also a smart business

strategy for stake holders n the tourism industry. By embracing sustainable practices such as energy efficiency, resource conservation, and local sourcing, hotels can reduce their environmental footprint while enhancing the guest experience. Pursuing certifications as directed by governing bodies demonstrates their commitment to sustainability, which can attract a growing number of environmentally conscious travellers. As the demand for sustainable accommodations rises and the hospitality industry's impact on climate change becomes more apparent, adopting sustainable strategies becomes a crucial step towards fostering a responsible and balanced tourism industry. It is worth mentioning that Travellers awareness of climate has increased continuously over recent years as 83% of the global travellers think sustainable travel is vital whereas 61% of the global travel safe pandemic has made them want to travel more sustainably in the future. Further 69% of the global travel and expect the travel and industry to offer more sustainable travel options. It is to be noted that not only that travellers awareness is increasing but also the traveller's Actual behaviour is also improving. for example in 2019, 10 million travellers have chosen lower emission flight with sky scanner. We as industry are now at responsibility to provide correct and accurate information while advertising and marketing the properties so the certification process in this field is going to play crucial role Chapter 7 of National strategy on sustainable tourism clearly specifies that 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. As per document, Ministry of Tourism shall be adopting Sustainable Tourism Criteria of India based on global practices adopted to the needs of the country. The Ministry will be finalizing 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 also be working with Industry and reputed nongovernment organizations in seeking their technical expertise for promotion of sustainable tourism. A defined Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India and Indicators for other tourism service providers are being created and shall be available soon. Digitalization and branding of Certification Schemes (The entire process of STCI certification shall be end to end digital) has also been envisaged which is in line with the take away of decisions taken at global level in G 20. In order to promote its awareness , an attractive branding and aggressive promotions by the Ministry of Tourism through all its channels including incredible India website and mobile application may be considered The State governments may be encouraged to prioritize destinations for certification of sustainability and thereafter ranking of the states with the key objective to foster competitiveness and encourage States to work proactively towards developing sustainable tourism is also a part of National strategy .