



## Women Empowerment is South Asia through Ecotourism

**Inception Workshop for the Rural and Ecotourism based Social Enterprise Project for Sustainable Development and Gender Empowerment in South Asia was held in New Delhi and Dehradun, November 25-28 2019**

**Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF) represented SWAN Sri Lanka Chapter in the above Workshop and Field Visits**

Among the flagship projects of the South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) is the Rural and Ecotourism based Social Enterprise Project for Sustainable Development and Gender Empowerment in South Asia.

In the opening welcome remarks at the Workshop, Professor & Ambassador, Veena Sikri, Convener, South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) & Vice Chairperson of South Asia Foundation (SAF-India) said "Tourism is one of the natural avenues for income generation across South Asia. It is also the most instinctive and successful way to bring the peoples of South Asia closer to each other. Ecotourism is environmentally responsible tourism. It inculcates respect for different cultures and sub-cultures, and is essential for sustainable development of regions and people. SWAN emphasizes the vital role of ecotourism for integrating women into the process of sustainable development. Women play a central role in rural communities in executing agricultural processes (from sowing to harvesting), in manufacturing of handicrafts and textiles, arts and music, cuisine and hospitality, preservation of the environment and solid waste management, cultural and heritage preservation and inculcating traditional values for the next generation. All these are core values for the development of ecotourism. By making local communities the principal beneficiaries in ecotourism projects, the aspect of gender empowerment for the women in these communities receives the highest priority. Ecotourism becomes the vehicle for skills, livelihood and sustainable development for the women of South Asia. Through this workshop, SWAN is planning to create an e-portal to develop rural and Ecotourism which will enhance knowledge and bring the women of South Asia closer to each other".

The South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) started work on the above project in 2014, on the eve of SWAN's Sixth Annual General Conference, held in Thimphu, Bhutan, in August/September 2014. The Tourism Council of Bhutan and SWAN co-organized the Special Workshop on "Ecotourism for Sustainable Development and Gender Empowerment in South Asia".

The Ecotourism Society of India was the facilitator for the Workshop. This Workshop deliberated extensively on the enormous power and potential of rural tourism and ecotourism as facilitators for gender empowerment through socio-economic development focused on poverty alleviation, protection of the biodiversity, environment, institutional and human resource development, and promotion of the infrastructure of connectivity, including friendship through people-to-people connectivity across South Asia.

Palitha Gurusinghe, President, Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation representing Sri Lanka at the Bhutan Conference, made a Presentation on "Ecotourism for Sustainable Development and Gender Empowerment in South Asia with special reference to Sri Lanka"

The participants agreed and emphasized that it is crucial to integrate women into the process of sustainable Ecotourism development. The Workshop held in Thimphu, Bhutan in September, 2014, the delegates from all South Asian countries attended agreed and emphasized that it is crucial to integrate women into the process of sustainable ecotourism development which is one of the noble objectives of SWAN. SWAN's vision is to achieve sustainable development for South Asia through an integrated approach incorporating the centrality of women's agency, voice, participation and leadership in every aspect of sustainable development.

This Workshop deliberated extensively upon the potential of tourism in South Asia. Discussions highlighted the fact that the unique topographies found in the region, its civilization, heritage and geographical and biological diversity, offer enormous scope for the promotion of Ecotourism as a tool for social and economic development.

The eight participating countries have identified sites in their respective countries for development of rural and Ecotourism Projects. They are India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka, SWAN, Sri Lanka Chapter, initiated an Ecotourism Project and Camp Site at Hikkaduwa in the close proximity to the Hikkaduwa Holiday Resort.



**Left:** Professor & Ambassador, Veena Sikri, Convener, South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) & Vice Chairperson of South Asia Foundation (SAF-India). **Right:** Workshop in progress





## Editor's Note

### Ecotourism shines in South Asia

Congratulations to SWAN, for its landmark Ecotourism and Social Enterprise Project for Ecotourism Development and Gender Empowerment in South Asia.

The Regional Workshop on "Rural and Ecotourism based Social Enterprise Project for Sustainable Development and Gender Empowerment in South Asia" was hosted by South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) and held at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, on the 25th November, 2019, supported by Tata Trusts India and the UN ESCAP, New Delhi. The SWAN Delegates from South Asia gathered at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, on the 25th November, 2019, discussed at length how to promote their flagship Ecotourism Projects in South Asia initiated by SWAN in 2014, August/September, Thimpu, Bhutan.

SWAN Project is the first ever Women Centric Ecotourism Project initiated in South Asia. The process in project formulation was completed by 2016, and a proposal has already submitted to the SAARC Development Fund (SDF) for funding. In between, two pilot projects under the SWAN Project have already been started by Himmoththan Society, Dehradun in India and Hikkaduwa in Sri Lanka.

The Workshop followed by two days Field Trip to Uttarakhand, Dehradun and Jadipani in India, deliberated extensively on the enormous power and potential of rural tourism and ecotourism as facilitators for gender empowerment through socio-economic development focused on poverty alleviation, protection of the environment, building of institutional and human resource capacity. Tourism is a natural avenue for revenue generation across South Asia. It is also the most instinctive and successful way to bring the peoples of South Asia closer to each other. Ecotourism is environmentally and socially friendly responsible tourism. It inculcates respect for different cultures and sub-cultures, and is essential for sustainable development of the regions and its people in the Asia-Pacific Region.

The Field Trips to Him Vikas Self-Reliant Cooperative at Jadipani, Uttarakhand in northeast India were a wonderful experience to all SWAN delegates to understand and observe first hand on the operational aspects of Home Stay and Community Camping in Jadipani which were administrated by a Federation of Women in the locality. These could be replicated in the other SWAN Ecotourism Projects too. These women stake holders ranging from young to aged (old) members are very efficient and mindful of what they are up to.

The two main important programmes were at the center of discussion during the Workshop were the Certification for SWAN Ecotourism Projects/Home Stay and the Marketing and Promotions. UN-ESCAP South and South West Asia Regional Office (SSWAO) in New Delhi, has offered its generous support to educate and train women stake holders of the SWAN Ecotourism Projects in South Asia on Market Outreach through their proposed E-Portal in collaboration with SWAN. As highlighted at the Workshop, e-portal could be a serious sustained effort which is necessary to attract domestic and international visitors to the ecotourism projects, year round from all over the world. Once the proposed e-portal comes off the ground it will be an impetus to manage ecotourism projects with viably and sustainably.

The other important issue discussed at the Workshop was Certification/Standards for Home Stay and Ecotourism Projects initiated by the SWAN Project Partners. Ms. Seema Bhatt, National NRM and Biodiversity Expert, UN FAO (New Delhi), and Honey Vice President of the Ecotourism Society of India and Palitha Gurusinge, President, Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation enlightened the delegates on the importance of Certification, particularly for Homestay and Ecotourism activities. Marketing and Certification are vital components to bring the quality wise development for any Ecotourism Project

## HIKKADUWA ECOTOURISM PROJECT



Ms. Seema Bhatt, in her presentation enlightened the participants on Certification for Ecotourism and said "Certification is one of the path-breaking issues. The rapid growth of ecotourism businesses, including rural tourism, has brought with it the practice of 'green washing' where tourism enterprises present themselves as 'green', 'ecologically friendly', or 'responsible', with no benchmark to measure or establish the veracity of these claims. An important way to prevent such unethical practices is to set standards for best practices and then, to develop and implement a certification scheme. Certification for ecotourism can be viewed as a tool that helps promote social equity and a sustainable environment. Certification adds credibility to an enterprise and ensures the professional nature of the initiative. This also provides an opportunity for self-evaluation and subsequent improvement of operating standards.

In theory, certification is like an appraisal of management practices. However, in reality, a reliable certification system needs the development of benchmarks that have been agreed upon by a diverse group of stakeholders in a participatory manner. In addition, there is the need for auditors who are independent of the enterprise to endorse the process. Ms Seema Bhatt will discuss all these issues".

The South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) emphasizes the significance of ecotourism for gender empowerment and sustainable development in South Asia. SWAN strongly supports the need for a certification process through a set of standards and guidelines. Through the discussions at the Inception Workshop, and in the follow-up after the Workshop, SWAN will focus on preparing a template of desirable inputs to ensure that the certification process is as comprehensive as possible. The issue of security, especially for women visiting and working at ecotourism facilities, is vital. SWAN will work towards a compilation of certification approaches specifically for the ecotourism sector of various countries (including in South Asia). A comparative study of home-stay guide-lines and ecotourism certification processes as an output of the Inception Workshop can surely be valuable as inputs for practitioners and policy-makers alike.

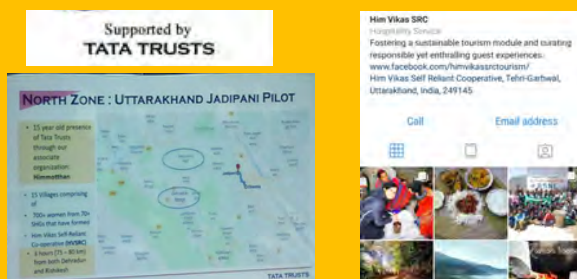
Palitha Gurusinge, President, Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation also made a combined presentation on Ecotourism Certification, Issues and Challenges of Home Stay Programmes in Asia-Pacific and the Hikkaduwa Women Centric Ecotourism Project in Sri Lanka

The Brainstorming Session was conducted by Dr Rajan Sudesh Ratna and Veena Sikri- Co-chairs, Ms Zulaikha Rafiq Afghanistan, Ms Rokia Rahman, Bangladesh, Mridula Tangirala, India, Ms Farida Akhter, Bangladesh, Dr Maryam Shakeela, Maldives, Yankila Sherpa, Deepak Tamang, Chanda Malla of Nepal, Mano Alles and Palitha Gurusinge from Sri Lanka

The Workshop was supported by; <https://www.tatatrusts.org/Upload/homepage/TT-lead-loop-v2.mp4>



## Sustainable, Rural and Ecotourism Project at its best in Uttarakhand, India, A SWAN Project, Supported by TATA TRUSTS



In a small village in Uttarakhand (India), the local and global meet in different ways to create sustainable solutions to real-life problems. connects the dots between the urban and rural to enhance young people's educational experiences, improve livelihood opportunities for rural communities and sustainable living practices for all

### EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

We design hands-on educational experiences that encourage children and young adults to understand, engage with, and develop innovative, sustainable solutions to real world issues.

### RESPONSIBLE CONSUMERISM

We enhance rural livelihoods by connecting rural farmers, women entrepreneurs and artisans directly with consumers based on mutual trust and exchange

### SUSTAINABLE LIVING

We innovate, pilot and demonstrate sustainable practices and technologies towards an alternate life style that leaves a minimum carbon footprint.

Logos; <https://www.himvikas.org/face book>; Him Vikas Rural Tourism

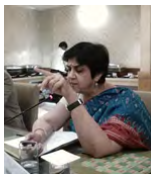
The SWAN delegation to the Delhi Workshop has been given a fantastic opportunity to visit and study Jadipani Ecotourism Project, their Home Stay Facially and Kanthar Gaon Community owned Camp Site, in Uttarakhand and study the same at first hand. It was a great opportunity presented to the delegates by SWAN to visit and interact with the local community in the ecotourism village.

All members of the SWAN delegation contributed and interacted by sharing their wide experiences with the community activists at Dehradun and Himmotthan Ecotourism Projects, and later with the local bodies at the Village Silkoti Sands and Him Vikas Women's Self-Reliant Cooperative. Professor & Ambassador, Veena Sikri, Convener, South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) & Vice Chairperson of South Asia Foundation (SAF-India) commented on the field visit "please accept my heartiest gratitude and joy at the success of the field visit to Jadipani. Mridula Tangirala, Coordinator, The Tata Trusts, has encapsulated all our thoughts and feelings in her beautiful description of this collaboration between Himmottan and SWAN has evolved and through Him Vikas continued its brilliant efforts through the Jadipani Project to make Ecotourism a reality in the vital twin contexts of gender empowerment and sustainable development"



Amongst the Experts and Resource Persons contributed to the Workshop were;

Ms. Seema Bhatt, National NRM and Biodiversity Expert, UN FAO (New Delhi), and Honey Vice President of the Ecotourism Society of India, Palitha Gurusingshe, President, Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation and the Chairman/CEO of Asia-Pacific Regional Ecotourism Council (APREC), Mridula Tangirala, The Coordinator of Tata Trusts Ecotourism Projects, Dr Nagesh Kumar, The UN ESCAP, SSWAO E-commerce Project, Delhi and Shireen Vakil, Head Policy and Advocacy, Tata Trusts



**Far Left:** Ms. Seema Bhatt, National NRM and Biodiversity Expert, UN FAO (New Delhi), and Honey Vice President of the Ecotourism Society of India.

**Left:** Palitha Gurusingshe, President, Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF)

**Right:** Dr Nagesh Kumar, E-Commerce Director of the UN ESCAP



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"Certification is one of the path-breaking issues. The rapid growth of ecotourism businesses, including rural tourism, has brought with it the practice of 'green washing' where tourism enterprises present themselves as 'green', 'ecologically friendly', or 'responsible', with no benchmark to measure or establish the veracity of these claims. An important way to prevent such unethical practices is to set standards for best practices and then, to develop and implement a certification scheme. Certification for ecotourism can be viewed as a tool that helps promote social equity and a sustainable environment. Certification adds credibility to an enterprise and ensures the professional nature of the initiative. This also provides an opportunity for self-evaluation and subsequent improvement of operating standards.

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**Above:** Women Federation Activists - Jadipani



## Professional Membership and Certification Courses offered by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES)

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) founded in 1990, it is a nonprofit international organization dedicated in promoting Ecotourism. TIES has been on the forefront of the development of ecotourism, providing guidelines and standards, training, technical assistance, and educational resources at global level. TIES' global network of ecotourism professionals and travelers is leading the efforts to make tourism a viable tool for conservation, protection of bio-cultural diversity, and sustainable community development to make travel and tourism more sustainable.

Through membership services, industry outreach and educational programs, TIES is committed to helping tourism organizations, communities and professionals to promote and practice the principles of ecotourism. TIES currently has members in more than 190 countries and reached the Membership Base well over 120,000 in territories, representing various professional fields and industry segments including: academics, consultants, conservation professionals and organizations, governments, architects, tour operators, lodge owners and managers, general development experts, and ecotourists.

Once you enroll as a Member of TIES you could enjoy the following Membership Benefits. Professional members receive benefits tailored to those working in ecotourism, and interested in sharing their expertise and improving their skills.

Professional Member Profile features include:

- Custom URL: Profile page link with individualized URL.
- Link Back: URL link directly to your website
- Profile Picture: Your member profile features your profile picture.
- Biography & Expertise: Highlight your educational background, accomplishments, and expertise through your profile page. Reach potential clients by posting your interest area.
- Social Media Links: You can link to all your social media profiles on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram.

You could now join TIES as a Professional/Institutional Member at a discounted membership fee offered during the celebrations of TIES 30th Anniversary, through Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation:

Professional Membership Fee (annual) US\$-40-  
Ecotourism Certification Course fee (On-Line) starting  
from US\$-45-

Please contact; [sleco@sltnet.lk](mailto:sleco@sltnet.lk) See more information;  
[www.srilankaecotourism.org](http://www.srilankaecotourism.org) \ <https://ecotourism.org/>  
 Please see our News Letters in our website;  
[www.srilankaecotourism.org](http://www.srilankaecotourism.org)

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THURSDAY NOVEMBER 21, 2019

**Daily Mirror** HS & DIAT TRAVEL GAMES & CARTOONS

# SRI LANKA ECOTOURISM FOUNDATION

## 2 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

SLEF also represented Sri Lanka in important international and regional ecotourism conferences held across the world. In appreciation of the services contributed by the SLEF in promoting of Ecotourism in Sri Lanka, it has been awarded 'Outstanding Contribution for Tourism' at the Presidential Awards for Sri Lanka Tourism, 2019 and the first ever Award for the 'Best Initiative for Ecotourism Research, Training and Education in Sri Lanka' in 2011.

During past 21 years SLEF has pioneered in popularising Ecotourism Education, Training and Researches in Sri Lanka, among the Community, Travel Agents, Tourism Marketing/Planning Executives and decision makers. Adventure and Nature based Tour Operators, University Students, teachers, Researchers, Practising National Tourist Guide Lecturers, Hotels, Guest Houses, Restaurants, Ecotourism operators and Camping Operators, Travel Journalists in Electronic and Print media etc.

**SLEF is the only tourism organisation in Sri Lanka that promotes training, and research programmes on ecotourism and sustainable tourism**

Since 1998, Palitha Gurusinghe, President of Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation and Chairman, Asia-Pacific Regional Ecotourism Council (APREC) has been working with TIES as its Board Member of the Advisory Council and the Coordinator of TIES Asia-Pacific Regional Network.

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'Once you enroll as a Member of TIES you can enjoy the following Membership Benefits. Professional members receive benefits tailored to those working in ecotourism, and interested in sharing their expertise and improving their skills' said Mr Gurusinghe, the President of SLEF.

Professional Member Profile features include: Custom URL - Profile page link with individualised URL, Link Back - URL link directly to your website, Profile Picture - Your member profile features your profile picture, Biography and Expertise - Highlights your educational background, accomplishments, and expertise through your profile page. It reaches potential clients by posting your interest area and Social Media Links. You can link to all your social media profiles on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram.

**A Message from Jon Bruno, CEO, The International Ecotourism Society (TIES)**

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) wishes to recognise and congratulate the Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF) and founder Dr. Palitha Gurusinghe for twenty-one years of service to ecotourism, sustainable tourism, sustainable development, and global communities. Founded in 1990, and a member of TIES since 1996, SLEF has been a key driver of excellence in ecotourism both through work in Sri Lanka and sharing knowledge and best practices internationally. As a pioneer of Community Based Ecotourism, SLEF has led the way to a global model of sustainable tourism that empowers local people while conserving precious natural resources and culture. SLEF continues to lead ecotourism efforts in Sri Lanka and in the Asia-Pacific Region. Dr. Palitha Gurusinghe has been a tireless advocate for ecotourism, shaping the global narrative with expert leadership, knowledge and personal academic achievement. His written and spoken presentations continue to set the standard, and he is a frequent guest at international conferences on sustainable tourism. His contribution to TIES cannot be overstated. Both as a Coordinator of the Asia-Pacific Region, and as a member of the TIES Advisory Council.

It is therefore our honour to recognize work and role of Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation, on this 21st anniversary of its founding.

See more information: [www.sri.lankecotourism.org](http://www.sri.lankecotourism.org) and <https://ecotourism.org/>

**S**ri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF), the premier National Ecotourism Organisation in Sri Lanka celebrates its 21st Anniversary this year. Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF) was established in 1998, 21 years ago, with a vision of uplifting neglected Lanka's eco-tourism sector. The main focus of Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation is the socioeconomic and socio-cultural development of Sri Lanka, through sustainable development and eco-based community tourism. From its inception, SLEF has worked hard to introduce and implement poverty alleviation programmes through ecotourism.

SLEF is also the oldest Regional Ecotourism Association in Sri Lanka, affiliated to The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), the largest and the oldest international ecotourism organisation in the world. Currently, Palitha Gurusinghe, President, Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation, is a Board member of the TIES and its Coordinator of the Asia-Pacific Region.

To realise this objective, SLEF provides support services and motivates local communities to participate in community-based ecotourism programmes and environmental conservation projects. One of the main objectives of SLEF is to reduce poverty in the tourism generating areas of Sri Lanka and thereby contribute to economic growth of the community, increase income generating activities through tourism and promote the conservation of the natural, cultural heritage sites through genuine ecotourism practices. The specific objective of SLEF is to promote sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka and position the island as one of the best ecotourism destinations in the Asia-Pacific Region through infrastructure improvements, community and public-private sector participation in tourism, and promote regional cooperation.

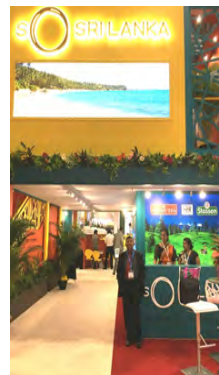
SLEF is the only tourism organisation in Sri Lanka that promotes training, and research programmes on ecotourism and sustainable tourism. In addition to the development of Community Based Tourism Projects. During the past 21 years, SLEF has conducted many Community Training programmes, Certificate Programmes, Ecotourism Business Development (EBD) Programmes, Workshops, study and field trips for the National and Qualified Guide Lecturers, activists of Community Based Ecotourism projects, university students and academic staff and officials of national and international NGOs, Executives of Destination Management Companies, private and public sector tourism organizations etc.

Apart from, SLEF has hosted and organised many national and regional ecotourism conferences, workshops, symposiums on diverse themes and subjects related to Ecotourism with a view to promote Ecotourism in the Asia-Pacific Region.

**'Once you enroll as a Member of TIES you can enjoy the following Membership Benefits. Professional members receive benefits tailored to those working in ecotourism, and interested in sharing their expertise and improving their skills'**



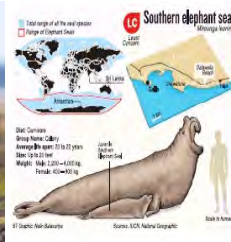
*SLEF Senior Vice President, Sanath Weerasriya at the World Travel Mart (WTM), England, in November, 2019. He is a Senior Travel Journalist of "Sunday Times", Sri Lanka. Sanath is also the Vice Chairman of Asia-Pacific Regional Ecotourism Council (APREC)*





## Lost elephant seal pup closely guarded on visit

The navy and police also helped ensure the unusual visitor's safety and it was there on the beach until nightfall, Mr. Adaranga said. "The next day, it was gone, and we hope it will find its path," the ranger added hopefully. A scientist at the National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency ( NARA), Upul Liyanage, who was present in the scene, said the seal could have been dragged off its course and towards Sri Lanka by an oceanic current linked to the north- east monsoon. Dr. de Vos said vagrant southern elephant seals had been recorded in unusual places. "We do not know why this happened this time but it is important that the seal be given space to rest if it is found again," she urged. As global warming causes polar ice sheets to shrink, seals that depend on the ice for resting, mating and giving birth are having their mating cycles disrupted, scientists said. The warming is also damaging the food web affecting algae, krill and plankton in polar regions where seals live. As food availability decreases, seals and other creatures might have to move further from their native grounds, which makes them vulnerable to harm.



Courtesy; Sunday Times (Sri Lanka), 24 Nov 2019, By Malaka Rodrigo  
<https://www.pressreader.com/sri-lanka/sunday-times-sri-lanka>

Story of  
**Ecotourism**  
*Sri Lanka*

Palitha Gurusinghe

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# Asia-Pacific Regional Ecotourism Council

“...marching forward in strengthening of ecotourism fraternity of Asia-Pacific Region...”

BY ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL ECOTOURISM COUNCIL (APREC) IN ASSOCIATION WITH SRI LANKA ECOTOURISM FOUNDATION (SLEF)

EMAIL – [sleco@sltnet.lk](mailto:sleco@sltnet.lk) / [info@aprec.asia](mailto:info@aprec.asia) | WEBSITE – [www.srilankaecotourism.org](http://www.srilankaecotourism.org) / [www.aprec.asia](http://www.aprec.asia) | Facebook



Asia Pacific Region is a vast region, covering some 2.8 billion hectares of land area, or approximately 22 percent of the global land area with an approximate population that represents 60% of the world population and nearly 4.75 billion people and more than 55 countries.

Asia-Pacific Region is a treasure trove for the marine ecotourism sector with about 55,000 small and big islands located in and around the Pacific and Indian Oceans, creating hundreds of thousands of kilometers of beautiful coastal shores, beaches that attract travelers from all over the world. APREC is receiving many inquiries from the Ecotourism Organizations of Asia-Pacific Region requesting information about the organization and how to enroll as a Member of APREC.

## Profile of APREC

APREC is the oldest Regional Ecotourism Network founded by Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF), and its core members during the first ever Regional Ecotourism Conference held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in May 2009.

## Mission of APREC

*‘... to give a “voice to the Ecotourism fraternity of the Asia-Pacific region” that can be heard in the wider global forum of discussions’*

## Core Objectives of APREC

- To promote and strengthen the Community Based Ecotourism (CBE) Projects in the Asia-Pacific region and to increase the competitiveness of CBE products and services worldwide, inter-and intra-regional tourism markets.
- To bring together Ecotourism industry segments in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss issues and challenges confronted by the ecotourism fraternity in the region and to explore in strengthening of their networks.
- To disseminate latest information on Sustainable and Ecotourism amongst the members of APREC and CBE organizations of Asia-Pacific region and to provide networking opportunities for stakeholders.
- Enabling the communities living in Asia-Pacific Region to fulfill their role as key custodians of natural resources and derive economic and social benefits from Ecotourism.
- To serve as an annual platform to bring together Ecotourism industry segments in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss issues and challenges and to strengthen marketing strategies.
- To showcase quality CBE products and services as best practice examples and to promote the Asia-Pacific region as an attractive Ecotourism destination on the world map.
- Promote cost-effective and donor supported National Sustainable Ecotourism Certification Programmes in the countries of Asia-Pacific Region which are adoptable to their socioeconomic and sociocultural background.
- To host training, research & awareness programmes, conferences, workshops, events in Ecotourism on regional basis and to offer financial assistance to APREC Members to take part at these events.

## APREC Steering Committee

We are in the process of expanding the **Steering Committee** of APREC. Those Ecotourism Associations based in the region could send their nominations to be appointed as Steering Committee Members.

## HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF APREC

APREC is a non-profit organization supported by Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF) and its donor networks. **Membership of APREC is FREE** for Ecotourism Organizations active in the region. Membership of APREC is also open to any individual/professional/student that admires, and loves the genuine ecotourism principles such as supporting the community in need through tourism, alleviation of poverty in the society, environmental and biodiversity conservation, preservation of cultural heritage etc.

*For more info, please contact SLEF /APREC by an email*