



Department of Tourism

Park View Thiruvananthapuram 695 033

Kerala India Fax: +91-471-2322279

Tel: +91-471-2326579 2321132

Email: info@keralatourism.org

marketing@keralatourism.org

www.keralatourism.org

Press Release

Kerala to host global meet on gender inclusive tourism in October

- ***Meet to showcase state's Responsible Tourism***

Thiruvananthapuram, June 02: Showcasing its success in promoting participatory development in Tourism through the globally-acclaimed Responsible Tourism initiative, Kerala has planned an international conference on Responsible and Gender Inclusive tourism in October this year.

A country first such initiative, the conclave will present before the world Kerala's experience in creating a sustainable and gender inclusive tourism model and chart out plans to further strengthen the movement that has made a deep impact at the grass roots across the state with local communities benefiting substantially.

"The RT initiative has made vital contributions in marking Kerala as an all-season experiential destination. It has successfully taken tourism to the grass roots in a sustainable manner with the active participation of local communities. The salient features of this unique project will be unveiled before a global audience at the conclave," Tourism Secretary Shri K Biju said.

Kerala Tourism had organised the Global Responsible Tourism Summit in Kumarakom in Feb 2023, drawing greater global attention to the initiative. The Global RT Summit saw the adoption of the Kerala Responsible Tourism Declaration 2023.

The 2023 Declaration, dwells on three kinds of responsibilities: social, economic and environmental. A vital guiding principle is the regular assessment of economic impacts before developing tourism. Preference will be for initiatives that benefit local communities and minimise negative impacts on livelihoods.

The Declaration called for maximum economic benefits to residents around any project by increasing linkages and reducing leakages by involving communities.

As for social responsibilities, local communities should be involved in planning, decision-making and capacity-building. To strengthen gender equality and ensure safe destinations for women as both hosts and guests, the State RT Mission will work with civic bodies and UN Women in all programmes.



Department of Tourism

Park View Thiruvananthapuram 695 033

Kerala India Fax: +91-471-2322279

Tel: +91-471-2326579 2321132

Email: info@keralatourism.org

marketing@keralatourism.org

www.keralatourism.org

Under environmental responsibilities amid alarming climate change, the RT Mission will accord high priority on reducing green-house gas emissions.

“The details of the forthcoming conference in October are being worked out in consultation with the Tourism Department and other stakeholders. It will have riveting conversations involving domain experts, people’s representatives, policy makers, stakeholders, cultural personalities, conservationists and members of civil society outfits from India and abroad,” said Shri Rupeshkumar K, CEO, Kerala Responsible Tourism Mission Society.

Launched in 2008 in four selected centres to promote sustainable and inclusive tourism initiatives, Responsible Tourism in Kerala has evolved into a massive grass-root level network having 25,188 registered units currently, of which 17632 units are either owned or led by women.

Known as RT Mission initially, the project was reconfigured as Kerala Responsible Tourism Mission Society (KRTMS) in 2023, imparting an added momentum to its activities.

So far, an approximate 52,344 people have directly and 98,432 people indirectly benefited from its activities, mostly in rural areas.

Over 1.5 lakh families are now part of the project linked to various tourism packages which have resonated well with domestic and foreign tourists.

Developing grass root level tourism, linking it with tourism industry, promotion of sustainable and gender inclusive models and generation of jobs and income for local communities are the basic objectives of Kerala RT.

Aligning with these goals, RT Mission has helped local communities to organise packages like village/agri/farm tours, cultural and experiential tours, food and culinary experiences. Nature and heritage conservation is a key component of all RT initiatives.

Pro-active implementation of RT schemes has helped bring local communities to the mainstream, besides conservation of natural and cultural ecosystem at the grass roots. Local self-government institutions and entrepreneurs have also been taken on board.

The RT projects also showcase art, craft and traditional livelihood of communities, which have earned it a number of coveted national and international honours. Kerala’s globally-acclaimed Responsible Tourism initiative clinched WTM London’s Responsible Tourism Awards for STREET Project in 2022 and in 2021, for the Aymanam Responsible Tourism Project.



Department of Tourism

Park View Thiruvananthapuram 695 033

Kerala India Fax: +91-471-2322279

Tel: +91-471-2326579 2321132

Email: info@keralatourism.org

marketing@keralatourism.org

www.keralatourism.org

The state was also recognised at the national level, when Kerala's Kanthalloor in Idukki won India Tourism's Best Tourism Village Gold Award in 2023.

The 'PEPPER" project - Peoples Participation for Participatory Planning and Empowerment through Responsible Tourism - has organised novel initiatives like convening tourism assembly in villages, resource mapping, compiling resource directories, holding stakeholders and investors meets. A slew of experiential tourism packages have also been drawn up. The progress of the project is reviewed through community auditing and flaws are rectified from time to time.

The STREET project (Sustainable, Tangible, Responsible, Experiential, Ethnic, Tourism Hubs), implemented by Kerala RT aligns well with the UNWTO theme of Tourism for inclusive growth.

It has also initiated a scheme to promote the making of tourist souvenirs bearing the cultural imprint of the specific locality, formation of tourism club, all-woman tour packages.

Training programmes on community tours, homestay management, Agri-tourism network facilitation and ethnic cuisine, handicraft production and geotagging of souvenirs are being taken up. These sessions are organised either physically or online, ensuring larger participation.

Ends