UNCTAD
Single-year Expert Meeting on
Tourism’s Contribution to Sustainable Development


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Sustainable Tourism: The Importance of a Pro-active Policy Agenda
The Kerala Experience in Responsible Tourism

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Sustainable Tourism
The Importance of a Pro-active Policy Agenda

The Kerala Experience in Responsible Tourism

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Secretary – Tourism, Government of Kerala, India
Kerala, The Case for Tourism

• Rich Green Nature with a long coastline
• Low Agricultural Productivity
• Fragmented Land Holdings
• Low level of Industrialisation
• History of Arab, European trade links
• Airline connectivity to Middle East
• A decade and a half ago, Kerala identified Tourism as a key driver of its economic growth
Kerala, A unique Location.

A Unique Geography.

Kerala Map with Altitude in Metres.
Kerala, Naturally Blessed

580 km long coastline...
Kerala, The Tourism Growth Curve

Domestic Tourist Arrivals Grew By 51% from 1995-2005
Kerala, The Tourism Growth Curve

International Tourist Arrivals Grew By 142% from 1995-2005
Kerala, Need for Sustainability

- Unfettered growth
- Fragile environment and eco system
- High density of population
- History of socialist struggles and governments
Kerala, Evolving a Policy Framework

• In 2006, the Kerala Tourism Department pro-actively decided to make Responsible Tourism (RT) the framework for sustainable growth and development of tourism in the state.
Pro-active, Interventionist Framework

- Extensive Consultation
- Multi Stakeholder Participation
- On ground activation
- Policy Support and Incentives
Extensive Consultation

• First step was an extensive consultative exercise to determine the contours of the overall strategy
• State level consultation on Responsibility in Tourism in association with ICRT-India and EQUATIONS (Equitable Tourism Options) in February 2007
• Follow up meetings and consultations with groups representing - LSGs & Civil Society Organisations, Tourism Industry, Govt. Departments and Organisations
• International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations in Cochin, Kerala in March 2008
Multi Stakeholder Participation

State RT CELL

SLRTC
- General Body
  - Executive Committee

Working Group Economic Responsibility
- DLRTC Kumarakom
  - Exe Committee
    - WG- Economic
    - WG- Social
    - WG- Environ.
  - Dest. RT CELL

Working Group Social Responsibility
- DLRTC Kovalam
  - Exe Committee
    - WG- Economic
    - WG- Social
    - WG- Environ.
  - Dest. RT CELL

Working Group Environmental Responsibility
- DLRTC Wayanad
  - Exe Committee
    - WG- Economic
    - WG- Social
    - WG- Environ.
  - Dest. RT CELL

- DLRTC Thekkady
  - Exe Committee
    - WG- Economic
    - WG- Social
    - WG- Environ.
  - Dest. RT CELL

General Body

Multi Stakeholder Participation

Exe Committee

WG- Economic

WG- Social

WG- Environ.
On Ground Activation

- *Kudumbashree*, the State Poverty Eradication Mission was identified as the partner for local production and services
- Leveraged *Kudumbashree’s* community network of women’s self-help groups to implement production cum supply plan
- Its closeness with Local Governments made the community - local government - industry engagement easy to facilitate
Policy Support & Initiatives

• Government Subsidies and Incentives are aligned to the Responsible Tourism framework
• Subsidy of 15% for tourism investment following Responsible Tourism guidelines
• Special Electricity Tariff for projects following Responsible Tourism practices
• RT certification for tourism service providers like Tour Operators, Resorts
**Kumarakom, The Pilot RT Initiative**

- Kerala RT Initiative was formally kicked off on 14 March 2008 at Kumarakom
- Launched after year long consultation and sensitization efforts
- 18 hoteliers signed tripartite agreements for procurement of produce from *Kudumbashree* with the Local Government also as a signatory
Kumarakom RT, Community Engagement

- Micro Enterprises, Group Farming, Cultural Group and Self-help Groups
- Creation of local supply chains
- Ethnic Restaurant run by women from BPL families
Kumarakom RT, Community Engagement

Excursions like Village Life Experience (VLE) tour coordinated and owned by local community
Kumarakom RT, Preserving Local Ethos

- Revived agriculture in Kumarakom as farmers became participants in the growing tourism industry
- Fish farming once again started in a big way and ethnic culinary traditions were revitalized
Kumarakom RT, Preserving Local Ethos

• Local handicrafts, arts that were fast losing ground regained popularity as new audiences were identified
Kumarakom RT, Preserving Local Ethos

- Started cultivation on shallow land
- Plastic free zone and mangrove protection schemes were initiated
- Master Plan for the bird sanctuary at Kumarakom prepared in association with local environment groups
Kumarakom RT, Capacity Building

- Skill Development programmes on food processing, homestead farming etc.
- Training/Skill Development programmes for local community members to equip them as resources for tourism industry
- Technical Expertise programmes for tourism stakeholders on waste management at destinations
Kumarakom RT, Capacity Building

• Capacity building programmes for development of local souvenirs
Kumarakom RT, Economic Benefits

- Open procurement and distribution system named *Samrudhi*
- More than 700 women, 500 farmers and 230 homesteads are engaged in this activity
Kumarakom RT, Economic Benefits

- Cultural group, souvenir and handicraft development units are providing more employment and income opportunities
Kumarakom RT, Economic Benefits

• Village Life Experience tour packages and Eco-bag units are creating another mode of income to households

• Around 1100 families benefit economically through the supply of various goods and services
Kumarakom RT, Empowering Women

- 760 women are included in the cultivation programme, 35 in retail activities, 30 in art and cultural groups and 45 in the village tour group.
- Helps poor rural women to become increasingly empowered, improve their status in their families and within the society.
Domestic Tourist arrivals have grown at an average rate of 8.2% per year.
Kerala: Sustainable Tourism, Sustaining Growth

International Tourist arrivals have grown at an average rate of 13% per year
Kumarakom Initiative, A Model for India

- The Kumarakom Responsible Tourism Initiative has inspired the Planning Commission of India to embrace a ‘pro-poor tourism’ approach.
- “The learning experience from Kumarakom RT initiative provides a successful pro-poor tourism model for replication across the country with suitable localisation” - Approach Paper to the Twelfth Plan.
Kumarakom, A Model for India

• ‘Pro-poor Tourism’ is about redistribution of resources and opportunities and not just the creation of a new product and governments have to be more pro-active

• An approach that can help Tourism in India realise its potential to promote faster, sustainable and more inclusive growth
Thank You

Kudumbashree Restaurant Unit