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**Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India (STCI)**  
**Practicing Responsible Tourism**  
**Regional Workshop- Ahmedabad, November 15,16, 2018**

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*Signed by*

*Mr. Sanatan Pancholi*  
*Gujarat Tourism*

*Mr. J.K.Mangaraj*  
*Principal IHM Ahmedabad*

*Ms. Shatrupa Dutta*  
*India Tourism Mumbai*

**Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India (STCI)  
Practicing Responsible Tourism  
Regional Workshop- Ahmedabad, November 15,16, 2018**

**DAY 1 ( Nov 15, 2018);**

**Registration- 9 'o clock onwards**

**Inaugural & Technical Session - 1:**

**Setting the Context for Responsible Tourism - 1000- 1300**

**Participants- (The tourism stakeholders from Government & Academia)**

- Importance of Sustainable Practices, Background & Role of ESOI; Mr Rakesh Mathur ( 15min)( ESOI)
- Vision- Gujarat Tourism – ( 10 min) Pr Secy - Tourism
- Issues & concerns in Sustainability of Tourism (15 min)- Ms Seema Bhatt- (ESOI)
- Sustainable Tourism- (Challenges & steps to overcome them)- Panel Discussion- (35 min)
- The role & necessity of standards & certification in Tourism -CEE( 15 min)
- Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India- Introduction, Relevance & Process- Dr Anjuna Dhir( 15 min)ESOI
- Case study – Melghat Tiger Reserve- (15) Mr Anirudh Chaoji
  - Session wrap up- Mr Rakesh Mathur ( 10 min)
- Q & A- 20 min

**Lunch: 1230-1330**

**DAY 1 ( Nov 15, 2018);**

**Technical Session-2 : Scope of Being Responsible 1400-1600**

**Audience- (The tourism stakeholders from Accommodation Service providers/ Hoteliers, the Govt & Academia)**

- Welcome to delegates, setting the agenda to the Accommodation service providers; Ms Seema Bhatt ( 15min)( ESOI)
- Sustainable Practices for Accommodation service providers; Mr Rakesh Mathur ( 20min)

- Panel discussion; Challenges to Sustainability in the Business of accommodation( 40 min)
- Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India for accommodation sector ; Dr Anjuna Dhir( 20 min)ESOI
- Sustainability is Good Business for accommodation sector- ( 25 min)  
Transformation of a Govt set up for accommodation & facilities ; Mr Anirudh Chaoji
- Q & A- 30 min
- Tea & snacks

**DAY - 2- ( Nov 16, 2018)**

**Technical Session-3 : Scope of Being Responsible 1000-1230**  
**Audience- (The tour operators, the Govt & Academia)**

- Welcome to the Tour Operators ; Mr Rakesh Mathur ( 15min)( ESOI)
- Sustainability- the role of a Tour operator- case study (Pugmarks) ( 30min)
- Panel discussion; Sustainability in the Business of tours- Is it really any effective / Challenges ( 35 min)
- The role & necessity of standards & certification in Tourism -CEE( 15 min)
- Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India for Tour operators ; Dr Anjuna Dhir( 20 min)ESOI
- **Discussions & Q & A ( 20 min)**
- **Session wrap up- ( 10 min) Mr Rakesh Mathur**

**Valedictory Session; 1245-1315**

- **Open house & Workshop wrap-up- all sessions- Mr Rakesh Mathur**
- **Valedictory address - Mr Jenu Dewan, MD , Gujarat Tourism**
- **Pledge- Safe, Honourable & Sustainable Tourism by ESOI**
- **Adoption of STCI by Gujarat Tourism**

**Vote of thanks ; Mr Rakesh Mathur**

**Lunch**

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**DAY 1 (Nov 15, 2018);**

**Inaugural & Technical Session - 1:**

**Setting the Context for Responsible Tourism - 1000- 1300**

**Participants- (The tourism stakeholders from Government, Associations & Academia)**

**Welcome Address & Importance of Sustainable Practices,  
Background & Role of ESOI; Mr Rakesh Mathur , ESOI**

Mr Rakesh Mathur began by welcoming all delegates to the workshop. He hoped for more participation from a city which has prided itself on having more than 65 hotels. Mr Rakesh Mathur also spoke about his past association with Ahmedabad and how it has played an important role in his current understanding of sustainability. Mr Mathur talked of the importance of Sustainable practices and standardisation in practices and the STCI. **STCI familiarisation and capacity building** workshops are extremely beneficial as they help the Tourism service providers in **Demystifying the concept of Sustainability** in every day Tourism business- by breaking it into easy, to do, 'sustainable' steps that are easy to emulate and apply. The workshops aim at setting corrective and curative measures with regard to Tourism practices with ecological sensitivity and conservation of nature and community development in the region. These practices shall be highlighted by speakers who practice them in their businesses and yet benefit financially along with creating a lighter footprint and supporting the local communities and environment.

The workshop shall not only familiarize participants with concepts of Sustainable Tourism and STCI, but also involve the understanding of its nuances and applicability. Hence it should be considered as training in 'Sustainable Tourism'. Each participant will receive a certificate of participation and training which would be handy whenever such a parameter based incentive is announced by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

**Inaugural Address : Mr H.C.Vyas, GM Administration, Gujarat Tourism**

Representing Gujarat Tourism and on behalf of the Principal Secretary, Mr S.J.Haider, Mr H.C Vyas declared the workshop open . Mr Vyas emphasized the importance of

Sustainable practices, especially with respect to the current state of tourism in Gujarat- where a lot of emphasis is on increasing the numbers. The destinations in Gujarat are progressively getting more and more visitors – the aim of the government is to make Gujarat the most popular destination.

Mr Vyas wished for a successful workshop with learning for all the participants

### **Issues & concerns in Sustainability of Tourism - Ms Seema Bhatt- (ESOI)**

Ms Seema Bhatt is a community tourism expert with interest and specialization in Biodiversity of Indian subcontinent. Her presentation informed about the range of tourism activities that include: Nature-based holidays; hill stations, adventure tourism, wildlife tourism etc. There exists a conflict between tourism, conservation and the community. Mass tourism results in adverse impacts such as sexual harassment, demand for timber, noise pollution, garbage disposable, wildlife disturbance, and desecration of heritage properties. This is what resulted in the evolution of ecotourism. She shared with the audience a number of examples of good ecotourism from different parts of the country.

The Key points from her presentation spoke about ;

- Mass tourism's negative impact on the environment and local communities
- Sustainable Tourism as a tool for Sustainable Development
- Promote local culture, local art and local cuisine
- Requirements for ecotourism are: Capacity Building, Education, Feedback Mechanisms, Code of Conduct and carrying Capacity Studies.

### **Sustainable Tourism- (Challenges & steps to overcome them)- Panel Discussion- Mr Chirag Munjani, Mr Rahul Pathak, Mr Dilip Thakkar, Dr Parul Mathur, Mr Gursharan Chabda, Moderator- Ms Seema Bhatt**

- **Dr Parul Mathur- Academician**

Sustainable & Responsible tourism is of utmost importance, but it is not an area which is taught in any academic institution, so how will the students learn

Responsible Business is a new area of study and should lead to positive action

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- **Mr Chirag Munjanie**

Sustainable Practices make good sense, but do they make business sense ? It s extremely difficult to sway business and customers on the sustainability platform- the customer has to demand and value this usp; only then shall it make a business case.

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- **Mr Rahul Pathak**

- Tourism is controlled by the tourist and sustainability is not an issue with the tourist
  - Skilled , trained staff is a problem- to expect them to be environmentally aware is asking for too much
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- **Mr Gursharan Chabda**

- Hoteliers will accept sustainable practices because they are good for business- but the solutions need to be fool proof and easy to implement

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- **Dilip Thakkar**
  - Though Sustainability is not an issue till now, but sooner or later it shall be, because tourist is getting aware and educated. It is for the industry to decide whether to be proactive or reactive to the issue.

### **The role & necessity of standards & certification in Tourism –Center for Environment Education**

This presentation was made by Center for environment & education. Ahmedabad – who are into Sustainability research, education and have recently tied up with Greenkey for hotel certifications. The presentation made a business case for standards and certifications to be followed in any industry ; specifically in the hospitality and tourism industry.

The presentation also focused on the key parameters followed by Greenkey internationally.

### **Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India- Introduction, Relevance & Process– Dr Anjuna Dhir ESOI**

Dr Dhir began her presentation by discussing the negatives of tourism and how there is now voices against tourism. She went on to talk of how all tourism needs to be sustainable for the business to survive. STCI is India's National Standard based on Sustainability parameter. based on Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. It is a certification plan to check on our sustainability quotient. Accepted and launched by Ministry of tourism government of India. Sustainable tourism is a responsibility for all including types of destination, including mass tourism. Four Pillars of sustainability are;

1. Economic viability
2. Socio- cultural responsibility
3. Tourism management plan
4. Environmental and biodiversity accountability.

STCI scans:

1. Policy
2. Procedure
3. Training
4. Records
5. Complaint mechanism

Ms Dhir highlighted the Principles, sub-principles and indicators of STCI. She also detailed the certification process and the STCI based certification plan for accommodation and tour operator industry. STCI certification is ;

1. A seal of confidence.
2. Informing consumer choice
3. Stimulating market development
4. Encouraging continuous improvement
5. Feel good factor- even profits can buy..!

### **Melghat Tiger Reserve- A case study- Mr Anirudh Chaoji( ESOI)**

The standards and certification process was followed by a case study on how tourism can also be a positive force in developing an area if practiced sustainably. Mr Chaoji detailed the development and transformation of Melghat Tiger reserve from just a protected area to a community based tourism initiative.

Not as yet STCI compliant, the speaker believes that if Melghat becomes STCI compliant, its sustainability quotient as well as tourism income generation shall certainly rise.

### **Q & A- 20 min**

The audience appreciated all the presentations and were very keen on asking questions to all the speakers; Some of the questions asked were;

1. The exact process and time span of the Melghat transformation
2. The role of Forest department in Melghat transformation
3. The STCI star categorisation
4. The STCI vs non stci – benefits; the incentive structure for STCI compliance
5. The process of STCI audit

The Discussions lasted 40 minutes.

Mr Rakesh Mathur thanked all the delegates for excellent participation , invited them to lunch and requested them to collect their certificates from the reception desk. He also invited them to stay for the post lunch session.

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### **Technical Session-2 : Scope of Being Responsible 1400-1600 Audience- (The tourism stakeholders from Accommodation Service providers/ Hoteliers, the Govt & Academia)**

Welcome to delegates, setting the agenda to the Accommodation service providers; Ms Seema Bhatt ( ESOI)

Ms Seema Bhatt began the afternoon post lunch session by welcoming all delegates to the workshop. She noted that though 35% of audience was new, most of the morning delegates had stayed over. This was a welcome situation, making us hopeful that the sustainability movement is here to stay. The participation had also increased significantly. She hoped for a really good, informative and insightful afternoon session

Ms Bhatt talked of the importance of Sustainable practices and standardisation in practices and the STCI. **STCI familiarisation and capacity building** workshops are extremely beneficial as they help the Tourism service providers in **Demystifying the concept of Sustainability** in every day Tourism business- by breaking it into easy, to do, 'sustainable' steps that are easy to emulate and apply. She invited the next speaker Mr Rakesh Mathur to present Sustainable practices for accommodation providers. But before that she requested Dr J.K Mangaraj, Principal IHM, Ahmedabad to say a few words on Sustainable Tourism and its importance

**Dr Mangaraj, Principal IHM spoke that Sustainable practices are of great importance and should be adopted by all in the industry.**

#### **Sustainable Practices for Accommodation service providers; Mr Rakesh Mathur**

Introducing the concept of Sustainability, Mr Mathur discussed why cant we look at Perpetual sustainability and what does it involve.

Mr Mathur shared a sustainability chart and highlighted the fact we ought to recycle but we fail tragically. His presentation highlighted;

#### **Guidelines for Ecotourism Projects in Hotels**

1. Avoid artificial room fresheners.
2. Regular servicing and changing of air filters.
3. Treat your water properly.
4. No smoking area signages.
5. White and reflecting colours on walls.

#### **Water:**

1. Water conservation
2. Water recharging system
3. Changing bed linen to be avoided.
4. Reutilization of water.
5. Regular checking of water distribution system for leaks.

#### **Energy**

1. Use gas or inductions over electric systems like ovens.
2. Use of solar power.

#### **Proper Waste Segregation**

1. Wet garbage can be converted to compost.



2. Dry garbage needs to be recycled.
3. Reusable cloth Laundry Bags.
4. Purchase amenities in bulk.
5. Use of natural products.
6. Encourage, train and motivate staff for waste management.

#### Sewage

1. Onsite sewage treatment plant
2. Recycle and reuse of waste water

#### Guidelines for Natural and Wildlife Lodges

1. Rain water harvesting.
2. Use of renewable energy resources.
3. 3 R's policies also including the 4<sup>th</sup> r of reducing.
4. Local food products.

#### New Ideas and Innovations.

1. Bucket bath
2. Small mirror size
3. Aircraft size toilets.
4. Use of rubber boards instead of teak etc
5. Solar reflection on windows, to generate power.
6. Reduce room sizes
7. Cotton mattresses
8. Use of potted plants instead of cut flowers.
9. CFL, LED use at every stage
10. Ban on plastic items.

### **Panel discussion; Challenges to Sustainability in the Business of accommodation**

The panel discussion was specific to Accommodation sector, hence hoteliers were invited to participate.

**Mr Praveen Sharda** from Taj Baroda, **Mr Snehal Shurma** from Asiatic Lion Lodge, **Ms Seema Bhatt** representing Community Based tourism properties, **Mr Niret Bhatt** from Climbing Tours and **Mr Dilip Thakkar** from Balaram palace participated in the discussions. The discussion was moderated by **Mr Rakesh Mathur**. Each speaker highlighted the challenges as recorded below;

- **Praveen Sharda**
- Taj Gateway Baroda highlighted the challenges faced by the city hotels such as
- No incentives for using alternate sources of energy- wind mill energy & solar energy
- No availability – of alternate sources of energy
- No takers for processed manure created by biodegradable waste

- Garbage segregation practices are ineffective because the segregated waste are mixed by Municipal corporation

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• **Mr Niret Bhatt- Climbing tours**

- It takes effort to identify and train local material, but once trained, they are worth gold. The locals are the best resources, using computers , making reports, save energy- requirement is to capture all this knowledge, document ,promote and emulate. Sustainability is a lifestyle issue

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• **Snehal Sharma, Asiatic Lion Lodges**

- Tourism is controlled and organised by forest department in Sasan Gir. The practices implemented by them
- Carrying capacity is a huge problem. Mass tourism, lion centric tourism, lack of discipline, plastic waste, waste collection is a problem
- Skilled , trained staff is a problem... Hospitality based mentality is also a problem. Our solution is to take staff from other neighbouring states..
- Stopped using mineral water, only RO water
- Use Ecofriendly plant to clean water using canae plants
- No initiatives from hoteliers, to protect lions, no signage, SOPs to tourists

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• **Seema Bhatt-community based homestays**

- Not all community based tourism are aware of Sustainable practices. They too need standards, they also need SOPs and maintenance, STCI fits into the homestays as well as community based initiatives.
- GSTC has had no criteria for cleanliness, which has been incorporated as a part of STCI
- Doing traditional architecture requires time, effort, energy, maintenance- but hybrid- ing those takes away the local character as well as incorporates unsustainable foreign practices

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• **Dilip Thakkar- Balaram Palace**

- Heritage properties have their own problems, ex; Balaram Palace constructed by Nawab of Palanpur
- Water problem, Garbage disposal, roads, fairs and festivals to attract tourists.. no promotion of heritage..
- Large rooms in the hotels with their own ventilation.. AC cost is a major cost..
- Rooms are not airtight – so lot of leakages.. Maintenance cost is very high, Plumbing is bad. They are high energy consuming assets
- Solutions may be simple, out of box, universal or modern/traditional Every car had a garbage bin- use me / don't throw me out

**Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India for accommodation sector ; Dr Anjuna Dhir (ESOI)**

Dr Dhir continued her presentation from the morning session where she specifically discussed problems related to sustainability in accommodation sector. She spoke about the process of auditing and certification and gave examples of compliance and non-compliant STCI behaviour.

STCI is India's National Standard based on Sustainability parameter. based on Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. It is a certification plan to check on our sustainability quotient. Accepted and launched by Ministry of tourism government of India. Sustainable tourism is a responsibility for all including types of destination, including mass tourism.

STCI certification looks at the desk submissions as well as on-site audit of

- Policy
- Procedure
- Training
- Records
- Complaint mechanism

Ms Dhir highlighted the Principles, sub-principles and indicators of STCI. She also detailed the certification process and the STCI based certification plan for accommodation and tour operator industry. STCI certification is ;

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- Informing consumer choice
- Stimulating market development
- Encouraging continuous improvement

**Sustainability is Good Business for accommodation sector- Transformation of a Govt set up for accommodation & facilities ; Mr Anirudh Chaoji**

The standards and certification process was followed by a case study on how tourism can also be a positive force in developing an area if practiced sustainably. Mr Chaoji detailed the development and transformation of Melghat Tiger reserve from just a protected area to a community based tourism initiative.

He spoke specifically of creating community based accommodation service sector in collaboration with the community and how the villagers were trained in servicing the tourists from cities and far away places.

He also outlined the sustainability of the destination plan, as developed by the community at Melghat

The audience appreciated all the presentations and were very keen on asking questions to all the speakers; Some of the questions asked were;

- The exact process and time span of the Melghat community transformation
- The SOPs as developed at Melghat Community
- The STCI Pilot testing process
- The non-compliance of STCI parameters
- Training for the process of STCI audit

The Discussions lasted 40 minutes.

Mr Rakesh Mathur thanked all the delegates for excellent participation , invited them to lunch and requested them to collect their certificates from the reception desk. He also invited them to stay for the post lunch session.

## **DAY 2- ( Nov 16, 2018)**

### **Technical Session-3 : Scope of Being Responsible 1000-1230 Audience- (The tour operators, the Govt & Academia)**

#### **Welcome to the Tour Operators ; Mr Rakesh Mathur ( ESOI)**

Mr Rakesh Mathur began by welcoming all delegates to the workshop on its day 2. Mr Mathur was pleased with the positive response from the tour operators of the city – as compared to the hotel industry

In a recap of day 1, Mr Mathur highlighted the learnings and decisions of day 1 and also appreciated the positive response from the hoteliers of the city to Sustainable practices.

He introduced the task that ESOI undertakes and also of the importance of Sustainable practices and standardisation in practices and the STCI. **STCI familiarisation and capacity building** workshops are extremely beneficial as they help the Tourism service providers in **Demystifying the concept of Sustainability** in every day Tourism business- by breaking it into easy, to do, 'Sustainable' steps that are easy to emulate and apply. The workshops aim at setting corrective and curative measures with regard to Tourism practices with ecological sensitivity and conservation of nature and community development in the region. These practices shall be highlighted by speakers who practice them in their businesses and yet benefit financially along with creating a lighter footprint and supporting the local communities and environment.

The workshop shall not only familiarize participants with concepts of Sustainable Tourism and STCI, but also involve the understanding of its nuances and applicability. Hence it should be considered as training in 'Sustainable Tourism'. Each participant will receive a certificate of participation and training which would be handy whenever such a parameter based incentive is announced by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

**Sustainability- the role of a Tour operator- Case study (Pugmarks) – Mr Anirudh Chaoji**

**Mr Anirudh Chaoji** was the former founding director of the tour operating agency 'Pugmarks'. The hugely popular Pugmarks was known for its path-breaking tours and policies. The case study on 'Pugmarks' highlights how tourism can be a positive force in developing an area and a sustainable business if practiced sustainably. Mr Chaoji detailed the development and transformation of Pugmarks from just a normal agency to a Responsible business.

**Panel discussion; Sustainability in the Business of Tours- Is it really any effective / Challenges ( 35 min)**

**Paras Lakhia** – President TAAI Gujarat

Sustainability – is it effective? May be but the main challenge is to think how to balance mass tourism with looking after the environment. This has its own challenge since mass market is a price sensitive market . Whose responsibility is it to educate and inform the market? Influencing the decision of tourists is tough and sustainability is not a decision making parameter as of now.

**Mr Chirag Munjani**- Responsible Tourism operator; Gir National Park is a great example with different different experience of creating a safari parks along with real jungle experience , by opening Devalia park... Crowd needs to be dispersed.. reducing the pressure on one destination. Other challenges are related to culture.. of the destination. Tourism is a sentimental industry – of the people. Kutch visitor needs to be sensitive to the local culture. Indian tourist is more aggressive as compared to travellers from the world. A traveller needs to be told / educated on how to behave, adapting to environment.

**Sunder Vasudevan, TRS Skills Academy**; We need to be accountable not just responsible in our tourism businesses. Ignorance is there... Sustainability is not just a mission- but a way of life...

Based on transaction.. skills and orientation needs to be incorporated. MoU with Govt of Gujarat to impart skills in Sustainable tourism seems to be a way forward. Giving free training to travel trade may inform and educate them. Tourism, the largest industry in the world needs to incorporate a change in its mind-set.

**Mahendra Vakaria, Chairman OTAAG**

Sustainability is increasingly becoming a discussion point internationally, but in India, it seems to be more of a talking point and less of an action point. We shall be very happy if this is brought into action.

**Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India for Tour operators ; Dr Anjuna Dhir(ESOI)**

Dr Dhir continued her presentation from the day 01 sessions where she specifically discussed problems related to sustainability in accommodation sector. She re-introduced STCI and spoke about the process of auditing and certification and gave examples of compliance and non-compliant STCI behaviour with respect to the Tour operator industry.

STCI is India's National Standard based on Sustainability parameter, based on Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. It is a certification plan to check on our sustainability quotient. Accepted and launched by Ministry of tourism government of India. Sustainable tourism is a responsibility for all including types of destination, including mass tourism.

STCI certification looks at the desk submissions as well as on-site audit of the policy, the process, the records and the systems of the agency

Ms Dhir highlighted the Principles, sub-principles and indicators of STCI. She also detailed the certification process and the STCI based certification plan for accommodation and tour operator industry. STCI certification is ;

- A seal of confidence.
- Informing consumer choice
- Stimulating market development
  
- **Discussions & Q & A**
- **Session wrap up- ( 10 min) Mr Rakesh Mathur**

#### **Valedictory Session; 1245-1315**

- **Open house & Workshop wrap-up- all sessions- Mr Rakesh Mathur**

The workshop ended on a positive note with all participants agreeing that sustainability is the need of the hour for the industry and should be practiced by all.

#### **Valedictory address – Mr Sanatan Pancholi , Gujarat Tourism**

**Mr Sanatan Pancholi , presented the Valedictory address and announced the following on behalf of Gujarat Tourism**

- 1. Support to Sustainable practices in Tourism**
- 2. Support to the Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India**

**Mr Rakesh Mathur thanked all for being a part of the workshop and hoped that Sustainable practices are followed by all present in the workshop and spread far and wide.**