

RURAL AND NATURE TOURISM ACCOMMODATION

Towards Responsible Best Practice





Doing better business

Step forward on a journey to positive, green success



Photo: Green Team at Evolve Back Coorg

WHY THE JOURNEY TO RESPONSIBLE PRACTICE IS IMPORTANT

The world is at a crossroads. Scientists across the globe have issued stark warnings. In one direction lies climate catastrophe, mass biodiversity loss, global instability, extreme poverty for many, malnutrition and chronic disease. In the other lies a green economy, inclusive prosperity, health and wellbeing, and a world teeming with biodiversity. 193 nations have signed up to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in a landmark agreement forged by the United Nations in 2015. Tourism has a decisive contribution to make highlighted by the UN's World Tourism Organisation impacting all seventeen goals.

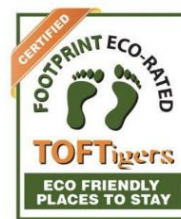
Playing your part and adopting responsible and sustainable tourism practices is not only about an existential threat which is already impacting communities around the world. It's good for your business now - mitigating risk, enhancing your business offer, gaining competitive edge and saving money.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



A Journey Towards Best Practice

Sustainable tourism practice is about putting local communities and the environment at the heart of business operations alongside economic drivers, the so-called triple bottom line. This toolkit is designed around TOFTigers' PUG certification, South Asia's highest standard for nature and eco-friendly accommodation providers in wilderness destinations, a process officially recognised by the UN's Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). It can equally be applied to our Footprint certification for accommodation in rural areas. It's designed to help you at whatever stage on the journey towards responsible practice you are, whether getting started or heading for best practice. Through sharing examples of good practice, we aim to inspire and catalyse positive change.



What's in the Toolkit

We've structured the information into nine overlapping themes which reflect what responsible practice and our certification processes cover. Each profile in the series includes a brief introduction on why the theme is important and how responsible action can benefit your business. We include a summary of top line action - **Easy Wins** and **Going for Gold** - and brief examples of good practice with more detailed case studies, tips and additional information in the resources section. The tips are more extensive than the criteria used for certification. Information is intended for use as general guidance only and may not be appropriate for every situation, destination and country.

Downloadable PDFs for the complete profiles are available online in each section. The online toolkit also includes advice on responding to Covid-19 and individual lodge case studies spanning all the themes which will be built up over time.



Introduction



Local Economy
– Employment,
Skills & Enterprise



Community
Liaison &
Support



Water
Conservation &
Treatment



Energy &
Carbon
Footprint



Waste
Management &
Recycling



Nature
Education &
Conservation



Cultural
Heritage



Sustainable
Building



Health, Safety &
Pollution



Individual Lodge
Case Studies



Responding to
Covid-19

How Certification Works

Our certification process involves an initial online questionnaire followed by a site visit by TOFTigers' Green Team, Sycom Projects Consultants Private Limited, independent environmental and social experts. Performance for each of the 86 criteria is scored from 0-3 with extra points awarded for exceptional performance. Scores achieving over 55% are rated Good, 65% Quality and 80% Outstanding. An opportunity is given to take action to improve your score before the report is finalised. Our Green Team are on hand throughout the process to offer you advice. Certification is valid for two or three years depending on the certification taken. Please feel free to speak to one of our team to discuss certification (contact admin@toftindia.org).

Mainstreaming Sustainable Practice in Policy and Practice

The best practitioners have established responsible tourism objectives and strategy at the highest level informing all aspects of their operation with key personnel or green teams responsible for implementing, monitoring annual goals, and reporting back. You can start with simple, no cost action. TOFTigers' Green Team are here to help you on your journey to positive green success.

- Use this toolkit to identify practical steps to take.
- Set realistic objectives and targets.
- Use clear benchmarks to measure and report on your progress.
- Review and set goals annually.
- Appoint a Green Team, allocate responsibility for key tasks, and develop champions in different areas of your operation.
- Train your staff, share your progress and reward good performance.
- Work with local people, the forest department, government, NGOs and trade associations to achieve your objectives.
- Share your good practice with your clients and potential customers.
- Use TOFTigers PUG eco-certification as part of your marketing strategy.

How the Toolkit was Compiled

Examples and case studies in the toolkit are based on the most recent PUG reports available for accommodation rated outstanding or quality, information provided by lodges in nominations for TOFTigers Wildlife Tourism Awards and lodge news and feedback. Examples reflect operations before Covid-19 set in. The toolkit has been developed on a limited budget and may not include the best examples in every case. It will be updated over time subject to funding being available. The toolkit was developed and written for TOFTigers by Positive Nature in collaboration with TOFTigers' Green Team, Sycom Projects Consultants Private Limited.



Positive Nature

Positive Nature is a not-for-profit organisation celebrating the wonder of the natural world, highlighting its importance and promoting sustainable living and wellbeing. Its founder Laura Downer worked for TOFTigers for over six years in a multi-faceted role. Her previous work included communications for a UK government programme working alongside environmental consultants to encourage replication of new environmental technologies and recycling; tourism and cultural consultancy; and international events and intercultural exchange. See <https://www.positivenature.world/>



Sycom Projects Consultants Private Limited

Sycom Projects Consultants Pvt Ltd is a premier consultancy organisation working for over 25 years in the sustainability sector on issues such as Waste Management, Water Health and Sanitation, Natural Resource Management, CSR, Training and Entrepreneurship, Renewable Energy, Socio-Economic and Responsible Eco-Tourism sectors. Their clients include a range of Multilateral and Bilateral Developmental Agencies as well as several Central Ministries and State Government agencies.



Sycom is the independent audit agency for TOFTigers' certification programmes for accommodation providers in India and Nepal using criteria recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). Their team of twelve experts making up TOFTigers Green Team have undertaken extensive training with the GSTC in addition to their environmental expertise and hold a GSTC certificate in Sustainable Tourism. See <http://sycomprojects.com/>

HELP US DRIVE THE CHANGE

Your *corporate commitment* to sustainability



TOFTigers is a global business-to-business nature travel charity with a mission to improve the ecological and economic sustainability of wildlands and wildlife across Asia. Well-planned and well-managed responsible tourism is a force for good bringing economic benefits to rural areas, restoring habitat, supporting conservation and local communities, changing poachers into protectors and giving visitors inspiring experiences of nature. We work with the travel trade, destinations, accommodation providers, governmental and conservation organisations to make this happen through training, advocacy, certification, promoting best practice and partnership working.

Our **certification programmes** place local communities, nature and environmental sustainability at the heart of business operations. They are a symbol of assurance for travellers and the travel trade that the places they select to stay at have been reviewed by environmental experts and exceed a minimum standard on a journey towards best practice. The PUG certification is recognised by the United Nation's Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and is aimed solely at nature focused accommodation. The Footprint certification has a broader client base that is not wholly nature focused and encompasses accommodation providers in rural, natural or more urban landscapes.

[Sign up for certification](#), [get involved in our campaign](#) or view sustainable travel options [on our website](#) and download the [Great Wildlife Travel Guide](#).

TOFTIGERS BEST PRACTICE SERIES

- [Introduction](#)
- [Community Liaison and Support](#)
- [Energy and Carbon Footprint](#)
- [Nature Education and Conservation](#)
- [Sustainable Building](#)
- [Local Economy – Employment, Skills and Enterprise](#)
- [Water Conservation and Treatment](#)
- [Waste Management and Recycling](#)
- [Cultural Heritage](#)
- [Health, Safety and Pollution](#)

Correct at time of press. Information included may not be appropriate to every situation, destination and country and is intended for general guidance only and may be subject to change.

Compiled for TOFTigers by [Positive Nature](#) and [Sycom Projects Consultants Pvt Ltd](#), March 2021

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