



travel operators for  
**tigers**  
Action on responsible use of wild habitats



Ecotourism Seminar  
CMS Vatavaran - 31<sup>st</sup> October 2009

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**ECOTOURISM:  
FEASIBILITY IN  
PROTECTED AREAS**

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**AIMS**

1. Introduction to PAs
2. Role of Ecotourism / Wildlife Tourism
3. Feasibility and Tourism Certification
4. TOFT and Its 'PUG' Certification

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## Introduction to PAs

- "an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources and managed through legal or other effective means" (IUCN)
  
- Estimated over 33,000 Protected Areas worldwide.



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IUCN CATEGORIES	
I	SSSI (Site for Special Scientific Interest)
II	NATIONAL PARK (Ecosystem Conservation & Recreation)
III	NATURAL MONUMENT (Conservation of Specific Features)
IV	HABITAT SPECIES MANAGEMENT AREA (Conservation through Management interventions)
V	PROTECTED LANDSCAPE / SEASCAPE (Landscape / Seascape Conservation & Recreation)
VI	MANAGED RESOURCE PROTECTED AREA (Sustainable use of Natural Ecosystems)



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## PA Management Regimes

- 1 Top to down – Government orders and people follow (e.g. – India, Kenya & Zimbabwe)
- 2 Co-management – Communities and the government have an equal say (e.g. - South Africa)
- 3 Community owned – Where regime is with the community and government has no say (e.g. Kakadu National Park – Australia)



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## Is Ecotourism Feasible around PAs?

- If ecotourism is to be feasible in India we need:
  - Visitor Impact Assessments
  - Willingness to Pay surveys
  - Carrying Capacity research / Limit of Acceptable Change
  - Tourism Certification
  - Knowledge based interpretation & guiding
- and yes, the negative and blame culture towards tourism needs to change



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**WILDLIFE TOURISM**

- Defined as:  
'a tool for participation and involvement where a visitor experiences knowledge, culture and ecological understanding of the area / its people - without harming its natural existence and his/her own experience' (Abhishek Behl).

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**WILDLIFE TOURISM – A PRODUCT**



- In tourism - 7P's of Marketing (all 4):
- People
- Process
- Physical evidence / Partnerships



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**WILDLIFE & THE TOURISM SECTOR -  
A MARKETING PRODUCT**

- Stakeholders must recognise that it is:
  - a limited resource
  - sustainable growth is a slow process
- Greater consideration needed for the socio-cultural cost of tourism development
- Tourism/Wildlife departments must recognise that:
  - WT is service-oriented
  - Need to treat employees and tourists ethically

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**CODES OF CONDUCT**

- Set of rules outlining responsibilities - maintaining tourism satisfaction for an individual or organisation
- A mechanism to regulate the impact of tourism
- Currently most of India's NP have Do's & Don't
  - This impacts on visitor experience and satisfaction
- Tourism impacts result from the activities of inexperienced visitors
- In contrast, *Responsible Guidelines* make visitors participate

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## TOFT TRAVELLER'S CODE

Placed in ticket wallets, bedrooms or lodge racks



**TOFT Traveller's Code**

**TRAVELLER'S CODE**

**KINGS LODGE KEN RIVER LODGE**

### Hard Facts TRAVELLER'S CODE

Visitors to India's wild places will help to conserve the natural environment and ensure their safe and enjoyable stay by following these simple rules:

- 1. Do not disturb wildlife or get your gear too close. Do not touch or feed any animals.
- 2. Do not feed or attempt to feed any animals.
- 3. Do not feed or attempt to feed any animals.
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## TOURISM CERTIFICATION

- Many tourism certifications in the world:
  - Green Globe 21
  - Rain-forest Alliance
  - PAN Parks
  - European Blue flag
  - Eco-tourism Australia
  
- A market based tool:
  - Linking the supply chain by guaranteeing tourists that suppliers have standards of good practice



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### WHY TOURISM NEEDS CERTIFICATION?

- Improves quality and performance of their business and staff
- 'Doing the right things' to protect the environment & local communities
- Cuts costs
- Gain marketing advantage
- Avoid being added with 'green washed' business that are not sustainable, yet try to claim to be

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### PRACTICES UNDER GUIDELINES



- Started in 2006/7
- 1<sup>st</sup> wilderness certification program in India
- Rates wilderness lodges through informal & formal audit process
- Registered 75 lodges
  - all lodges audited
  - 27 received ratings
- Encourages lodges to improve

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## THE 'PUG' RANKING

**MEMBER**  
(2007-10)

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In partnership with  
**GLOBAL TIGER PATROL**  
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This accommodation is  
**PUG Rated**

- **OUTSTANDING PRACTICE**
- QUALITY PRACTICE
- GOOD PRACTICE
- UNDER PROCESS



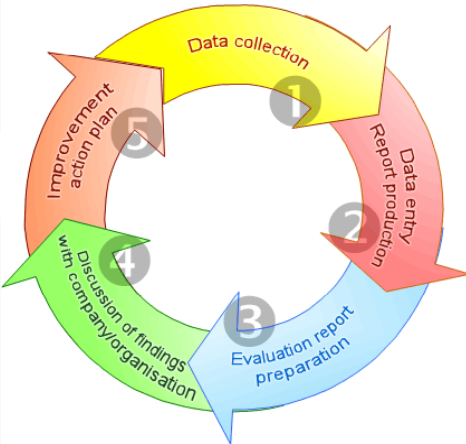
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## THE 'PUG' PROCESS

- Register to the PUG
- Lodge Self assessment questionnaire / evidence
- On-site auditor views / collect evidence
- Spot checks, visitor feedback forms
- Final overall rating
- Improvement to enhance rating



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## THE 'PUG' PROCESS



**Economic:** Local employment, local purchasing & capacity building / training.

**Socio-Cultural:** Cooperative structures & local culture.

**Ecological:** Planning, Design/Property Construction, Waste-water Management, Energy conservation, Nature conservation & Visitor interpretation and Guiding

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## THE 'PUG' BENEFITS

- **Enhanced Quality:**
  - Preserves the destination, helps businesses to meet higher standards through continuous improvement
- **Improved Profitability:**
  - Reduces bills, positively contributing environmentally & to well-being of local people
- **Broader Market Appeal:**
  - Use of the rating logo in marketing & promotion through TOFT website; demonstrating commitment & high performance
- TOFT Certification is wilderness industry recognised and used by its suppliers compared with other certifications

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## The 'PUG' Future

- Tourism industry driven certification
- Further audits need to incorporate all lodges in 6 parks and opened to all India this season onwards.
- Maximum support from stakeholders required
- Create a benchmark for all India wildlife lodges
- Advocate and support best practice providers (whole India)
- All stakeholders (government / tourism industry) to use PUG as a regulatory tool

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## Summary

- Discussed different PA regimes
- How this impacts on ecotourism in India
- Key changes needed to make Ecotourism feasible in India
- Illustrated 'PUG' as a Tourism certification example

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Certification is a journey of a thousand miles which begins with a 'single step'.



Aditya Singh

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