

## MoCAT launches new guideline to strengthen community-based tourism

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Dhaka: The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism has introduced the Community-Based Tourism Guideline 2025, now accessible on its official website, aiming to make local communities key partners in Bangladesh's tourism development.

According to the ministry, the new framework is designed to ensure that tourism growth benefits local residents while protecting the environment and cultural heritage. It seeks to curb economic leakages, minimize resource exploitation, and prevent the loss of traditional practices — common side effects of mass tourism.

The guideline emphasizes that community-based tourism (CBT) can create sustainable livelihoods, enhance visitor experiences, and preserve both natural and cultural assets.

Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — particularly Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) — the policy envisions tourism as a tool for inclusive and responsible development.

Among its key directives are the identification of potential CBT destinations, engagement of local households in tourism activities, and market assessments to design eco-friendly, locally driven experiences. It also focuses on protecting heavily visited areas from environmental degradation and biodiversity loss.

The guideline further details standards for health, safety, quality assurance, and community participation, as well as mechanisms for monitoring, promotion, and digital marketing. It also proposes building international partnerships to expand Bangladesh's visibility in the global tourism market.

To oversee its execution, the ministry has recommended establishing a National Community Tourism Steering Committee and District Tourism Development Committees, which will coordinate local-level implementation and monitor outcomes. Guidance on funding mechanisms and budget management has also been included to support long-term sustainability.

Officials said the overarching goal of the initiative is to empower marginalized communities and improve livelihoods at the grassroots level through sustainable tourism practices that celebrate local culture and protect natural resources.

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