

Fact Sheet - IV

Eco-Tourism in West Bengal

Regulatory Framework

West Bengal Tourism Policy, 2016

West Bengal Incentive Scheme for Tourism Units, 2015

New Tourism Policy, 2002

National Ecotourism Policy and Guidelines, 1998

- **What it says?**
 - ✓ State aims to attract tourists from home and abroad
 - ✓ State aims at making tourism environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable
 - ✓ Encouraging private players into tourism sector
 - ✓ Building Bengal as an tourism brand

- **Highlights and Incentives Available**
 - ✓ Emphasises on Ecotourism
 - ✓ Identification of new tourist destinations
 - ✓ Promoting Mega Projects
 - ✓ Public Private Partnership(PPP) model is encouraged
 - ✓ Available subsidies:
 - *Capital Investment Subsidy*
 - *Interest Subsidy*
 - *Waiver of Electricity Duty*
 - *Additional Incentive on generation on Employment*
 - *Reimbursement of VAT as additional incentive to Adventure Tour Operators*
 - *Luxury tax exemptions*

- **What is Eco-tourism**

Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of the people

- **Key elements of Eco-tourism:**
 - ✓ Existence of National Park/Sanctuaries as prime attraction
 - ✓ Should be economically, socially, culturally, and economically sustainable
 - ✓ Should have participation of the local stakeholders
 - ✓ Should be a low profile venture
 - ✓ Should be capable of forging partnership with the existing tourism industry

- **Advantages of Eco-tourism**
 - ✓ Generates local employment
 - ✓ Generates revenue for the state
 - ✓ Checks migration to urban areas
 - ✓ Better life quality of the locals due infrastructure building like electricity, power etc.

- **Disadvantages of Eco-tourism**
 - ✓ Greater influx of people may result in ecological imbalance
 - ✓ Tourism infrastructure may be at the cost of forest land
 - ✓ Culture and ethnicity of the region may be disturbed

- **Challenges**

- ✓ Uninterrupted power supply to be ensured to the ecotourism sites located in remote areas
- ✓ Availability of adequate land for setting up Off-grid projects
- ✓ Solid waste management in the tourism sites is also a challenge
- ✓ Involving local population

State Level Initiatives

- ✓ “**mon chasa**” , a rural based ecotourism model based near Kolaghat is presently operational and uses solar energy
- ✓ Sundarbans to be developed as world class ecotourism destination
- ✓ National parks and Wild Life Sanctuaries in North Bengal also attracts ecotourists
- ✓ Work for mega tourism project in Jagaldoba, Jalpaiguri district has already started
- ✓ Tourism Department is developing two new eco-tourism hubs at Sylee(near Malbazar), and Kunjanagar(near Falakata) in the Dooars