“Sikkim Tourism Policy 2018 - towards sustainable tourism in Sikkim”.

ESOI Worshop on Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India, 29 Nov 2018, Hotel Lemon Tree

Presented by; Rajendra P Gurung CEO ECOSS
Why sustainable tourism?

• The flip side of tourism - negative impacts of tourism on the local population and resources.

• **UNWTO Definition of Sustainable Tourism**: "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”

• It’s only in the last couple of decades that tourism has truly exploded. More people around the world have disposable income and an interest in travel today than ever before. This is putting a strain on the tourism industry as a whole – and especially on the most popular destinations. CC impact.

• Sikkim Tourist Arrivals touching 15 Lakh visitors in 2017. Should we be targeting 50 Lakhs??
UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030

• Universal set of goals, targets and indicators that UN members will use to frame their policies over the next 15 years. 17 Goals 169 Targets Named “Transforming Our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” Adopted by 193 Member States of UN on 25th September 2015, Came into effect from 1st January 2016. India a signatory, Niti Aayog MOPI
End poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity and peace for all through partnerships.
How are the SDGs connected with Tourism?

- Most of the Goals are in a broad way connected to Sustainable Tourism Development.

- **Goal 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth.** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Tourism is one of the driving forces of global economic growth, and currently accounts for 1 in 11 jobs worldwide. By giving access to decent work opportunities in the tourism sector, society—particularly youth and women—can benefit from enhanced skills and professional development.

- The sector's contribution to job creation is recognized in target 8.9 *"By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products".*
How are the SDGs connected with Tourism?

• **Goal 12 Ensure sustainable Consumption and Production patterns.** A tourism sector that adopts sustainable consumption and production (SCP) practices can play a significant role in accelerating the global shift towards sustainability.

• To do so, as set in Target 12.b of Goal 12, it is imperative to "**Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism which creates jobs, promotes local culture and products"**.
How are the SDGs connected with Tourism?

- Goal 14. **Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.** Coastal and maritime tourism, tourism's biggest segments, particularly for Small Island Developing States' (SIDS), rely on healthy marine ecosystems. Tourism development must be a part of integrated Coastal Zone Management in order to help conserve and preserve fragile ecosystems and serve as a vehicle to promote the blue economy,

- This is in line with target 14.7: "**by 2030 increase the economic benefits of Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism".**
2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development

• The United Nations 70th General Assembly designated 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (A/RES/70/193).

• This is a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the contribution of sustainable tourism to development among public and private sector decision-makers and the public, while mobilizing all stakeholders to work together in making tourism a catalyst for positive change.

• The International Year aimed to support a change in policies, business practices and consumer behavior towards a more sustainable tourism sector that can contribute to the SDGs.

• International Tourism Day 2017 Theme “Tourism & the Digital Transformation”
SIKKIM TOURISM POLICY 2018

DRAFTED BY

WWF

ECOSS
Background

- WWF-ECOSS Stakeholder Consultation on Strengthening Sustainable Tourism – August 30, 2014

- Lack of policy emerged as one of the key issues

- ECOSS and WWF designated to lead the process for policy formulation in consultation with Tourism Department

- Participative approach to be adopted. Local inputs to be taken
:: Methodology

- **Stakeholder inputs from various consultations**

- **Feedback from tourists/feedback from industry**
  10 hotels of different grades. Feedback sought through tourist questionnaire on Sikkim’s USP/ pricing / tourism amenities/overall experience.

- **Review of existing eco/ tourism policies and plans**
  - Tourism Policy of Bhutan

- **Review of existing policy documents for Sikkim**
  - TECS TourismMaster Plan, 1997 - 2007
  - Singapore Consultants Tourism Master Plan, 2011
  - Sikkim Tourism Mission, 2010
  - Draft Sikkim Ecotourism Policy, 2013
  - Sikkim Human Development Report, 2014

- **Launching of Draft policy on WTD 27 Sept 2015**
  - reviews – finalisation. Cabinet Clearance.

- **Launch by HCM on 15th August 2018**
• SECTION A – BACKGROUND (Pages 1-16)
  • A1. INTRODUCTION
    • A1.1 Global Tourism Scenario
    • A1.2 Tourism in mountain regions
    • A1.3 Tourism in India
  • A2. TOURISM AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
    • A2.1 Key considerations
  • A3. TOURISM IN SIKKIM
    • A3.1 State Profile/ Natural Landscape / Culture and People
    • A3.2 Tourism Development in Sikkim
    • A3.3 Tourism in the economy
    • A3.4 Strengths and challenges of tourism in Sikkim
    • A3.5 Need for a tourism policy for Sikkim
    • A3.6 Methodology for Policy Development
Sikkim Tourism Policy – Structure/Contents

- **SECTION B - SIKKIM TOURISM POLICY (17-40 24 pages)**
  - B1. VISION
  - B2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES
  - B3 GOALS
  - B4. KEY TOURISM PRODUCTS
  - B5. OBJECTIVES
:: Vision

Sikkim becomes a **highly valued responsible** tourism destination with tourism contributing significantly to the **state economy** while conserving its **natural and cultural heritage**
:: Guiding Principles

- **Environmental sustainability**
  Tourism development will not be at the cost of degradation of the environment and natural resources of the state.

- **Cultural integrity**
  Tourism development will ensure appreciation, promotion and conservation of Sikkim’s diverse culture.

- **Equity Inclusiveness & Social Justice**
  Opportunities and benefits of tourism shall not exclude those disadvantaged by gender, remoteness and poverty, and tourism practices shall ensure the upholding of human rights and justice.

- **Atithi Devo Bhava**
  Tourism development shall focus on providing quality experiences and services for all visitors and ensure their safety and satisfaction.
:: Policy Goals

Goal 1  Develop tourism as a key sector in Sikkim’s economy

Goal 2  Promote low impact sustainable tourism for the state

Goal 3  Make Sikkim a prime round the year destination for nature, adventure and culture based tourism within India and globally

Goal 4  Tourism benefits are broad based to support local, social and economic development in Sikkim and also ensure social justice.

Goal 5  All tourism infrastructure and services shall be of the best standards and quality delivering a consistent high level of satisfaction and hospitality to tourists.
Key Tourism Products

• Conventional leisure based tourism
• Nature based tourism or Ecotourism
• Adventure based tourism
• Culture based tourism & village homestays
• Religion based tourism
• MICE (Meetings, Incentive Events, Conferences and Exhibitions)
• Health and Wellness tourism
:: Policy Objectives

1. Establish and strengthen Institutional Structures to promote, manage and implement responsible tourism in Sikkim

2. Ensure that Sikkim has the highest level of skills and capacity for quality service delivery through consistent human resource development

3. Promote Standards and Certification for the Tourism Industry

4. Promote sustainably managed tourism destinations, quality tourism infrastructure and safe transport
:: Policy Objectives

5. Promote high value and high quality tourism products
6. Ensure strategic and sustained marketing and publicity
7. Promote enabling environment for tourism stakeholders
8. Facilitate inter-sectoral coordination and convergence
The Ministry has recently announced the Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India (STCI) and its indicators. It is now imperative that the tour operators and accommodation industry in the state adopt the STCI through their various associations and also take steps for its implementation. Sustainable tourism criteria also needs to be developed for rural tourism, homestays and other tourism service sectors.

3.4 Standards & Certification for Accommodation Sector & Tour Operators

3.4.1 The Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India and Indicators recently announced by the Ministry for accommodation sector and tour operators shall be taken up for ratification by the industry associations in the state. Implementation of the criteria and indicators (for tour operators and the accommodation sector) and the development of criteria and indicators for rural tourism and home-stays, and other sectors will be taken up subsequently along the guidelines/suggestions, support mechanisms and action steps as laid down by the Ministry in this regard.
Other connections

• Carrying capacity
• Local employment and opportunities
• Tourism benefits for rural areas
• Sustainable waste management – reduction of load on landfills, littering.