**Proceedings of the 1st meeting of Task Force for Rural Tourism held under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Tourism), Government of India on 10ᵗʰAugust 2022 at 12:00 PM**

1ˢᵗ meeting of Task Force for Rural Tourism was held under the Chairmanship of Shri Arvind Singh, IAS, Secretary (Tourism) through hybrid mode on 10ᵗʰAugust 2022 at 12.00 PM.

**Agenda 1.1　　Leave of absence**

The list of participants, who attended the meeting is given at Annexure-1. Leave of absence was granted to those, who could not attend the meeting. Additional Secretary (Tourism) welcomed the members to the first meeting of the Board.

**Agenda 1.2　　Introduction to National Strategy for Adventure Tourism**

1.  A presentation on National Strategy and Roadmap for Rural Tourism was made by IITTM, Central Nodal Agency (CNA-RT)and following salient features of the strategy were covered:
    (i)　　Introduction
    (ii)　　SWOT analysis and stakeholders
    (iii)　Vision, mission and objective
    (iv)　State assessment and ranking on rural tourism
    (v)　　Digital technology for rural tourism
    (vi)　Developing cluster for rural tourism
    (vii)　Marketing support for rural tourism
    (viii) Capacity building for rural tourism

    (ix)　Governance and institutional framework

2.  A presentation on National Strategy for Rural Homestays was made by IITTM, CNA-RT and following salient features of the strategy were covered:
    (i)　　Introduction
    (ii)　　Vision, mission and goals
    (iii)　Salient features of Rural Homestays
    (iv)　Incentives for Rural Homestays
    (v)　　State assessment and ranking on rural homestays
    (vi)　Digital technology for rural homestays
    (vii)　Developing cluster for rural homestays
    (viii) Marketing support for rural homestays
    (ix)　Capacity building for rural homestays

    (x)    Governance and institutional framework

3. The members noted the salient features of the Strategies and appointment of Institute of Travel and Tourism Management (IITTM) as Central Nodal Agency for assisting the Ministry of Tourism in the implementation of the Strategy.

**Agenda 1.3**    **Assessment and Ranking of States for Rural Tourism and Rural Homestays**

1. CNA-RT presented the framework of State Assessment and ranking covering the following pillars

    (i)    State Rural Tourism/ Homestay Policy
    (ii)    Safety Measures for Tourists
    (iii)    Mapping Rural Locations
    (iv)    Process for Registering Rural Tourism service providers
    (v)    Infrastructure in & around the Rural Tourist Attractions
    (vi)    Marketing and Promotion
    (vii)    Community involvement in Rural Sites

    (viii)    Sustainable & Responsible Practices in Rural Tourism

2. Following suggestions were made in this regard:

    (i)    Organizations and institutes working on constructing homestays using local material should be leveraged through projects.
    (ii)    Centrally made standards for Rural Tourism should be put in place before assessing states.
    (iii)    Rural Tourism initiative should be structured in a way to motivate and support the local families who run the homestays.
    (iv)    Maintenance of the Rural Tourism Accommodations is a challenge. The under-used funds for the development of Scheduled Tribe can be utilised.
    (v)    Hospitality giants such as Taj should be involved to implement good quality Rural Tourism products on ground.
    (vi)    There should be an ease in procurements required for creative products and services.
    (vii)    IITTM-Shillong need to be strengthened for the development of homestays in Arunachal Pradesh and other states in North East where homestays are coming up.
    (viii)    NIRD and SIRD can be roped in for language training of local communities.

(ix)   Self Help Groups need to be included in the development of Rural Tourism.

(x)    Efforts need to be taken for sensitization of tourists for Rural Tourism.

3.   CNA-RT was asked to circulate the draft framework after incorporating the feedback to all the members and State Tourism Departments and the same may also be published on MOT website. All members were requested to provide their feedback and suggestions in writing as well on assessment and ranking framework.

**Agenda 1.4     Identifying best tourism villages**

1.   Swadesh Darshan PMU presented a detailed structure of nationwide competition for identifying besttourism villages at the District, State and National level. The following key steps were explained:

(i)    CNA-RT for Rural Tourism and Rural Homestay will develop criteria for India on the lines of UNWTO best tourism village criteria.

(ii)   It will also develop processes and toolkits for organization of the competition.

(iii)  A portal will be developed for inviting entries from the districts.

(iv)  State Tourism Departments will organize district level evaluation of three best entries as per the toolkit.

(v)   State Tourism in the second phase will organize evaluation of the three best entries from the three shortlisted entries at the district level.

(vi)  Ministry of Tourism will finally organize evaluation of the three best entries from the shortlisted entries of the States.

2.   It was decided that necessary steps to be taken to launch the competition on September 27, 2022. A separate meeting may be held with the State Nodal officers to provide them training.

**Agenda 1.5     Replication of best practices for developing Rural Tourism**

1.   In continuation of the Best Tourism Village presentation, CNA-RT shared best practices followed by tourism villages shortlisted for UNWTO best tourism villages and other international best practices.

2.   It was decided that the best practices may be circulated to all the States for replication.

**Agenda 1.6    Digital Portal for Rural Tourism Destinations Attractions/Homestays**

CNA-RT proposed a way to enable NIDHI portal and Common Service Centre (CSC) Platforms for Rural Tourism and Rural Homestays. Following actions were suggested:

(i)    Enabling NIDHI to create 'One Nation One Registration' that will provide National and International Visibility to Rural tourism service providers, create unique identity for data exchange

(ii)    CSC will provide assistance in onboarding the village level Rural Tourism Services.

It was decided that NIDHI team and CSC teams may organize a meeting with the States to provide necessary training to onboard rural tourism service providers, destinations and attractions.

**Agenda 1.7    Marketing and Promotion of Rural Tourism and Rural Homestays**

1. CNA-RT shared an overview of the initiatives for marketing and promotions that have been planned as follows:

   (i)    Social media pages (on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn) to promote Rural Tourism and Homestays products. A website dedicated to the Development of Rural Tourism and Homestays is being developed.
   (ii)    Logo and tagline for Rural Tourism are being finalized.
   (iii)    The Rural tourism villages identified from the national level competition will be showcased on incredible India and NIDHI portal also apart from dedicated Rural Tourism portal.
   (iv)    Market development assistance programmes may be developed specifically to assist rural tourism entrepreneurs.

   (v)    Focusing on showcasing India's rural tourism as one of the key areas towards promoting sustainable, resilient and inclusive tourism sector during India's Presidency of G-20.

2. CAN-RT was asked to expedite various initiatives for marketing and promotion of Rural Tourism. So far as Market Development Assistance program specifically focused on Rural Tourism is concerned, the Ministry of Tourism may explore the possibility of framing guidelines under existing scheme or the new dedicated scheme being proposed.

**Agenda 1.8    Setting up of Resource Centres for Capacity Building for Rural Tourism**

1.  CNA-RT presented preliminary approach of focus areas for capacity building for Rural Tourism and Homestays, case studies of states, and presented action plans based on gaps in existing schemes as follows:

    (i)      Compilation of practices of Central Ministries
    (ii)     Compilation of practices of States
    (iii)    Interaction with Industry and Homestay owners
    (iv)    States to compile the list of destinations
    (v)     National and State Resource Centres
    (vi)    Specialized Training Programs

    (vii)   IITFC Program for rural tourist guides

2.  It was decided that a detailed plan for capacity building may be presented in the next meeting after consultation with the States and Industry Stakeholders.

**Agenda 1.9      Development Rural Tourism Clusters and Products**

1.  The Strategy recommends identifying clusters of villages based on various themes such as:

    (i)      Local crafts and cuisines
    (ii)     Folk music, dance, puppet shows, theatre/street dramas,
    (iii)    Agri tourism, Organic farming, Fam stays, herbal products, tea estates
    (iv)    Yoga and meditation centres,
    (v)     Eco zones within or around the village,
    (vi)    Rural sports and cultural events
    (vii)   National parks, wildlife sanctuaries
    (viii) Unique tribal culture

    (ix)    Proximity to existing tourism circuits

2.  SwadeshDarshanNPMU presented Rural Tourism Circuits developed in Swadesh Darshan 1.0 and presented the narrowed focus on Rural Tourism in Swadesh Darshan 2.0 through following actions:

    (i)   Hard infrastructure facilities
    (ii)  Soft interventions

    (iii) Curating the best village life experiences

3. It was decided that wide publicity may be given to the rural tourism circuits created under Swadesh Darshan and process for identifying rural tourism clusters may be initiated by the States.

**Agenda 1.10    Framing of Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Rural Tourism**

1. Swadesh Darshan NPMU presented the Central and State Components in the scheme to provide financial support for various initiatives aimed at development of Rural Tourism.

    (i)  Central Component (100% funding from centre)
    - (a)  National Resource Centre
    - (b)  Central Nodal Agency
    - (c)  Digital Platform for Rural Tourism Destinations, Products and Homestays
    - (d)  Promotion and marketing of Rural Tourism

    (ii)  State Components (60:40 between Central Government & State Government with 90:10 for NE States)
    - (a)  State and Cluster Resource Centres
    - (b)  State Nodal Agency
    - (c)  Digitalization, marketing and promotion
    - (d)  Development of Rural Tourism Clusters
    - (e)  Incentives for private sector product development

4. It was decided that draft Scheme may be circulated to all the concerned Stake holders for their comments and suggestions.

5. Following suggestions were made after presenting above agendas by CNA-RT and Swadesh Darshan NPMU:

    **(i)**  The services of Rural SHGs and NRLM may be taken for promoting Rural Tourism.

    **(ii)**  Similarly, Ministry of Tribal Affairs offered that they can also support Rural Tourism Projects.

    **(iii)**  Efforts should be made to promote vernacular architecture.

    **(iv)**  Heritage compilation with Ministry of Culture should be used as a knowledge support in the developmental activities involved in Rural Tourism

**(v)**   Dedicated Destination Management Organisations should be formed to manage the Rural Tourism Clusters

**(vi)**   CII can work on pilot project to develop Rural Tourism Villages. The suggestions for the state for the same to be shared by CII

**(vii)**   Need to ease in process to access MSME loan provided for tourism enterprises.

ANNEXURE A

### 1. List of Participants from Ministries

| S. No. | Ministries | Name | Designation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Ministry of Rural Development | Mrs. Simriti Sharan | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change | Mr. Sunil Sharma | AIG |
| 3. | Ministry of Culture | Mr. Ajay Yadav | Director (ASI) |
| 4. | Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region | Mr. Harpreet Singh | Joint Secretary |
| 5. | Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship | Mr. Bailochan Gahan, IES | Assistant Director |
| 6. | Ministry of Textiles | Mr. Arun Kumar Yadav | Director (Handicraft) |
| 7. | Ministry of Panchayati Raj | Dr. B.K. Behra | Economic Advisor |
| 8. | Ministry of Tribal Affairs | Ms. Sangeeta Gupta | Director |
| 9. | NITI Aayog | Mr. Avinash Mishra | Advisor |
| 10. | Ministry of Home Affair | Mr. Manoj Kumar Jha | Deputy Secretary (Border Management) |
| 11. | Ministry of Women and Child Development | Ms. Pallavi Aggarwal | Joint Secretary |

### 2. List of Participants from Heads of Central Government Organizations

| Sn | Organisation | Name | Designation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12. | IITTM Indian Institute of Travel and Tourism Management | Prof. Alok Sharma | Director |
| 13. | | Dr. Pawan Gupta | Nodal Offices, IITTM-Noida |
| 14. | | Ms. Ankita Debnath | Asst. Professor |
| 15. | | Mr. Sourav Mazumdar | Project Assistant, IITTM-Noida |
| 16. | | Mr. Raja Gopal Patra | Project Assistant, IITTM-Noida |
| 17. | | Ms. P Priyadarshini | Project Assistant, IITTM-Noida |
| 18. | | Mr. Mustahib Khan | Project Assistant, IITTM-Noida |
| 19. | North East Council (NEC) | Ms. R. Lalrodingi | Advisor |

### 3. List of Participants from States

| S.No. | State | Name | Designation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 20. | Madhya Pradesh | Mr. SheoShekher Shukla | Pr. Secretary |
| 21. | Tourism | Mr. Manoj Kumar Singh | Director (Tourism) |
| 22. | Punjab Tourism | Mr. Tejveer Singh, IAS | Pr. Secretary |
| 23. | Kerala Tourism | Mr. P. B. Nooh | Pr. Secretary |
| 24. | Odisha Tourism | Mr. Satyanar Jadhav, IAS | Director |
| 25. | Uttarakhand Tourism | Ms. Pooja Garbiyal | ACO |
| 26. | Telangana Tourism | Mr. Manohar Rao | MD |
| 27. | Andhra Pradesh Tourism | Dr. Lajwanti Naidu | Assistant Director |
| 28. | Goa Tourism | Mr. Gavin Dias | General Manager |

## 4. List of Participants from Industry Associations

| S.No. | Industry Associations | Name |
|---|---|---|
| 29. | Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) | Mr. Sanjay Razdan |
| 30. | CII | Ms. Mridula Tangirala |
| 31. | | Ms. Swati Thakre |
| 32. | | Ms. Isha Verma Miglani |
| 33. | FICCI | Mr. Sajeev Kurup |
| 34. | | Mr. Anirban Chatterjee |

## 5. List of Participants from MOT

| Sn | Name | Designation |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Mr. G Kamla Vardhan Rao, IAS | Director General, MOT |
| 2. | Mr. Rakesh Kumar Verma, IAS | Additional Secretary, MOT |
| 3. | Mr. Om Prakash | Under Secretary (NT), MOT |
| 4. | Ms. Gargi Mittal | Assistant Director, Niche Tourism Division / National Tourism Policy, MOT |
| 5. | Mr. Aravind Viswanathan | NPMU, (EY LLP) |
| 6. | Ms. Faisal Khan | NPMU, (EY LLP) |
| 7. | Ms. Manjiri Gaikwad | NPMU, (EY LLP) |