



THE 6 PILLARS OF GENDER RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

A Framework for Action for the achievement of more gender-equitable forms of tourism

Overall Goal: Gender Responsible Tourism is aimed both at advancing women's best interests in the tourism sector and at promoting better tourism products. These mutually reinforcing goals are sought within the basic framework and Guiding Principles of Responsible Tourism (see Annex 1).

This document identifies 6 Pillars that are intended to provide a framework for action leading towards the achievement of *gender responsible tourism* – in other words an approach to tourism, which recognises the valuable contributions of women and seeks to redress existing inequities and injustices tourism as a whole.

Each of the Pillars draws on a wealth of documented research based on practical field experiences¹ and seeks to bring together in a short document the broad sets of actions required. Previous sets of recommendations have addressed a range of stakeholders, - including governments and policy-makers. This call for action is primarily addressed at tourism managers.

This Framework is the first step. The next step is the development of detailed Guidelines providing clear examples of the ways in which the general actions called for in this Framework for Action can be implemented.

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These include the UN global Report on Women and Tourism in 2010, Lucy J. Ferguson and Daniela Moreno Alarcon, authors of 'Tourism as an Opportunity: Good Practices in Sustainable Tourism from a Gender Perspective' and 'Tracing the Maze', Equations, 2011

1. Promoting the *quality*, as well as quantity of women's engagement in the tourism sector

This means:

- ✓ Recognising, valuing and actively seeking out the special skills and gifts that women bring to tourism
- ✓ Rejecting the gender-stereotyping of women's jobs in the tourist sector and widening the range of roles and positions occupied by women
- ✓ Supporting women's entrepreneurship and innovation
- ✓ Promoting the social and political empowerment of women

In order to achieve the above, initiatives taken to engage women in tourism should take into account the socio-cultural gender-biases existing in tourism planning and development due to its gendered nature and aim to eliminate them.

2. Promoting equal access to opportunities in tourism for women

Women are often denied access to the many opportunities that tourism provides, on account of barriers that prevent them from taking up these opportunities. In order to enhance women's access to such opportunities, actions are needed to increase women's access to:

- ✓ Specialised vocational training
- ✓ Leadership training
- ✓ Credit
- ✓ Markets
- ✓ Information
- ✓ Land

This involves analysing existing obstacles and barriers to women's active participation and access to opportunities, developing policies and strategies aimed at overcoming them and involving women every step of the way.

These may include:

- ❖ Positive outreach and awareness-building to ensure women's access to information about opportunities
- ❖ Gender sensitisation of stakeholders in the tourism industry
- ❖ Safe working conditions for women (eg safe travel at night)
- ❖ Provision of childcare facilities and flexible employment policies to enable women with children and other care responsibilities to take employment
- ❖ Supporting credit cooperatives or other schemes providing groups of women with access to credit, technology and market linkages

3. Promoting a fair and equitable sharing of benefits from tourism

Too often women are denied an equitable share in the benefits of tourism. For example, they are frequently paid less than their male counterparts for the same work, expected to contribute their labour without remuneration and/or denied opportunities for self-advancement. Similarly, women are often left out of discussions and meetings at the local community level to discuss tourism plans, pricing of products, and so on.

In order to promote greater fairness and a more equitable distribution of the benefits from tourism, measures required include:

- ✓ Valuing and paying for all work carried out by women
- ✓ Adopting and enforcing equal pay for equal work policies
- ✓ Ensuring equal access to natural resources such as land, water, forests.
- ✓ Introducing systems and mechanisms to encourage and facilitate women's participation in decision-making

4. Upholding the rights of women employed in tourism

The employment rights of women working in the tourism sector are frequently violated. Tourism companies must uphold and defend the rights of women workers by:

- ✓ Building women's awareness of their legal rights (especially women employed in the informal sector, such as vendors, crafts sellers, and so on)
- ✓ Adopting measures to safeguard the interests, needs and rights of women, especially in the informal sector
- ✓ Building women's capacity to assert these rights (eg through cooperatives and collectives)
- ✓ Providing protection against workplace harassment (e.g. by formulating sexual harassment policies and appointing a harassment prevention committee)
- ✓ Respecting women's maternity rights
- ✓ Opposing all forms of sex discriminations, such as unequal pay, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy, unequal access to decision-making positions, promotion, training opportunities and so on.

5. Opposing commoditisation and others forms of gender-based exploitation in the tourism sector

The spread of sex tourism is a major concern and carries many risks for women, including HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. The commoditisation of women through marketing images is also widespread. These practices should be actively opposed by tourist companies.

Measures that can be adopted include:

- ✓ A policy of zero tolerance with respect to any form of exploitation of women in tourism – such as exploitation of women’s labour, sexual abuse, pornography or trafficking
- ✓ Taking steps to ensure that tourism does not displace women or alienate them
- ✓ Ensuring a gender-friendly environment, including promoting the safety and security of women tourists

6. Promoting Women’s Voices and Leadership

Women’s voices are often ignored they are often denied the opportunity to take on leadership roles. This is mainly due to gender-based cultural conditioning that shapes gender relations at all levels: from the community, the workplace and in the wider society.

In order to encourage and promote women’s leadership, it is necessary to:

- ✓ Promote women’s involvement in decision-making at all levels of tourism processes from initial planning, project development, implementation and monitoring of outcomes.
- ✓ Ensure women’s voices are heard at the community level
- ✓ Provide support mechanisms to enhance the active participation of women in decision-making spaces

ANNEXE I: THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF RESPONSIBLE TOURISM²

PEOPLE-CENTERED

- Tourism is based on local aspirations and contexts and delivers local benefits
- Tourism development acknowledges people's primary rights over common property resources and natural resources & recognises that nature is not a commodity
- Tourism models shift from mass /consumptive nature to interaction, learning, genuine human encounters and mutual respect
- The success of tourism projects is measured, not by the economic gains alone, but also the growth of social capital and empowerment
- Local people's right to say no to tourism is respected

DEMOCRATIC & PARTICIPATORY

- Decision making is participatory, transparent, inclusive and based on research/facts
- Tourism development is undertaken with people's consent, keeping in view their vision for how tourism should develop
- Tourism is regulated by norms developed by local communities including women, local governance bodies, and tourism developers, that aim to minimise negative impacts on women and ensure sustainability and equity
- Consultations on tourism impacts are based on dialogue, education, awareness, learning from experience and mutual respect between multiple stakeholders of tourism

NON-EXPLOITATIVE

- Tourism does not displace or alienate people from traditional livelihoods, nor does it exploit marginalised communities, women and children
- In particular tourism has zero tolerance to any form of child abuse – labour, sexual abuse, pornography, trafficking
- Tourism does not expropriate – land, water, natural resources
- Tourism is culturally sensitive and does not commoditise local practices and culture. It strives to balance the need for commercial viability and the supporting and reviving of cultural traditions, arts and crafts

² These Guiding Principles were developed by Aditi Chanchani and Surabhi Sinng of Equations

CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

- Tourism practices ensure responsible use of natural resources, low energy use, effective waste management, and minimum negative impact on the environment

ACCOUNTABLE

- Tourism policy makers and implementers hold themselves accountable through ethical practices and stringent regulation for negative impacts

EQUITABLE

- Systems and mechanisms encourage and facilitate participation of local communities and local institutions to influence tourism and the sharing of benefits in more equitable ways
- Local ownership is strong, small and medium enterprises are vibrant, local employment and local economies are stimulated by tourism development.
- Strong backward linkages ensure that tourism relies on local produce and local skills