

## **ECOTOURISM WORKSHOP: AN ATTEMPT TOWARDS MORE RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN MAHARASHTRA**

**Ecotourism Society of India (ESOI)** will be holding its eleventh 2-day workshop with focus on “RESPONSIBLE TOURISM – ISSUES & PRACTICES” as follows:

**Aurangabad, Maharashtra: April 27-28, 2012**

The workshop is being organised by **Ecotourism Society of India (ESOI)** with the support of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, in State partnership with **Maharashtra Tourism**. Over 100 delegates are expected to attend this event.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Mandip Singh Soin FRGS, President ESOI said “the workshop aims at setting corrective and curative measures with regard to TOURISM practices with ecological sensitivity and conservation of nature and community development in the Western Region, an area that is extremely ecologically and culturally significant. The challenge for the tourism service providers is in implementing environmentally responsible and sustainable tourism practices. These practices will not only create a lighter footprint but will support local communities and conserve the environment”.

These workshops aim at strengthening the understanding of the critical need to safeguard fragile ecosystems and conserve the country’s rich natural, built and cultural heritage, so as to raise awareness of sustainable tourism practices and to highlight the importance of local community participation, waste management, and preservation of the vernacular idiom.

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is in the process of giving final shape to the **Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India (STCI)** to position India as a global ecotourism destination in the near future, through the core committee representing all trade bodies, NGOs and environmentalists., Such workshops will help build-up awareness at the ground level as to what this type of tourism entails, thus escalating this transition.

Some of the eminent experts /practitioners expected to participate in the workshops are Mr.Rakesh Mathur, Ms. Seema Bhatt – Consultant Ecotourism, Biodiversity and Climate Change, , Mr.Ritwick Dutta – Environmental Lawyer – Supreme Court, Mr.Vinay Luthra IFS, Addl. PCCF, Govt. of Karnataka, Mr.Niranjan

Khatri, GM-Environment – ITC WelcomGroup, Dr.H.S.Pabla IFS (Retd), Former PCCF, Madhya Pradesh, Mr.Bhau Katdare, Sahyadri Nisarga Mitra, Mr.Pandurang Taware, Agritourism, Ms.Kishori Gadre, GM – Maharashtra Tourism.

Some of the key topics are:

1. Sharing models of Best Practices
2. Protection of Natural and Cultural heritage
3. Balancing between Conservation and Tourism Development
4. Waste Management & Renewable Energy
5. Environmental Law and its relevance to the tourism sector
6. Need for Ecotourism Certification

Welcoming the event, Dr.Jagdish Patil, MD, Maharashtra Tourism Devt. Corpn. said "I am quite happy that Ecotourism Society of India has decided to conduct a workshop on Ecotourism in Maharashtra. I am quite sure that the outcome of the workshop will help a great deal in shaping the broad framework of the Ecotourism in Maharashtra and shall also help create the much-needed awareness on responsible practices among all stakeholders. We need to focus on deciding important issues related to an Ecotourism policy for the state and most importantly, its best implementation'.

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