

Business management support to homestays

The purpose of this initiative is to strengthen the homestay hospitality sector for enhancing local livelihoods.

Implementing department: Tourism and Civil Aviation

The key Initiatives are described below.

Establishment of Baseline of Homestay Owners: The T&CAD will establish a robust baseline of homestays in the state. The baseline will be in a secure digital portal that will allow for easy updating and analytics. This information will serve as the foundation for designing targeted support interventions to strengthen homestays.

The T&CAD will commission a consultant agency to undertake the baseline assessment study. The methodology will involve conducting telephonic and/or digital surveys, gathering supporting documentation (including photo documentation), and possibly site visits to collect detailed information about homestay owners. The indicative data points include: year of establishment, identification details of homestay owners, demographic information (age, gender, location) of homestay owners, education levels of homestay owners (education, existing skillsets, details of training received), infrastructure and amenities available at the homestay, occupancy rates, pricing points, digital presence, digital technology adoption for homestay management, transport connectivity, details of government support/schemes availed so far, etc. The assessment will also map the capacity building needs of homestay owners/managers.

The baseline assessment, including development of the digital portal, will be completed within 6 months.

Business management training for homestay owners/managers: The T&CAD will organize business management training (a) for existing homestay owners and (b) for individuals interested in starting homestays. The training will be provided primarily through the IHM but may also be provided through other reputable training partners/providers. The training will be provided at multiple locations across the state, in addition to the IHM campus, for easier access by homestay owners. The training curriculum and delivery modality will be based on the findings of the baseline assessment and will include a combination of in-person workshops and online training sessions. The key themes to be covered in the training will include:

- Business Management aspects like pricing, reservation management, customer service, staff training and management.
- Hospitality Management aspects such as facility management, culinary arts, curated experiences for customers, etc.
- Digital Marketing covers website development, social media promotion, onboarding to aggregators platforms like Agoda, MakeMyTrip, AirBnB, etc.
- Digital Financial Management includes the use of digital secure payment systems, digital tools for financial management, etc.

- Compliance and regulatory issues.
- Networking with tour operators.

Post-training follow-up will be undertaken by the IHM (as described in section 3.2.2.4).

Monitoring will be undertaken on an on-going basis and data fed into the integrated MIS. The key indicators to be monitored include:

- Number of homestays, including number of women-led homestays.
- Percentage of women-led homestays that received training in business management and digital marketing skills.
- Percentage of trained women-led homestays that have adopted digital marketing and/or digital payment tools.

Business management support for homestay owners/managers: The T&CAD will establish a ‘homestay development cell’ and provide comprehensive support to homestays, which will include the following:

- **Registration and Helpline:** Homestays will be incentivized to register with the T&CAD. T&CAD will establish an online database of all registered homestays that is publicly accessible. A helpline or dedicated contact point will be established within the T&CAD for inquiries by homestay owners/managers.
- **Capacity building:** Ongoing capacity building services will be provided to homestays that will include (a) periodic refresher and specialized courses (online or offline) for homestay owners/managers/staff (b) mentorship Programs for homestay owners/managers linking experienced homestay owners/managers with new entrants.
- **Branding and Marketing Support:** The T&CAD will undertake a branding and marketing exercise to strengthen the appeal of the state as a tourism destination, and especially of homestays as the preferred option for tourists. A comprehensive strategy and plan for branding and marketing will be developed and may include multiple initiatives such as promotional events, participation in tourism exhibitions, outreach through social media influencers, etc.
- **Access to finance:** The T&CAD will facilitate access to finance for homestays through facilitating linkages with formal financial institutions, existing government schemes, etc.
- **Whole of Community Tourism:** The T&CAD will identify potential whole-of-community rural tourism destinations through a focused study and extensive consultations with key stakeholders. Comprehensive business development plans will be developed for selected locations (villages, communities) through a participatory process, involving the local communities. Service providers within the communities (home stay owners, food service enterprises, transport operators, handicraft and handloom enterprises, tourist guides, etc.) will receive support in terms of access to finances through linkages with formal financial institutions, training on quality service delivery, branding and marketing, etc. The T&CAD will promote the selected ‘whole of community’ tourism locations through innovative branding and marketing.

- **Rating System:** A transparent rating system will be developed as a mechanism for periodic assessment, incentivization and signaling of quality standards. The assessment will be comprehensive and will check the performance of homestays against established standards and aspects such as occupancy rates, customer reviews, etc.

Timeframe: Ongoing, starting in Financial Year 2025-26.

Strengthening of Institute of Hotel Management (IHM)

The Institute of Hotel Management was established with the objective of providing job-oriented and professional hospitality education. It is affiliated to the National Council for Hotel Management under the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. IHM offers degree, diploma, and craftsmanship courses to meet the needs of skilled workers for the hospitality industry. Under the Program, the IHM will be strengthened to increase the quantity and quality of the training in the hospitality sector.

Implementing department: Tourism and Civil Aviation

Activities:The key activities to be undertaken for strengthening IHM are as follows.

Needs Assessment: Comprehensive assessment of the industry demand and IHM’s capacity will be undertaken. The assessment will identify the demand for trained personnel in various types of establishments in the hospitality sector in consultation with key stakeholders from the hospitality industry, alumni, etc. The assessment will also examine the current capacity of IHM in terms of its courses, curricula, educational resources, physical infrastructure, etc. Based on this, an assessment report will be developed which will include recommendations for future development initiatives. Based on currently available information, a preliminary set of interventions have been identified, and are detailed in the following paras.

New Short Duration Training Courses in Hospitality Sector: IHM will introduce new short duration (under 6 months) training courses – including in homestay management, campsite management, rural tourism management, etc. The details of the training courses (tentative list) are provided in the table below.

Table 1 New Short Duration Training Courses in Hospitality Sector

S. No.	Training Course	Trainee Profile	No. of trainees per course (indicate women trainees separately)	Course duration	Delivery modality (online, offline, blended)	Post-training prospects (employment, enterprise development)

The following activities will be undertaken to introduce new training courses in priority sectors:

- Subject matter experts and experienced educators will work closely with IHM faculty to design the short duration training programs.
- Resource allocation for the development of new training courses, including hiring qualified instructors, setting up of dedicated training facilities, procuring the necessary training equipment and materials, procuring service provider for online training course deployment, etc., will be done.
- Partnerships with hospitality enterprises, especially local enterprises, will be done to identify opportunities for internships and apprenticeships for course graduates to enhance their skills.
- Financial support will be provided to trainees to ensure that the courses are accessible to a broader range of participants, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This will involve offering need-based stipends, mobility allowance, etc.

Augmenting Training Facilities for New Courses: IHM will augment its existing training facilities (training equipment, teaching-learning materials, etc.) to service the needs of training courses in priority non-farm sectors. A thorough needs assessment will be conducted to identify the specific training materials and equipment required for the training programs in priority non-farm sectors. This assessment will consider factors such as the number of participants, training modules, technological upgrade, etc. Partnerships with industry leaders will be explored for support for the establishment of required training facilities (e.g., as part of CSR initiatives). Activities will be limited to those permissible as per the E&S screening criteria.

Targeted training for women-led homestays: IHM will undertake targeted training of women-led homestays. Women-led homestays refer to homestays with either (a) full or partial ownership by a woman/women, or (b) at least 1 woman in a key decision-making or managerial position. The T&CAD will commission a baseline study of women-led homestays covering details on homestay ownership, infrastructure, human resources, digital technology adoption, etc. The IHM will target women owners/managers of homestays and will focus on business management and digital marketing skills. IHM will partner with reputed management and/or entrepreneurship development institutions to design and deliver the training. The training may be organized within the IHM campus or at decentralized locations – giving priority to easy access by women homestay owners/managers. Post training follow-up and refresher training will be undertaken to enable homestay owners/managers in learning retention and application of the training to homestay management.

Post-Training Follow-Up Activities: IHM will implement the following post-training follow-up activities:

- Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems will be deployed to conduct automated follow-up calls to participants. These calls will assess their progress, solicit feedback, provide information on job/market opportunities and further training opportunities, etc.
- Continuous feedback mechanisms, including telephonic surveys and online feedback forms, will be employed to collect participant input on their post-training experiences, employment outcomes, and areas for improvement.

- An alumni network will be established to engage former participants, enabling them to stay connected, share experiences, and access resources for ongoing enterprise/career development and networking.
- Impact assessments will be conducted to measure the long-term influence of the training programs on participants' enterprise/career growth.

IT Enabled Refresher Training programs: IHM will initiate refresher training courses for alumni delivered over digital platforms such as websites, mobile apps, etc. This initiative is to ensure continued and updated skill development of alumni. The refresher training content will reflect the emerging trends in the hospitality sector. The details of the IT enabled refresher training programs (tentative list) are provided in the table below.

Table 2 IT Enabled Refresher Training programs

S. No.	IT enabled refresher training Course	Mode of delivery (website, mobile app, etc.)	Eligible alumni (mention main course)

Placement Support Services: IHM will strengthen provision of comprehensive placement services that include identification of relevant job opportunities, assistance in contacting prospective employers (e.g., organizing campus placements, training on utilizing job portals, etc.), guidance on job application (e.g., advice on preparation of a resume) and preparation for job interviews (e.g., conduct of mock interviews), guidance on settling into new job (e.g., orientation for work readiness), etc. IHM will maintain a placement cell managed by a placement officer who will keep regular contact with prospective employers to understand their workforce needs, the preferences of job seekers, and match them with job openings, manage campus placement processes, etc. IHM will establish strong links with hospitality industry associations to advocate for support and incentives conducive to employment. A feedback system will be established to gather input from trainees and alumni regarding the quality and effectiveness of placement support services.

Improved Monitoring Systems: Monitoring will be undertaken on an on-going basis and data fed into the integrated MIS. Staff of the IHM will be trained in collection of data on key performance indicators (KPIs), data input into the MIS portal, utilization of the MIS portal for analytics on performance of the IHCAE, report generation, etc. The key indicators to be monitored for IHM include:

- Number of trainees who secure job placements in hospitality enterprises and their job retention rates.
- Percentage of women-led homestays received training in business management and digital marketing skills.
- Percentage of trained women-led homestays have adopted digital marketing and/or digital payment tools.

Timeframe: Ongoing, starting from Financial Year 2024-25.

Strengthening of Indian Himalayan Centre for Adventure Eco-Tourism (IHCAE)

IHCAE provides high standard eco-tourism and adventure related training courses while emphasizing environmental protection. IHCAE currently offers courses in mountaineering, paragliding, mountain biking, skiing, etc.

Implementing department: Tourism and Civil Aviation

The following activities will be undertaken under the Program to strengthen the IHCAE.

Recognition from Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF): IMF recognition is critical for ensuring greater uptake of IHCAE's courses. IHCAE will focus on securing IMF recognition by facilitating IMF's inspection process, undertaken required gap-filling actions as per the inspection recommendations, etc.

Needs Assessment: Comprehensive examination of the current situation will be done based on analysis of available data (enrollment, placement, retention) and consultations with key stakeholders (trainees, prospective trainees, prospective employers, etc.). Consultations will also be held with currently untapped groups of prospective employers/clients – for example, management training institutions, educational institutions, etc. Based on this, an assessment report will be developed which will include recommendations for future development initiatives. Based on currently available information, a preliminary set of interventions have been identified, and are detailed in the following paras.

New Training Courses: IHCAE will introduce new training courses based on the potential identified through the needs assessment. These may include – EHS and disaster management in adventure sports, adventure sports for teambuilding, adventure sports for personality development, adventure sports for individuals with special needs, etc. The details of the training courses (tentative list) are provided in the table below.

The following activities will be undertaken to introduce new training courses:

- Based on the findings of the needs assessment, subject matter experts and experienced faculty will work closely with industry leaders to design training programs. Partnerships with training institutions, both within and outside the country, will be explored for this purpose.
- Resource allocation for the development of new training courses, including hiring qualified instructors, setting up of dedicated training facilities, and procuring the necessary training equipment and materials will be done.
- IMF compliance will be ensured, where relevant, so that the courses lead to recognized qualifications valued by employers. These certificates will have the provision to be saved on secure digitization services such as DigiLocker.
- Financial support will be provided to trainees to ensure that the courses are accessible to a broader range of participants, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This will involve offering need-based scholarships, mobility allowance, etc.

Augmenting Training Facilities: IHCAE will augment its existing training facilities (training equipment, teaching-learning materials, etc.) to service the needs of both existing and new training courses. A thorough needs assessment will be conducted to identify the specific training materials and equipment

required for the training programs in priority sectors. This assessment will consider factors such as the number of participants, training modules, and the IMF as well as industry's quality demands. Partnerships with industry leaders will be explored for support for the establishment of required training facilities (e.g., as part of CSR initiatives). Activities will be limited to those permissible as per the E&S screening criteria.

Augmenting Adventure Tourism and Ecotourism Facilities: IHCAE will augment adventure tourism and ecotourism facilities including (a) upgradation of trekking trails (b) creation of outreach centers. Upgradation of trekking trails will include trail maintenance, enhancement, interpretive signage, provision of basic facilities for users, etc. IHCAE will create outreach centers for the purpose of extending the reach of its services. Outreach centers will provide multiple facilities and services including information for youth and women on adventure and eco-tourism related training and career options, information for tourists on adventure tourism and eco-tourism in Sikkim, interpretive IEC facilities, etc. Activities will be limited to those permissible as per the E&S screening criteria.

Career Counselling and Placement Support Services: IHCAE will maintain a career counselling and placement cell managed by a placement officer who will keep regular contact with prospective employers and alumni to understand workforce needs and available vacancies, the preferences of job seekers, and match them with job openings, assist in job applications and interview preparation, etc. A feedback system will be established to gather input from trainees and alumni regarding the quality and effectiveness of placement support services.

Post-Training Follow-Up Activities: IHCAE will implement the following post-training follow-up activities:

- Continuous feedback mechanisms, including telephonic surveys and online feedback forms, will be employed to collect participant input on their post-training experiences, employment outcomes, and areas for improvement.
- An alumni network will be established to engage former participants, enabling them to stay connected, share experiences, and access resources for ongoing enterprise/career development and networking.
- Impact assessments will be conducted to measure the long-term influence of the training programs on participants' enterprise/career growth.

Improved Monitoring Systems: Monitoring will be undertaken on on-going basis and data fed into the integrated MIS. Staff of the IHCAE will be trained in collection of data on key performance indicators (KPIs), data input into the MIS portal, utilization of the MIS portal for analytics on performance of the IHCAE, report generation, etc. The key indicators to be monitored include:

- Number of trainees who have successfully completed training.
- Number of trainees who have received career counselling and placement services.
- Number of trainees who secure job placements and their job retention rates.
- Number of trainees who established or augmented their own enterprises.

Timeframe:Ongoing, starting from Financial Year 2023-24.