**Submission to the Ministry of Tourism, National Tourism Strategy Consultation**

# Responsible Tourism

*"You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today " Abraham Lincoln 1864*

*'The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it" Robert Swan*

**Sustainable tourism is not the same as Responsible Tourism**

## 1. Responsibility is necessary to drive sustainability

**Only if the industry and government, working with communities, take responsibility can progress be made to achieve the UN's `SDG's.**

Sustainability is the ambition; Responsible Tourism is about what we do as producers and consumers to realise the aspiration. Too often, sustainable is used only in the abstract sense. **Responsible Tourism is not the same as sustainable tourism**. Responsibility requires that we say what we are **doing** to make tourism better and that we are transparent about what we achieve.

Sustainability is the abstract aim, so vague that it cannot be called an objective. It is very often little more than greenwashing. Responsible Tourism is what results when we take responsibility as producers or consumers - it is about what we do and what we achieve.

Without exercising responsibility, we shall not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We need to do more than voice the aspiration.

The Ethics, Culture and Social Responsibility Department of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics[1] puts responsible tourism at the heart of the purpose and value of tourism

> "The understanding and promotion of the ethical values common to humanity, with an attitude of **tolerance and respect for the diversity of religious, philosophical and moral beliefs, are both the foundation and the consequence of responsible tourism;** stakeholders in tourism development and tourists themselves should observe the social and cultural

[1] https://www.unwto.org/global-code-of-ethics-for-tourism available online https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/imported_images/37802/gcetbrochureglobalcodeen.pdf

> traditions and practices of all peoples, including those of minorities and indigenous peoples and to recognise their worth."[2]

In December 2001, the UN General Assembly[3] endorsed the Code recognising

> "… tourism as a positive instrument towards the alleviation of poverty and the improvement of the quality of life for all people, its potential to make a contribution to economic and social development, especially of the developing countries, and its emergence as a vital force for the promotion of international understanding, peace and prosperity."

The UN encouraged member states to "consider introducing … laws, regulations and professional practices…" and emphasised "the need for the promotion of a responsible and sustainable tourism that could be beneficial to all sectors of society". The 1999 Global Code of Ethics for Tourism[4] sought "to promote responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism."[5] It put responsibility first, understanding that responsibility drives sustainability.

**All forms of tourism** must be produced and consumed more responsibly. Responsible Tourism and sustainable tourism are not niche products for niche markets.

## 2. Whose responsibility is it?

The UN is clear that

> "responsible and sustainable tourism is by no means incompatible with the growing liberalisation of the conditions governing trade in services and under whose aegis the enterprises of this sector operate and that it is possible to reconcile in this sector economy and ecology, environment and development, openness to international trade and protection of social and cultural identities."

And that this requires that all stakeholders, everybody, engage

> "**national, regional and local administrations, enterprises, business associations, workers in the sector, non-governmental organisations and bodies of all kinds belonging to the tourism industry, as well as host communities, the media and the tourists themselves,** have **different albeit interdependent responsibilities** in the individual and societal development of tourism and that the formulation of their individual rights and duties will contribute to meeting this aim,

Responsible Tourism cannot be reduced to the responsibility of the travellers and holidaymakers alone. There is a clear role for producers and consumers and government at the national, state and local levels.

Tourists have very limited influence over how tourism is offered in a destination. Their only real power is to go elsewhere if the destination is spoilt.[6]

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[2] https://www.unwto.org/global-code-of-ethics-for-tourism
[3] A/RES/56/212 Global Code of Ethics for Tourism
[4] Ibid.
[5] "3. Invites Governments and other stakeholders in the tourism sector to consider introducing, as appropriate, the contents of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism in relevant laws, regulations and professional practices, and, in this regard, recognizes with appreciation the efforts made and measures already undertaken by some States;"
[6] See for example https://www.insider.com/places-ruined-by-tourists-over-the-past-decade-2019-12#dubai-is-synonymous-with-glitz-and-glam-and-lots-of-tourists-7

The UNWTO's World Committee on Tourism Ethics produced "Tips for a Responsible Traveller" in 2017 and a revised version on account of the Covid pandemic in 2020. These tips focus on travellers and holidaymakers, urging them to travel with respect, protect our planet, support the local economy, travel safely, be informed, and use digital platforms wisely. The Tips for a Responsible Traveler concludes: "this set of principles is designed to guide key players in tourism development. The [UNWTO Code of Ethics] is addressed to governments, tourism companies, destinations, local communities, and tourists alike." [7]

It is the providers of tourism services and managers of the destinations and the attractions who structure the place where the tourists interact with the local community, their environment and their lived and built heritage. If a dress code is imposed, the tourist will comply or not enter. If water is not provided in plastic bottles, the tourists will not be able to purchase plastic bottles full of water or leave the bottle as waste. The producers of tourism services and managers of the destinations and the attractions "choice edit" for tourists.

'Choice editing for sustainability' describes how retailers eliminate the option of buying products with a poor environmental or social record. "
https://eng.mst.dk/media/mst/68957/1.%20choice%20editing.pdf

At the Kerala Responsible Tourism Summit there was reference by one of the speakers to "little Maharajas", the sense of entitlement that some people have, domestic and some international tourists. The Hosts & Guests model suggests that operators and accommodation providers are attracting the wrong guests. Responsibility rests with all the stakeholders. The tourism businesses, and the community can "choice edit". For example, if there are no plastic bottles of water, the tourists cannot purchase and discard them

## 3. India's Leadership through the G20

As India assumed the presidency of the G20, Hon.PM Shri Narendra Modi asked "Can we catalyse a fundamental mindset shift, to benefit humanity as a whole?'[8] Prime minister Modi argues that humanity has, throughout history, lived with scarcity, "confrontation and competition … became the norm. … we remain trapped in the same zero-sum game even today."
Shri Modi disagrees that humans are "inherently selfish," asking, "what would explain the lasting appeal of so many spiritual traditions that advocate the fundamental oneness of us all?"

**"वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्" - The World is One Family.**
"One such tradition, popular in India, sees all living beings, and even inanimate things, as composed of five basic elements – the *panch tatva* – earth, water, fire, air and space. Harmony among these elements – within us and between us – is essential for our physical, social and environmental wellbeing."

[7] https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-07/Tips-for-Responsible-Traveller-WCTE-EN.pdf
[8] Narendra Modi (01'12'2020) 'Humanity's Challenges Can't Be Solved By Fighting … But By Acting Together." Times of India

Shri Modi affirms that India's G20 presidency "will work to promote this universal sense of oneness." India's theme for the G20 is "One Earth, One Family, One Future." Today's challenges, climate change, terrorism and pandemics "can be solved not by fighting each other, but only by acting together." To provide a presidency of "healing harmony and hope. … to shape a new paradigm – of human-centric globalisation."

Shri Modi writes of the power of India's "citizen-centric governance model" and making national development "not an exercise in top-down governance, but rather a citizen-led people's movement."

Given that often when we travel that we are open to new experiences and to rethinking the way we live, there is a particular responsibility on the sector to attend to.PM Modi's mantra of Mission LiFE, 'Lifestyle for Environment.' and apply it through reshaping the products and services sold in the travel and tourism sector and the way destinations are managed.

Mission LiFE "…connects the powers of the people for the protection of this earth, and teaches them to utilise it in a better way. Mission LiFE makes the fight against climate change democratic, in which everyone can contribute within their capacity. It inspires us to do all that can be done in our everyday life to protect the environment. It believes that the environment can be protected by making changes in our lifestyle."

This "… mission emboldens the spirit of the P3 model, Pro Planet People. "Mission Life, unites the people of the earth as pro-planet people, uniting them all in their thoughts. It functions on the basic principles of 'Lifestyle of the planet, for the planet and by the planet'"

PM Shri Modi has pointed to the importance of convergence, of government departments working together and with communities and businesses to use tourism for sustainable development. Destination-centric convergence is required to deliver for communities and business.

## 4. Hinduism & Diversity

India seeks “unity in diversity”, people from various religious beliefs, customs and culture, living together in harmony . Responsible Tourism requires equal opportunities for participation, and India demonstrates this, particularly when it is a part of the tradition to welcome guests with genuine and warm hospitality.

Hinduism has a distinctive view of the relationship between man, nature and the divine.
Nanditha Krishna writes of the close relationship between Hinduism and Nature.
"There is a very strong and intimate relationship between the biophysical ecosystem and economic institutions which are held together by cultural relations. Hinduism has a definite code of environmental ethics and humans may not consider themselves above nature, nor can they claim to rule over other forms of life. Every aspect of nature is sacred for the Indic religions: forests and groves, gardens, rivers and other waterbodies, plants and seeds, animals, mountains and pilgrimage centres."[9]

"The basis of Hindu culture is dharma or righteousness, incorporating duty, cosmic law and justice. Every person must act for the general welfare of the earth, humanity, all creation and all aspects of

[9] https://penguin.co.in/author-nanditha-krishna-on-the-close-relationship-between-hinduism-and-nature/

life. Dharma is meant for the well-being of all living creatures. The verses of the Vedas express a deep sense of the union of man with god. Nature is a friend, revered as a mother, obeyed as a father and nurtured as a beloved child. In Vedic literature, all of nature was, in some way, divine, part of an indivisible life force uniting the world of humans, animals and plants."[10]

"Hindu religion wants its followers to live a simple life. It does not allow people to go on increasing their material wants. People are meant to learn to enjoy spiritual happiness so that to derive a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment, they need not run after material pleasures and disturb nature's checks and balances. They have to milk a cow and enjoy, not cut at the udder of the cow with greed to enjoy what is not available in the natural course. Do not use anything belonging to nature, such as oil, coal, or forest, at a greater rate than you can replenish it. For example, do not destroy birds, fish, earthworms, and even bacteria which play vital ecological roles; once they are annihilated, you cannot recreate them.

Thus only can you avoid becoming bankrupt, and the life cycle can continue for a long, long time."[11]

## 5. The Cape Town Declaration

By 2002 it was clear that there was insufficient action to address the challenge of sustainability – work done with the Association of Independent Tour Operators in the UK and in developing the post-apartheid 1996 White Paper on *The Development and Promotion of Tourism In South Africa* created the opportunity to launch Responsible Tourism as a way of securing change.

In Cape Town in 2002 the 1st International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations held alongside the WSSD in South Africa affirmed a similar approach to the management and development of tourism:

> "We commit to making our contribution to move towards a more balanced relationship between hosts and guests in destinations, and to create better places for local communities and indigenous peoples; and recognising that this can only be achieved by government, local communities and business cooperating on practical initiatives in destinations.

For the background on the emergence of Responsible Tourism and its development, this publication may be helpful. Goodwin H (2023) *Responsible Travel and Ethical Tourism: Trends and Issues*, Journal of Responsible Tourism Management Volume 3, 1, 01/2023

The 2002 Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism in Destinations [12] endorsed

> "the Global Code of Ethics and the importance of making all forms of tourism sustainable through all stakeholders taking responsibility for creating better forms of tourism and realising these aspirations. Relishing the diversity of our world's cultures, habitats and species and the wealth of our cultural and natural heritage as the very basis of tourism" and accepting that sustainability "will be achieved in different ways in different places." The 2002 Conference recognised that "that dialogue, partnerships and multistakeholder processes - involving government, business and local communities - to make better places for hosts and guests can only be realised at the local level, and that all stakeholders have different, albeit interdependent, responsibilities; tourism can only be managed for sustainability at the destination level."

[10] https://penguin.co.in/author-nanditha-krishna-on-the-close-relationship-between-hinduism-and-nature/
[11] https://interfaithsustain.com/hindu-faith-statement-on-the-environment/
[12] https://responsibletourismpartnership.org/cape-town-declaration-on-responsible-tourism/

## 6. The 2022 Responsible Tourism Charter

Responsible Tourism in Destinations is now over twenty years old; we have learnt a great deal about Responsible Tourism in two decades and with the climate change crisis upon us, it is important to consider travel to the destination. A new Charter had become necessary.

**The 2022 Responsible Tourism Charter**
**Signed on Magna Carta Island on November, 6th 2022 at an event supported by Therme Group**

Sustainability is an aspiration. It will only be realised if and when we take responsibility for making tourism sustainable. Responsibility drives sustainability. Responsible Tourism is about "making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit."

The diversity of our world makes travel worthwhile and generates tourism. Few businesses or destinations can address all the issues on the Responsible Tourism agenda. We must explain why we take responsibility for the things we choose to improve through tourism and the impacts of our efforts.

**Responsible Tourism:**

1. Recognises that greenhouse gas emissions, plastic waste, and biodiversity extinction are global issues requiring local action. Potable water is also an issue in many places, but not everywhere;
2. Sets goals, measures and reports efforts to minimise negative economic, environmental, and social impacts, including crowding and overtourism;
3. Generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities by providing better employment conditions, developing shared value with local businesses to create more and better livelihoods and addressing the economic needs of the economically poor and marginalised;
4. Involves local people in decisions that affect their communities, their lives and life chances
5. Makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world's diversity, lived cultures and cultural monuments;
6. Addresses biodiversity loss and is nature-positive;
7. Provides inclusive employment for the differently abled and people of diverse ethnicities, gender and sexual orientation;
8. Provides more enjoyable experiences for all, through more meaningful connections with local people and a greater understanding of local history and culture, and social and environmental issues;
9. Offers culturally sensitive experiences engendering respect between tourists and hosts, and building local pride and confidence.

We call upon countries, multilateral agencies, destinations and enterprises to develop practical guidelines and to encourage planning authorities, tourism businesses, tourists and local communities - to take responsibility for achieving sustainable tourism and creating better places for people to live in and for people to visit.

Recognising that sustainability is a journey and that we will need to do more when we can, we commit to

- do what we can to make tourism better;

- explain why we focus on particular issues and what we are doing to address them and
- recognising that transparent and auditable reporting on the impacts of our efforts is essential to demonstrating what is being achieved by those taking responsibility;
- moving our sector towards sustainability.

## 7. Trends in Responsible Tourism

***The key question for any community is whether they want to use tourism for sustainable development or be used by it.***

*Tourism is like a fire, you can use it to cook your dinner, or it can burn your house down. Maasai*

**Responsible Tourism is a Movement**

Responsible Tourism was never intended to be a consumer-facing label, although it has served Responsible Travel well with the strapline " the best holidays for you, local people and places." In the Responsible Tourism Movement the label is not important, it is the practice. Some forms of ecotourism are responsible, many are not. Some forms of mass tourism can be responsibly managed.

Responsible Tourism is a social phenomenon, it is co-created by the stakeholders, by hosts and guests,, and should not be claimed as property by any business or organisation.

Responsible Tourism must include and empower local communities in decision-making about tourism in their places, deciding when their place is being spoiled. Local and national government needs to respond to their concerns and ensure that tourism does not degenerate into overtourism.

**The Role of Government**

Businesses and governments can both focus too much on next year's results and the next elections. Like communities, they are prone to short-termism. The power of vested interests can also be difficult to overcome. Only the government can hold the ring between the stakeholders who may have competing and conflicting interests within and between stakeholder groups. Governments are best placed to pay attention to future-proofing destinations, although they too find it very difficult, as we see now with the industry having to finance reductions in carbon emissions and adaptation to the consequences of climate change at the same time. Where some businesses drag their feet and fail to deliver sustainability, they will undermine the efforts of those trying to adopt responsible practices by undercutting them. It is necessarily the role of governments to regulate the laggards.

**Experiential Travel**

The evidence from the Booking.com surveys reveals that travellers from nearly all source markets seek "meaningful connections, "which most often involve engagement with communities. Increasingly tour operators and accommodation providers recognise that local food, craft, dance, music and visits to crafters and artists are important. The Village Life Experiences of Kerala demonstrate that this enriches the community financially and enriches the tourist experience, extending their length of stay – good for economic yield and for the environment

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**DMO – moving from marketing to management**

Destinations need to use marketing to attract the kinds of tourists with interests which will be satisfied there and behaviours that do not alienate locals. Too often in tourism around the world the focus is on promotion to maximise arrivals with little thought about who is being attracted and with what benefits to businesses and the communities. DMOs need to use a marketing approach to design a product, a place that is in harmony with local people and their lived culture, and with their natural and cultural heritage. This results in 'guests' arriving – the kind of people you want to share your place with.

**Making better places for people to live in**

Kerala has been successful in moving from being used by tourism to using tourism for sustainable development. Dr Venu ended charter flights from the UK in 2009 because domestic tourists were spending more than the UK visitors. The focus on local livelihoods and cleaning up after the tourists has made Kerala a top destination globally. Madhya Pradesh is using tourism to empower women and to reduce the out-migration of young people by developing homestays in villages where there is community support and villagers wanting to develop them. Tourism and destinations are diverse.

**Countering Out-Migration & Conflict with Protected Areas**

In rural areas, tourism can create higher-value employment for young people and encourage them to remain in, or return to, the villages in which they were born and raised. Village Ways was formed explicitly to address this, and in Madhya Pradesh, the government is working with the panchayats to create a network of tourism services, homestays and guest houses in villages. The Mangalajodi Ecotourism Trust, Chilika Lake, has worked to counter poaching, the Madras Croc Bank has worked to fund the conservation of crocodiles and Himalayan Ecotourism has worked to ensure that communities benefit from wilderness land and its wildlife.

**Local Economic Development & Avoiding Dependency**

There are many examples in India where businesses like CGH Earth Experience Hotels, Kabani, Blue Yonder, Reality Tours & Travel, No Footprints and Pashoo Pakshee have successfully demonstrated local community benefits from tourism by upskilling communities, creating shared value, and applying the principles of pro-poor tourism now more loosely defined as inclusive tourism.

**Transparent Reporting**

The issues and challenges vary from place to place, so the exercise of responsibility requires that people say why they have chosen to address particular issues. No business can address all of the local issues, plus waste plastic and greenhouse gas emissions.

Responsible businesses and destinations will be clear about which issues they are addressing, why, what they are doing, and their impact. Transparency is a litmus test core indicator that Responsible Tourism is being delivered. Unfortunately, there is a large amount of greenwashing, transparent reporting and careful judging of the Responsible Tourism awards help to counter greenwashing

**Destination Partnerships**

The success of Responsible Tourism approaches to using tourism to make "better places for people to live in", relies heavily on local partnerships. The local community through the panchayats needs to

be engaged in resource mapping and planning, and their skills need to be developed so that they can be employed or sell locally produced goods and services to tourism businesses or directly to tourists. The community, tourism business based in the place, and government must work together in a partnership based on cooperation and mutual respect, to harness tourism to bring sustainable development and prosperity for local people and local businesses. Progressive destinations are moving from conflict to cooperation, recognising their competition is other destinations rather than similar businesses in their destination.

**Honeypots and Carrying Capacity**

Overtourism describes destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area, or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably. Overtourism is affected both by numbers and behaviour, at festivals and street markets people, hosts and guests, want crowds. When tourists are in our ways or behaving inappropriately, we find them annoying. Overtourism is largely subjective. The Carrying Capacity is best measured using Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) – the community must be involved in defining it.

**Methodologies**

The SWOT grid can be used with communities and business groups to analyse tourism in particular places and to identify issues and opportunities to address. The Kerala Responsible Tourism Mission has developed some useful manuals on how to develop better tourism, as has Madhya Pradesh. Generally, in the Responsible Tourism movement, there is a willingness to share experiences to enable others to build on the work of pioneers.

## 8. Responsible Tourism Policy in Kerala & Madhya Pradesh

The Principal Secretary of Culture and Tourism, Madhya Pradesh, signed the 2002 Charter. The government of Kerala has adopted the 2022 Charter as the opening to the 2023 Kerala Declaration on Responsible Tourism.

We live in a diverse world and different issues matter in different places. Businesses address the issues that matter locally and to their clients, and which can make a difference. Therefore, local communities must be consulted directly or through their local government, in India the panchayats.

Responsible Tourism at the destination level requires that the community and local businesses agree on what kinds of tourists, market segments, they wish to attract and how they wish to present and promote their place. This requires a multistakeholder partnership approach and the engagement of the community in decision making either directly or most likely in India through the panchayat. This has been the case in Kerala and Madhya Pradesh and has made a significant contribution to their success.

As PA Mohamed Riyas, Tourism Minister of Kerala, said at WTM, London Responsible Tourism has been a major vehicle for economic empowerment across the state. "We have created more than 25,000 units under the state RT Mission. These units are of small-scale entrepreneurs, artists, craftsmen, traditional workers, farmers and other service providers from the grassroots level of the local community."[13]

[13] https://hospitality.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/travel/keralas-rt-model-wins-hearts-at-wtm-london/95484652?redirect=1

The core components of Responsible Tourism are listed in the Charter, but they are not exclusive. Clearly, additional issues arise and may have particular importance. Both Kerala and Madhya Pradesh have addressed safety and security for visitors and this has been addressed nationally recently. For India, it may make sense to add this to the generic definition.[14]

## 9. The Challenge of Certification

Incredible India is incredible because of its diversity. For certification to be useful in achieving sustainability, it must be credible, it must have meaning for the consumer, and for communities, it must relate to what matters locally. The certification process needs to explain why particular issues are to be addressed, require businesses and government to explain what they are doing to address the issues and report the impact of their efforts in addressing climate change, single-use plastics and the local issues that matter to communities.

The purpose of consumer-facing certification is presumably to assure the guest or client that the hotel they are planning to stay in, or the operator they plan to travel with meets a sustainability standard. But there are problems:

1. Certification is opaque. No certification scheme permits a customer to identify the hotel or lodge with the lowest water consumption per bed night, the lowest carbon emissions or the best employment practices in the destination to which they plan to travel.
2. There is such a plethora of schemes that it is all but impossible to understand what they mean. How is a purchaser to understand the GST-Member; GSTC-Approved; GSTC Accredited? What are the differences between them? What assurance does the label provide?
3. The labels are process driven – none of them transparently reports what has been achieved by a hotel or tour operator in reducing negative impacts or increasing positive impacts.
4. One size does not fit all. Water conservation is a bigger issue in Dubai or Kenya – priorities vary locally between and within countries.
5. A consumer cannot recover damages from a hotel which fails to deliver against its certificate.
6. There is no effective enforcement mechanism.

The credibility of the existing certification schemes is undermined each time a traveller or holidaymaker checks into a certified hotel and goes to the room to find the thermostat set at 15C, all the lights and the TV on, and a bit of card stuck in the key card light switch, more damage is done to certification. When you turn the thermostat up or off, switch off all the lights and the TV, and put the towels back on the rail as you leave in the morning only to find, on returning to your room, the aircon back on, a freezing room with lights blazing and fresh towels, consumer confidence in certification is undermined.

Kerala's *Responsible Tourism Classification Scheme* is very different. It distinctively reflects local concerns and priorities and the classification can be withdrawn in case of violation of classification conditions, as and when brought to the notice of the government. This scheme has teeth and is able to secure compliance.

[14] https://newsonair.com/2022/10/19/sustainable-responsible-plan-to-welcome-tourists-in-india/

Hopefully, Kerala will ensure that the basis for each hotel or resort's classification be made clear by the publication of their scores against each of the criteria. This would

- make it possible for communities, travellers and holidaymakers to draw attention to hotels and resorts which may be breaching their claims; and
- enable consumers to choose to stay in the hotel or resort that scores highest on the criteria that matter most to them.

## 10. India is the World's Leading Destination for Responsible Tourism

The emergence of India as the world's leading destination for Responsible Tourism is evidenced by the success of states and businesses in the WTM Responsible Tourism Awards. Kerala and Madhya Pradesh each won multiple times as states. In 2021 India won four of the six Global Responsible Tourism Awards presented at WTM, London.

In 2008, at the first conference on Responsible Tourism in India, we recognised that we had not made as much progress as we would have hoped in the six years which had elapsed since the 1st International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations held in Cape Town in 2002. There was then, as there is now, a real danger that Responsible Tourism will be undermined by businesses, communities and governments which use the language of responsibility but do little and, too often, nothing.

The only way to challenge those who pay only lip service to the cause of using tourism to make better places for people to live and secondly to visit, is to report their contribution and achievement in a transparent, honest and robust way. The WTM Responsible Tourism Awards, which have been running annually since 2004 recognise those that have taken responsibility and made a difference.

India's Responsible Tourism efforts have won WTM Responsible Tourism Awards over many years. For the list of those recognised, see here 106, States, Union Territories, businesses and NGOs have been recognised across India: Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Assam, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Dium, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Ladakh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal. **Directory of Responsible Tourism Award Winners in India**

There is more on Responsible Tourism in India here

## 11. The Kerala Model

Kerala's new Responsible Tourism policy is based on the 2022 Responsible Tourism Charter and a set of Guiding Principles specific to Kerala.

This approach is derived from the South African 2002 Guidelines for Responsible Tourism. If states adopted this approach in India, they could readily address local business and community concerns and opportunities.

**The Kerala Government has outlined the main principles, which will be incorporated within the new declaration as follows:-**

**1. Guiding Principles for Economic Responsibility**

- Assess economic impacts before developing tourism and exercise preference for those

forms of development that benefit local communities and minimise negative impacts on local livelihoods (for example through loss of access to resources), recognising that tourism may not always be the most appropriate form of local economic development.

- Maximise local economic benefits by increasing linkages and reducing leakages by ensuring that communities are involved in, and benefit from, tourism. Use tourism to assist in poverty alleviation by adopting pro-poor strategies.
- Develop quality products that reflect, complement, and enhance the destination. Market tourism in ways which reflect the natural, cultural and social integrity of the destination and which encourage appropriate forms of tourism.
- Adopt equitable business practises, pay and charge fair prices, build partnerships which may share and minimise risk, and recruit and employ staff recognising international labour standards.
- Provide appropriate and sufficient support to small, medium and micro enterprises to ensure tourism-related enterprises thrive and are sustainable.

**2. Guiding Principles for Social Responsibility**

- Actively empower and involve the local community in planning and decision-making and provide capacity building to make this a reality.
- To achieve greater gender equality, safe destinations for women as hosts and guests. The RT mission will cooperate with panchayats, UN women and Equations, gender equality elements, in all its work programs.
- To deliver equality of access for the differently abled hosts and guests. The RT mission will endeavour to deliver equal access for people living with any kind of disability. As far as possible, with current technology, all tourism activities and experiences should be accessible for all, that is barrier-free tourism.
- Assess social impacts throughout the life cycle of the operation – including the planning and design phases of projects - in order to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive ones.
- Endeavour to make tourism an inclusive social experience and to ensure that there is access for all, in particular vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and individuals.
- Combat the sexual exploitation of human beings, particularly the exploitation of children.
- Be sensitive to the host culture, maintaining and encouraging social and cultural diversity.
- Endeavour to ensure that tourism contributes to improvements in health and education.
- Promote innovation in the tourism sector in economic, social and environmental aspects to enhance the local community's benefits.
- To ensure the local communities respect the culture, lifestyle and language of the guests and vice versa.

**3. Guiding Principles for Environmental Responsibility**

- Climate Change presents serious challenges for communities in Kerala. The RT mission places a high priority on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and recognises that with other ministries, communities need investment to adapt to the consequences of climate change generated beyond Kerala.
- Assess environmental impacts throughout the life cycle of tourist establishments and operations – including the planning and design phase - and ensure that negative impacts

are reduced to the minimum and positive ones are maximised.

- Use resources sustainably, and reduce waste (particularly plastic) and over-consumption. And also use the 3 R's – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle to reduce waste and upcycle wherever possible. Priority should be given, for environmental and cultural reasons, to the restoration and reuse of existing buildings rather than new build. If new build is necessary, it should use local, eco-materials. A comprehensive Design policy should be adopted.
- Management and restoration of sustainability of natural diversity. Assessment of the carrying capacity and the type and nature of the tourism that the destination environment can support. Respect the integrity of the vulnerable ecosystems and protected areas. To avoid disturbing the wildlife.
- Promote education and awareness for sustainable development – for all stakeholders
- Raise the capacity of all stakeholders and ensure that best practice is followed, for this purpose consult with environmental and conservation experts.
- Working with other government ministries to promote green principles – in construction, design, architecture, protocols for waste management, organic farming etc in tourism destinations and thus making and developing carbon-neutral destinations.

## 12. A note on language

We have been told variously that the word responsibility does not exist or is particularly difficult in India – we dispute that. It's meaning is not dissimilar to that in most countries. The word and, along with it, the concept of Responsibility is known and used in a number of languages spoken in India.

India is linguistically complex, with over 100 languages, of which 18 are recognised as official languages. Indian thought recognises ever-widening circles of responsibility the self, society and nation. The words for responsibility in most modern Indian languages come from Sanskrit – the exception is Tamil, where the word for responsibility is poruppu

In Hindi, two words denote responsibility:

***Uttardaitva –*** used in Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati
The suffix *utttar* means, reply, response , answer – but may also mean beyond, after, and –post. *Da-itva* implies responsibility or duty, yi refers to what we owe to or give others.

*Uttardaitva* means "that response, or reply or answer that we owe or is due to others. A heavy word suggesting, task, weight and burden." [15]

***Zimmerdari-*** used in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Kashmiri

[15] Professor Makarand Paranjape, Jawaharlal Nehru University

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*Zimma* means weight, burden, task. *Dari* means agency or doership of weighty tasks.

(Jan Bhagidari) - People Participation or Involvement of People.

**Jawab-dehi** or **jawab-dari s**ometimes used in Marathi, meaning to be accountable, answerable

**Dena is** sometimes used in Bengali, to give a debt, with a negative connotation of weight, burden , obligation, what is owed.

"To be responsible is to do one's Dharma "the regulating principle, practice of which leads immediately to well—being in this world and eventually to liberation in the here as well as the hereafter. Responsibility is thus the key to the pursuit of the good life in India. Duty and responsibility are closely related because duty does not have the negative connotation that it sometimes does in the West. To do one's duty is to be responsible; to be responsible is to do one's duty, but perhaps more than one's duty."

"…. There are also duties to other forms of like, which as humans must protect and nourish; there are duties to the ancestors and to Gods." [16]

"… when seen in the light of deeper ideas such as Karma and Dharma, it becomes intrinsic to the desiderata of a good life, to the very purpose of human existence itself."[17]

Indian civilisation is built not on the idea of the rights of man, as many modern western societies are. Rather it is based on each member of society discharging his or her individual responsibility. These duties and responsibilities form a complex web of mutual support and solidarity." [18]

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Submitted By Manisha Pande and Harold Goodwin on behalf of the ICRT India Foundation

[16] Makarand Paranjape pp. 85-6
[17] Makarand Paranjape p. 87
[18] Makarand Paranjape pp93-4