Kerala Tourism Policy 2011 Participatory? - YES! Inclusive NO!

Issued by Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala

EQUATIONS
30.11.2011

The Kerala Tourism Policy 2011 (Draft) issued by the Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala in November 2011 recognises the role of local self-governing institutions in tourism development. The policy also visualises sustainable development through involving local Panchayat and communities. Both these are welcome moves. What needs a perspective change is the excessive tourist focus without consideration of the impacts on local communities. The objectives of the policy seem to be primarily about the role and functions of the Department of Tourism and the formal sector of the tourism industry while the informal sector of the tourism industry that constitutes a significant part of the industry and economy has been ignored. EQUATIONS’ critique highlights the need for tourism impacts to be considered in policy formulation and implementation.

To
Ms. Rani George IAS
Director
Department of Tourism
Government of Kerala
Park View,
Thiruvananthapuram

Subject: EQUATIONS comments and recommendations on the Kerala Tourism Policy 2011 (Draft) Issued by the Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala in November 2011

Dear Madam,

EQUATIONS is a research, campaign and advocacy organisation founded in 1985 studying the social, cultural, economic, environmental and institutional impact of tourism from the perspective of local communities. A question that has been central to our work and directs much of it is 'Who Really Benefits from Tourism?' (www.equitabletourism.org).

We have had a consistent engagement with the Department of Tourism, Kerala on issues of sustainable, equitable and people centred tourism. In the recent years, EQUATIONS has been a member of the Responsible Tourism cell and actively engaged with the Department of Tourism in particular on the RT initiatives in the state and towards protection of children in tourism.

We thank the Department Tourism, Government of Kerala for providing an opportunity to EQUATIONS and civil society organisations to input our view and concerns on the Kerala Tourism Policy 2011 (Draft).

In response to the invitation to provide inputs to the Kerala Tourism Policy 2011 (Draft) issued by the Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala in November 2011, our detailed comments and recommendations are enclosed along with some supporting documents.

We summarise our key comments and recommendations below:

1. A noteworthy aspect of the Draft Tourism Policy is recognition of the role of local self governing institutions in tourism development. The Policy statement also visualises sustainable development through involving local Panchayat and communities. Both these are welcome, and long due in a policy document. It is important that
the policy document spell out guidelines for translating the participation of PRIs and implementation of above concepts.

2. The vision, mission and the objectives are not connected. The mission and objectives of the policy is not leading to the vision envisaged in this policy.

3. Rather than formation of so many committees / task forces it is important to synchronize and coordinate efforts and actions.

4. While ensuring that tourism is responsible is welcome, it is critical that the learning, gaps and lacunae from the current RT Initiative are taken into consideration and a proper plan is developed before formulating the RT plans for the other tourism destinations.

5. We hope Kerala Tourism takes the step to declare Zero Tolerance on abuse in Tourism – particularly child abuse.

We hope our inputs are taken into consideration.

We look forward to continue engaging with the Department of Tourism in transforming tourism in the state of Kerala.

Sincerely

Aditi Chanchani
Coordinator Programmes

Copy to:
1. Dr. Rathna Kelkar IAS, Additional Director, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala
2. U.V. Jose, Director, KITTS

Encl:
1. Kerala Tourism Policy 2011 (Draft) - EQUATIONS Comments
2. Note on limit of acceptable change
3. EQUATIONS analysis of the draft Guidelines for Ecotourism in and around Protected Areas which was issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests on June 2, 2011
4. Note on Tourism Impact Assessment

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