

Bill No. 89 of 2025

THE ECO-TOURISM PROMOTION BILL, 2025

By

SHRI RAJU BISTA, M.P.

A

BILL

to provide for the promotion, regulation, and development of eco-tourism in India through sustainable and inclusive practices, the constitution of institutional mechanisms for planning and implementation, protection of fragile ecosystems, empowerment of local communities, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-sixth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

- 5 1. (1) This Act may be called the Eco-Tourism Promotion Act, 2025.
 (2) This Act extends to the whole of India.

Short title,
extent and
commencement.

(3) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

Definitions.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) “appropriate Government” means in the case of a State, the Government of that State, and in all other cases, the Central Government;

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(b) “Authority” means the Eco-Tourism Promotion Authority constituted under section 3 of this Act;

(c) “Eastern States” include the States of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha;

(d) “North-Eastern States” include the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura as recognized under the North Eastern Council Act, 1971;

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(e) “Indian Himalayan Region” or “IHR” includes the States and Union Territories lying partially or wholly within the Himalayan-mountain ranges, namely,— Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Meghalaya, as well as the hill districts of Assam (Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong) and the hill regions of West Bengal (Darjeeling and Kalimpong);

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(f) “Agency” refers to the Skill Enhancement Certification Agency constituted under section 15 of this Act;

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(g) “States” means the State Governments referred to in under Article 1 of the Constitution of India;

(h) “Task Force” means the Marketing Task Force constituted under section 16 of this Act;

(i) “tourist centre” means a centre declared as a tourist centre by the appropriate Government; and

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(j) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules made under this Act.

CHAPTER II

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Constitution of
the Eco-Tourism
Promotion
Authority.

3. (1) The Central Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, constitute an Authority to be known as the Eco-Tourism Promotion Authority for the purposes of promoting eco-tourism and developing tourist destinations in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

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(2) The Authority shall be a body corporate by the said name, having a common seal and the power to acquire, hold and dispose of property, both movable and immovable, and to enter into contracts, and may sue or be sued in its said name. The Authority shall continue to exist notwithstanding any change in its composition.

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(3) The Authority shall consist of the following members—

(a) the Minister-in-Charge of the Union Ministry of Tourism – Chairperson, *ex officio*;

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(b) one full-time member to be appointed by the Central Government, having proven experience and expertise in the field of tourism development, archaeology, country and town planning, architecture, heritage conservation, or law – Vice-Chairperson;

(c) the Secretary, Union Ministry of Tourism – member, *ex officio*;

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(d) the Secretary, Union Ministry of Culture – member, *ex officio*;

(e) the Secretary, Union Ministry of Home Affairs – member, *ex officio*;

(f) the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India – member, *ex officio*;

(g) the Secretaries in charge of the Department of Tourism of the State Governments – members, *ex officio*;

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(h) the Member of the House of the People whose parliamentary constituency includes any part of a designated tourist destination – member, *ex officio*;

(i) the Municipal Commissioner of the Municipality concerned – member, *ex officio*;

5 (j) the Divisional Commissioner of the Division concerned – member, *ex officio*; and

(k) not more than three persons, possessing such qualifications and experience as may be prescribed, to be nominated by the Central Government – members.

10 (4) The Vice-Chairperson and the nominated members under clause (k) shall hold office for a maximum term of three years, or such other period as may be prescribed.

(5) The salary, allowances and other terms and conditions of service of the Vice-Chairperson and other members, other than *ex officio* members, shall be such as may be prescribed.

15 4. (1) The headquarter of the Authority shall be at Darjeeling in West Bengal.

Headquarter and other offices of the Authority.

(2) The Authority shall have its offices in every state capital or at such other places as it may deem fit for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

5. (1) The Authority shall appoint a Secretary and a Chief Accounts Officer in such manner as may be prescribed, by the Central Government.

Appointment and Functions of Secretary, Chief Accounts Officer and other staff of the Authority.

(2) The Secretary shall be the principal executive officer of the Authority and shall—

20 (a) act as the administrative head of the Authority;

(b) be responsible for convening meetings, preparing agenda, maintaining records and proceedings of the Authority;

(c) supervise and coordinate the activities of all divisions and personnel of the Authority;

25 (d) implement the decisions of the Authority and ensure compliance with statutory obligations; and

(e) discharge such other functions as may be assigned by the Authority or prescribed by rules.

30 (3) The Chief Accounts Officer shall be responsible for the financial management of the Authority and shall—

(a) prepare annual budgets and financial statements;

(b) maintain accounts in the manner prescribed;

(c) ensure compliance with financial regulations; and

35 (d) facilitate internal audits and coordinate with the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

(4) The salary, allowances, and other terms and conditions of service of the Secretary, the Chief Accounts Officer, and other officers and staff shall be such as may be prescribed.

40 (5) The Authority shall be provided with such number of officers and other employees as may be required for its efficient functioning.

(6) The Authority may, with the approval of the Central Government, appoint such other officers and employees as may be necessary for the efficient discharge of its functions under this Act.

45 (7) The duties, qualifications, and terms of service of the officers and employees appointed under sub-section (6) shall be such as may be specified by regulations made by the Authority, with the prior approval of the Central Government.

6. (1) The Authority shall meet at such times and places and shall observe such rules of procedure in regard to the transaction of its business at its meetings, as may be prescribed.

Meetings and procedure of the Authority.

50 (2) When any member referred to in sub-clause (c) or (d) or (e) of section 3 is unable to attend a meeting of the Authority for any reason, he may depute an officer, not below the

rank of Joint Secretary, from his Department to attend the meeting and such member shall have the right to vote.

(3) No Act or proceeding of the Authority shall be invalid by reason of any vacancy in the Authority.

CHAPTER III

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POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE AUTHORITY

Objectives of the Authority.	7. The objectives of the Authority shall be—	
	(a) to promote and develop eco-tourism in the country;	
	(b) to improve and strengthen the existing infrastructure in and around rural regions, ancient monuments, heritage sites and tourist destinations;	10
	(c) to develop new eco-tourism destinations with all basic amenities;	
	(d) to co-ordinate, support and interact with other departments and agencies for streamlining services and amenities in and around eco-tourism destinations;	
	(e) to provide safety and security to tourists;	
	(f) to facilitate and enhance the experience of the tourists, by promoting tourism ethics and education; and	15
	(g) to promote Indian culture, heritage, diversity, and tourism in a sustainable manner.	
Master Plan for development of tourist destinations.	8. (1) The Authority shall, as soon as may be, prepare a separate Master Plan for the development of each eco-tourism destination.	20
	(2) The Master Plan shall include—	
	(a) vision for the development of eco-tourism destinations;	
	(b) measures both short term, and long term to promote and develop eco-tourism; and	
	(c) measures to strengthen the existing infrastructure in and around eco-tourism destination.	25
	(3) The Master Plan of an eco-tourism destination shall be published in at least one local newspaper having circulation in that area for inviting objections and suggestions from general public before such date as may be specified in the publication.	
	(4) The Authority shall, before finalizing a Master Plan, take into consideration all objections and suggestions made under sub-section (3).	30
Functions of the Authority.	9. The Authority shall—	
	(i) promote the development of tourism facilities in collaboration with local communities in the eco-tourism destination;	
	(ii) development of all infrastructure will be undertaken prioritizing the preservation of the original composition— ethnic, cultural and natural, of the tourism destination;	35
	(iii) prepare a calendar of activities including annual festival, melas, haats to be organised in each forthcoming financial year for the promotion of eco-tourism at different tourist destinations;	
	(iv) advertise such activities as it considers necessary to promote eco-tourism at different tourist destinations;	40
	(v) interact once in three months with the stakeholders including representatives of the local communities, hoteliers, local authorities, police, forest, Archaeological Survey of India, and the Tourism Department of the State Governments concerned for proper co-ordination to develop and strengthen eco-tourism infrastructure in and around tourist destinations in the area;	45
	(vi) provide green amenities at such rate and in such manner to the visitors, as may be notified by the Central Government in this regard;	

(vii) provide such other amenities as it may deem fit for the development of eco-tourism destinations;

(viii) recommend to the Central Government the measures to be taken for the development of eco-tourism destinations;

5 (ix) coordinate with the local authorities functioning in the area regarding any developmental work undertaken or to be undertaken in or around an eco-tourism destination;

(x) maintain a website containing all essential information regarding eco-tourism destinations including forest camps, homestays, hotels, monuments and heritage sites, tourist maps, help desk, district administration and tour operators with a view to provide necessary information and help to the tourists;

(xi) levy and collect entry fee at such rate and in such manner, as may be prescribed, from visitors at eco-tourism destinations; and

15 (xii) issue such directions as it may deem necessary or expedient to meet the purposes of the Act.

10. (1) The Central Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, constitute an Eco-Tourism Satellite Account for the economic measurement of eco-tourism in the country.

Constitution of Eco-Tourism Satellite Accounts.

(2) The Eco-Tourism Satellite Account shall include –

20 (a) harmonization and reconciliation of eco-tourism statistics from an economic perspective;

(b) eco-tourism economic data that is comparable with other economic statistics; and

25 (c) inbound domestic eco-tourism and outbound eco-tourism expenditure including internal eco-tourism expenditure, production accounts of eco-tourism industries, the Gross Value Added (GVA) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) attributable to eco-tourism, employment, investment, Government consumption and non-monetary indicators.

30 **11. (1)** The Central Government may, if it is of the opinion that an area has eco-tourism potential in view of its location, cultural uniqueness, ancient or historical importance, or natural beauty, it may, by notification in the Official Gazette, declare that area to be an eco-tourism destination.

Declaration of an area as Tourist Destination.

(2) An area declared under sub-section (1) as eco-tourism destination shall be maintained by the Board as per international standards.

35 **12. (1)** Whenever any development work is to be carried out in or around any eco-tourism destination by any local authority, such local authority shall inform the Authority, through its Secretary or designated officer, in writing at least fifteen days before carrying out any development work, along with the estimates of expenditure likely to be incurred on the development work.

Prior intimation of any development work by any local authority to the Authority.

40 (2) The Authority shall maintain a Register containing details of development works to be undertaken by the local authorities.

(3) Any person, who intends to inspect the Register maintained under sub-section (2), shall apply to the Authority, in such form and manner as may be prescribed.

45 (4) If, in the opinion of the Authority, any proposed development work shall adversely affect the eco-tourism potential of a tourist destination, the Authority may, after giving an opportunity of being heard to the agency concerned, restrain such agency from carrying out any such development work.

50 **13. (1)** Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, the Central Government may, on the recommendation of the Authority and in consultation with the State Government concerned, acquire any land required for the purposes of development of a new eco-tourism destination under this Act. Such acquisition shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Right to Fair

Acquisition of land for development of tourist destination.

Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.

(2) The Central Government shall ensure payment of fair compensation and provision of rehabilitation and resettlement to the affected persons within six months from the date of acquisition.

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CHAPTER IV

IMPLEMENTATION ARMS AND MECHANISMS

Skill
Enhancement
Certification
Agency.

14. (1) The Central Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, constitute an Agency to be known as the Skill Enhancement Certification Agency for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

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(2) The Agency shall—

(a) establish and recognize skill development institutions which provide courses in any such activity which aid in eco-tourism; and

(b) provide to every student who successfully complete courses in eco-tourism guides, languages, cookery and driving a certificate for acquiring respective skills.

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Marketing Task
Force.

15. (1) The Central Government shall, in consultation with the Council, constitute a Task Force to be known as the Marketing Task Force for marketing and campaigning of the eco-tourism in the country.

(2) The Task Force shall consist of—

(a) a Chief Public Relations Officer having compulsory training in marketing, even if recruited from All India Civil Services; and

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(b) representatives from the marketing and personal relations industry, to be appointed by the Central Government in such manner as may be prescribed.

(3) The Task Force shall—

(a) strive to develop positive image of eco-tourism in India and also in other countries;

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(b) make tailor-made ad campaigns and other marketing modes to promote eco-tourism in the country;

(c) report negative experiences of tourists in a particular place as collated through analytics to the local administration for their immediate redressal; and

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(d) showcase the trouble-shooting and hassle-free eco-tourism experiences in the place.

CHAPTER V

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Constitution of
the Eco-Tourism
Promotion
Authority Fund.

16. (1) The Central Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, constitute a Fund to be known as the Eco-Tourism Promotion Authority Fund.

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(2) The Central Government shall, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, provide requisite sums to the Fund for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

Returns and
inspections.

17. (1) The Authority shall furnish to the Central Government at such time and in such form and manner, as may be prescribed, such returns, statements and other particulars in regard to any proposed or existing programme for the promotion and development of eco-tourism, as the Central Government may, from time to time require.

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(2) The Authority or any other officer authorized on its behalf, may call for reports and other information from the State Government or any other agency, as may be required by it for the efficient administration of this Act and it shall be incumbent for the State Government or other agency concerned to furnish the information so required.

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CHAPTER VI

SUPERVISION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Central
Government to
issue directions.

18. The Central Government shall, from time to time, issue such directions to the Authority, as may be necessary for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

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	19. (1) The Authority shall prepare every year an annual report in such form and manner, as may be prescribed by the Central Government, giving a full account of its activities during the previous year, and copies of the report shall be forwarded to the Central Government.	Annual Report.
5	(2) A copy of the report forwarded under sub-section (1) shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is received, before each House of Parliament.	
	20. All permissions, orders, decisions, notices and other documents of the Authority shall be authenticated by the signature of the Secretary to the Authority or any other officer authorized by the Authority in that behalf.	Authentication of orders and documents of Authority.
	CHAPTER VII	
10	MISCELLANEOUS	
	21. No suit, prosecution or other legal proceedings shall lie against any person or authority for anything which has been done or intended to be done in good faith under this Act or the rules made thereunder.	Protection of action taken in good faith.
15	22. The Board may, by general or special order, direct that any power exercisable by it under this Act may be exercised by such officer or local Board in such cases and subject to such conditions as may be specified therein.	Power to delegate.
	23. (1) The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.	Power to make rules.
20	(2) Every rule made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament, while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the rule or both the Houses agree that the rule should not be made, the rule shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or	
25	be of no effect, as the case may be; so, however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule.	
	24. If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may, by order published in the Official Gazette, make such provisions not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, as may appear to it to be necessary or expedient for removal of the difficulty:	Removal of difficulty.
30	(i) provided that no such order shall be made after the expiry of a period of two years from the date of the commencement of this Act; and	
	(ii) every order made under this section shall, as soon as may be after it is made, be laid before each House of Parliament.	
35	25. The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of any other law for the time being in force, dealing with any of the matters dealt within this Act.	Act not to be in derogation of other laws.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

India possesses immense ecological and cultural diversity, offering a tremendous opportunity to position itself as a global leader in eco-tourism. With 106 national parks covering 44,402.95 km² (1.35% of the geographical area) and over 1,000 protected areas spread across 178,640 km² (5.43% of India's landmass), the country's natural resources are unparalleled (Wildlife Institute of India, PIB, 2024). Further, India has a rich cultural, linguistic, musical, religious and ethnic diversity, which are primary drivers of eco-tourism across the world. Yet, despite this potential, eco-tourism contributes less than 5% to India's tourism economy, signaling a significant gap between potential and policy.

As per recent projections, India's eco-tourism market was valued at USD 8.4 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow to USD 26.85 billion by 2030, expanding at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 18.1% as per the Grand View Research, 2024. However, unregulated tourism has led to loss of traditional communities, their culture and traditions, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and the exploitation of fragile ecosystems. Recognizing these threats, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has designated Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs) around 487 protected areas, yet enforcement and developmental synergy remain weak.

The Eco-Tourism Promotion Bill, 2025, seeks to establish a robust institutional and regulatory framework through the constitution of the Tourism Development Board, the Eco-Tourism Promotion Authority, and the Sustainable Tourism Interventions Council. These bodies will ensure coordinated planning and execution of eco-tourism strategies while preserving local ecology, promoting sustainable infrastructure, and engaging indigenous communities. Additionally, the Bill proposes a Skill Enhancement Certification Agency to build human capital in eco-tourism and a mechanism for Tourism Satellite Accounts to monitor economic, social, and ecological outcomes.

This legislation aligns with India's international obligations under the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDGs 8, 11, 12, 13, and 15 focusing on sustainable economic growth, resilient communities, responsible consumption, climate action, and biodiversity conservation, and responds to the increasing demand for nature-based, responsible tourism. By establishing a unified framework that integrates environmental safeguards, community-based tourism, and sustainable economic development, the Eco-Tourism Promotion Bill, 2025 will serve as a blueprint for green growth and ecological resilience in India's tourism sector.

Hence this Bill.

NEW DELHI;
July 8, 2025

RAJU BISTA

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

Clause 3 of the Bill provides for the constitution of the Eco-Tourism Promotion Authority. Clause 5 provides for the appointment and functions of Secretary, Chief Accounts Officer and other staff of the Authority. Clause 13 provides for acquisition of land for development of tourist destination. Clause 14 provides for skill enhancement certification agency. Clause 15 provides for constitution of a Marketing Task Force. Clause 16 provides for constitution of the Eco-Tourism Promotion Authority Fund. The Bill, therefore if enacted, would involve expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India. It is estimated that a recurring expenditure of rupees fifty crore per annum will be involved.

A non-recurring expenditure of rupees one hundred crore is also likely to be involved.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 23 of the Bill empowers the Central Government to make rules for carrying out the purposes of the Bill. As the rules will relate to matters of detail only, the delegation of legislative power is of a normal character.

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to provide for the promotion, regulation, and development of eco-tourism in India through sustainable and inclusive practices, the constitution of institutional mechanisms for planning and implementation, protection of fragile ecosystems, empowerment of local communities, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

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