



Department of Tourism

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Press Release

Kerala's STREET tourism project bags global award at WTM London



- ***Water conservation initiative clinches the honour***

Thiruvananthapuram, Nov. 08: Kerala's sustainable and inclusive tourism project STREET has received the global award at the World Travel Mart (WTM) London in recognition of the water conservation initiatives successfully carried out as part of the community-oriented destination development plans.

STREET-- which stands for Sustainable, Tangible, Responsible, Experiential, Ethnic Tourism-- is a participatory tourism development approach evolved on the basis of UNWTO's motto 'Tourism for Inclusive Growth'. The project is being implemented as part of the globally-acclaimed Responsible Tourism initiative of the Kerala Tourism Department.

The state bagged the award for the commendable work it carried out for 'Conserving Water and Improving Water Security and Supply for Neighbours.'



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“It is indeed a proud moment for Kerala Tourism and its Responsible Tourism initiative as the STREET project has been honoured with the global award at WTM London. The award is for the water conservation initiative taken up under the STREET project, which is a first of its kind initiative in the world. This award comes as an inspiration for Kerala Tourism to move forward with more new initiatives. My congratulations to the state’s RT Mission and its co-ordinator Rupeshkumar for getting this international honour”, said Tourism Minister Shri PA Mohamad Riyas, who is leading the Kerala delegation to WTM London.

“This award is a categoric recognition of Kerala’s fast and concerted efforts post-Covid for inclusive development of tourism destinations. This award encourages us to take forward Kerala Tourism’s RT initiatives with more conviction and resolve. The Kerala Government will continue its focus on ensuring that local communities actively participate in tourism activities across the whole of Kerala, thereby ensuring more economic benefits to the community”, he added

This project is especially important for a place like Kerala whose core strength is natural assets. Through STREET, the state aims at conserving these invaluable assets side by side the tourism development, Shri Riyas further added.

The project focuses on theme-based street development approach at tourism destinations to reduce over concentration of activities at core centres, to widen the area of interest for visitors and maximise the local community benefit.

‘Water Street’ is one major stream of the STREET Project, successfully implemented at Maravanthuruthu Panchayat in Kottayam District near the world-renowned RT destination Kumarakom.

As part of developing Water Streets at Maravanthuruthu, 18 canals, three rivers and a backwater stretch flowing through the area have been cleaned and deepened as the combined effort of local community, RT Mission units and the local Panchayat.

The banks of the canals were protected with coir rapping and cultivation of flower, herbal and vegetable plants. Once the free flow of clean water was ensured, water related tourism activities like Kayaking, rowing country boats, shikkara trips were taken up and marketing of local products and live fishing activities were organised.

Launched to promote experiential tourism, such activities are taken up by the local community with a local monitoring mechanism. The initiative created an awareness that it is crucial to avoid pollution of water bodies.

These activities have led to development of the sub-category called Water STREET and it proved that Tourism can protect water bodies with strong involvement of the community. It



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proved that if the local community finds a livelihood in the water body its members will get actively involved in conservation activities.

A positive environmental impact has been created through these activities in the project area and helped control the water-logging and flooding during the rainy season. Through WATER STREET Kerala's Responsible Tourism Mission has shown the world that tourism can become a tool for water conservation if connected with local economic development.

Mr KS Srinivas IAS, Principal Secretary, Tourism; Mr P. Nooh, Director, Tourism and Mr. K Rupeshkumar, State Coordinator, Kerala Responsible Tourism Mission are also part of the delegation to WTM London 2022, a meeting place for the global travel trade that attracts top travel destinations and tourism buyers and sellers from all over the world.

In a celebration of the state's sustainable tourism practices in the past 15 years, WTM London is scheduled to feature a seminar on Kerala's pioneering RT activities, which have repeatedly won global accolades.

'Looking Back, Moving Ahead: 15 Years of Kerala's Responsible Tourism Journey' is the title of the analytical session to be held on November 9, on the final day of WTM London. Shri Riyas will deliver the inaugural address at the hour-long session.

Mr Srinivas will moderate the session, while Mr Nooh will welcome the gathering. Mr K. Rupeshkumar will give a presentation on 'Community Empowerment Through Responsible Tourism — Kerala Model'.

Ends