

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

Comments of the general public on the Draft Policy are invited. Comments may be sent on e-mail ID: nationaltp2015@gmail.com on or before 10th May 2015

DRAFT

NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY 2015

Incredible!ndia

The Wonder that is India

"So far as I am able to judge, nothing has been left undone, either by man or nature, to make India the most extraordinary country that the sun visits on his rounds. Nothing seems to have been forgotten, nothing overlooked."

Mark Twain

"If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions, I should point to India".

Max Mueller

"If there is one place on the face of earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India."

Romain Rolland

NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY 2015

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PREFACE

Travel & Tourism is a mirror of our evolving world. Reflecting economic, social and environmental shifts in our times, the Tourism sector is a dynamic, inspiring force, clearly mapping how nations are advancing as individual societies and economies, as well as members of the global community. Because of its dynamic nature, a nation's tourism sector requires constant monitoring and understanding to ensure it is being leveraged for the greater good of the people of the destination, and as a competitive force on the global landscape. This is especially true for nations looking to the tourism sector as a vehicle for national growth, development and employment generation.

A National Policy on Tourism for India was first formulated in 1982. Highlighting the importance of the sector and the objectives of tourism development in the country, the National Tourism Policy responded to emerging challenges and opportunities. Keeping with the economic environment of the times, the Policy took a broad view on sectoral growth. While offering overarching direction for the nation's tourism industry, the role of the private sector and foreign investment were not central to its focus. Similarly, Domestic tourism and product development were other areas, which were not fully addressed in the Policy.

Subsequently, the National Tourism Policy 2002 was formulated with the objective of positioning tourism as a major engine of economic growth and to harness its direct and multiplier effects for generating employment and eradicating poverty in an environmentally sustainable manner. It recognized domestic tourism as a major driver of tourism growth and acknowledged the critical role of the private sector with the Government playing the role of facilitator and catalyst. The Policy highlighted seven key areas that would provide the required thrust to tourism development. These were :

- Swagat*** (welcome),
- Soochana*** (information),
- Suvidha*** (facilitation),
- Suraksha*** (safety),
- Sahyog*** (cooperation),
- Samrachana*** (infrastructure development) and
- Safai*** (cleanliness).

The National Tourism Policy 2002 was futuristic with guiding principles that hold relevance even today. It offered an exceptional degree of conceptual alignment around definition and activation of destination India's core offering to the international travelling market, as well as identifying opportunities for domestic tourism growth.

While offering a critical framework for the destination proposition, the Policy was not backed by a concrete 'Plan of Action'. This framework for implementation was central to realization of the destination's potential. The 2015 policy development process therefore sought to push the 2002 policy into a new status of focused implementation.

Moreover there have since been widespread, interrelated global developments and advancements, which have had a strong bearing on the Tourism sector. These include, amongst others:

- Increased desire and financial mobility for travel of the middle classes (domestic and international)
- Step-change increase in air access (airlines, airports and route development) in tandem to decreases in the cost of travel
- Growth in the quest of travellers for immersive experiences rich in cultural and natural exposure
- Path-breaking innovations in the field of Information Technology, including mobile usage, digital content creation and sharing
- More importantly, appreciation of the tourism economy amongst heads of state and policy makers and
- Increasing tourism-related infrastructure investment.

With the above in mind, and recognizing the need to continuously examine the sector policy vis-à-vis the changing traveller and industry landscape, the Ministry of Tourism has re-visited the National Tourism Policy 2002 and drafted the National Tourism Policy 2015. The National Tourism Policy 2015 seeks to take into account such developments, as well as to put in place a concrete Action Plan to achieve the objectives of the Policy.

Critically, this policy addresses the issues of achieving growth commensurate with our potential, within a framework of:

- Responsibility (in line with UNWTO's Global Code of Ethics)
- Social, environmental and cultural preservation, protection and promotion

- Opportunities for community development
- Job creation for youth and women
- SME development

Inputs for the Policy have been received from the States / Union Territories, Industry Associations, Stakeholders in the Tourism sector as well as leading Foreign Tour Operators to get their perspective on what works for India as a destination and the best practices which could be adopted by the country. Global bodies, including the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) have been consulted and public feedback obtained by uploading the draft on the websites of the Ministry and inviting inputs / suggestions through advertisements released in leading newspapers. Consultations on the Policy were also held during workshops / meetings organized with:

- (i) Industry Associations and Stakeholders
- (ii) State Governments and Union Territories
- (iii) Leaders and Opinion Makers in the field of Tourism

TOURISM – A GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY

Tourism today is one of the largest global industries and a major engine for economic growth and employment generation. International tourist arrivals have grown steadily from 25 million in 1950 to over 1.1 billion in 2014. At present, 1 in every 11 people worldwide are employed by the tourism sector, with the industry generating US\$ 7.6 trillion or 10% of the global GDP in 2014 (*Source :WTTC Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2015*).

Once perceived as an activity for the affluent, today the number of travellers is growing rapidly and many international travellers are from the expanding middle class of large emerging economies. Tourism has become a way of life. Globally, strong economic growth has generated millions of new travellers looking for exceptional travel experiences, be they business or leisure, domestically, regionally or internationally, and this trend is expected to continue with sustained momentum, outpacing global economic growth.

International tourist arrivals worldwide are expected to increase by 3.3% a year from 2010 to 2030 to reach 1.8 billion by 2030, according to United Nations World Tourism Organisation's (UNWTO) long term forecast *Tourism Towards 2030*. Between 2010 and 2030, arrivals in emerging destinations (+4.4% a year) are expected to increase at twice the rate of those in advanced economies (+2.2% a year) as per UNWTO estimates. ***Travel and tourism is a global opportunity that cannot be ignored.***

In India beginning with the turn-around in 2002, Foreign Tourist Arrivals have steadily grown from 2.38 million in 2002 to 7.70 million in 2014 (provisional) accounting for 0.68% of global international tourist arrivals. In terms of its share of the international tourism receipts India earned US\$ 19657 million (Rs. 120,083 crore) or 1.58% in 2014 (provisional).

India's transformation economically, demography and psycho-graphically over the past two decades on the back of economic reforms has led to the emergence of a large urban middle class which has become the main stay of India's tourism sector. From 270 million domestic visits in 2002 it has steadily grown to 1.14 billion in 2013. Supporting this growth in tourism activity, as a highly labour intensive activity, tourism and tourism support activities create a high proportion of employment and career opportunities, providing 277 million jobs globally, and directly accounting for 23 million jobs or 5.5% of total employment in India, as per the World Travel and

Tourism Council (WTTC) estimate. This number swells to 36.6 million or 8.7% of the total jobs when the indirect jobs created by the sector are also included. The WTTC estimate has pegged the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in India at INR 7,642.5 billion or 6.7% of GDP in 2014. This is expected to rise by 7.3% per annum to INR 16.587 billion in 2025, accounting for 7.6% of GDP, and generating 45.5 million jobs (9% of the nation's total workforce)

The Planning Commission in its 12th Five Year Plan document noted that “the tourism sector has a major role to play to promote a faster, sustainable and more inclusive economic growth – the goal of the Twelfth Five Year Plan. It has better prospects for promoting pro – poor growth than many other sectors”.

Even though the tourism sector in India is growing, it is over a narrow base. Considering India's potential, the gains made are relatively modest. Therefore a set of ambitious targets are required which define clear, cohesive, sustainable and equitable approaches to delivering performance in line with opportunities available for growth and diversification.

The growth of the tourism sector will have a direct and tangible impact on the Indian economy in terms of spreading benefits across the country including remote areas and providing employment and entrepreneurial opportunities to youth, women, marginalized sections of the society and those in the informal sector. In addition tourism will facilitate the preservation of cultural and historical traditions. These positive outcomes on ecological, social, cultural and economic impacts along with a robust community involvement can be achieved by following a paradigm of responsible tourism as clearly defined by the UNWTO through their Global Code of Ethics.

Tourism, with its positive impact on economic growth, employment generation and sustainable development can, therefore, play a significant role in the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals, in particular those relating to eradication of poverty, gender equality, environmental sustainability and global partnerships for development.

For Tourism, climate change is not a remote event, but a phenomenon that already affects the sector and certain destinations, in particular mountain ranges and coastal destinations among others. Climate is an essential resource for tourism, specially for the beach, nature and winter sport tourism segments. Changing climate and weather

patterns at tourist destinations and tourist generating countries can significantly affect the tourists' comfort and their travel decisions. There is now a wide recognition of the urgent need for the tourism industry, national governments and international organizations to develop and implement strategies to face the changing climate conditions and to take preventive actions for future effects as well as to mitigate the environmental impacts of tourism contributing to climate change.

In effect, our concerted pursuit of growth should be within a framework of responsibility that positively and proactively addresses the issues of environmental sensitivity, social engagement and economic returns for the community. Tourism should not only work for the tourist and the entrepreneur but for the wider host community, and overall identity of the nation, today and for future generations.

For effective delivery of the New Tourism Policy 2015, Tourism development has to effectively happen in a way that leverages all critical levers for tourism economy development, including:

- Ensuring alignment of the States and the Union Territories, based on a common agenda and a co-operative, synergized approach.
- Creating a framework for engaging with local bodies productively.
- Recognising that Tourism development is also synonymous with the growth of the trade and industry, making it necessary to effectively coordinate efforts for cross-sectoral benefit.
- Activation of a responsible framework for growth that can be achieved by engaging with the larger civil society.

It is therefore necessary to build a robust partnership between the Centre, States and UTs, local bodies, Industry and the civil society to achieve sustainable growth in a Public – Private – Peoples Participation (PPPP) framework.

Tourism should also be placed in the concurrent list of the constitution for effective legislation to make tourism into a national agenda. National prioritisation of the sector is critical to ensuring focus, investment, alignment and competitiveness needed as precursors to maximizing the impact of the tourism sector for the benefit of India at large.

Directly linked to this, to achieve the targets of increased tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings, efforts need to be supported by adequate budgetary allocations for tourism. Although, the amount allocated for the development of tourism has risen, it remains negligible as part of the total outlay of the five year plans and vis-à-

vis the opportunity for accelerated growth of the tourism economy. From being 0.04%, the highest allocation the tourism industry has witnessed is in the 12th five-year plan, which is about 0.35%.

VISION, MISSION & OBJECTIVES

Vision

Develop and position India as a **“Must EXPERIENCE”** and **“Must REVISIT”** destination for global travellers whilst encouraging Indians to explore their own country and realise the potential of tourism as a major engine for economic growth, employment generation and poverty alleviation in a responsible, inclusive framework.

Mission

- Enhance the share of international tourist arrivals and revenue through a sustained growth path.
- Stimulate repeat, year-round visitation with high dispersion across the destination.
- Promote domestic tourism.
- Develop and promote tourism in a responsible, sustainable manner economically, socially, culturally and environmentally.
- Position India as a welcoming, safe and sustainable destination for both Foreign & Domestic Tourists.
- Enhance the image of brand ‘Incredible India’.
- Deliver a world-class, yet authentic local experience.
- Handhold State Governments, Union Territories and Stakeholders in development and promotion of tourism.
- Ensure meaningful, equitable community participation in tourism development.

Objectives

- Increase India’s share in world tourist arrivals from the present 0.68% to 1% by 2020 and increase to 2% by 2025.
- Position Tourism as a priority on the National political and economic agenda.

- Widen understanding of the benefits of the tourism sector within the wider governmental framework, especially with Government departments critical to Tourism success.
- Evolve a framework for tourism development, which is Government-led, private sector driven and community welfare oriented.
- Foster and develop a coordination mechanism between the Centre and the States / UTs and between various Ministries / Departments and create a framework for engaging with local bodies, to drive the National Tourism Agenda.
- Focus on the benefits of tourism for local communities and the natural and cultural environments.
- Directly address seasonality, creating year-round offerings for continuous tourism economy activity.
- Create a safe, secure, clean, hygienic and inviting environment for tourists.
- Innovation into integrated tourist circuits and destinations based on India's unique civilization, heritage, and culture in partnership with States / UTs, private sector and other agencies, thus spreading the reach and impacts of tourism beyond gateway cities, further across the nation and deeper into communities.
- Position India as a global brand and preferred tourism destination in overseas markets.
- Focus on domestic tourism as a major driver of tourism growth.
- Focus on development and promotion of the North East Region and the state of Jammu & Kashmir.
- Develop quality human resources in the tourism and hospitality sectors across the spectrum of vocational to professional skills development and opportunity creation.
- Create an enabling environment for investment in tourism and tourism-related infrastructure (hard and soft).

DELIVERY MECHANISM - GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

In order to centre stage tourism as a national agenda it is necessary that the jurisdictionary powers of legislation are clearly defined and mobilised. Placing tourism in the concurrent list of the constitution will enable the Centre and States to legislate effectively and demark clear roles for the Centre and the States/ UTs. Tourism development is essentially a State / UT Government driven agenda This will also ensure adequate support is provided to the sector, especially as regards

investment. In order to achieve a common vision, aspiration, set a cogent agenda and address issues that affect the tourism ministry, the following bodies need to be set up:

National Tourism Advisory Board (NTAB) which would be chaired by the Union Minister with all the tourism ministers of the States / UTs and domain experts as members. The Board would have a dedicated secretariat and a corpus of fund to be able to undertake its activities and to provide a robust follow up mechanism.

Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee on Tourism(IMCCT) - Tourism also requires convergence with several ministries at the Centre as well as the States. An Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee set up under the chairmanship of the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister with representation from all relevant ministries can address issues of convergence and synergy. This can be replicated in the States/ UTs through Inter Departmental Co-ordination Committees on Tourism (**IDCCT at State level**).

National Tourism Authority (NTA) - Tourism is a market-oriented sector that requires a swift and flexible approach from the tourism authorities to capitalize on market opportunities. Most competing destinations have separated the policy-making functions from the executing functions. However, in India even though such a system was envisaged early and the twin positions of Secretary and Director General have been delineated, no real separation of functions and activities has been achieved. As a result the Ministry of tourism functions as both the policy making and executing arm of the Ministry of Tourism. Its functioning is hamstrung by the elaborate and time-consuming processes that are prescribed for the Government ministries.

A separate National Tourism Authority (NTA) would be established with representation from the trade and industry and interconnected departments/ agencies to execute the policy laid out by the Ministry. Simple, flexible and elegant processes can be laid down to allow for nimbleness.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

India is one of the greatest civilizations in the world, and is home to four great religions. It is a rich tapestry of varied product and experience offerings across the nation's innate strengths of culture, heritage, nature, beaches, mountains, wild life,

wellness, cuisine and other unique assets spread across different landscapes, communities and climatic zones. Such abundance poses a problem of plenty. As a destination that seeks to achieve exponential growth, focus is required to leverage growth levers, creating compelling reasons for visitation that tap into lead motivations of travellers, ensuring exceptional experience delivery, whilst at the same time also exposing other opportunities for discovery.

It is therefore necessary to fully understand the scope of our offerings to enable the sector to position and promote them in such a way that:

- astutely takes advantage of global market opportunities
- creatively innovates offerings for visitor experience delivery, serving the needs of travellers be they travelling independently, on tour packages, or through charters,
- maximizes synergies between leisure and business travel, including pre/post leisure for MICE visitors
- ensures that key strategic imperatives are realized : year-round visitation, dispersion across the destination, increasing length of stay, spend, and propensity for repeat visitation
- strengthens opportunities for public-private partnerships
- maximizes community participation as a precursor to SME development and job creation, and
- allows for sustained, equitable growth and development.

Our bouquet of products must be customized to attract travellers from specific markets, both as geographic entities and interest groups.

The important products are discussed below:

- **Heritage and Culture** : Often referred to as a living museum, India is blessed with a rich history and a vibrant heritage and culture. India has an array of 32 cultural and natural sites inscribed on the World Heritage list of UNESCO. In addition, 47 more such sites are on the tentative list. There are Museums which are rich repositories of the country's culture with explicit examples as proof of the development of the country's culture and heritage over a period of time. Tourism is one of the most effective instruments to give a new lease of life to such priceless heirlooms inherited and celebrated by us. A strong public - private - people partnership to restore and adapt our historical and cultural assets into tourism products would go a long way in preserving not just our built heritage but also our intangible assets like folk arts, dance forms etc.

- **Spirituality:** India has from time immemorial been a destination that has drawn and welcomed seekers from afar in search of enlightenment. Tourism in India has traditionally thrived upon travellers visiting places of spiritual interest. As the birthplace of four great religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, India can attract significant number of visitors. Up gradation of infrastructure at pilgrim centres to offer a serene and spiritual experience to the travellers is critical. Proactively promoting tour packages including charters in to these destinations can help build a sizeable market within a short period.
- **Yoga:** As a science that seeks to keep the body, mind and soul in concert, Yoga is India's gift to the world which holds the promise of self-realization. Yoga has drawn followers from all over the world over the years. Properly marketed, Yoga has the potential to draw in significant number of long stay travellers. It is however necessary to inventory the existing yoga imparting institutions and connecting them to the tourism market by adapting them suitably in terms of language orientation, physical infrastructure and ability to handle visitors. India has the potential to establish itself as the land of Yoga, leveraging this growing global interest and the United Nations' declaration of the 21st of June as World Yoga Day.
- **Ayurveda / Holistic Health Systems / Wellness:** The ancient science of Ayurveda seeks to maintain a balance amongst the different elements in the body to maintain good health. Entirely holistic in its approach, it has emerged as the answer to lifestyle issues that ail modern living through its detoxification and maintenance regimens. With increasing consumer demand for wellness services and products, the global wellness market is now worth US\$3.4 trillion (*Source: The 2014 Global Spa & Wellness Economy Monitor*). Wellness also brings in high yield tourists and significantly increases the average duration of stay. International wellness tourists spend 59% more than the average tourist in 2013 (*Source :GWI - Global Spa & Wellness Economy Monitor*). *Monitor*). A distinct opportunity exists for India to identify Ayurvedic centres, create a talent pool of practitioners and standardize the products, processes and infrastructure to build a robust product offering. Other indigenous holistic health care systems need to be similarly promoted. Given a strong impetus, Ayurveda along with Spirituality and Yoga can position India as a land that offers an opportunity to the world to return to the best that is in human nature. It also increases the duration of stay.

- **Medical Tourism** : India has a large medical tourism sector which is expected to grow at an estimated rate of 30% annually, to become a US\$ 2 billion industry in 2015. India is placed among the top three medical tourism destinations in Asia (with Thailand and Singapore), mainly due to the low cost of treatment, quality healthcare infrastructure and availability of highly skilled doctors (*Source: FICCI-KPMG Report on Medical Value Travel in India*). India is home to some of the finest hospital facilities and well-trained manpower. Most medical procedures offer world-class expertise and facilities at extremely competitive prices. Quality accreditation of hospitals, insurance coverage and a focused campaign in identified markets can yield handsome dividends.
- **Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions (MICE)**: This segment is one of the fastest growing, high yield segments of the tourism sector and can act as an excellent instrument to tide over the seasonality of the industry. Globally, the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions) segment, with a 54% market share, has overtaken the traditional business trips segment. Conferences/Meetings/Seminars (41%) and trade fairs/exhibitions (29%) are the two largest MICE sub-segments (*Source: ITB World Travel Trends Report 2014/2015*). A number of facilities like convention centres along with supporting hotels have come up in the past few years. Large conventions and conferences bring significant number of high spending tourists, which boost the local economy. India's efforts in attracting big conventions to its shores need to be re-imagined, moving from the current model of supporting individual operators to generate business to a more result oriented framework. In addition, pre/post leisure activity needs to be leveraged as a way of increasing the value of MICE tourism.

A National MICE Promotion Bureau with industry representation working in tandem with similarly structured State/ destination MICE promotion bureaus should work in harmony to secure business, maximizing MICE activity throughout the year and across the country's MICE-ready locations. This will require bureaus having a committed corpus of funds with contribution by the respective Governments and participating private players.
- **Rural / Village / Farm or Agritourism / Plantation**: It is rightly said that India lives in its villages and to peep in to India's heart and soul one has to experience its villages. Indian villages are imbued with natural beauty, charm, and a simple way of life and offer unique experiences for the traveller. Tourism can also act as a powerful tool for revitalizing the rural economy. Developing strong public private peoples partnership within a responsible tourism framework can create a win-win

situation for the tourist, entrepreneur and the community and emerge as an alternate engine of growth for the rural areas. Unique Village Life Experience packages can revive our traditional activities in the villages. Farm and plantation tourism can augment the income from agricultural activities and de-risk farmers to some extent.

- **Beaches:** Globally, Beach holidays have grown by 18% over the last five years and remain the most important segment of leisure travel with 28% of all holiday trips (*Source: World Travel Monitor 2014, IPK International*). With over 7500 Km. of coastline and a tropical climate, India has the potential to create a vibrant beach tourism economy. Challenges like haphazard and unscientific development of beaches, lack of proper upkeep, non-involvement of the community and regulatory obstacles have hampered progress. Strong branding and marketing of the Indian beach experience can change the paradigm. Legislative / regulatory changes which are sensitive to the needs of development without compromising upon the principles of sustainability and right to livelihoods will enable growth.
- **Rivers / Backwaters / Dams:** River cruising has become a valuable niche for destinations across the globe, offering a more exclusive, intimate experience of a place, and a unique up close & personal perspective. India is well irrigated by its rivers, which flow along the length and breadth of the country. Rivers also offer an alternate mode of transportation and recreational opportunities. Similarly, Backwaters are a unique ecosystem, which offer experiential holidays. Dams are typically built in pristine environments with reasonable connectivity. Land is also available near the dams for developing accommodation centres, gardens, mounting water sport activities and other such activities. Planned development in tune with the environment can readily yield new tourism destinations.
- **Cruises / Coastal / Inland:** The Cruise sector is a fast growing component of the leisure industry, worldwide. Experience in the Caribbean, Latin American and South-East Asian countries indicate that a huge amount of foreign exchange can be earned and sizeable direct & indirect employment can be generated onshore by providing the right policy environment and infrastructure for the growth of cruise shipping. It is estimated that on an average a cruise tourist spends about USD 200-300 and a cruise staff/officer spends about US\$ 100-150 per port visit.

India has several advantages like along coastline and strong port positioning which imparts a natural advantage to the country to attract international cruise lines and

India's positioning in South Asia and its proximity to already popular cruise destinations would enable strong cruise circuits to be created over a period of time.

India's share of cruise tourism has, however, been steadily slipping in the recent past. It is therefore necessary to explore the creation of dedicated cruise berthing/facilitation services in important ports, ease visa and immigration processes, introduce time efficient operations, moderate port charges and incentivize cruise operators to call on India. Similarly, coastal cruises connecting various Indian ports and river cruises need to be incentivized in the short term to add experiential products to our portfolio.

- **Adventure:** With its diverse geographical zones India has immense potential for adventure activities throughout the year. 73% of the Himalayas are situated in India and along with the other mountain ranges can host a variety of activities like skiing, trekking, rock climbing, para-gliding etc. Caravan parks and caravan tourism can add yet another facet to the tourism product. Our coast can support a variety of sea based sporting activities. Similarly, our rivers and backwaters can support a variety of activities like kayaking, white water rafting etc. It is important to unleash the potential of the sector by providing access to suitable places, providing facilities and infrastructure for mounting various activities, while establishing clear protocols and safety norms and accrediting operators with the right experience and credentials to ensure safety and assure quality in line with responsible tourism principles.
- **Wild Life/ Eco Tourism:** India has ecological hotspots, which are rich in flora and fauna. While uncontrolled tourism can harm these areas, a calibrated and meaningful approach can help in preserving these areas with the visitors acting as a check against illegal activities. A proactive, responsible approach providing controlled access to these areas after carefully ascertaining carrying capacity within an eco-friendly framework can augment incomes in the poorest parts of the country and also help the cause of preserving wild life and plant life.
- **Golf:** Over the past few years some world-class golf courses have been developed in India. Golf tourism brings in high spending tourists for a relatively longer duration of stay. Focused marketing of this niche product will help in supporting the economy of those regions, add to the viability of the golf courses and popularize the sport in India.

- **Cuisine** : Getting a taste of local cuisine has become an essential part of the travelling experience, and as such gastronomy presents a vital opportunity to enrich the tourism offer and stimulate economic development. India's strongest calling card to the world is its cuisine. Indian restaurants are now running in many parts of the world to great popularity. As the primary producer of spices and the melting pot of various cultures India offers an interesting and diverse array of culinary experiences. An Indian Culinary Institute with Regional Chapters is proposed to be set up for research, documentation and propagation of Indian Cuisine and to provide quality education in the field of Culinary Arts.

International interest by Indian cuisine should be leveraged to draw travellers to explore our culinary trails with their myriad traditions and ingredients. Interactive culinary offerings should also be developed to allow travellers to enjoy hands-on instruction round Indian cooking techniques, furthering their immersion into the culture and hospitality of India.

- **Shopping**: India is a veritable shopper's paradise especially for the high skill handcrafted products and retail trade provides enormous forward and backward linkages throughout the economy. Shopping is an integral part of the tourism experience and a valuable contributor to revenues. The development of dedicated shopping centres for traditional crafts, designed along the lines of ethnic village haats such as DilliHaat and Shilpgram needs to be encouraged and the "Make in India" brand should be promoted. Shopping should be made a part of the itinerary of tourists.
- **Fairs & Festivals** : Fairs & festivals in India are colourful commemorations of religious or historical events or celebrations of the change of seasons. They reflect the vigour and life-style of its people and provide unique experience to visitors. Vibrant colours, music and festivities make the country come alive throughout the year. Fairs and festivals should be assertively utilized to drive year-round, cross-country travel, creating planning tools such as festival calendars to enable tourists to include these in their itineraries.
- **Cinematic Tourism**: Films are an excellent medium to present a destination. While advertisements give a run time of a few seconds, films run for much longer and can create an aspirational desire amongst the audience. Not only do shooting films help the tourism industry and boost the local economy significantly, some

destinations have proven that films can be a cost effective method to market a destination. Creating an inventory of shooting locations, enabling film shootings by simplifying processes and issuing time bound clearances and incentivizing film makers through a dedicated corpus of fund by both the Centre and the States will help tap in to the opportunity.

- **Destination Weddings:** India is known for its vibrant and colorful weddings and its spectacular palaces and rituals can form an attractive proposition for destination weddings. The opportunity exists to elevate this niche, linking together various locations and experience creators (ie wedding planners, tour operators, and hoteliers etc.) to create attractive offerings, expanding our ability to tap into this unique, lucrative market.

Building on the above, **Honeymoon** is another attractive segment that can be targeted through innovative product development and promotion.

- **Interpretation / Heritage Walks:** Experiential tourism is all about storytelling to make the facts come alive and make the visitor relive the experience. A concerted effort should be made to establish high quality interpretation centres, provide well-trained guides, hop-on hop-off city bus tours, sound and light shows, aids like apps, audio guides to enhance the visitor experience. Similarly activities like heritage walks help the visitor experience the living history and can be a powerful tool to interpret the past and the present and instill a sense of pride in our surroundings.

As clearly demonstrated above, India is over-blessed with an array of offerings, each able to create a compelling invitation for travellers. This, however, risks causing confusion for travellers as to what to experience. It also risks overwhelm when travellers try to do too much on one trip.

Product development must, therefore, take into careful consideration traveller core interests, familiarity with the destination (i.e. first visit or repeat), duration of stay, time of year and ideal diversity of exposure, thus ensuring immense traveller satisfaction, yet seeding the desire to return and to experience India again.

Importantly, product development must ensure that the momentum of tourism experience creation and delivery is established to allow for:

- 365 day visitation
- Gateway city visitation and into the second and third tier cities

- Leverage of non-weather sensitive niches
- Maximisation of opportunities for repeat visitation
- Complementing traditional offerings with innovation
- Embedding destination India advocacy to leverage credibility and influence of word of mouth awareness building
- Maximizing ROI (return on investment) on destination promotion

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure is essential to traveller experience delivery. It is central of not only what they see, but how they feel while travelling. India as a tourism destination needs to prioritise infrastructure as the backbone of the country's long-term success. Regardless of how compelling our cultural and heritage attractions, if the country is not seen, felt, and experienced as warm, welcoming, safe, secure and easy to explore, the tourism sector will not be able to realize its aspiration of being the driver of our nation's identity, economic advancement, and wellbeing.

Infrastructure for the tourism sector can broadly be categorized into three: Social infrastructure, Core infrastructure and Tourism infrastructure.

Social Infrastructure

This is the precedent condition for the growth of tourism in the country with five main components.

- (a) **Cleanliness**: tourists from all over the world visit Tourism destinations and as such the cleanliness and hygiene requirements need to be higher than the socially acceptable levels. Lack of cleanliness and hygiene can severely impact the tourism sector and calls for concerted action by the Centre, States and the industry. Comprehensive plans for identified tourism destinations can be implemented with contributions from the Government of India, State Governments and the local tourism industry. Peoples' participation and social awareness should be the cornerstones for such an initiative and the tourism stakeholders, as the primary beneficiaries should have a vital role in maintaining the cleanliness and hygiene of the destination. Benchmark standards for cleanliness and hygiene should be followed in all projects and activities of the tourism sector. On the domestic front, even as we run social awareness

campaigns like the “Athithidevo bhava” and “Campaign Clean India”, we need to redouble our efforts to aggressively push key messages like safety and hygiene.

- (b) **Safety:** Tourism cannot take root in an environment bereft of safety and security and calls for a policy of zero tolerance. Issues of safety pertain not only to physical assault but also to hustling, cheating etc. A concerted drive by the Centre and the States with stringent provisions in the law along with a dedicated police force and deployment of technology to yield tangible results on the ground is essential.
- (c) **Welcome:** The success of a tourist destination lies in how welcoming it is to its visitors. Various nations have revamped their visa, immigration and customs processes to gain a greater share of the tourism market. The E-Tourist Visa is a landmark development that has ushered in ease and convenience in travelling to India. The success of the E-Tourist Visa needs to be expanded for other countries and deepened with a provision for multiple entry visas at least for visiting neighbouring countries. The facility of E-Tourist Visa needs to be expanded to the other international airports and seaports. Immigration processes need to be streamlined especially for the cruise tourists to reduce the time for administrative procedures.
- (d) **Accessibility :** Facilitating tourism travel for persons with disabilities and differently abled persons is an essential element of any policy for the development of responsible tourism. Most differently abled persons will get excluded unless adequate arrangements are made to enable them to enjoy their visit. Every tourist destination and project should be designed to become a barrier free tourism destination. Physical infrastructure like specially designed walkways, ramps, elevators, Braille signage are to be provided. Similarly information on the tourist destinations and the facilities for the differently abled need to be made easily available.
- (e) **Responsibility:** Tourism should be sensitive to present and future economic, social and environmental impacts including concerns related to climate change and should equitably address the needs of tourists, industry, environment and most importantly that of the host communities. The focus of tourism should, in fact, be on the benefits that tourism can provide to the community and the environment. This calls upon duties and obligations amongst all stakeholders. Even though this is likely to place a limited burden on the stakeholders in the

short term, the reward it holds of having a community that cherishes ecological preservation, cultural integrity and livelihoods and the attraction that it holds in the global market place justifies it handsomely. The framework of Responsible Tourism should be the corner stone of all the endeavours of the tourism sector and in this regard the Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India (STCI) framed by the Ministry would form the base, to be expanded to include further elements of responsibility.

Core Infrastructure

Tourism rides on the existing core infrastructure like roads, rail, aviation and waterways. Secondary tourism infrastructure can thrive on an existing base of core infrastructure. Intermodal transportation is the key to achieving hassle free, seamless travel.

- (a) **Roadways** : India has a vast and intricate network of roadways. Over the past decade considerable progress has been made with the major highways. However, last mile connectivity to tourist destinations still remains a challenge. Co-ordination between the tourism and the road building agencies is essential to map out and provide this last mile connectivity. In addition, ancillary infrastructure like signages, clean restrooms at regular intervals along the roads, provision for safety and emergency medical services are required. Measures like a single point interstate road taxes and streamlining toll tax collection need to be put in place immediately to provide ease of road travel.
- (b) **Railways** : The Indian Railways is one of the largest transportation and logistics network of the world, carrying over 23 million passengers a day and connecting about 8,000 stations spread across the sub-continent (*Source*: Indian Railways – A White Paper, February 2015). Most of the tourist destinations are connected by rail. However, a railway system adapted to the needs of the tourists would be a game changer. Some initiatives like establishing dedicated tourist coaches on trains, tourist lounges, attention to better amenities like clean toilets, seats, linen, Wi-Fi connectivity, entertainment options along with a clean and hassle free railway stations with clean toilets, dispensaries, ATMs, vending machines, information and facilitation centres would shore up revenues for railways and give a boost to tourist connectivity. Mountain trains like the Nilgiri Mountain Railway are great tourism products and with some qualitative improvement can emerge as iconic products. Luxury tourist trains like Palace on Wheels are a great

way to see India and are strong tourism magnets that need to be multiplied and encouraged.

- (c) **Air Transport** : India is currently the 9th largest aviation market and is projected to be the 3rd by 2020. India has excellent air connectivity with 125 airports, handling about 122 million domestic and 47 million international passengers and is poised to handle 217 million domestic and 76 million international passengers by 2020 (*Source*: Press Release dated 22nd September 2014 of AAI). In spite of this India still accounts for a negligible 0.04 trips per capita per annum as compared to 0.3 air trips in the case of China which points towards a considerable room for growth. Currently 70% of FTAs are funneled through the 5 international airports in metro cities. There is a strong case for dispersing the traffic to other destinations/ airports to add to the convenience of the passenger and viability of tourist destinations. Similarly, domestic aviation traffic is also concentrated around the metro cities and dispersal to other tier 2 and tier 3 cities will create a robust connectivity to tourist destinations.
- (d) Last mile connectivity to emerging destinations can be provided through non-scheduled operators with the support of the State Governments, helicopter services, charter services etc. Experiential products like seaplanes can give a boost to tourist destinations. Rationalizing fares, taxes like the ATF and airport charges can give a fillip to the tourism industry as a WTTC study suggests that a 10% reduction in cost of air tickets causes an increase of 17 to 22% in tourist arrivals.
- (e) **Waterways**: With its long coastline of over 7500 km. and significant network of rivers, lakes and backwaters India has tremendous unrealized potential for water transportation. Cruise passenger traffic over the past five years has recorded a negative growth rate of -14%. The situation needs immediate correction by building some world class experiential infrastructure at the receiving ports, rationalizing port charges and taxes, streamlining Customs and Immigration processes and providing incentives in the short term to encourage cruise operators to choose a port of call/ home port in India. Similarly, inland water cruises should be encouraged by providing adequate berthing facilities, tourist amenities, navigation facilities and incentives to promote the segment.

Tourism Infrastructure

This largely comprises of enabling public infrastructure, which is funded by the State and private sector. Even though a significant amount of funds were committed to the development of public infrastructure over the years there are no truly world class, experiential destinations as the resources tend to be thinly spread. An effort has to be made to create benchmark global destinations, which will have a demonstrative effect and trigger similar developments. Following such an approach in the Central Schemes of Swadesh Darshan, PRASAD, the iconic Buddhist Circuit and all our new schemes, will create a tangible impact. Destination planning, development and maintenance need to be in line with the carrying capacity and follow the principles of responsible tourism. Destinations also need to have a strategic marketing plan with a calendar of events for effective branding and marketing.

Private Infrastructure which largely comprises of accommodation units, convention centres, theme/ entertainment parks etc. needs to be scaled up immediately, if India is to deliver on its promise of growth. A clear and robust framework that would unleash the potential of the entrepreneur has to be put in place. Hospitality assets tend to fall in the grey zone between real estate and infrastructure. However, considering that they are typically long gestation projects without transfer of ownership and are not natural monopolies, there exists a strong case for treating them on par with infrastructure projects. Since potential investors gauge the performance of the present players before taking an investment decision, it is necessary that the issues affecting the existing investors be addressed expeditiously. Efforts must be made to improve the ease of doing business for predictable and time bound results. Issues pertaining to taxation need to be rationalized to enhance the competitiveness of the industry.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Tourism is, at its heart, about experience delivery. For this reason, the Tourism sector can emerge as a major generator of employment and play a key role in poverty reduction especially since India is a fertile ground for social enterprise and experimentation. The net effect is the nation's ability to directly address the areas of sustainability, inclusivity, and poverty reduction.

In order to realize its potential and to emerge as a shining example for other similarly placed nations, India needs to take a position of thought leadership. This can be achieved by establishing a skills development network at different levels:

- Thought Leadership : a full-fledged university, which will not only act as the regulator for taught courses but also emerge as the fulcrum for professional education, research, consultancy and advocacy. The efforts of the university can be extended by setting up centres of excellence in different geographies with the participation of State Governments and the industry. The university can also offer “distance education” as a platform to harvest such talent.
- Professional Skills: If India’s potential growth is to be realised, it needs a significant amount of managerial talent. In addition to the State run/ supported institutions, private institutions should be encouraged to be able to create the required talent pool. One of the drawbacks of a career in hospitality industry is lack of a clear career path and progression. The State in collaboration with the industry should address this issue to be able to attract the best talent and maintain professionalism. To achieve high standards of professional skill development it is equally important to engage in training and skill development of the trainers.
- Skill development is the most important segment to create jobs amongst the poorest segments especially in the unorganized sector. There is a need to retrain the current service providers like taxi drivers, boat operators, guides, restaurants, dhabas etc. on a regular basis. This can be done by the State tourism departments in association with the local tourism and hospitality institutes with the active participation of the industry as per a fixed schedule. Eventually, this training component can become benchmark criteria for classification and accreditation.
- Vocations Skills and Complementary community workforce support: absorption of a diverse workforce of retirees, housewives etc. in areas like cultural interpretation, conducted tours etc. The larger task is to skill people to enable them to find meaningful employment in many ancillary areas of tourism. Traditionally, we consider areas like hotels, restaurants and tour operations as intrinsic to tourism. There are many areas like souvenirs, farming, activities like traditional fishing, toddy tapping, handloom weaving, tea plucking, etc. which can become important magnets for experiential tourism. People working in such areas can be trained to open the doors of opportunity in the tourism sector.

Tourism thrives on innovation and has low barriers to entry. The success of any destination rests on the vibrancy and the freshness of its products. To stay ahead of the innovation curve we need to move away from a paradigm of “job seekers” to “job creators” by introducing a module in all our curricula on entrepreneurship and impart some skills on incubating a business along with some mentoring by industry leaders.

CERTIFICATION & ACCREDITATION

Trust is the cornerstone on which all businesses are built. Buyers need to be reassured that what they buy is what they get. All stakeholders within the tourism industry, whether product or service providers, need to view themselves as part of India’s delivery of:

- The Incredible India Brand promise
- Exceptional traveller experience

Commitment to this unifying aspect of the industry is vital to holistic growth and development of the sector. Establishing a means of ensuring alignment is, therefore, of utmost importance.

It is necessary to have a rigorous and robust certification and accreditation of products and services across all segments like accommodation providers, tour operators, adventure tour operators, service providers like spa and wellness, entertainment, guides, restaurants etc. An effective, singularly understood and adopted certification and accreditation system needs to be accepted by an overwhelming majority of the industry. The effort should be to achieve maximum coverage of the industry without compromising upon the standards. Since the industry has a spectrum of players of different sizes and price points a graded approach, which classifies them in to different categories is necessary. Certified and accredited players need to be incentivized to attract a wider subscription. Similarly, strategic measures to goad the reluctant to seek certification and accreditation need to be pursued. Applications need to be dealt with in a time bound and simple manner by outsourcing activities and by deploying information technology.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information technology has emerged as the biggest influence in recent times. With specific areas of lifestyle penetration and benefit, nations unable to harness it are fast becoming significantly disadvantaged. It is incumbent that we create a proactive

ICT culture and ecosystem and take a holistic 360-degree approach as a means of escalating our tourism awareness, attraction and experience delivery.

Technology has become a powerful tool for both internal and external operations of nations utilizing tourism as a lever for growth. Technology has a significant impact across the following areas which can directly benefit tourism nations:

- Efficiencies
- Engagement
- Knowledge Hub

That said, it is important to recognize that the digital phenomena is not the answer to all innovation, branding, marketing and promotional questions. Purpose must always precede application. Ultimately, usage of technology v/s touch, traditional media v/s new media must be determined based on:

- how best to respond to target market habits, attitudes, aspirations
- how best to deliver experience excellence
- how best to organize, monitor, manage and optimize the tourism sector

The traveller's journey of destination interest, search, researching, decision making and final booking process is an ever evolving one. Triggers of traveller interest in a destination, range from traditional advertising (ie television, print, outdoor), online advertising and promotion, word of mouth and other forms of influence. It is very important that the right vehicle of communication is married to the purpose of messaging (i.e. brand messaging and invitation v/s, niche marketing vs. promotion). Where technology has become a strong force of influence in tourism demand creation is in the area of experience decision making and delivery.

The internet (increasingly mobile-based) is a leading method of search and has the biggest influence in decision-making and the mobile phone is fast becoming the device of choice. Internet is differentiated from other forms of disseminating information by its ability to be queried. A comprehensive and robust information base on our website is to be created which can cater to fill the information needs of travellers seeking specific, granular information comprising of text, pictures, videos, audio etc. This information can be used as the basis for building a strong audience community especially overseas sellers through an e-newsletter. The message to the audience community is to be amplified through the various social media platforms. Applications or Apps running mobile devices on a range of topics from information, route guidance, safety etc. will add to the reach and utility. Publicity material and

collaterals should be primarily produced in electronic form for convenience and to reaffirm our commitment to the environment. The information is to be made available in different languages to connect across communities.

Internet promotion also allows us the opportunity to target specific communities across geographies and interest groups on a diverse range of subjects. The power of the Internet as a cost effective way to reach specific audiences should be harnessed in mounting promotional campaigns. Promotion can take place through two primary vehicles:

- Advertising: formal messaging sent out through formal platforms which are trusted due to their established brands and, importantly, vetting of content for honesty and authenticity
- Social media: informal messaging grounded in UGC (user generated content), allowing for high degrees of content and interactivity, however is not vetted for truthfulness

As a result, it is important to remember that usage of messaging platforms has a direct rub-off on brand image and trust of message. Once again, it is very important that the right vehicle of communication is used to respond to the purpose of messaging (ie brand messaging and invitation v/s, niche marketing vs. promotion). A clear, cohesive strategy is needed to define and differentiate the role of messaging platforms.

Wi-Fi connection at places of tourist importance will act as an enabler for connectivity, safety, information and to run destination specific apps that can become an interactive way to replace dated technologies like audio guides, guide books etc. Technologies like virtual reality, interactive maps, interpretation, profiling tourists for market research purposes, e payments are to be actively pursued.

There is also a need to develop tourism trade and industry capability in this area to enable them to harness the benefits of the ICT revolution especially in such as customer engagement, working with online aggregators, online feedback portals, CRM, etc.

Further, activities of the Ministry need to be upgraded and migrated to the E office platform gradually starting with the subjects that involve interaction with the trade and industry.

PROMOTION AND MARKETING

The Incredible India campaign is one of the most successful campaigns that placed India on the world tourism map. It is imperative that we build on its strength by keeping it fresh to productively engage with the audience. This is also an excellent vehicle to project our soft power and create a positive perception about India.

Apart from Incredible India, various States are also promoting themselves internationally. There is a strong case for achieving coordination with the States while planning our publicity campaign to achieve synergy and greater efficiencies. A consultation and co-ordination mechanism is envisaged. Our campaigns address two kinds of audience, the international and the domestic. It is important to focus on key markets to engage with established markets along with a few key identified emerging markets that can push our growth and insulate us from market risks. All markets are not similar and hence a specific brand campaign and media strategy projecting specific core messages, invitations and offerings, which are of interest in that market.

Domestic

On the domestic front even as we run social awareness campaigns like the “Athithidevo bhava” and “Campaign Clean India”, we need to redouble our efforts to aggressively push key messages like safety and hygiene. Along with promotional campaigns for the special regions of North East and J&K, a coordinated approach with the States to popularize some of the lesser-known destinations need to be undertaken. Implicit in this strategy is the understanding that a robust domestic tourism would mean lesser outbound tourists, which would help retain foreign exchange and bolster our economy. It would also be a valuable driver of tourism dispersion across the country, and flattening of the seasonality curve.

International

Our campaigns typically run on print, television, outdoor and the internet. As the media landscape is evolving, especially with the latter fast emerging as highly influential in terms of reach and choice of engagement, careful media strategy development is required to ensure:

- Big brand awareness and gravitas – best achieved through reputable television networks
- Audience engagement – best achieved through online advertising with national tourism connection

- Search and conversion – online, especially tourism websites

Our allocative efficiency needs to change depending on our messaging goals and desired actions of audiences.

World-class publicity material and collaterals need to be produced in tandem to ensure that the brand is carried through all media platforms. Our participation and presence in international fairs and road shows needs to be impactful and meaningful, enabling preference as a prelude to destination choice. India should also host a high profile global travel mart in India in partnership with highly reputable organisations, thus achieving reach, profile and gravitas. Publicity boosters like shooting films in India are to be actively solicited, with strong PR support to maximize awareness. Online training programmes leading up to an “India Specialist” certification would be organized.

The overseas offices of the Ministry of Tourism should be restructured to act as the nucleus with most of the commercial and market oriented functions outsourced to specialized agencies. Similarly, appointing representative agencies in markets where we do not have a presence would re-energize our efforts and allow for focused investment on conversion of interest into booking.

The Overseas Indian community estimated at over 25 million is spread across every major region in the world, with a presence in 189 countries across the globe. The Indian Diaspora forms a significant and influential group in their respective country of residence. The outreach of the Incredible India brand can be further expanded, through pooling of resources and synergised efforts of all stakeholders including the Indian Diaspora. The Overseas Indian community can, in fact, be the real Ambassadors for Indian Tourism and can contribute significantly to promoting the visit of an increasing number of tourists to the country.

It is also necessary to have in place effective crisis management systems to counter and contain negative impacts of disasters, calamities, epidemics or any untoward incidents. This would involve disaster management on the ground as well as effective communication through media and PR activities.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

The significance of International Co-operation lies in building partnerships, learning from each other's experience and to collaborate for mutual benefit. Tourism is also an excellent vehicle for projecting soft power. India needs to articulate the interests of emerging/ developing nations and champion the causes of sustainability, responsibility and the poverty alleviating and employment generating aspects of tourism. Bilateral agreements entered into with other nations should be result oriented.

India should also actively engage in multilateral forums like the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) Dialogue Forum, BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa), etc. and international industry bodies like the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), etc. to further its interest. India should play a constructive role in UNWTO initiatives like the Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP), the Silk Road and play a leading role in mounting the Spice Route initiative. Collaborative projects like the Silk Road and Spice Route projects help India build constructive international partnerships that can yield excellent commercial results. Similarly, partnerships built with neighbouring countries like Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and other South Asian countries, to mount international itineraries like the Buddhist circuit, Ramayana circuit, Himalayan circuit would yield excellent dividends to all participating nations. Collaborating with international industry bodies like the WTTC, PATA etc. for engaging with the tourism players across geographies, market intelligence, communicate with the global industry on key issues and harness their expertise would benefit our industry.

MARKET INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

It is rightly said, "If you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it". A robust statistical system and market research are critical for action for both the Government and industry.

At a national level, it is the responsibility of the tourism authority to guide vision and set goals. As part of this, intelligence is needed to ensure awareness of:

- Global state of the industry (quantitative and qualitative)

- Traveller trends: destinations, motivations, spend, purchase process, usage of technology etc.
- Changing forces in the industry creating opportunities and/or challenges
- State of the industry in India
- Measurement of the sector vis-à-vis strategic imperatives

Governments also need a strong information and feedback system for optimal policy making especially in emerging areas to mount meaningful efforts. Similarly, the trade and industry also needs information in real time in areas like market trends, assessment of source markets etc. to help them make informed decisions.

Vast amounts of research are available in the public domain that will dramatically assist India's tourism sector in responding to the above. In addition, state tourism bodies across India also possess valuable research and intelligence that can be of benefit across the nation. The national ministry should, therefore, lead in:

- collection,
- consolidation,
- centralization, and
- reporting

of this insight and data for the benefit of industry stakeholders in both the public and private sectors.

Linked to the above, market research should not only use the primary research and statistical sources but also collate and cross-reference it with the work done by organizations like UNWTO, WTTC, PATA etc. A strong and comprehensive framework for statistical information and market research will become the basis for optimal policy making and exploiting market opportunities.

The agenda of tourism development has to be primarily implemented by the States and Union Territories. While some States have understood the potential of tourism, drafted enabling policies and have emerged as global destinations some have not initiated any concerted efforts to harvest the potential of tourism. Such States and Union Territories are to be encouraged and handheld to help them make a baseline survey, draft policies and vision documents to pursue a tourism development agenda.

IN CONCLUSION

As a travel destination, few other nations can offer the diversity of products and experiences found in India. However, tourism in India, though growing consistently, is

yet to realize its full potential. The travel and tourism industry offers significant opportunity for fulfillment of key national growth imperatives including employment generation across all regions of the country, and growth in the sector can contribute to overall economic development in the country.

The National Tourism Policy 2015 has put together a broad framework of recommendations for the development and promotion of both, domestic and international tourism. It has suggested approaches for reducing barriers, creating better visitor experiences through improved facilities and services and availability of a skilled workforce, fostering close cooperation between the Central and State Governments and the private sector and creating a positive and enabling environment for growth of the industry, in a responsible manner. Combined with a targeted and focused promotional strategy, the policy aims at giving India its rightful position in an increasingly competitive international tourism market, whilst also driving meaningful domestic tourism.

The Policy also has a concrete action plan with a clear-cut road map and time frames to ensure its time bound and successful implementation.

Most importantly, the National Tourism Policy 2015 seeks to unite, inspire and guide India's tourism sector to build an invaluable platform for the nation economically, socially, for now and for future generations of Indians.

ACTION PLAN

Delivery Mechanism - Governance and Administration

- Tourism to be included in the Concurrent List of the Constitution of India. This will provide a constitutional recognition to the tourism sector, help in channeling the development of tourism in a systematic manner and enable the Central Government to legislate for tourism development.
- Set up a National Tourism Advisory Board with the Minister of Tourism as chairman, Minister of State for Tourism as Vice Chairman, Ministers from State Governments and domain experts as members, which would meet every three months.
- Establish a permanent secretariat for the committee for continuous follow up of the agenda, which would be housed in Paryatan Bhawan. Joint Secretary in the Ministry would be the Member Secretary and an officer of the rank of Director to act as the CEO.
- Set up a corpus of funds for the functioning and activities of the above Committee.
- Set up a formal “Inter Ministerial Coordination Committee” under the Chairmanship of the Principal Secretary to Prime Minister with representation of all the connected Ministries to achieve convergence on tourism matters.
- Clearly delineate the policy-making aspects and the executing aspects.
- Establish a National Tourism Authority as the executing arm with an officer of the rank of Joint Secretary designated as the Director General.
- Devolve authority and funds and establish flexible and time efficient processes and procedures for the Tourism Board.
- Empowered Regional Councils to be set up to take up matters pertaining to the Region.
- The Indiatourism offices overseas to function as the nucleus in their respective regions and to outsource PR and event management activities to the extent possible.
- India Tourism Marketing Representatives (ITMRs) to be engaged in important source markets where the Ministry does not have its own offices.
- Project Monitoring Units to be set up in the Ministry for effective monitoring.

Product Development

Heritage & Culture

- Make efforts to increase the number of World Heritage sites in India.
- Conservation, preservation, integrated development of areas around World Heritage Sites and other important archaeological monuments.
- Up-gradation of Museums in the country.
- A certain percentage of the ticketed revenue at monuments to go back to the monument for preservation / maintenance.
- Night viewing at ASI / State Archaeology monuments to be considered, especially during summer months.
- States / UTs to consider mounting Son-et-Lumiere (SEL) / Sound & Light Shows at important monuments and tourist sites, as an added attraction for tourists.
- Encourage the States to create an enabling framework for adapting privately owned heritage structures for public use on a revenue sharing basis.
- Frame a policy for Vintage and Classic cars.
- Set up a National Heritage Tourism Board.

Spirituality

- Identify spiritual destinations and work with States to improve infrastructure and experience of the visitors.
- Incentivize tour packages / charters in foreign markets in the short term
- Promote spiritual destinations as a product / circuit.
- Encourage States to have a body to act as a guardian for the destinations.

Yoga

- Organise special events in India and overseas on “International Yoga Day” (the 21st June).
- Make a list of quality yoga institutes and handhold them to adapt to tourism.
- Market them as a product aggressively in the international market.
- Create a Yoga Promotion Board.

Ayurveda/ Holistic Health Care / Wellness

- Develop Synergy with the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) for developing the sector.

- Formulate a certification process for wellness centres to assess their standard for infrastructure, expertise of manpower and quality of medicines used.
- Make a database of such Ayurveda / Wellness Centres available online.
- Develop and promote centres of excellence for different wellness systems.
- Run specific promotional campaigns in potential markets.
- Create a Wellness Promotion Board.

Medical Tourism

- Create a strong synergy with the health care sector and the Ministry of Health.
- Promote accreditation of hospitals and widen international insurance coverage for treatments in Indian hospitals.
- Create a Medical Tourism Promotion Board for focused intervention.
- Promote through specialized exhibitions and focused road shows in specific markets.

Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions (MICE)

- MICE Promotion Bureau with industry representation to be set up at the Centre and replicated at the State / Destination level. A corpus of funds to be created by contribution from the Government and participating industry for bidding for large conventions. The National and State / Destination Bureaus to pitch together for getting MICE events to the country.
- Provide a single window clearance for organising Meetings and Conventions in India.
- MICE facilities to be an integral component of the concept of “Smart Cities” announced by the Government.
- Develop mega Convention Cities in each of the five regions of India to cater to small and medium conventions.
- Inventory of MICE facilities / Convention Centres to be made available online.
- Familiarization trips for international convention planners to be organized.
- Rationalise and simplify Conference visa regime.
- Promote MICE segment through specialized trade fairs and focused Road Shows.

Rural / Village / Farm / Plantation Tourism

- Create a template for developing Rural/ Village/ Farm/ Plantation tourism and encourage the States to adapt it with suitable modifications including legislation quality standards etc.

- Document best practices and promote successful destinations / projects internationally to encourage others to follow.

Beach

- Encourage States to establish Beach Development Authorities for planned development and upkeep of beaches on a revenue-generating model.
- Review of legislations relating to Coastal Regulatory Zones (CRZ)

River / Backwater / Dams

- Encourage States to develop master plans for developing waterfront areas / water based activities.
- Review legislation to enable responsible development.
- Publish a template for development with best practices to sensitize the States.

Cruise

- Upgrade facilities in line with those at international cruise terminals and develop dedicated cruise terminals at potential ports.
- Rationalize and simplify procedures & processes related to Immigration, Customs at cruise terminals / ports.
- Create recreation areas near cruise terminals, with restaurants, shopping arcades, etc.
- Create boat jetties and facilitating infrastructure to enable river / inland cruises.
- Incentivize river cruise operators to start services.
- Create a template of guidelines for river cruise operators covering safety and service aspects and encourage the States to adapt it with suitable modifications.
- Incentivize coastal and passenger cruises between the different Indian ports.

(Also refer to Infrastructure/ Core Infrastructure/ Waterways)

Adventure

- Develop integrated plans to make the country's geographical and natural assets, tangible world-class tourism experiences.
- Develop and promote brand Himalayas in collaboration with the Himalayan States.
- Training of adventure guides.
- Public liability insurance policy to be made available for adventure tour operators.

- Draft clear guidelines for Adventure Tour operators especially covering areas like safety and make accreditation mandatory.

Wildlife / Eco tourism

- Engage with the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF)/ States on a policy with a controlled but visitor friendly approach to achieve positive outcomes.
- Clearly defined carrying capacity to be the basis for any intervention.
- Publish a template for development with best practices to encourage the States / stake holders.

Cuisine

- Research and document ancient culinary tradition through Hotel Management and Food Craft Institutes and other private culinary institutes.
- Organize / support India Food Festivals in overseas markets in association with leading Indian hotel chains, India Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. and Indian Missions.
- Develop and promote '*Culinary Trails*' to showcase the rich culinary heritage of States/ UTs.
- Publish thematic brochures on Indian Cuisine / Recipes for distribution through India restaurants and India Tourism offices, overseas.
- Invite "Master Chef" and similar culinary reality shows to India.
- Organise familiarization tours for leading international chefs to popularize India cuisine.

Golf

- Inventorize the existing facilities and engage with Golf tour operators.
- Conceive and support a signature international golf tournament, which can be played sequentially in the best golf courses to popularize them.
- Undertake focused marketing initiatives.

Shopping

- Engage with the Ministry of Textiles / Handicrafts etc. to identify opportunities.
- Encourage the States to map and identify the resource persons/ talent pool and connect them to the market.
- Publish a template / best practices to encourage the States.

- Create tour itineraries combining the modern and the traditional.

Fairs and Festivals

- Create an exhaustive calendar of fairs and festivals and disseminate the information in advance to enable tourists to plan.
- Identify established fairs and festivals like the Pushkar fair, Nehru Trophy Boat Race and others and develop them into strong tourism magnets.

Cinematic

- Undertake an inventory of suitable destinations and disseminate information.
- Proactively engage with production houses – international and domestic to attract film shootings in Indian locations.
- Facilitate Single Window clearance for films / TV shows.
- Make available consolidated information on locations, procedures, production houses, etc. online.
- Promotional tie-ups with international films shot in India.
- Set up a dedicated corpus to attract film shooting to India.

Destination Weddings

- Inventory the facilities for wedding and disseminate that information.
- Engage with wedding planners and connect with service providers.
- Participate in specialized events and road shows.
- Run a focused campaign for popularizing wedding and honeymoon options.

Interpretation & Heritage Walks

- Interpretation to be a component of all tourism projects.
- Hop-on hop-off city bus tours across primary attractions of the city.
- Encourage and set accreditation processes for professional interpretation / heritage walk organisers.

Infrastructure

Social Infrastructure

Cleanliness

- Highlight the importance of hygiene & cleanliness at destinations through large-scale awareness campaigns in different media.
- Launch cleanliness drives at tourist destinations and sites, involving Schools & Colleges, Institutes of Hotel Management, Stakeholders and with local / community participation.
- Encourage business houses to adopt important monuments.
- Cleanliness and beautification of surroundings to be part of the CSR of the Tourism and Hospitality Industry.
- For any financial support / assistance provided by the Ministry to State Governments / Union Territories / Private Sector, a certain percentage to be dedicated to initiatives under Campaign Clean India.
- Waste management and disposal practices to be part of all infrastructure projects sanctioned to States / UTs with Central Financial Assistance.
- Clean and hygienic food to be provided at various locations under the “Swachh Bharat Swachh Pakwan” initiative.
- Collaboration with the National Association of Street Food Vendors (NASVI) for quality upgradation.
- Work with local bodies on issues pertaining to garbage disposal, controlled parking zones

Safety

- *Tourist Police* - A dedicated specialized task force dedicated to tourists is key to addressing perceptions around security, in co-ordination with local police forces. A number of States (Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha) have deployed Tourist Police, in one form or the other and the other States / Union Territories should replicate the same.
- Deploy Ex-servicemen / Trained Volunteers at important tourist sites, monuments, etc. to facilitate tourists. They may be given “Tourism Volunteer” badges.
- Organise regular Tourism Orientation Programmes for stakeholders including Custom and Immigration Officers, taxi / rickshaw drivers, coolies and porters, etc.

All such trained personnel, particularly taxi / rickshaw drivers, coolies, porters, etc. to be given “Tourist Friendly” badges.

- “*Atithidevo bhava*” campaigns to be undertaken on a large scale by the Central and State Governments to sensitise stakeholders and general public about the importance of tourism and the need for good behavior towards tourists.
- Multi-lingual, 24x7 ‘Incredible India’ Tourist Helpline to assist and facilitate tourists with information as well as in times of distress.
- Illumination of destinations and setting up CCTV surveillance at destinations / sites with high tourist foot falls.
- Code of Conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism to be more effectively implemented and regular workshops to be held to sensitise tourism service providers.

Welcome

- Provision of multiple entry visas under the E-Tourist Visa Scheme at least for visiting neighbouring countries.
- E-Tourist Visa facility to be made available at all international airports, sea ports, border entry points in a phased manner.
- Permits for visiting Restricted and Protected Areas to be given along with the E-Tourist Visa.
- Restricted Area Permit (RAP) and Protected Area Permit (PAP) restrictions to be reviewed and eased where possible and permits to be given for a longer duration.
- Streamline immigration processes for Cruise tourists with Advance Passenger Information (API), On-board clearances, etc.

Accessibility

- Accessibility to be made an inherent part of planning.
- Encourage States / UTs to transform existing destinations to become made barrier free.
- Accessibility to form part of all certification criteria.
- Braille signages at all tourist centres /monuments /transport, etc.

Responsibility

- All inclusive implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India (STCI).
- Carrying capacity of destinations to be studied and architectural integrity to be emphasized prior to initiating tourism development.
- Ensure local community participation in all tourism development.
- Water harvesting to be made mandatory for hotel industry.

- Instill the principle of “Polluter Pays” among all tourism service providers.
- Evolve responsible tourism framework for private players in tourism industries.
- Encourage stakeholders to implement Responsible initiatives like local recruitment, local supply, purchase, gender equality, re-cycling and use of eco-materials, renewable energies, etc.
- Align subsidies and incentives to compliance of the responsible tourism framework.
- Organise workshops and seminars for advocating responsibility among stakeholders.

Core Infrastructure

Roadways

- Seamless travel through signal free and fast moving corridors connecting tourist destinations, allowing tourists more time to experience the destination.
- Implementation of Traffic Management Systems to ease traffic burdens.
- Improving qualitative aspects of last mile connectivity in co-ordination with State and District authorities.
- Implementation of a seamless interstate taxation regime.
- Provision of adequate, clean and hygienic wayside amenities for travellers including fuel stations-cum-public conveniences, restaurants, etc.
- Land to be made available through National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) for developing wayside amenities at locations to be decided in consultation with the States / UTs.
- Provision of dedicated parking space for tourist vehicles.
- Decongesting illegal encroachment on and along National / State Highways and other roads in coordination with local authorities.

Railways

- Cleanliness and hygienic conditions on trains, railway stations / platforms.
- Safety and security measures, including implementation of CCTV surveillance.
- Implementation of appropriate waste management systems and bio-toilets.
- De-congestion of railway stations, along the lines of airports.
- Enhancing the tourism experience by providing clean waiting rooms & train toilets with ticket bar coded access and creating better F&B experiences.
- Developing and sustaining special tourist trains and unique tourism products like the mountain rails, luxury tourist trains, etc.

- Examining the possibility of establishing quality budget hotels at railway stations and in the surplus land available with Railways. The private sector to be incentivized to operate these hotels on long-term leases.

Air Transport

- Unlock the Indian skies in letter and spirit.
- Direct connectivity with major overseas source markets and augmenting seat capacity on important existing routes.
- Air connectivity between tourist destinations in the country, particularly destinations that form part of tourism circuits.
- Activating non-functional airstrips in hill states, military and dormant Government air strips in smaller towns and remote areas.
- Use of helicopter services to facilitate travel to destinations without air connectivity as well as for activities such as mountain viewing.
- States to be encouraged to explore Non Schedule Operators and set up a Seat Underwriting Fund to cover incremental costs on new sectors.
- Up-gradation of airports in tourist destinations.

Waterways

- Encourage Cruise passenger services along India's coastline, as this can form both a means of transport as well as a tourist attraction.
- Develop a chain of small ports along the coast of India to promote cruise tourism and provide direct access to tourist sites along the coastline.
- Provide adequate berthing facilities to enhance passenger convenience.
- Develop basic tourist facilities and amenities at terminals, jetties, riverfronts etc.
- Harness the potential of India's mighty rivers, especially the Ganges and the Brahmaputra as a means of transport as well as unique tourism products offering a complete experience of the local habitat along the rivers.

(Also refer to Product Development / Cruise)

Tourism Infrastructure

Integrated Development of Tourist Circuits and Destinations

- Swadesh Darshan
Theme based tourist circuits to be developed on the principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability, in an integrated manner by synergizing efforts to focus on needs and concerns of all stakeholders, to enrich tourist experience and enhance employment opportunities.

- PRASAD (National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive). Integrated and holistic development of selected pilgrim destinations to be undertaken in a planned, prioritized and sustainable manner to provide complete religious tourism experience.
- Buddhist Circuit: Special focus on development and promotion of the Buddhist Circuit by the State Governments and with assistance from international bodies including the World Bank, JICA, International Finance Corporation, Asian Development Bank, etc.
- Priority Areas : Focused development and promotion of the North East Region and the state of Jammu & Kashmir as priority areas for the Government.
- Special Tourism Zones to be considered on the lines of Special Economic Zones.

Accommodation

- Review of dated legislation, which have outlived their purpose.
- Encourage non-traditional categories of accommodation such as Home Stays, Tented Accommodation, Camping Sites, Timeshare Resorts, etc. along with a classification system.
- Develop a dedicated website to list all home stays, bed & breakfast units in the country.
- Encourage the States to set up Tourism Investment Promotion Boards and establish an Investor Facilitation Cell by the Government of India to advise and handhold investors.
- Classifying hotels & resorts as infrastructure under section 80 IA / IB of the IT Act.
- Permitting & classifying the hospitality sector as a permissible infrastructure activity for accessing tax free bonds under section 54 EC through notified financial institutions.
- Including hotels of ₹20 crore CAPEX (without land cost) and hotels with a star rating of 1 star & above anywhere in India, as infrastructure sub sector for lending under the RBI harmonized list for infrastructure sub sectors. Currently hotels of ₹ 200 crores CAPEX (without land cost) and hotels with a star rating of 3 star & above only are classified.
- Declaring all hospitality projects as industrial sector for the purposes of utility charges & properties cesses and levy of industrial rates.

Enabling Framework for Investment

- Implementation of GST – subsuming all indirect taxes and classification of all tourism & hospitality businesses in the lower GST slab.
- Encourage States to rationalize Sales Tax on ATF.
- As GST stabilises, consumption of goods and services by foreign tourists to be treated as exports and GST paid by them refunded when they leave the country, in line with best international practice.
- Streamline and rationalize Service Tax for Tourism service providers.
- Incentivize large-scale infrastructure development by ensuring availability of a 10-year income tax holiday to mega tourism zones of a minimum 25 hectares, promoting tourism as the principal economic activity. These could be convention & exhibition destinations, accommodation centres, amusement/ theme parks, wellness centres, tourism sports destination, spiritual tourism destination, tourist attractions etc.
- Incentivize adventure tourism activities in India by reduction / exemption on import duties on adventure tourism equipment & accessories and include them in the list of specified businesses eligible for deductions u/s 80 ID of the Income Tax Act (for tour operators certified by ministry of tourism).
- In lines with the reduced commissions of airlines, ensure that under the rule 6(7) of the service tax rules, reduction and standardisation of the applicable service tax to air travel agents bookings to 0.36% of the basic amount on both domestic and international bookings as against the current provision of 0.6% & 1.2% respectively
- Extension of Input Tax credit on the tourism components of travel intermediaries.
- Information on areas open for investment and incentives available to be widely disseminated through websites of the Centre, States and Indian Missions overseas as well as by organising Investment Meets, etc.

Skill Development

- Establish a dedicated University for Tourism and Hospitality education with pan – India centres for excellence.
- Create convergence between International organisations, global think tanks, voluntary organisations and industry to generate cutting edge ideas.
- Extend the ideas to the field under the patronage of the State Governments in tandem with industry.
- Bring academic rigour to industry by creating a platform through consulting.

- Benchmark and regulate the education in the Hospitality and Tourism sector.
- Offer distance education programmes to cover non-traditional workforce like retirees/ housewives, etc.
- Create an enabling framework for private institutes in this sector with strict quality guidelines.
- Industry to initiate a discussion on a predictable career growth for professionals in the sector.
- Undertake training programmes / skill development for trainers in the tourism and hospitality sectors.
- Identify sector-wise requirement of skilled labour.
- Create guidelines for skill refresher courses for existing service providers like taxi drivers, boat operators, restaurant, Dhabas etc. with State Governments and industry.
- Annual Schedule of training to be published and training to be made mandatory for classification/ accreditation.
- Expand and deepen skill development programmes to cover ancillary activities of tourism like souvenirs, farming, fishing, handloom weaving etc. which can provide a unique experience to the tourists.
- Include “entrepreneurship” in the curriculum at all levels and create a framework for mentoring by industry leaders to change the paradigm from job seekers to job creators.
- Augment the availability of language speaking guides at all major tourist centers.
- Synergy with
 - ✓ Ministry of Skill Development/ National Skill Development Mission
 - ✓ Indian Technical Institutes (ITIs) /Polytechnics, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and Vocational Training Programme (VTP)
 - ✓ State livelihood mission / Self Help Groups
 - ✓ NSS / NCC / Scouts & Guides.
- SUPW (Socially Useful and Productive Work) could be oriented towards tourism and Heritage preservation.
- Tourism /Hospitality options to be part of the curriculum at school levels.
- Setting-up tourism clubs in schools and colleges.
- Capacity building / training programmes to be organized for staff working in tourism departments of States / Centre.

Certification & Accreditation

- Create clear certification and accreditation or self-certification guidelines for all service providers across different categories.
- Run a campaign with trade and industry bodies to promote the endeavor.
- Create incentives like limiting participation in the India pavilion in trade fairs and road shows to accredited operators.
- Use the Incredible India website and social media to establish credentials and promote certified and accredited players.
- Shift the accreditation process on to the electronic platform and establish time lines.
- Outsource the process of accreditation to chartered hotel approvers on the lines of chartered accountants. Guidelines to be drawn up and classification of hotels up to 3 star categories can be outsourced on a pilot basis.

Information Technology

- Engage a professional IT Solution Provider for portal development, content management and social media management.
- Harness the potential of Social media for wider reach of audience.
- Redevelop the Incredible India website using state of the art technology to make it user friendly, engaging, informative, clutter free and compatible on all digital platforms.
- Augment page and multimedia contents of the website.
- Enhance language options by translating the website in various Indian and foreign languages.
- Develop theme based mobile applications to connect with the ever-growing community of mobile users.
- Build an audience community with an e-newsletter.
- Develop e-brochure on various themes and tourist centers in India.
- Provide free Wi-Fi connectivity at tourist centres in India.
- Initiate an e-office concept to speed up the decision making process.
- Use GIS technologies for both development and promotion.
- Focus e-marketing strategy to synchronize marketing efforts across search, social and content.
- Provide intensive training to officials for successful implementation of IT initiatives.

Promotion and Marketing

International

- Collaborate with the international campaigns of States to achieve synergy and greater impact.
- Focus on established source markets and potential markets, which are contributing significantly to global tourist traffic.
- Targeted and country specific Incredible India Media Campaigns to be launched in overseas markets annually, with impactful creatives.
- Focus to shift from traditional media like print and television and greater emphasis to be placed on outdoor branding, online campaigns, interactive / social media and other modern and innovative technology spheres. Print advertising, when undertaken to focus on advertorials.
- Campaigns and Brand Communication to project the soft power of India and to work towards creating a positive image globally.
- Niche tourism products of the country like Heritage Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Rural Tourism, Wedding / Honey Moon Tourism, Wellness and Medical Tourism, MICE Tourism, Golf, Polo, etc. to be promoted through the Campaigns.
- High impact participation in the important international travel fairs and exhibitions. India to participate as partner country in travel fairs / exhibitions (if possible one every year). India Pavilions to be more vibrant with activities.
- International travel related associations and organizations to be encouraged and supported to hold their annual meets / conferences in India.
- Overseas tour operators to be incentivised to promote and sell India packages, through familiarization trips, brochure support, etc.
- Focused Road Shows to be organized in collaboration with stakeholders in important and potential source markets overseas. Such Road Shows to also be organized on specific themes like Medical & Wellness Tourism, etc. To supplement the Road Shows, "Know India" Seminars and Workshops to be organized in other 2-tier and 3-tier cities in overseas source markets.
- Online training programmes for overseas tour operators to create groups of "India Specialists" who could promote and sell India packages.
- NRIs and PIOs to be targeted and encouraged to "rediscover their roots".
- Leverage the medium of Cinema and Television as a tool for the development and promotion of destinations in the country.
- Special events like the International Buddhist Conclave, International Travel Mart for the North East Region to be organized periodically to promote focus areas / circuits in the country.

- Mega Familiarisation Tours to be hosted inviting tour operators, travel partners and famous travel writers / journalists to India to obtain first-hand knowledge of Indian tourism products.
- Engage with the Indian Diaspora in source markets overseas for promotion of brand Incredible India.
- Encourage States / UTs to establish effective Disaster / Crisis management systems.
- Crisis Management through PR activities and in consultation with Indian Missions to be undertaken overseas in the event of calamities, epidemics, untoward incidents.

Domestic

- Social Awareness Campaigns under the brand line “Atithidevo bhava” in the print, television, radio, online and outdoor media.
- Intensify “Campaign Clean India” under the overall umbrella of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan, in collaboration with State Governments, Union Territories, Stakeholders, Schools & Colleges, etc. This would include initiatives of “Swachh Pakwan” and others.
- Campaigns for promoting tourism in priority areas such as the North East Region and Jammu & Kashmir and lesser-known destinations in various media.
- Promotion of important Fairs and Festivals and support to important tourism related events and major Travel Marts & Exhibitions organized in the country.
- Provide assistance and support to State Governments / Union Territories for production of publicity material, IT initiatives, etc.
- Production of world-class publicity material and collaterals.
- A central repository of tourism films and audiovisual promotional material to be created.

International Co-operation

- Carry forward Agreements / Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) on Tourism Cooperation entered into with other countries, by formalising concrete action plans of activities to be undertaken for the promotion of tourism between the countries.
- Play a more pro-active and decisive role at multilateral tourism forums under SAARC, ASEAN, IBSA, BRICS and others.
- Join and take centre stage in UNWTO initiatives like Silk Route, Spice Route, ST-EP initiative, etc.

- Develop and promote common packages with SAARC and ASEAN nations on themes that link the countries such as the Buddhist Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Heritage Circuit, etc., in collaboration with stakeholders.

Market Research

- Prepare vision documents / annual market intelligence reports to exploit our top 10 source markets which would form the basis for Government and industry activities.
- Provide Forecasts/Sector Insights/Consumer Demands on a quarterly basis to the Indian Tourism Sector.
- Every State / UTs not actively pursuing tourism should undertake a study on the potential of the sector and their vision for realizing it.
- Study on potential of some of the Niche Products for development and promotion to be undertaken.
- Undertake a detailed study on the impact of taxation on the tourism sector.
- Implement International Visitor Feedback Survey for International Passengers.
- Implement a similar Domestic Visitor Feedback Survey at Airports, key destinations.
- A system to be devised to gather tourist arrival data on a daily basis from Bureau of Immigration at all international airports, seaports and border crossings, so as to provide country wise arrival figures on monthly basis.
- Develop a common methodology for measuring footfall of international and domestic tourists for use by States and UTs.
- Adjust, measure & monitor National Tourism Policy and Strategy as per results, on an annual basis, with third party participation.
