

PEPPER (PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION FOR PARTICIPATORY PLANNING & EMPOWERMENT THROUGH RESPONSIBLE TOURISM)

PEPPER is a revolutionary tourism initiative by Kerala Tourism under Responsible Tourism Mission (RT Mission). It is the process of identifying and developing new tourism destinations with the support of local community and Local Self Governments (LSGs). Through this initiative grass root level community participation is assured right from the initial level discussions. Kerala Tourism is the first one to come up with this kind of a participatory tourism approach in the country perhaps the whole world.

Concept

Kerala Tourism has always introduced novel ideas and practices in tourism sector and created models like Responsible Tourism practices at Kumarakom. Likewise PEPPER is an initiative of Kerala Tourism under RT Mission piloted at Vaikom Taluk in Kottayam District of Kerala. This initiative encourage concern LSGs to develop proposals for the potential tourism projects in their locality, which are derived from the ideas and suggestions evolved in discussions of Special Tourism Grama Sabhas, and submit it to Department of Tourism. The entire process will happen with the support and guidance of RT Mission. Department of Tourism will evaluate the project proposals received under PEPPER and take up the projects according to viability and priority basis.

Vision

Planning and Developing a Vibrant, Structured Responsible Tourism Destination

Mission

Develop Global Tourism Destination with RT initiatives and public private partnerships

Objectives

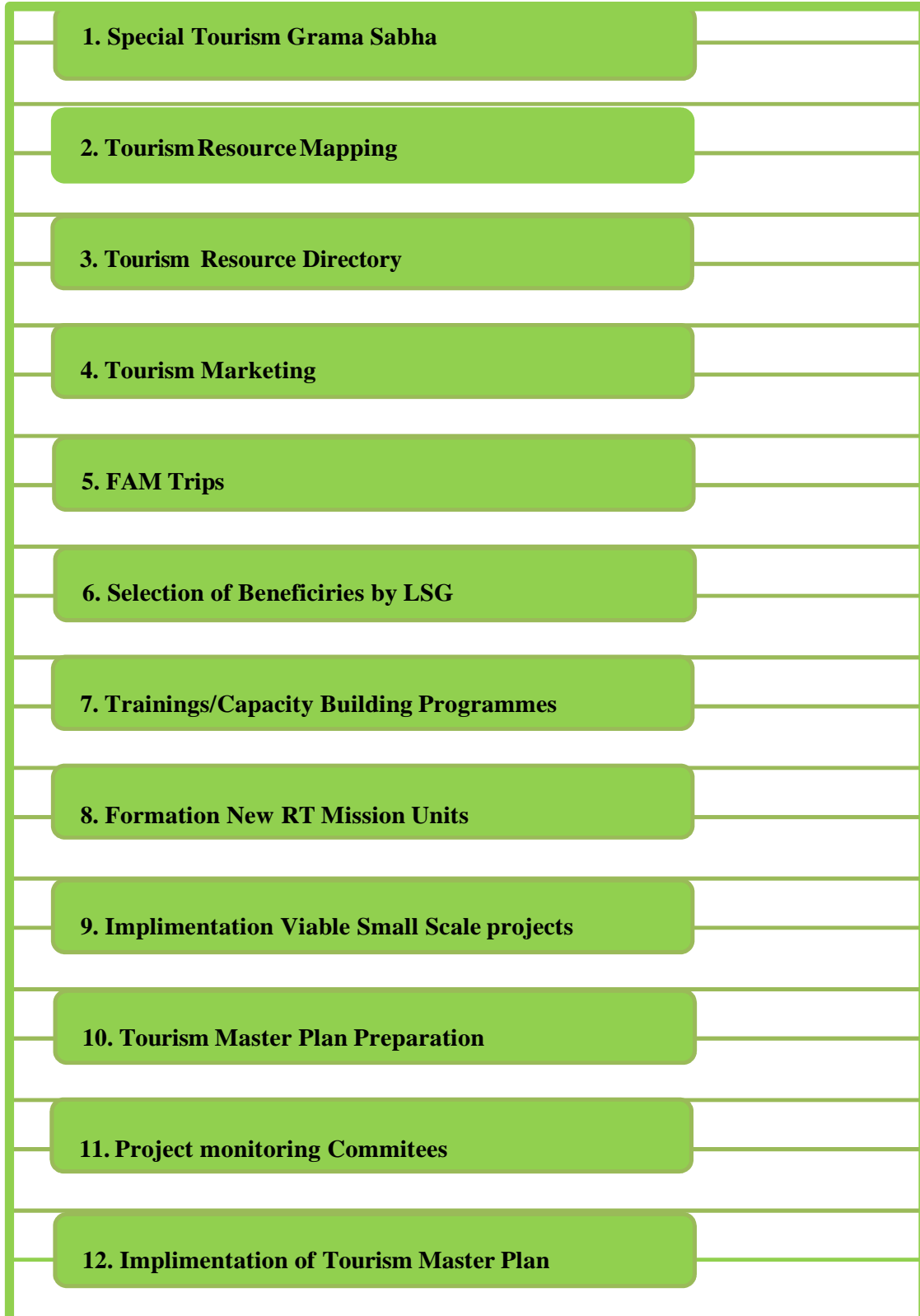
- Develop a participatory approach in tourism planning and development.
- Ensure grass root level community participation and LSG involvement in tourism development
- Establish 100% structured Responsible Tourism destinations
- Change the face of Kerala Tourism into Responsible Tourism Destination

Benefits

PEPPER will benefit to discover new zones or unexplored destinations that are rich with tourism potential and developing them in a hundred percent sustainable fashion with the active involvement of the local community. This tourism scheme aims at the total development of the area through the coordination of different government departments by implementing multiparty projects in the area. PEPPER scheme envisioned women empowerment and capacitate the marginalised community by making revenue directly or indirectly from tourism sector. The scheme gives emphasis for the maximum utilisation of

existing facilities by promoting farm stay, home stay, and grihasthali accommodation units than new constructions.

Process



1. Special Tourism Grama Sabha

Grama Sabhas are the special meetings organised by LSGs to discuss various problems, development aspects in that area, familiarise government schemes and grants to local people etc. Normally in Kerala these meetings are held ward wise and different matters will be discussed. Special Tourism Grama Sabhas are full day meetings organised by LSGs (one for each LSG) in association with RT Mission only to discuss the tourism prospects and potential of the area. LSGs ensure the participation of 100-200 representatives of the local community members from the locality which will be a cross section of the local community including elected representatives of the area, tourism entrepreneurs, local artists, artisans, farmers, Kudumbashree members, representatives from temples/churches/mosques and any others from that area who are interested to become part of tourism development.

Special Tourism Grama Sabhas are full day programmes that starts by 10.00 am with an inaugural session with the precedence of Panchayat President/ Municipal Chair Person/ Corporation Mayor. In inaugural session a representative from the RT Mission will explain about RT Mission, activities of the Mission and the PEPPER scheme in detail. The process of Tourism Resource Mapping, Tourism Resource Directory preparation, identification of tourism products, formation of Experiential Tour Packages and related tourism development projects will be explained to the audience.

The second half of the Special Tourism Grama Sabhas is Group Discussion. The participants of the Grama Sabha will be divided into 7 groups named:

- Farming, Animal Husbandry and Tourism Development
- Human Resource development and Tourism
- Kudumbasree and Tourism- Joint Tourism Initiatives
- Traditional jobs and tourism development
- Tourism & basic infrastructure development
- Ritual Arts/Festivals in the area and tourism development
- Tourism Resource Mapping

Each group will have a group leader and the outcome of the discussions will be consolidated and presented by each group leader. The Grama Sabha will be concluded with the formation of Tourism Resource mapping Committee under the Chairmanship of LSG Head and Convenorship of RT Mission coordinator.

2. Tourism Resource Mapping

Tourism Resource mapping is the process of documenting geographical, historical, cultural environmental and manmade specialties/peculiarities to identify new tourism products and destinations. It is one of the basic components of participatory tourism development approach. Responsible Tourism Mission has trained 750 Resource Persons (RTRP) across the state for supporting various activities of the Mission. The Resource Persons from the locality will do the Resource Mapping with support and guidance of Resource Mapping Committee. The following are the methods used for Resource Mapping:

➤ Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Small group discussions in ward basis or combined for 2-3 wards will be organised by RT Mission in association with LSG members. In this discussion the check list will be discussed in detail and the items presented in the area will be documented by RTRPs. Other specialties which are not listed in the checklist also will be identified through these kinds of FGDs and documented.

➤ Individual Data Collection

Details will be collected by distributing a structured questionnaire based on the check list to the local community. The filled questionnaires are also used for documentation.

➤ Document/Text References

Historical documents, development documents, departmental/governmental documents, and any other reliable reference documents can be referred for Resource Mapping.

➤ Field Visits

RTRPs will collect data by field visits in the area also. They will record the documents of from governmental office, historic monuments, natural attractions/sites, shrines etc. as texts and photos.

3. Tourism Resource Directory

The data collected through the Resource mapping will be converted as Resource Directory in this stage. The Resource Directory will have the following sections:

➤ Introduction

This section tells about the project, objectives of it and about the LSG.

➤ Profile of the LSG

The geographical area, climate conditions, nature, life style, population, traditional jobs, local cuisines, art forms and other specialties will be described in this section.

➤ History

History of the area will be documented here with the support of reliable references. Other mythologies, folk stories and hearsays also can be included here with the title “Mythology/ Folk Stories”.

➤ Tourism Attractions

All the potential tourism products available in that area will be recorded in this section under the below listed categories:

1. Natural attractions
2. Manmade attractions
3. Farming Methods
4. Farms

5. Traditional Works
6. Handicrafts/Souvenirs
7. Local/Traditional/Folk Art Forms
8. Ritual Art Forms
9. Dairy/Poultry Farms
10. Traditional Work Yards like Weaving Societies, Coir Societies, and Pottery Societies etc.
11. Traditional/Conventional Treatment Methods (Only Certified)
12. Local Arts & Sports Centres, Local Libraries and other Local Cultural Training Centres etc.

➤ **Potentials & Possibilities for Tourism Development**

This section contains the possibilities for tourism development in the area proposed by the LSGs and RT Mission.

The proposed projects will be submitted to the Department of Tourism through RT Mission and the department will implement the project after verification and scrutiny. These destinations will be developed by ensuring Responsible Tourism Criteria.

4. Selection of beneficiaries by LSGs

While developing a tourism destination various products and services are required to fulfill the direct and indirect need of the industry. Responsible Tourism development focuses to link the local community with tourism and generate revenue for them. In PEPPER scheme, LSGs will select the beneficiaries from local community and intimate RT Mission. While selecting, LSGs will give preference to women, marginalised communities, transgender people, differently abled people etc.

5. Trainings and Capacity Building Programmes

RT Mission will organise and conduct various trainings and capacity building programmes for the beneficiaries selected by the LSG to equip them to work in tourism industry or to start various micro enterprises directly or indirectly linked with tourism.

Different Experiential Tour packages also will be developed in this period by the RT Mission and the local panel will be formed to run the package. Local Tour Leaders will be trained to operate it in systematic manner under the guidance of RT Mission.

6. Formation of New RT Mission Units

The trained people will be registered as RT Units and they will be supported to start different Micro Enterprises, Home Stays, farm Stays, Tended Accommodation units, Cultural Groups, VLE partners etc.

7. Implementation of different viable small scale projects proposed by LSGs

Department of Tourism and LSGs will implement different Tourism Projects proposed by LSGs according to the feasibility by ensuring the RT concepts. New RT destinations will be evolved across the state through this.

8. Tourism Marketing

The newly developed destinations will be marketed by Kerala Tourism and RT Mission through its different online and off line marketing mechanism and through national & international Trade Fairs/Exhibitions etc.

9. FAM Trips

As part of the PEPPER Scheme familiarisation trips will be organised for industry partners and media people.

10. Tourism Master Plan

According to the success of the above steps a tourism master plan for Responsible Tourism development in that area will be prepared in consultation with all the stake holders as the third phase.

11. Formation of Project Monitoring Committees

A Project Monitoring Committee will be formed by incorporating representatives of all stake holders to ensure the responsible tourism development. The implementation of master plan will be strictly monitored by this committee.

12. Implementation of Tourism Master Plan through approved Government Agencies.

With the strict monitoring of the committee the Tourism Master Plan will be implemented at the newly developed Responsible Tourism Destinations by following the RT concepts.