

Sahana Ahmed
National President
Rural Tourism Council

November 28, 2021

Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman
Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs
Government of India

Respected Madam,

Subject: Recommendations for the Development of Rural Tourism in India

We refer to the Draft National Strategy & Roadmap for Development of Rural Tourism in India dated June 12, 2021, issued by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and submit our recommendations as under:

1. Lending for Rural Tourism is proposed to be included as a separate category in Priority Sector Lending (PSL) norms for banks. This will bring in focus lending to this sector and ensure flow of funds to this deserving but deprived segment.
2. Large corporates to adopt a minimum of one village each year as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. They could implement a development plan, based on their expertise, for the following:
 - i. Physical Infrastructure
 - ii. Digital Infrastructure
 - iii. Social Infrastructure
 - iv. Tourism Products and Activities
 - v. Marketing and Promotion
 - vi. Capacity Building

A pool of corporates with varied expertise is suggested to be created, to be engaged in developing villages either as part of their CSR activities or through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP).

3. All spends towards identified clusters in Rural Tourism should be given concessions while calculating taxable income for companies, individuals, and visitors. All incomes generated by any service provider or any individual for contributing towards revenues in these clusters should be tax-free.
4. Vendor financing to be made available to locals from banks. Proceeds routed through banks will prevent defaults by these companies to small artisans.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours faithfully,
Sahana Ahmed
National President
WICCI Rural Tourism Council