

Incredible India



Himachal Pradesh Sustainable Tourism Development Policy 2013



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HIMACHAL PRADESH



LEGENDS	
--- (dashed line)	International Boundary
--- (dash-dot line)	State Boundary
--- (dotted line)	District Boundary
--- (solid line with cross-ticks)	Railway Line
⊙ (circle with dot)	State Capital
⊙ (circle with dot)	District Hqtrs.
■ (square)	Taluk Hqtrs.
• (dot)	Other town
✈ (airplane icon)	Aerodrome
— (thick line with number in box)	N.H. with No.
— (double line)	Major Road

Map Not To Scale

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HP SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT POLICY - 2013

PREFACE : INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Himachal Pradesh is a well recognized tourist destination in the Country. The State offers a wide variety of options to the tourists having different interests and is popular for leisure, religious, adventure and cultural tourism.

In the year 2005, the State had come up with the Tourism Policy with the purpose of analyzing strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats and to lay down a strategy for development of the tourism in the State. A short and medium term action plan had also been laid down in the policy.

From a figure of 65.49 lakh tourists in 2004, the number of tourists visiting the State has now gone up to 161.46 lakh in 2012. The need of the hour, given our fragile ecosystem, is to ensure that this growth continues in a sustainable manner. The Sustainable Tourism Development Policy, 2013 is an attempt in this regard. This policy has been framed for achieving sustainable tourism development based on global and national good practices, situation analyses, stakeholder engagements, rapid destination diagnostics, and participatory planning exercises. It shall act as a guide for the State to ensure sustainable development and inclusive green growth in the tourism sector in Himachal Pradesh.

**Chief Minister
Himachal Pradesh**



1. VISION AND MISSION

- i. Vision :** To make sustainable tourism one of the prime engines of socioeconomic growth in the State by establishing it as a leading global sustainable tourism destination by 2029.
- ii. Mission :** To use sustainable tourism as a means to provide better employment and greater business opportunities for residents, to contribute to the protection of the state's unique natural and cultural heritage and to ensure the long-term prosperity and good quality of life to future generations in Himachal Pradesh.

2. POLICY GOALS

Objectives that will lead to the desired outcomes :-

- (i) To establish Himachal Pradesh as a leading global sustainable tourism destination;
 - (ii) To make sustainable tourism one of the prime engines of socioeconomic growth in the State; and
 - (iii) To achieve proposed targets by 2029.
- Goal 1** – To establish Himachal Pradesh as a global brand and sub-brands in domestic and international markets.
- Goal 2** – To ensure sustainable tourism which primarily benefits host communities and supports natural and cultural-heritage preservation.
- Goal 3** – To ensure visitor's high quality experience and contribution to the safeguarding of the States destinations.

Goal 4–To create an enabling environment for investment and private sector development.

Goal 5 – To build capacity and develop quality human resources in sustainable tourism and state-of-the-art hospitality.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long - term sustainability.

While tourism is an economic activity largely carried out by the private sector in most countries, governments have a critical role to play in making policies and master plans for tourism development as part of national, state and local economic objectives. Sustainable tourism development, involves almost all aspects of life, in a way that the tourism sector is viewed as an integrated whole with an impact not only on the economy by ensuring more equitable and more widespread distribution of income, but also on society, cultures, and the environment. Given the relevance of tourism as an engine of economic growth for the State, the Government of HP is committed to advance its contribution to sustainable development in the state by placing greater emphasis on tourism impacts on the environment and the quality of life of local communities.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, “sustainable tourism

takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities." Such definition emphasizes an integrated approach to tourism development in a way that improves the lives of residents, preserves the natural environment and cultural assets in destinations, and improves the enjoyment and attitude of the tourists; rather than the traditional focus on increasing tourist numbers and their spending.

Based on lessons learnt from sustainable tourism initiatives worldwide, the H.P. Sustainable Tourism Development Policy will be guided by three main principles :-

- i. Ensure viable, long-term economic growth, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation and sustainable development of HP destinations.
- ii. Make optimal use of environmental assets that constitute a key element in sustainable tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and help conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
- iii. Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.

4. STRATEGY :

To ensure a sustainable focus as well as positive impacts on the state destinations and their people, ecology and cultural assets, the HP Sustainable Tourism Development Policy proposes four areas of strategic action in alignment with its goals:

Goal 1 To establish Himachal Pradesh as a global brand and sub-brands in domestic and international markets.

i. Destination Planning and Product Development :

Involves the long-term outline of general goals, objectives and directions for sustainable tourism development at state and destinations levels. The planning process will be ongoing and action-oriented in ways that ensures continued relevance and facilitate implementation.

• Tourism Development Planning :

- Tourism Development Plans will be prepared and will include zoning Atlases for planned and non-planned areas at a State level based on the Town and Country Planning Department land-use plans, development and accessibility requirements, and the classification and hierarchy of tourism nodes.
- Circuits will be developed linking hubs with lesser-known and unknown destinations as well their products based on prioritized primary, secondary and tertiary destinations in a rational way to accrue maximum tourism benefits and minimum

environmental and socio-cultural impacts.

- Land banks will be attempted to be created within prioritized primary, secondary and tertiary destinations based on zoning Atlases by identifying viable land for development. Adherence to environmental regulations for land development will be required.
- **Private sector engagement** : the government will work with the private sector to identify opportunities for diversifying and improving the mix of tourism products, festivals and events based on tourist profiles (e.g., agritourism, health and wellness, adventure tourism, etc.) and the tourism activities and product strategies. It will use the private sector to help identify and prioritize sites for corrective action or expansion based on new and existing circuits and tourist hubs.
- Sustainable tourism standards shall be identified and sustainable tourism criteria will be adopted based on the needs of the state.

ii. Destination marketing and branding :

- **Branded Destinations** : Branded destinations will be established.
- **Sustainability Story** : The State's accomplishments in sustainable tourism development will be promoted(reinvigorate promotion of rural tourism development).
- **Internet and Social Marketing** : The himachaltourism.gov.in and hptdc.nic.in

websites / user interfaces will be modernized, and social marketing tools will be used for more effective promotion of tourism (e.g., increase the use of video, enable e-commerce, and develop mobile technology applications).

- **Length of Stay** : Sustainable tourism in developing multi-day and multi-experience packages and products will be supported and promoted to increase the average length of stay.
- **Seasonality** : Products to target markets and enhanced product and service offering will be matched to extend the seasonality in key destinations.
- **Travel Facilitation** : Key bottlenecks to travel to/from and in the state will be assessed, especially underdeveloped transport systems and general lack of information.
- **Quality Ratings** : Compulsory quality ratings will be adopted that include sustainable tourism standards to ensure accommodations, tour operators, and restaurants meet higher standards. Tourism Trade Associations will be involved in the inspection work.

iii. Target Markets :

- **Existing Markets** : Market specific strategies will be formulated based on market research and tourism profiles to optimally use resources to strengthen existing international & domestic markets.

- **Emerging Markets :** New and emerging markets will be identified and market specific strategies will be formulated to make destination brands more visible in these markets.
- **Business - To - Business :** Tourism body workshops, seminars and knowledge sharing events will be organized.

iv. Market Research :

- **Data Collection :** Data collection methodologies will be strengthened and institutionalized to develop more detailed tourist profiles for existing and potential target markets in key tourism destinations with the support of tourism businesses.

Goal 2 To ensure sustainable tourism which primarily benefits host communities and supports natural and cultural-heritage preservation.

i. Community Benefits :

- The creation of locally owned Micro, Small & Medium Tourism Enterprises(MSMTEs) will be facilitated to increase the distribution of tourism revenues, thus generating employment and additional income for local communities; and provide an entrepreneurship development program to develop local level entrepreneurs and attractions.
- Secondary and tertiary destinations will be identified based not only on tourism potential, but also on communities receptivity to tourists as well as

environmental and cultural sensitiveness.

- **Home Stays :** The home stay policy tax holiday will be extended and will be updated to ensure that the policy supports the preservation of Himachal Pradesh cultural assets and expressions by limiting registered home stays to homes with traditional architecture and those that demonstrate adherence to state approved sustainable tourism criteria. Promotional support will be improved and the owner-occupied homes requirement more strictly enforced. The number of related trainings will also be increased and made more accessible to rural communities.

ii. Inclusive Planning and Implementation :

- Key stakeholders, including local residents will be identified and actively involved in sustainable tourism development planning and implementation by creating and institutionalizing a mechanism by which they receive information and provide feedback, insights and suggestions.

iii. Natural Heritage Preservation :

- Ecological systems in key destinations and the services they provide to tourism will be inventoried.
- The Department of Tourism shall work in close collaboration with the State Pollution Control Board to establish environmental regulations for sustainably and legally sourced environment friendly construction materials and designs; and require

developers to complete environmental impact assessments and to implement environment management plans in ecologically sensitive areas within/near destinations.

- Coordination with relevant departments will be promoted to improve existing infrastructure on public lands; to strengthen sustainable tourism standards for concessionaires; and to close fragile ecosystems to tourism seasonally or permanently.
- Panchayats as well as community-based organizations will be motivated/incentivized to protect the environment (e.g., protect open spaces from development, plant trees, and maintain their communities litter-free, sanitary disposal of solid and liquid waste, open defecation free status).

iv. Cultural-Heritage Preservation : The Department of Tourism shall work in close collaboration with the Himachal Pradesh Department of Language, Art and Culture to undertake the following :

- Material and intangible cultural-heritage will be mapped and inventoried, including heritage that is endangered.
- Promotional mechanisms will be established to foster the revival and the protection of heritage authenticity.
- Local products and Himachali cuisines will be promoted to tourists by working closely

with local bodies, Self Help Groups, NGOs, Farmer groups and other relevant departments.

- Panchayats as well as community-based organizations will be motivated/incentivized to protect cultural assets (e.g., protect sacred areas from development, promote continuous maintenance of heritage structures / buildings, and incentivize cultural practices in destinations).

Goal 3 To ensure visitors high quality experience and contribution to the safeguarding of the States' destinations.

i. Promotion of Local Products and Services to Decrease Footprint :

- Tours involving closer relations with host communities will be prioritized (e.g., tax break for home stays, promotion of seasonal menu in hotels, visits to local tea plantations).
- The Department of Tourism shall work in close collaboration with the Himachal Pradesh Industries Department and Department of Language, Art and Culture to develop Centers of Excellence of Handlooms and Handicrafts and promote local industries as a priority with private sector participation. Micro - enterprise development and support cultural-heritage preservation in rural communities and tribal areas will be fostered by providing marketing support services.

ii. Tourist Information Centers :

- Quality information on tourism will be designed and promoted at all major tourism destinations including tourist centers gateway cities, popular temples, and transport nodes in the state and borders.

iii. Visitor Interpretation :

- Visitor interpretation will be improved by improving upon the existing signage system to better inform and educate tourists.

iv. Provision of Quality Services :

- Tourism services in prioritized destinations, including but not limited to wayside facilities, potable drinking water, waste management, public toilets, and broadband services, will be improved and partially financed through the licensing of tourism businesses and fee collection in highly visited sites.

v. Accessibility :

- **Improve connectivity :** Current tourist flows, transportation routes, and nodes will be mapped, and problem areas, supply/demand needs, and the transportation planning requirements identified to improve connectivity and facilitate growth in tourism (e.g., increasing the availability of transportation services in high season, introducing guided tourist coaches for local sightseeing and/or hop on hop off services in tourist hubs).
- Improve transportation quality including transportation modes and hubs to meet

international or the best national standards.

- Sustainable urban mobility “Traffic Free”/ pedestrian zones and seasonal one-way traffic routing will be established in highly trafficked tourist hubs and places of tourist interest.

- **Ropeways :** The development of new ropeways will be re-evaluated in highly visited tourist sites that attract travellers interested in nature-based, ecotourism and adventure activities.

vi. Health, Safety and Security :

- **Police :** The number of trained police will be increased (including community policing) for regulating tourism related activities in key tourist sites to address tourist harassment and regulate traffic according to seasonality.
- **No-solicitation :** the solicitation of tourists will be prohibited within airports, railway station and bus stands.

Goal 4 To create an enabling environment for investment & private sector development

Recognizing the importance of sustainable tourism in stimulating the economic development of the State, an enabling environment will be created to attract investments and to encourage the adoption of sustainable tourism practices by the private sector.

i. Sustainable Financing :

- **Private public partnerships :** Commercially viable projects and the

establishment of private public partnerships will be evaluated on an open competitive tender basis for select State-run tourism and related services, including accommodations, destination development, transportation (e.g., airport, bus, railway, parking), tourist amenities (e.g., toilet complexes, restoration of heritage sites), and tourism concessions on public lands (e.g., tourist information centers, existing guest houses on forest lands).

- **Fee Collection :** A fee program will be implemented based on willingness to pay measures and different rates for Indians and international travellers to establish sustainable financing for the maintenance and improvement of tourism related infrastructure and for regulating tourism in highly visited sites. The average costs or range of costs for tourist services (e.g., taxis, hotels and busses) will be regulated (i.e., high versus low season) and promoted to tourists.
- A tax holiday will be offered for applicable taxes in sustainable tourism projects located in secondary and tertiary areas within the proposed circuits.
- Preferred tax holidays will be offered and possibility of deferring payment of luxury tax will be examined for sustainable tourism businesses that establish cultural-heritage attractions (e.g., refurbish and renovate heritage buildings, traditional home stays renovation, arts and crafts etc.)

and for accommodations and tourism units in lesser developed districts and regions within the State.

ii. **Green Tax Benefits :**

- Possibility of providing tax benefits on energy conservation, renewable energy and water saving / recycling / catchment technologies and equipment will be examined.
- Incentive packages will be strengthened and fast track clearances provided for tourism projects of domestic investment and foreign investment.
- Marketing incentives will be provided for tourism businesses that receive quality ratings and meet baseline sustainable tourism criteria.

iii. **Promotion :**

- Eligibility requirements will be enforced that only enable sustainable tourism businesses registered with the tourism department to receive the tax benefits, financial incentives, and other enabling mechanisms when offered at a State level. Aggregate and actively promote all of the tax benefits, financial incentives, and other enabling mechanisms offered at a State level (e.g., single window clearance for all sustainable tourism related investments).
- All of the other national and international benefits and incentives will be aggregated for promoting private investment in the sustainable tourism sector.

iv. Financial Disincentives :

- The provision of marketing incentives will be limited to registered sustainable tourism businesses. Strictly enforce laws and ensure tourism-related fines for infractions are high enough to provide a disincentive to breaking them.
- The Department of Tourism will work with the Department of Transport towards easing congestion in highly trafficked tourist areas. This may include but may not be limited to enacting green fee levies of municipal taxes, high congestion taxes on private vehicles, licensing fees, parking fees, and District level traffic driving restrictions.

v. Finance :

- The Department of Tourism shall work in close collaboration with the Department of Industries to facilitate access to micro-finance for locally owned micro-, small and medium-sized tourism enterprise (MSME).

Goal 5 To build capacity and develop quality human resources in sustainable tourism and state - of - the - art hospitality Governance Structure.

i. Integrated Tourism Resource Management :

- Mechanisms to foster cooperation encourage the pooling of resources, and coordinate tourism development, management and promotion efforts among State, District, Municipal and Ward-level Government bodies as well as the private sector will be put in place.

ii. HP Tourism Development Board :

- The HP Tourism Development Board will serve as an advisory and coordinative body for public-sector actions related to tourism, approve and facilitate each District's annual action and investment plans, and coordinate policy, regulate, capacity development, marketing, participatory planning and monitoring.

iii. Implementation Cells :

- A Monitoring and Evaluation Cell will be established at the State level to track and report out on priority performance tourism-related matrix and detect issues in their early stages so that remedial measures can be taken.
- Create Marketing Cells to establish a presence and market the State in priority markets.

iv. Tourism Development Council :

- District-level inter-departmental teams will be formalized that are tasked with implementing priority tourism development initiatives, assisting Panchayats in tourism development, and establishing sustainable financing for the maintenance and improvement of tourism related infrastructure by regulating tourism and collecting fees in highly visited sites.

v. Awareness Raising :

- A program to raise awareness and educate key stakeholders at every level will be designed and promoted, especially at

implementation level, regarding rules, regulations, new policy relating to tourism development.

vi. University Curriculum :

- Institutions such as State-run Universities and institutions as also private Universities and recognized institutions shall be encouraged to offer sustainable tourism curriculum and to expand existing ones.

vii. Primary School Curriculum :

- Sustainable tourism will be integrated into the primary school curriculum (e.g., traditions of Indian hospitality, the importance safety and security, etc.), strengthening existing environmental curriculum, and introducing cultural-heritage curriculum to children.

viii. Guide Training :

- Sustainable tourism will be integrated into guide training curriculum and specialized training will be provided in international target market languages and adventure sport instruction with increased number of trainings.

ix. Taxi Driver Training :

- Taxi drivers in tourism hubs will be provided with tourism training that covers courtesy and professionalism, marketing, rules and safety.

x. Youth Development :

- Funding from various departments will be secured to offer skill oriented courses in sustainable tourism to unemployed youth.

xi. Qualified Faculty :

- A train-the-trainer program will be promoted for expanding qualified faculty targeting experienced industry professionals.

xii. Education and Training :

- A capacity building program will be implemented.







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