

## 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 an 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.