

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

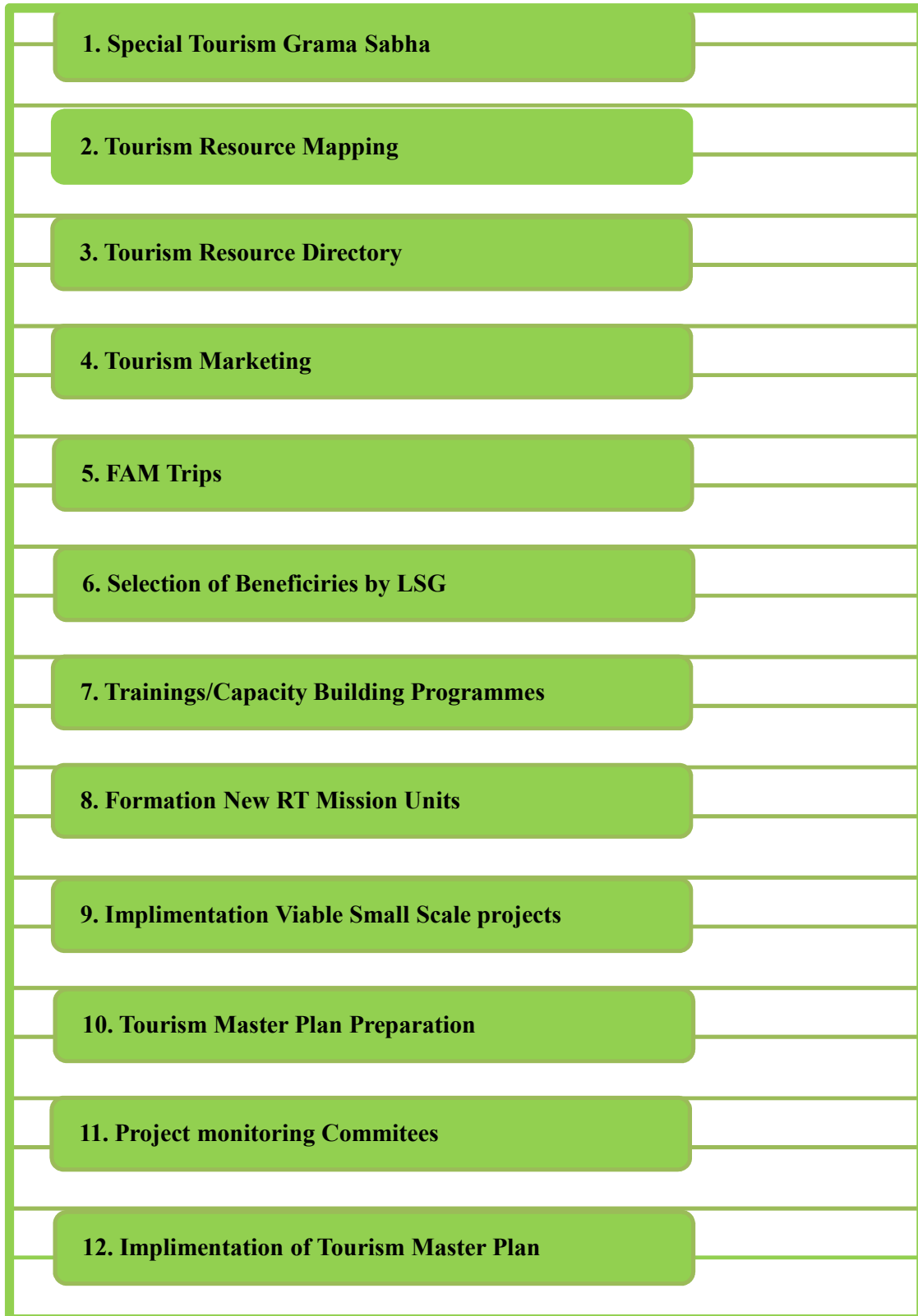
- Develop a participatory approach in tourism planning and development.
- Ensure grass root level community participation and LSG involvement in tourism development
- Establish 100% structured Responsible Tourism destinations
- Change the face of Kerala Tourism into Responsible Tourism Destination

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, to familiarise government schemes and grants to local people etc. Normally in Kerala these meetings are held in ward wise and different matters will be discussed. Special Tourism Grama Sabhas are full day meetings organised by LSGs (one for a 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 etc. and any others from that area who are interested to become part of tourism development.

Special Tourism Grama Sabhas are full day programmes 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 project also 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 specialities/peculiarities to identify new tourism products and destinations. It is one of the basic components of participatory tourism development approach. A check list* (attached as supporting document) has been prepared by RT Mission to process easier. 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 specialities which are not listed in the checklist also will be identified through these kinds of FGDs and getting 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 to 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 specialities will be described in this section.

➤ History

History of the area will be documented over 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 full fill 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, transgenders, differently abled people etc.

5. Trainings and Capacity Building Programmes

RT Mission will organise and conduct various trainings and capacity building programmes for the benefices 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. Like this new RT destinations will evolved across the state.

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.

VAIKOM

Vaikom Taluk in Kottayam District of Kerala is the Pilot destination selected for piloting PEPPER Scheme. The scheme envisaged to implement in a phased manner at Vaikom. Out of the 10 LSGs in Vaikom Taluk, 8 LSGs including Vaikom Municipality and 7 other Grama Panchayats (Udayanapuram, Thalayazham, Chempu, Kallara, Vechoor, Maravanthuruthu and T V Puram) have been included in the first phase. The scheme has been extend to Velloor and Thalayolapparambu Grama Panchayats in the second phase.

First level discussions were happened with LSG Heads, Vaikom MLA and State RT Mission Coordinator to kick start the programme. A road map about the implementation of the scheme was created in this meeting.



The official launching of PEPPER was done by Sri. Kadakampally Surendran, Hon. Minister for Tourism on 3rd November 2017 at Vaikom NSS Auditorium.



Almost 3000 participants were present to attend the inauguration this revolutionary initiative of Kerala Tourism through RT Mission.



Special Tourism Grama Sabhas

As the first step of implementation Special tourism Grama Sabhas were conducted at the 8 LSGs by the respective LSGs in association with RT Mission. The participants of the Grama Sabhas had been invited by the LSGs and a cross section of the local community including traditional workers, artists, artisans, farmers, all elected representatives of these LSGs representatives of various associations were participated.

Sl. No	LSG	No. of Participants
1.	Udayanapuram Grama Panchayat	178
2.	Thalayazham Grama Panchayat	213
3.	Chempu Grama Panchayat	186
4.	Kallara Grama Panchayat	169
5.	Vechoor Grama Panchayat	197
6.	Maravanthuruthu Grama Panchayat	203
7.	T V Puram Grama Panchayat	192
8.	Vaikom Municipality	153
9.	Velloor GP	180
10.	Thalayolaparsmbu	160
	Total	1831

Different attractions/potential products from each LSGs were listed in the Group discussions and various innovative ideas came up and presented by the group leaders. Resource mapping Committees were formed in each LSG under the Chairmanship of Panchayat President/Vice President/Municipal Chair Person and Convenorship of RT Mission Coordinator.





Resource Mapping

After completing the Special Tourism Grama Sabhas, started off with Resource Mapping of each LSG by trained Resource Persons under the guidance of RT Mission. Data collected through FGDs conducted by RT Mission in each LSG, filling up of questionnaires based on the check list, field visit by RPs, and references from various documents from libraries, documents available at Vaikom Temple, reports of researchers etc.

Resource Directory

Resource Directories in Malayalam for each LSG has been prepared along with detailed description of the attractions and photographs. The Resource Directories are getting translated into English also.

Training and Capacity Building Programmes

RT Mission had conducted various trainings and capacity building programmes for the beneficiaries nominated by LSGs. To develop the destination as plastic free, Paper bag making and Cloth bag making trainings were conducted under PEPPER scheme at Vaikom. Ladies in the local community were trained to make different types of candles from normal candles to aroma candles. Community Tour Leaders have been trained in the area to operate the Experiential Tour Packages developed at Vaikom. Training was organised to make Pappad, an unavoidable dish of traditional Kerala meals. This gives an opportunity to the trained ladies of the local community to start pappad unit and generate income by working from home as per their contineence. These pappad can sell to restaurants/catering units etc. in tourism industry. To ensure accommodation for the guests in Vaikom destination interested local community members were trained to operate home stay/ farm stay/ tended accommodation units etc. Talented and interested people were also trained as Story Tellers as part of developing Story Telling Packages at Vaikom. These Story Tellers will explain the

real story of each activity/attraction at Vaikom in a fascinating way to the tourists. Some more training have been planned at Vaikom as part of PEPPER.

Sl. No	Area of Training	Beneficiaries
1.	Paper bag making training-Vythiri	102
2.	Home Stay/Farm Stay/Tented Accommodation Entrepreneurship Training	67
3.	Cloth Bag making training	85
4.	Community Tour Leader	20
5.	Pappad making	43
6.	Candle making training	70
7.	Story Tellers	15
8.	Sample soap	80

RT Mission Units

The beneficiaries of the above trainings were started new ventures in which they got trained. They have registered as single member units or units with many members. They started different Micro Enterprises, got linked with tourism directly or indirectly and started generating revenue.

RT Mission also identifies the existing units from different categories like cultural groups, vegetable farms, handicraft/souvenir making units etc. train them and links them with tourism sector for making addition income generation from tourism.

Now RT Mission has 401 registered units at Vaikom destination and the income generated by these units during the one and half year is Rs: 95 Lakhs INR

Sl No	Category of Unit	Number of Units	Direct Beneficiaries	Indirect Beneficiaries
1.	Handicraft	60	93	150
2.	Alternate products for plastic	80	144	280
3.	Candle	14	32	49
4.	Vegetable Cultivation	32	80	115
5.	Diary/ Poultry	11	25	47
6.	Art & Cultural Groups	43	108	157
7.	Shikkara Operators	22	22	45
8.	Farm Tourism	14	36	49
9.	RT chauffer	18	18	35
10.	Local Tour Operators	8	12	32
11.	Ethnic Food/ Homely Food Units	12	18	60
12.	TukTuk Tour Operators	25	25	50
13.	Accommodation units (Small and medium)/ Local Service Providers	30	45	75
14.	Tender Coconut	7	10	60
15.	VLE Partners	25	32	70
		401	700	1274

Experiential Tourism Packages

Vaikom is truly stunning waterscape with diverse tourism products but did not secure place in the tourism map of Kerala. To tap the tourism potential of Vaikom RT Mission has developed Experiential Tour packages at Vaikom. At first various activities, which can attract tourists, have been identified and two Village Life Experience Package, three Cultural Experience Packages, one TukTuk Package and one Story Telling Package were developed. The local community members involved in each package have been trained to welcome guest and interact with them. A set of Community Tour Leaders/ Story Tellers were also trained to explain the activities to guest. During the period of one year Vaikom welcomed 60367 tourist out of which 44683 (74%) are foreign tourists.



Promotion & Marketing

RT Mission has identified and developed a new Tourism destination Vaikom through the scheme PEPPER. The Mission is actively marketing the destination also. For marketing RT Mission has prepared one printed Brochure and 2 videos for Vaikom. **The packages at Vaikom are described in RT Mission website** . The Experiential Tour Packages at Vaikom can be booked through the online VLE booking system.

RT Mission has developed an online platform for product sales of the registered RT Mission units - 'Kerala RT Network'. This network will enable the producers and suppliers to sell their products directly to the customers. Registration of RT Units to this network is in the final stage and the network will be launched in November.

In the same way a network for Artists and Cultural groups has been developed by RT Mission in the name 'RT Art & Cultural Forum'. Artists of any art forms and Cultural Groups across

the state can register in this network. This network links the artists/cultural groups directly with the customers who can be individual tourists or hotels/resorts who wish to enjoy/organise the performance.

The Human Resource Portal of RT Mission registering unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled persons of the local community in the portal from which the tourism industry can employ local people as per their needs. Not only the tourism industry anybody can call employees from the RT HR Portal.

These three online platforms created by RT Mission as part of marketing the products, skills and services of the registered RT Units.

FAM Trips

RT Mission is organising Familiarisation Trips at Vaikom for tour operators, bloggers and reporters of different medias. During January 2017 a group of 169 foreign tour operators visited Vaikom. FAM trips were organised by RT Mission for various other small and large groups. Officials from other state and Central Ministry also visited Vaikom destination to study about the scheme.



List of Projects

As part of PEPPER scheme LSGs has submitted 169 different tourism development projects for Vaikom destination. The projects will be scrutinised and the feasible projects will be combined to develop the Master Plan for Vaikom Tourism.

Since PEPPER scheme is getting implemented in a phased manner Tourism Master Plan preparation and implementation has been envisaged in the second phase. The Master Plan preparation for Vaikom destination is in progress which will be finalised and implemented in this financial year itself.

New RT Destination –Vaikom

The pilot destination –Vaikom, for the scheme PEPPER shows very well proven that new tourism destinations and zones can be identified through local community participation, developed in a participatory approach and can emerge as true RT destination. Vaikom also proved that LSGs can play a vital role in participatory tourism development approach.

By seeing the overwhelming support for the scheme from the local community and LSGs, Government of Kerala decided to implement the scheme to 13 more LSGs in the state.

The progress of the selected PEPPER Destinations are given below :-

Sl No	Name of Destinations/ LSGs/Taluk	Status of Launching & Special Tourism Gramasabha	Training and Other Programmes	Status of Resource Directory
1.	Vaikom	Completed in 10 LSGs – 1831 people participated	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Training - First phase Completed, second Phase started2. Local Investors Meet – First and second Phase Completed3. Local Stake Holders Meet- Ist and second phase completed4. Tour Packages Marketed5. Promotional Videos Launched6. 30 Accommodation units started7. 401 other units started8. 80,000 tourists visited	10 Tourism Resource Directories completed
2.	Athirappally	Completed- 185 people participated	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Local Investors & Stake Holders Meet completed2. 3 community tour	Tourism Resource Directories Completed

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> packages developed and marketed 3. 60 other units started 	
3.	Kayyoor–Cheemeni	Completed-160 people participated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Investors & Stake Holders Meet completed 2. 150 persons trained 3. 100 units started 	Completed`
4.	Punnayoorkkulam	Completed-260 people participated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Investors & Stake Holders Meet completed 2. 3 tour packages started 	Completed`
5.	Peringamala	Completed-120 people participated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Investors & Stake Holders Meet completed 	Resource Mapping completed
6.	Kallikkad	Completed-180 people participated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Investors & Stake Holders Meet completed 2. 80 units started 	Resource Mapping completed
7.	Kanthalloor	Completed- 280 people participated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Investors & Stake Holders Meet completed 2. 20 accomodation units started 3. 180 other units started 4. 5 Tour packages developed and marketed 5. 300 tourists visited 	Resource Mapping completed
8.	PONNANI	Special Tourism Gramasabhas completed in 6 LSGs – 1500 local people participated in Gramasabhas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness Workshop & Programme Launching Completed 2. 3 tour packages developed 3. Promotional videos launched 4. 40 units started 	Resource Mapping completed in 6 LSGs 6 Resource Directories Ready for Launch
9.	Amballoor	Completed- 280 people participated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Investors & Stake Holders Meet completed 2. 130 other units 	Resource directory Completed

			<p>started</p> <p>4. 4 Tour packages developed and marketed</p> <p>5. Video shoot completed</p>	
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