



Call for Action !

## **We seek stringent regulation of Tourism in and around Protected Areas** **EQUATIONS comments and recommendations on the (Draft) Guidelines for Ecotourism In and** **Around Protected Areas issued by the Ministry on June 2, 2011**

EQUATIONS  
29 June 2011

*The (Draft) Guidelines for Ecotourism in and around Protected Areas were issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests on June 2, 2011 and comments invited by June 30, 2011. Through detailed comments and documentation, we have recommended that the Ministry recognise the primacy of the Gram Sabha and the various committees formed under The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 in forest governance. A proposed structure for the guidelines, a note highlighting the realities of ecotourism in the context of conservation and livelihoods form important parts of the documents sent to the Ministry.*

To,  
Shri Jairam Ramesh,  
Minister of State for Environment and Forests,  
Paryavaran Bhavan,  
CGO Complex,  
Lodhi Road,  
New Delhi - 110 003

June 29, 2011

Subject: EQUATIONS comments and recommendations on the (Draft) Guidelines for Ecotourism In and Around Protected Areas issued by the Ministry on June 2, 2011

Dear Shri Ramesh,

We welcome the Ministry's endeavour to create guidelines for ecotourism, which we hope will soon transform into a more stringent regulation mechanism.

Enclosed are our comments and recommendations on the (Draft) Guidelines for Ecotourism In and Around Protected Areas issued by the Ministry on June 2, 2011.

We summarise our key comments and recommendations below:

1. Along with guidelines for tourism in forest and wildlife in and around protected areas, it is important that there be regulation of tourism in a range of ecosystems. We had communicated this concern when we wrote to the Chairman of the committee formed to create guidelines for forest and wildlife ecotourism. We hope that the Ministry will take an initiative to formalise guidelines and regulations for the all areas which are ecologically fragile and sensitive in relation to tourism.
2. The guidelines need to give primacy to Gram Sabhas by ensuring that their approvals are sought in the process of tourism development as is the case for other forms of development. This is a massive lapse in the light of the 72<sup>nd</sup> and 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment and hope this will be rectified in the final guidelines.
3. It is with much disappointment we see that The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 has not been considered while formulating these guidelines. We hope that the final guidelines will ensure that the provisions of this key Act are upheld in the context of the governance and regulation of tourism and rights of forest dwelling communities.
4. The very important resolution of the XXI meeting of the Indian Board for Wildlife in January 2002 regarding the demarcation of eco-fragile zones and guidelines for which have been issued by your Ministry on February

9, 2011 have been disregarded. The guidelines issued in February 2011 mandate regulation of tourism in a 10 kms radius from park boundaries.

We sincerely hope that you see our recommendations as an attempt to make ecotourism democratic, just and sustainable such that both communities and tourists benefit.

We look forward to meaningful and definitive action from your Ministry.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Viswanath  
Director

**Copy to:**

1. Subodh Kant Sahay, Minister, Ministry of Tourism
2. Sujit Banerjee, Committee Chairman and Rajesh Gopal, National Tiger Conservation Authority
3. T Chaterjee, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests
4. Rajen Habib Khawja, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism

**Encl:**

1. EQUATIONS Analysis of (Draft) Guidelines for Ecotourism In and Around Protected Areas issued by the Ministry on June 2, 2011
2. Proposed structure of the ecotourism guidelines
3. Note on Ecotourism – to be read in conjunction with EQUATIONS Analysis of (Draft) Guidelines for Ecotourism In and Around Protected Areas issued by the Ministry on June 2, 2011
4. Brief note on Limits of Acceptable Change
5. Brief note on Tourism Impact Assessment

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