# Reimagining Tourism, Art & Culture through
## Decentralised Digital Infrastructure
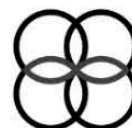
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**CULKEY** FOUNDATION

**FIDE** Foundation for Interoperability in Digital Economy

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# Foreword

India's tourism, art, and culture (TAC) sector stands as one of the most diverse and vibrant in the world. This landscape is both a living heritage and a profound economic opportunity, rich with untapped potential to enhance livelihoods, foster job creation, and drive economic inclusion for millions of Indians nationwide. Yet, today many of these opportunities remain scattered and fragmented, primarily due to the absence of a cohesive, techno-legal backbone that can bring together all players within this ecosystem. This is where "OneTAC", a *Decentralised, Open Transaction & Assets Grid - powered by the Beckn Protocol -* can be transformative.

Through a foundational digital infrastructure, India's OneTAC Grid will enable her incredible tourism and cultural assets to be brought to a greater domestic and global audience, creating not only economic upliftment but also enabling deeper cultural exchanges and unique experiences. On the demand side, there is great potential to unlock entirely new forms of consumer engagement, with experiences that are combinatorial, immersive, and fueled by rich content, generated by travellers and local communities alike. These experiences will open up new shared spaces, where travellers can leverage rich & dynamic resource catalogues, contribute timely testimonials, and enrich their journeys. On the supply side, the Grid's decentralised model will bring visibility and market greater access to the millions of unorganised TAC operators across the country - artisans, cultural performers, local tourism and travel guides, travel agencies, and many more. By empowering several hyperlocal TAC networks within the national Grid, we can champion the authenticity and cultural character of each region, while allowing domestic and global consumers to discover all their rich assets, as well as increasing economic opportunities for local providers. The OneTAC Grid will enable a thriving marketplace of ideas, innovation, and services. As a result, we foster sustainable growth and livelihoods, while preserving the deep-rooted heritage of India's culture, arts, and tourism.

Through strong public-private collaboration and effective cooperative governance models in this OneTAC Grid, we can envision a world where travellers and communities co-create experiences, where every local tourism operator and cultural performer finds a place in India's digital economy. Together, we have the opportunity to craft a resilient, inclusive, and vibrant TAC ecosystem for all.

**Dr. Pramod Varma**
**Co-Founder, FIDE; Co-Author, The Beckn Protocol; Co-Chair, Center for Digital Public Infrastructure**

# Foreword

In an era where technology seamlessly integrates with our everyday lives, Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) is emerging as a transformative force, unlocking new potentials for India's Tourism, Art, and Culture (TAC) sector. With OneTAC at the forefront, this initiative aims to create a unified ecosystem, enabling each cultural asset to connect globally, thereby creating a cohesive "single source of truth" for visitors and locals alike.

Today, India's TAC sector stands as one of the most diverse and vibrant globally. However, its full potential remains unrealized, primarily due to fragmented visibility and market access. By deploying a decentralised, open transaction and asset grid like OneTAC, powered by the Beckn Protocol, we can transform this landscape. Imagine a rural village, once isolated, now thriving through digital connectivity—its unique art, crafts, and experiences accessible to global audiences. This newfound visibility fosters tourism and provides substantial economic upliftment, creating jobs across hospitality, transportation, and artisanal crafts.

Historically, sectors like fintech have witnessed a revolution fueled by DPI, driving transformative growth and investments. Similarly, India's TAC sector has already attracted $9.86 billion in lifetime venture capital investment, with $331 million invested year-to-date in 2024 alone. This accelerating investment underscores the potential for OneTAC to provide the necessary infrastructure to scale this sector, unlocking both economic and cultural value.

OneTAC is a visionary endeavour, enabling tourists to experience India's cultural richness through personalised itineraries, real-time updates, and immersive experiences. For local stakeholders, the OneTAC Grid empowers artisans, tour guides, and small businesses by increasing market access, fostering authenticity, and promoting sustainable practices aligned with the values of today's conscientious travellers.

As we explore this potential, it becomes clear that OneTAC is not just a digital infrastructure project—it is a movement. It invites us all—venture capitalists, governments, startups, and citizens—to co-create a resilient, inclusive ecosystem that preserves our rich heritage while propelling economic growth. For venture capitalists and global investors, this is a unique opportunity to participate in a transformative journey that revitalises communities, drives sustainable growth, and positions India's TAC sector on a global stage.
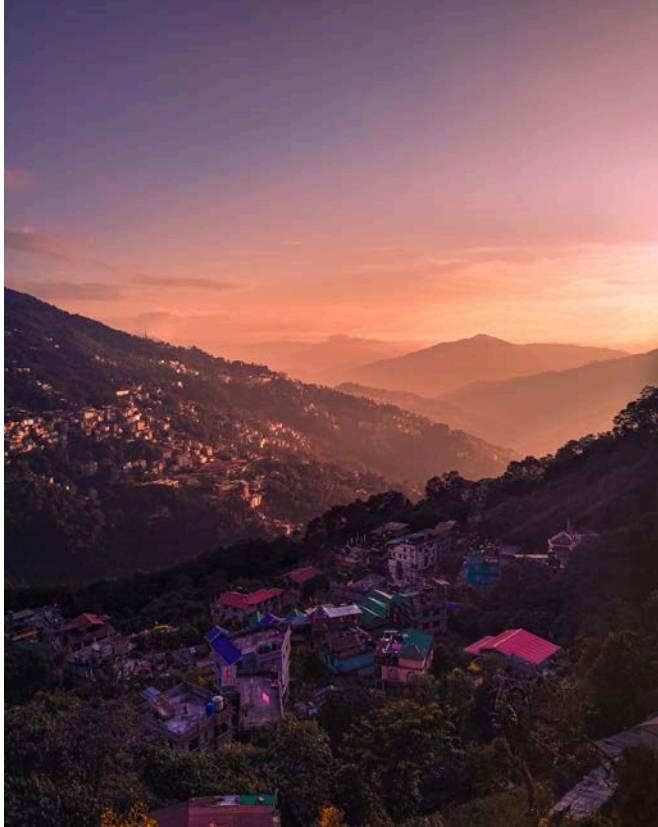
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# 1. Tourism, Art, and Culture in the Present Day

**India, a land of diverse cultures, traditions and artforms, is a potential tourism powerhouse, yet untapped opportunities remain.**



Tourism, Art, and Culture are intricately woven into the very fabric of India, drawing millions of visitors annually to explore the country's diverse heritage. From the architectural splendour of the Taj Mahal to the traditional dance forms of Kerala, cultural tourism remains a **vital pillar of India's economy**, contributing 1.77%[1] to the GDP and supporting over 70 million direct and indirect jobs in 2021-2022.

This deep connection between culture and economy positions India as one of the most culturally vibrant and diverse nations in the world.

The Indian government is actively promoting tourism through various schemes[2] and budget allocations aimed at enhancing infrastructure and accessibility. Today, India's tourism sector offers diverse experiences[3], including adventure tourism, cultural tourism, wildlife tourism, medical tourism, and eco-tourism. Other segments like religious tourism, beach tourism, rural tourism, business tourism, luxury tourism, wellness tourism , cruise tourism, sports tourism, and educational tourism are also growing. Despite these efforts, India still lags behind neighbouring countries[4] like Thailand (28 million), Malaysia (20.1 million), and Vietnam (12.6 million) in attracting international visitors.
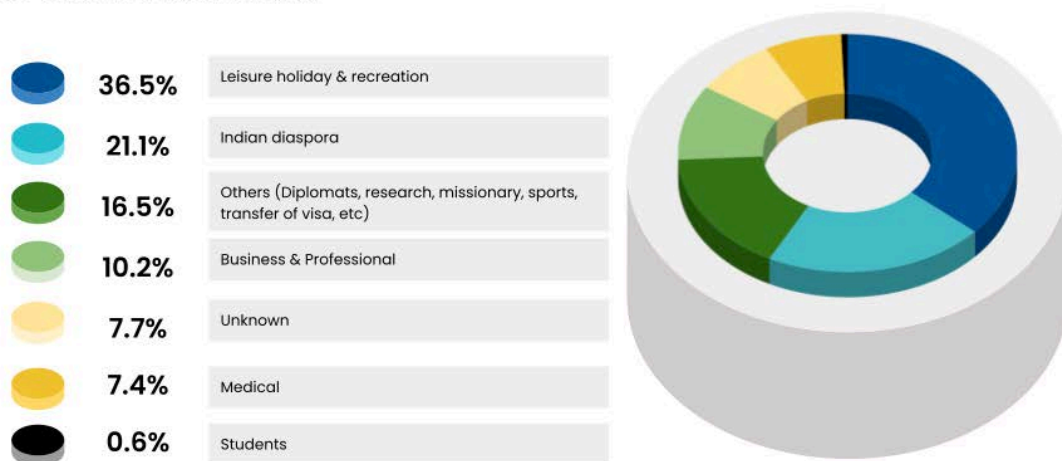
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[1] India Tourism Statistics 2023
[2] Refer Annexure
[3] Refer Annexure
[4] Statista, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, Vietnam National Authority of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism

**However, what does tourism mean in India today, and how is it perceived across various demographics?**

India is emerging as a significant player in the global tourism sector, with foreign tourist arrivals increasing from 6.44 million in 2022 to 9.24 million in 2023—a remarkable 43.5% growth year-on-year[5]. While the majority of **international tourists** visit India for leisure, holidays, and recreation (36.5%), followed by the Indian diaspora (21.1%), other significant segments include business and professional travellers (10.2%) and those seeking medical tourism (7.4%). With an average stay of 27.4 days, this data reveals not just the growing demand for India's diverse experiences but also an immense opportunity to cater to various visitor segments. Enhancing infrastructure and curating specialised cultural and wellness experiences can further capitalise on this demand, positioning India as a premier global destination for immersive travel.

## For international visitors, leisure and recreation remains the primary reason for their travel to India

| % | Segment |
|---|---------|
| 36.5% | Leisure holiday & recreation |
| 21.1% | Indian diaspora |
| 16.5% | Others (Diplomats, research, missionary, sports, transfer of visa, etc) |
| 10.2% | Business & Professional |
| 7.7% | Unknown |
| 7.4% | Medical |
| 0.6% | Students |

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**Domestic tourism**, on the other hand, is thriving with Indians taking 1.7 billion[6] leisure trips in 2022 with 99% of them being domestic. However, the travel trends are largely concentrated in major cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai, leaving vast regions and hidden gems across the country untapped as potential tourist destinations. This presents a significant opportunity to diversify tourism beyond metropolitan areas and bring lesser-known locations into the spotlight.

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[5] PIB on Foreign Tourist Arrivals
[6] How India Travels_Report by Booking.com and McKinsey

India's burgeoning middle class has become a significant driver of tourism, with **travel expenditure** increasing by approximately 9%[7] per year. Additionally, the **trend** of independent travel planning has risen significantly, with 71%[8] of Indians now planning their holidays independently, reducing reliance on traditional travel agencies and negatively impacting their businesses. Travel, once considered a luxury, has transformed into a necessity, especially for younger generations seeking experiences that blend authenticity and adventure. For many, it's no longer sufficient to merely visit popular landmarks; instead, they seek meaningful engagement with local culture, history, and unique experiences. This shift in mindset has led to a growing interest in authentic alternatives, such as staycations and offbeat destinations, with searches for these options increasing by 25% in 2024[9]. This shift is in line with the growing demand[10] and emerging trends in Indian tourism, including[11];



**Rise in online travel bookings**

*Two out of three* Indians from tier-1 cities said they usually book their travel online

**Social media influencing travel**

Globally, **75%** of travellers use social media for travel inspiration

**Rise in disposable income**

**63%** of Indian travellers have budgeted to spend more on travel in 2024 compared to 2023

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Despite these trends, tourism in India remains highly diverse, shaped by factors like socioeconomic status, purchasing power, and access to resources. While luxury travellers may gravitate toward premium experiences, younger and budget-conscious travellers often prioritise authentic and affordable adventures. For them, a "top 10 things to do" list may not appeal as much as the opportunity to explore India's deeper cultural roots and support local artisans. Both consumers and suppliers in the Indian TAC ecosystem face significant **challenges that limit the sector's potential** that include;

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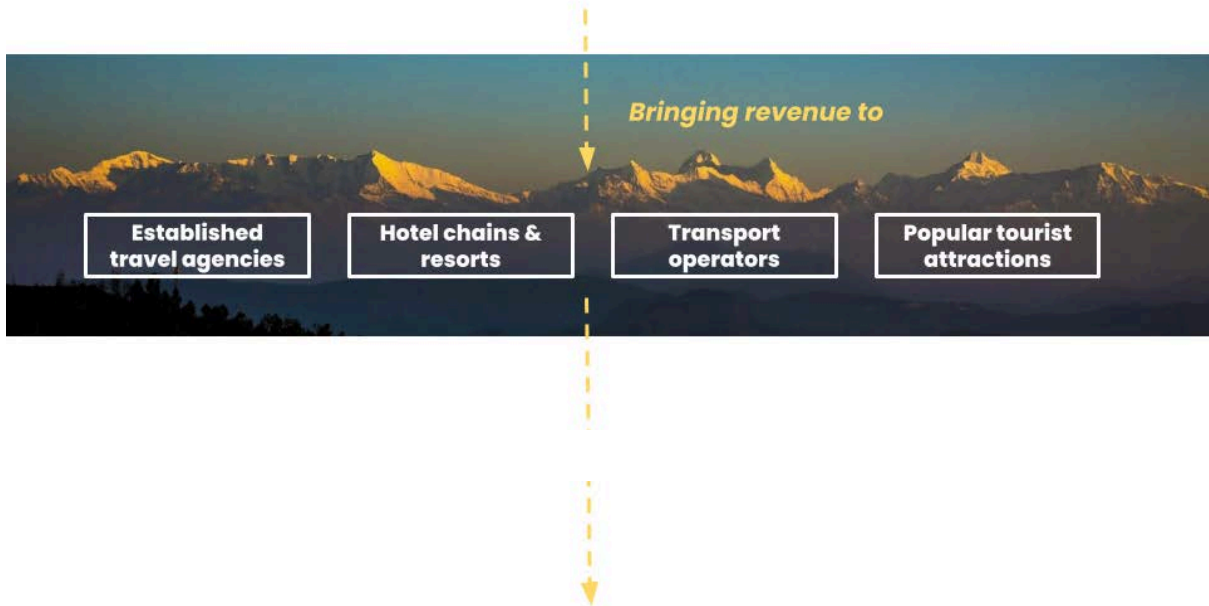[7] Trends shaping tourism in 2024 - McKinsey
[8] ET Hospitality
[9] Hindu Business Line
[10] Hospitality Inside - The New Desire to Travel Among Indians
[11] Indian Traveler Behavior & Insights Report 2023, Statista, Travel Trends- Skyscanner 2024

| Actor | Challenges |
|---|---|
| Consumer (Tourist, art enthusiast) | • Limited access to authentic experiences<br>• Lack of comprehensive tourism information<br>• Disjointed travel experiences |
| Supplier (Travel agent, artisan, artist, performer, tour guide, etc) | • Restricted market access<br>• Scaling challenges<br>• Difficulty in collaborating to provide seamless experiences |

## The concentration of tourism activities in select regions has created an uneven distribution of economic benefits

*Bringing revenue to*

| Established travel agencies | Hotel chains & resorts | Transport operators | Popular tourist attractions |
|---|---|---|---|

## While the burden of discoverability and lack of economic opportunities often falls on smaller, unorganised players

Independent tour operators  Tour guides  Homestays  Local artists & artisans

Local souvenir shops  Local event organisers  Rickshaws & pedicabs

Cultural performers  Local restaurants

9

This imbalance also threatens the survival of traditional art forms, which often rely on tourism for sustenance. For example, traditional art forms like **Lippan Art of Gujarat**, **Chittara of Karnataka**, and **Kavad of Rajasthan, are among the 52 Indian folk art forms at risk of extinction**[12] due to a lack of infrastructure, promotion, and financial incentives. These art forms are at risk of disappearing, as there is no robust digital platform that connects them with a broader audience.

With supply driven by demand, many smaller artists, local businesses, and cultural practitioners struggle to gain exposure and sustain their livelihoods. Without digital access and coordinated promotion, they are often left behind, making it difficult for them to continue preserving and promoting their art forms. India's cultural identity stands at a crossroads. To protect and elevate it, we must move beyond conventional approaches, and focus on inclusivity, digital empowerment, and sustainable livelihoods for all stakeholders.



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[12] [International Indian Folk Art Gallery](#)

## 2. The Imperative for Change

**Imagine if every corner of India could become an engine of local economic growth, just like India's most iconic landmarks.**

Among many challenges this sector faces, one of them is the overwhelming focus on popular attractions drawing away potential from other locations. For example, the Taj Mahal drew an impressive 34.2 million visitors between 2015 and 2022, while nearby Rambagh[13], only 8 kilometres away, attracted just 435,000 visitors in the same period.

This stark disparity underscores the need to promote lesser-known, often undervalued destinations to create a more balanced, inclusive and sustainable tourism landscape.

**On the supply side of the ecosystem, smaller players struggle with challenges like;**



- **Missed economic opportunities** for lesser-known sites, hindering broader regional development.
- **Presence of intermediaries**: Tour guides often rely on partnerships with travel agencies to connect with potential tourists, limiting their direct engagement.
- **Decline in demand for offline travel agencies**: A significant 71% of Indians now plan their holidays independently, reducing reliance on traditional travel services.

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[13] Times of India & Archaeological Survey of India

- **Lack of incentive to practise art forms**: Approximately 52 Indian folk art forms are nearing extinction due to insufficient support and recognition.
- **Limited collaboration channels**: Folk-art performers face challenges in finding and coordinating with other artists, hindering their ability to organise and promote shows effectively.
- **Seasonality,** for instance, occupancy rates for homestays vary significantly, ranging from 50-75% during peak season but dropping below 50% in the off-season, indicating underutilization.

**The imperative to reimagine tourism is three-fold** – *One*, to put the tourists/consumers at the centre by enabling them to become active participants in discovering and interfacing with a tourist attraction. *Two*, restoring the agency and enabling livelihoods for multiple service providers, especially in the unorganised sector – from local artisans to guides – by creating a market for unique experiences and *Three*, contributing to the preservation of monuments as well as dying art & culture forms.

As this happens, the definition of tourism may expand beyond the famous and the conventional – generating more demand for offbeat and hyperlocal experiences. This will give more visibility to smaller and lesser-known areas and provide communities sustainable livelihoods.



**To truly transform the tourism, art, and culture landscape, we must shift our focus**

| From a mere display | From travelling | From fragmented | From top down | From physical |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| to immersive storytelling | to experiencing | to unified | to bottom up change | to phygital |

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This calls for a **comprehensive digital infrastructure strategy** that enhances visibility for the supply-side ecosystem, while providing tourists with more authentic, immersive, and memorable experiences. Such a digital infrastructure would;

- **Enhance the discoverability** of lesser-known attractions, art forms, and cultural experiences.
- Empower suppliers in the tourism ecosystem with **greater market access**, promoting sustainable livelihoods.
- **Formalise the TAC sector**, transforming local contributors into economic drivers of India's tourism, art, and culture journey.
- Offer tourists and art enthusiasts a rich, **content-driven, personalised discovery** experience.
- Cultivate a balanced and **inclusive tourism economy** that preserves India's underexplored treasures.

Embracing the **individuality of every region** will lead to a thriving tourism economy that contributes to national economic growth while safeguarding the diverse identities that enrich India's cultural fabric.

## 3. Introducing *OneTAC* : The TAC-Grid of India

## To thrive in an evolving digital landscape, it is imperative to accelerate transformation through a comprehensive nationwide infrastructure.

This transformative infrastructure is underpinned by three critical pillars:
1. The **Digital Pillar**, which focuses on technology and infrastructure;
2. The **Policy and Governance Pillar**, ensuring regulatory compliance while cultivating a responsible and transparent ecosystem;
3. The **Community Pillar**, which engages local stakeholders to create an inclusive and sustainable network.
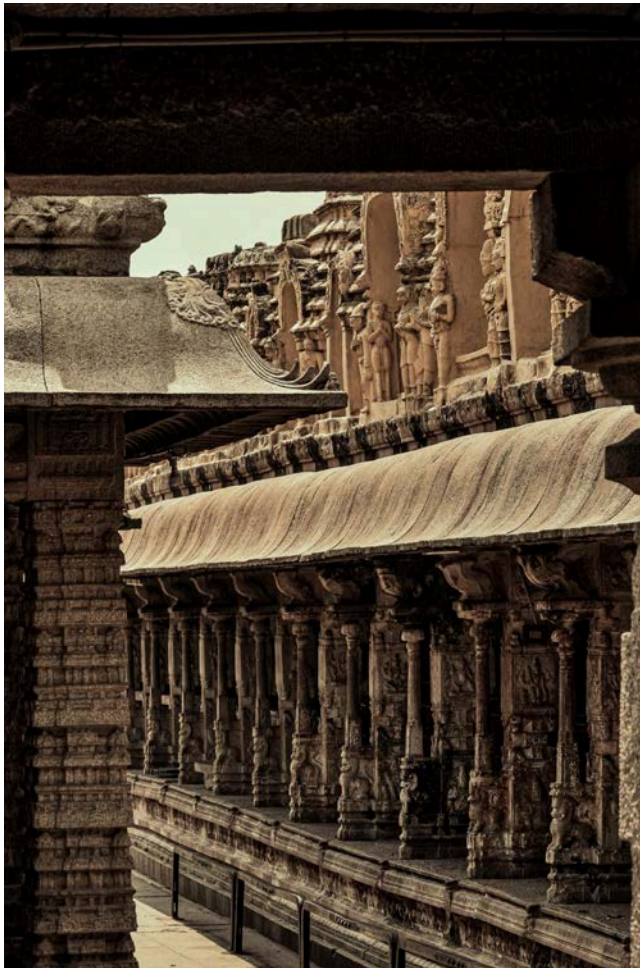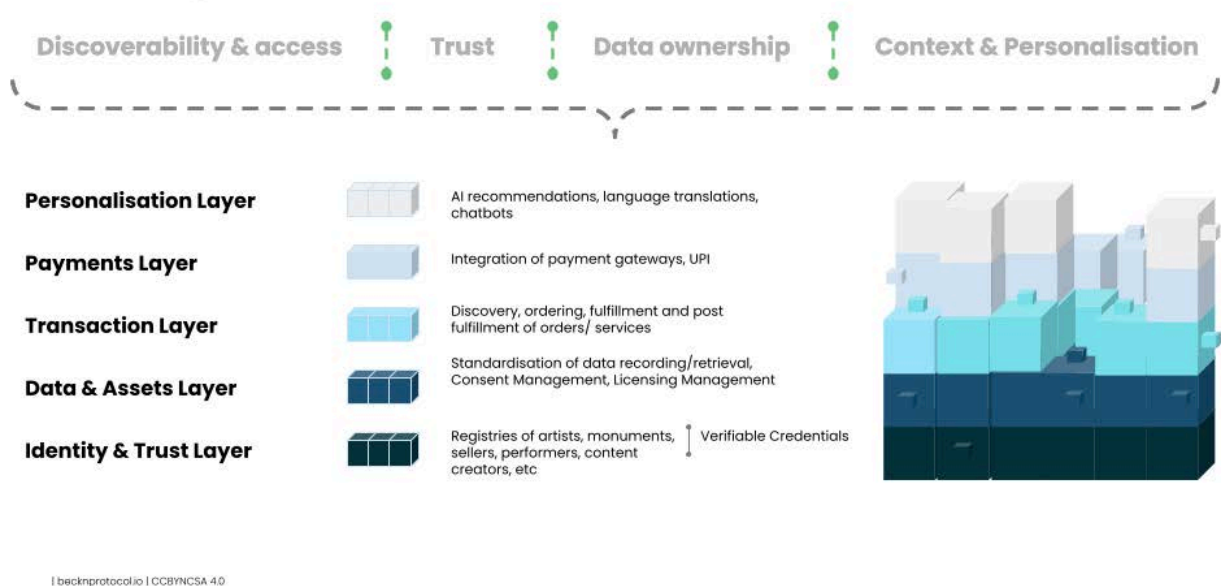


### Digital Pillar

At the core of the Digital Pillar lies **OneTAC's *Open Transaction Network*** driven by the [Beckn Protocol](https://becknprotocol.io/)[14], designed to seamlessly integrate tourism, art, and culture by overcoming their fragmented nature. It facilitates the discovery and transaction of services among participants within the TAC ecosystem. The network will leverage essential components such as digital identities, registries, verifiable credentials, asset and data exchange to enhance functionality.

The **OneTAC** Grid will serve as the foundational infrastructure for enabling decentralised transactions and asset sharing within India's TAC ecosystem. It leverages registries, verifiable credentials, payment systems, and a discovery and fulfilment transaction layer. Furthermore, the OneTAC Grid includes an asset and data exchange layer, a personalization layer, and a governance layer, all designed to ensure an enhanced user and provider experience.

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[14] Beckn Protocol: [https://becknprotocol.io/](https://becknprotocol.io/)

## OneTAC grid

Discoverability & access | Trust | Data ownership | Context & Personalisation

| Personalisation Layer | AI recommendations, language translations, chatbots |
| Payments Layer | Integration of payment gateways, UPI |
| Transaction Layer | Discovery, ordering, fulfillment and post fulfillment of orders/ services |
| Data & Assets Layer | Standardisation of data recording/retrieval, Consent Management, Licensing Management |
| Identity & Trust Layer | Registries of artists, monuments, sellers, performers, content creators, etc | Verifiable Credentials |

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### a. Identity and Trust Layer

The Identity & Trust Layer is crucial for establishing unique identities for every actor, institution and entity in the tourism, art, and culture sector, thereby building trust and facilitating authentic interactions. This layer leverages **digital registries** that serve as a single source of truth for all stakeholders, and **verifiable credentials** to authenticate the identities and qualifications of stakeholders. For example, a certified tour guide can be listed in a digital registry, allowing tourists to verify their qualifications through verifiable credentials before booking a tour.

### b. Data and Assets Layer

The Data and Assets Layer focuses on securely managing user-generated content, digital assets, and ensuring that these assets are used with appropriate permissions. This layer is crucial for protecting the rights of content creators while facilitating the **consent-based sharing** and utilisation of digital assets like videos, images, and other media. Additionally, it encompasses **licensing and tokenization** processes that assign unique identifiers to digital assets, thereby streamlining licensing, enhancing asset security, and creating new opportunities for creators to actively participate in the Indian TAC economy. For example, a content creator can licence their videos and tokenize them, allowing tourism companies to easily verify ownership and obtain permissions for use.

### c. Transaction Layer

The Transaction Layer of the OneTAC Grid plays a vital role in enabling **seamless interactions between users (consumers) and sellers (providers)** within the ecosystem. By leveraging globally recognized protocols like the Beckn Protocol, this layer standardised

processes for discovery, ordering, fulfilment, and post-fulfillment activities. Furthermore, by integrating with a national Open Transaction Network[15] like ONDC, the OneTAC Grid enhances connectivity and efficiency across the entire ecosystem, fostering a more cohesive and user-friendly experience for all stakeholders.



### d. Payments Layer

The Payments Layer of the OneTAC Grid is designed to ensure secure, efficient, and **seamless financial transactions** between users (consumers) and sellers (providers) within the ecosystem. By integrating a variety of payment methods and technologies, this layer fosters a cashless environment that enhances user experience and operational efficiency. Additionally, it will leverage national payments infrastructure - Unified Payments Interface, to streamline transactions and facilitate real-time payments, further promoting a frictionless experience for all participants.

### e. Personalization Layer

The Personalization Layer of the OneTAC Grid will harness **artificial intelligence** technologies to enhance user experiences through tailored recommendations and content and data delivery, enabling users with actionable insights and suggestions that are specifically designed to meet their unique preferences and needs. This layer can leverage **language translation** tools like Bhashini, to ensure that information is accessible and relevant to diverse user demographics.

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[15] World Economic Forum - Open Transaction Network: What is it and what does it mean for the incoming era?

## Policy and Governance Pillar

The Policy and Governance Layer of the OneTAC Grid is crucial for establishing the rules, guidelines, and frameworks that govern interactions and operations within the ecosystem. This layer ensures that all stakeholders adhere to agreed-upon policies, fostering transparency, accountability, and compliance with relevant regulations.

A **unified national policy code** is essential for the TAC ecosystem, providing a framework that addresses specific areas, for instance, content creation—defining what types of content are permissible. However, **governance** must remain **decentralised and cooperative**, preserving the autonomy of local stakeholders while ensuring that grievances and issues are managed effectively at the community level. By jointly drafting a policy code with input from the central and state governments, along with civil society, we can create an inclusive instrument that respects local contexts and operationalizes governance in a way that aligns with the overarching goals for India's TAC sector. This collaborative approach will ensure that while there is a common agenda, **local definitions of governance and mechanisms for resolving issues are tailored to meet the needs of the communities they serve.**
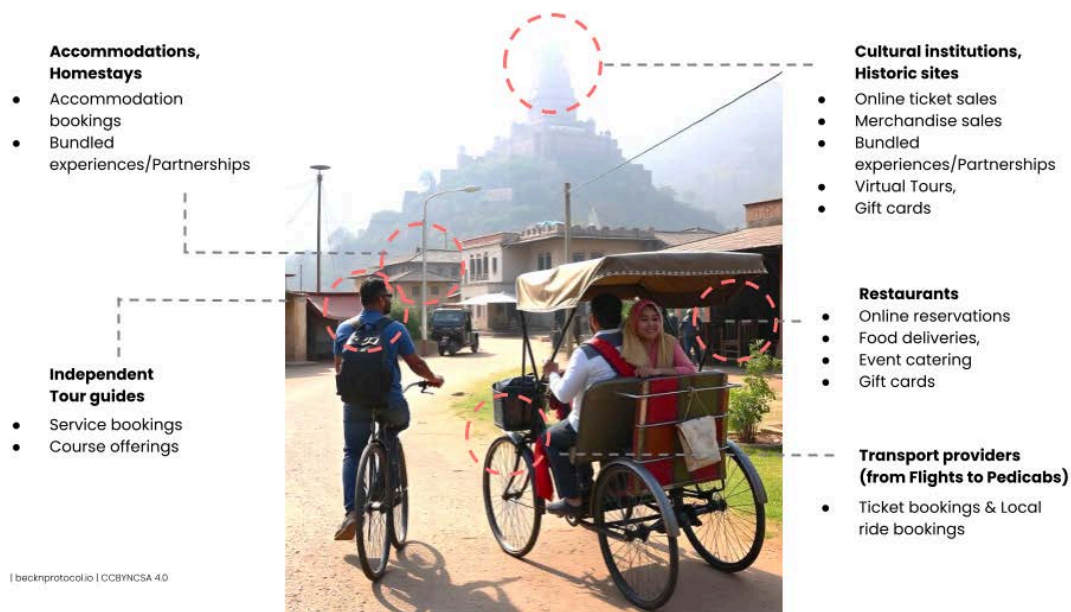
## Community Pillar

The Community Pillar is essential for fostering collaboration and engagement among all stakeholders within the India TAC ecosystem. It emphasises the importance of local involvement and collective action, empowering community members to actively participate in shaping their cultural and economic landscape.

**What will it enable for local communities?**

- Job creation and economic upliftment
- Sense of ownership to revive and preserve local culture
- Empowering artisans with digital tools
- Shifting tourist experiences from passive to immersive
- As a multiplier effect driven by increased demand, this initiative boosts the supplier-side ecosystem, enabling more participation
- Incentivizes infrastructure development through public-private partnerships (PPP) and donor funding.



**Accommodations, Homestays**
- Accommodation bookings
- Bundled experiences/Partnerships

**Cultural institutions, Historic sites**
- Online ticket sales
- Merchandise sales
- Bundled experiences/Partnerships
- Virtual Tours,
- Gift cards

**Restaurants**
- Online reservations
- Food deliveries,
- Event catering
- Gift cards

**Independent Tour guides**
- Service bookings
- Course offerings

**Transport providers (from Flights to Pedicabs)**
- Ticket bookings & Local ride bookings

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**Government institutions, Tourism Boards**
- Certifying tour guides, travel agents, adventure activities

**Travel agencies**
- Tour package bookings
- Custom tour packages
- Virtual Tours
- Gift cards

**Artists, Artisans**
- Online sales
- Workshops/Courses
- Commissioned work

**Content creators**
- Video/Photo licensing
- Affiliate marketing
- Sponsored content

**Local businesses**
- Online sales,
- Bundled experiences/Partnerships

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**Performers**
- Online ticket sales,
- Merchandise sales
- Content licensing

**Venues**
- Venue bookings for events

**Event curators/hosts**
- Online ticket sales

**Private platforms**
- Provider onboarding fee
- Online ticket sales
- Virtual Tours
- Gamified experiences

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A remarkable example of community collaboration is the *Kumbalangi Integrated Tourism Village Project* in Kerala, which aims to transform a traditional fishing community into a sustainable tourism hub while preserving its cultural and ecological heritage. Imagine the potential if other small villages across India could follow suit, through the OneTAC Grid and become thriving tourism destinations.



**Village Chiefs**
- Organise village tour packages

**Village residents**
- Secure guided tours

**Village residents**
- Art Workshops
- Culinary experiences
- Local activities like fishing, boating, etc

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Image Source: Deccan Herald

**Ways in which the community can participate in the OneTAC Grid**

- Encourage **partnerships** among local artisans, businesses, government agencies, academia and NGOs to foster a collaborative environment that supports shared goals and resources.
- Identify and support **local leaders and champions** who can drive community initiatives, advocate for local needs, and represent the community's interests.
- Encourage community members to actively **contribute content, such as stories, reviews, and ratings**, enriching the ecosystem with authentic local insights and experiences.
- Leverage the TAC Grid, to **innovative and develop solutions** that address the needs of both consumers and providers, enhancing service delivery and enriching the overall TAC experience.
- Provide training and resources to **enhance digital capacity** among community members, enabling them to leverage technology for market access and engagement.

# 4. The Road to Implementation

*For true empowerment of the TAC sector and its participants, we need a bottom-up strategy that amplifies grassroots initiatives and fosters local ownership.*

India's rich cultural tapestry means that conditions can shift dramatically from one region to another. A decentralised approach allows us to be responsive to these local variations and ensures that there is local ownership towards TAC initiatives.



To validate this decentralised model, we must first demonstrate its feasibility through successful on-ground implementations. By fostering the emergence of **hyperlocal networks** within the OneTAC Grid, we can create **"TAC Pods"**—small, localised hubs that connect to the larger national OneTAC Grid, while maintaining their authenticity and cultural integrity. These TAC Pods will form the foundation of a **network-of-networks model**, linking unique local ecosystems and enabling scalable and sustainable development within the TAC sector.

For effective implementation, we can conceptualise a district-level plan. This would involve identifying key local stakeholders, establishing partnerships, and rolling out tailored initiatives that resonate with the community's cultural and economic landscape.

**A Decentralised Implementation approach for the TAC Sector - How do we enable this?**



To implement a bottom-up, district-level approach for the Tourism, Art, and Culture (TAC) sector in India, empowering local governments and communities to take ownership of their cultural assets is crucial. This plan focuses on creating a decentralised framework to accommodate India's diverse languages, dialects, and cultural practices, that might serve well than a "one-size-fits-all" for a country as varied as India.

**1. District-Level Data Collection and Asset Mapping**

Begin the TAC transformation by focusing on the grassroots level—"districts"—as the primary hubs for cataloguing and managing cultural assets.

- **Identify and engage local stakeholders:** Form district-level committees comprising local government officials, TAC professionals, historians, artisans, and community leaders to oversee the collection and validation of cultural assets.
- **Asset mapping:** Conduct district-wide cultural asset mapping, including tourism destinations, historical sites, art forms, festivals, traditional knowledge, and local artisans.
- **Use local languages and dialects:** Ensure all data is captured in local languages and dialects to ensure accuracy and inclusivity. This will also support the growth of vernacular markets.
- **Training programs:** Provide training to district-level officials and local communities on digital tools and data entry to ensure consistent and accurate documentation of assets.



**2. Creation of District Digital Registries**

Establish decentralised, district-level digital registries to act as the foundation for TAC asset management.

- **Decentralised registry setup:** Implement decentralised digital registries at the district level to record TAC providers, professionals, facilities, and assets with verifiable credentials.

- **Real-time data contribution:** Enable local authorities and professionals to continuously update and validate data in real time, ensuring up-to-date and verified information.
- **Interoperability:** Ensure these district registries are interoperable, allowing seamless data exchange between districts and with national platforms for broader reach and visibility.

## 3. Empowering Local Governments and Leadership

To successfully implement a OneTAC Grid, a concerted effort is needed across all levels of society. Empowering local leaders ensures that implementation strategies are attuned to the unique cultural nuances and needs of each region. By supporting grassroots efforts, communities can take ownership of tourism development and Heritage Conservation, enhancing local economies and preserving their cultural identity.

- **Local validation and verification:** Enable district authorities to validate and verify TAC assets, ensuring that local expertise is leveraged for accurate representation,
- **Resource allocation:** Provide financial and technical resources to local governments for the maintenance of digital registries, training, and promotional activities.
- **Local tourism development plans:** Encourage districts to create and execute localised tourism development plans that align with the unique cultural aspects of their region.

## 4. Enhancing Vernacular Data and Inclusivity

Ensure that TAC data is accessible in local languages, fostering inclusivity and expanding market opportunities.

- **Multilingual platform integration:** Develop the TAC platforms to support multiple languages, allowing data entry, navigation, and user interaction in various Indian languages and dialects.
- **Vernacular product development:** Leverage the collected data to create vernacular products and services such as virtual tours, itineraries, and cultural content tailored for non-English speaking users.
- **Increased market reach:** By offering TAC information in vernacular languages, expand the reach of TAC assets to a broader audience, both within India and globally.

**5. Economic Enablement and Payment Integration**

Facilitate economic growth by integrating payment layers into the TAC ecosystem, allowing for monetisation at the district level.



- **Monetisation of assets:** Enable local TAC professionals and facilities to monetise their offerings, such as virtual tours, workshops, digital content, and ticket sales, through the payment infrastructure embedded in the platform.
- **Direct engagement with global markets:** Empower local artisans, performers, and cultural practitioners to reach a global audience by selling products and services directly through the platform.
- **Job creation:** The decentralised approach will create jobs at the grassroots level for asset validation, promotion, and tourism services, fostering local economic development.

**6. Connecting Districts with National and Global Platforms**

A templated approach allows for replicating successful models in districts, then states creating a scalable solution. This ensures that best practices in digital infrastructure for tourism and culture can be adapted to different locales, promoting consistent and



sustainable growth. Through the OneTAC Grid model, we can link decentralised district-level registries with national platforms to create an interconnected ecosystem that bridges local and global markets.

- **National integration:** Ensure that district-level registries are seamlessly integrated with the national-level OneTAC Grid infrastructure, enabling broader exposure and participation in larger cultural tourism initiatives.
- **Global promotion:** Promote district-level TAC assets to a global audience through digital platforms, leveraging emerging technologies like AI, AR, and virtual tourism to attract international tourists and researchers.

**7. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement**

Implement a feedback loop to ensure continuous improvement and scalability of the decentralised model.

- **Performance tracking:** Establish metrics at the district level to monitor the success of TAC asset management, user engagement, and economic activity.
- **Feedback mechanism:** Create channels for local stakeholders to provide feedback on the registry, platform, and processes to improve efficiency and inclusivity.
- **Scalability:** Use successful district-level models to scale the approach to other districts across India, tailoring it to specific cultural and linguistic needs.

*8. Decentralised and Collaborative Governance*

Empower local communities by allowing decisions to be made closer to the ground, ensuring policies reflect regional needs while aligning with national goals. Foster collaboration between local governments, state authorities, and the central government to ensure smooth implementation.

- Establish a **collaborative governance model** where district, state, and national authorities work together to maintain consistency in standards and protocols while allowing for regional flexibility.
- **Decentralised funding:** Allocate decentralised funds to district-level projects, ensuring that local governments have the necessary resources for implementation and maintenance of TAC infrastructure.

**Why a Decentralised Model of Governance is Essential for TAC**

In addition to centralised government efforts, a decentralised model can significantly accelerate digital transformation within the TAC sector. By combining local empowerment with market-driven approaches, we can effectively reach even the smallest districts, creating a robust and inclusive framework for growth. The TAC sector, which encapsulates a wide range of art forms, languages, customs, and heritage, will benefit from a more flexible, localised approach to effectively capture and promote these assets.

*Comparative Example: Decentralised Governance in India – The Panchayati Raj System*
*A strong example of decentralised governance in India is the **Panchayati Raj System**, which empowers local self-government at the village, block, and district levels. The system delegates significant decision-making power and responsibility to local bodies, enabling communities to address their own development needs more effectively.*

*Key Policy prerequisites for implementing the OneTAC Grid could include,*

- **Devolution of authority to local governments:** Empower local authorities to create and maintain digital registries, validate professionals and facilities, and manage TAC assets in line with local needs.
- **District-specific cultural development plans:** Local governments should be encouraged to design and implement TAC development plans that are tailored to the cultural assets and tourism potential of their respective regions. These plans should include strategies for promoting lesser-known art forms, festivals, and historical sites, helping them gain national and global visibility.
- **Localised resource allocation:** Policies should ensure that funds are allocated equitably based on the unique needs of each district, prioritising lesser-known and underdeveloped TAC regions. This would encourage balanced growth across all regions, rather than concentrating resources on already popular destinations.
- **Promotion of vernacular languages and diversity:** Policies must mandate the inclusion of local languages and dialects in the digital registry and platform interfaces. This not only preserves linguistic heritage but also ensures broader accessibility and participation from local communities.
- **Local data ownership and security:** Ensure that local communities and governments have control over their data and cultural assets, addressing concerns of ownership and security. Verifiable credentials should be issued at the district level, with national validation mechanisms in place to ensure authenticity and standardisation.

**10. Incentivising Adoption and Participation**

To ensure the successful adoption and widespread participation in the OneTAC Grid, financial and non-financial incentives should be considered. Such incentive models will encourage collaboration and active participation from a diverse range of stakeholders, including local communities, academia, NGOs, corporates, and influencers, while also involving the public sector. This collaborative effort will play a key role in the preservation, promotion, and monetisation of local TAC assets.

*Key Strategies for Incentivising adoption, could include;*

**1. Financial Incentives and Partnerships**
- **Tax Exemptions:** A significant financial incentive could be providing tax exemptions similar to those available under Section 35 (i) (ii) of the Income Tax Act, 1961. This section offers tax exemptions to individuals and corporations that contribute to scientific research. A similar model can be applied to TAC-related activities, allowing corporations and individuals to receive tax benefits for investing in the preservation, promotion, and development of TAC assets. These funds could be used for activities such as research on local heritage, conservation of monuments, and development of infrastructure for tourism.
- **CSR Funding and Partnerships:** Encourage corporates to adopt TAC assets through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding, in line with government initiatives like the Adopt a Heritage policy, Government of India and Adopt a Monument policy, Government of Karnataka. Through CSR, companies can invest in providing basic amenities, infrastructure development, and conservation efforts for TAC facilities, helping to ensure long-term sustainability while fulfilling their social obligations.
- **Subsidies and Grants:** The government can provide subsidies or matching grants for local businesses, NGOs, and startups that work on promoting TAC assets at the district level. This can help incentivise local entrepreneurs and cultural professionals to engage in the sector while alleviating financial barriers to entry.

**2. Non-Financial Participation**
- **Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building:** Engage academia, NGOs, and experts in providing knowledge-sharing sessions, research, and capacity-building programs. Universities and academic institutions can contribute through research projects on local art, culture, and heritage, which would help enrich the digital registries and databases being developed under the decentralised TAC framework[16].

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[16] PIB on Measures taken by Government to preserving and promoting the traditional cultural heritage of India

- **Community Engagement:** Promote grassroots efforts by collaborating with local NGOs and community leaders to foster active participation in preserving and promoting TAC assets. NGOs can play a pivotal role in mobilising local communities, raising awareness, and assisting in the cataloguing of local heritage.

### 3. District-Specific Brand Ambassadors

- **Local Icons as Brand Ambassadors:** Appoint district-specific brand ambassadors, including both well-known and lesser-known local icons from the fields of arts, sports, and culture, to promote TAC assets at a regional level. These ambassadors will act as advocates for the district's TAC initiatives, raising awareness and generating interest, thereby fostering local pride and increasing participation. By promoting locally known personalities, this strategy will resonate more deeply with local communities and enhance engagement.

**Alignment with Existing Government Initiatives:** The Government of India's "Adopt a Heritage" policy initiative has already demonstrated the potential of public-private partnerships for TAC asset conservation and development. By introducing financial incentives like tax exemptions under Section 35 (i) (ii) of the Income Tax Act and scaling CSR contributions to include TAC asset development, these initiatives can be expanded further. This approach will align with the broader goal of decentralising the TAC sector and ensuring that every district in India can preserve and monetise its cultural heritage.

Incentivising both financial and non-financial participation, combined with the decentralisation of the TAC policy, will unlock the full potential of the sector, driving both cultural preservation and economic activity across India.

## 5. Call to Action

### *The goal is to make every corner of India a global TAC destination and achieve a 100x growth in Tourism within the next 10 years.*

Now is the moment for all stakeholders—artists, cultural institutions, technology innovators, policymakers, academia, startups, and community leaders—to come together in a shared vision for transforming India's TAC landscape. The OneTAC Grid is not just an initiative; it represents the foundation for a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive future that celebrates our rich heritage.

**How to Get Involved:**

- Contribute your **expertise, research, and stories** to OneTAC, ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are heard and valued.
- Help develop and implement **cutting-edge solutions** that enhance user experiences and streamline interactions within the TAC ecosystem.
- Provide innovative **funding models and market access strategies** that empower local artisans and cultural entities, fostering inclusivity and sustainability.
- Work alongside fellow stakeholders to co-create initiatives, ensuring a cohesive approach to growth and preservation of the TAC sector.



Your involvement is crucial to our success. Together, let's cultivate a vibrant ecosystem that not only celebrates our rich heritage but also drives us toward a flourishing cultural economy for generations to come.

# 6. Annexure

To effectively strengthen the TAC sector, it is crucial to leverage existing governmental initiatives and amplify our efforts.

**Initiatives launched by Government of India**

Some of the initiatives launched by the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, include;

1. **Swadesh Darshan and Swadesh Darshan 2.0**

The Ministry of Tourism launched its flagship scheme of 'Swadesh Darshan' in 2014-15 to complement the efforts of respective State Governments/ UT Administrations for building tourism facilities across the Country.

The Ministry of Tourism has revamped its Swadesh Darshan scheme in the form of Swadesh Darshan 2.0 in 2023 with the mission to create a robust framework for integrated development of tourism destinations. In consultation with the State Government / UT Administrations 57 destinations across 32 States/UTs have been identified, till date, for development under Swadesh Darshan 2.0 scheme.

2. **PRASAD** (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive) - for development of tourism infrastructure in the country including historical places and heritage cities.

3. **Dekho Apna Desh initiative** was launched in January 2020. It is promoted extensively on social media accounts and websites of the Ministry and by Domestic India Tourism offices. Under this initiative, the Ministry has been organising webinars, quiz, pledge, discussions to keep connected with the stake-holders and to encourage citizens to travel within the country.

4. **National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry (NIDHI)**

   **NIDHI** was launched in 2020, a technology driven system, aligned with our Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of an "Atmanirbhar Bharat", which is to facilitate digitalization and promote ease of doing business for the hospitality & tourism sector. This initiative has been upgraded as NIDHI+ to have more inclusivity, that is, of not only Accommodation Units, but also Travel agents, Tour Operators, Tourist Transport Operators, Food & Beverage Units, Online Travel Aggregators Convention Centers and tourist Facilitators.

   

5. **Incredible India Tourist Facilitator (IITF) Certification Programme** was operationalised in 2020, with the objective of providing online training and accreditation of Tourist Facilitators through a centralised PAN India e-learning module. This will benefit the Indian economy in general and Indian tourism in specific by enabling creation of a pool of well trained and professional Tourist Facilitators and also creation of additional employment opportunities even in remote areas.

   

6. **Loan Guarantee scheme for Covid Affected Tourism Sector (LGSCATSS)** has been launched by the Ministry of Tourism, following the announcement made by the Ministry of Finance on 28.06.2021, to provide relief to the distressed tourism sector. This is a collateral free loan guarantee scheme, under which, loan upto `10.00 lakh will be extended to each Tour Operators/ Travel Agents/ Tourist Transport Operators approved/recognized by the Ministry of Tourism, up to ₹1.00 lakh will be extended to each Regional Tourist Guide/ Incredible India Tourist Guide approved/recognized by the Ministry of Tourism and Tourist Guides approved/ recognized by the State Govt./ UT Administration.

7. **Travel for LiFE,** a sectoral program under Mission LiFE, targeted towards the tourism sector was launched in 2023, by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

8. **Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan** project, focuses on developing tourism amenities at heritage/ natural/ tourist sites spread across India for making them tourist friendly, in a planned and phased manner, with the help of companies from public sector, private sector, trusts, NGOs, individuals and other stakeholders. Under the project, 29 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) have been awarded to 15 Monument Mitras for twenty-seven (27) sites and two (2) Technological interventions across India.

9. **Dekho Apna Desh People's Choice 2024**, a nationwide initiative to identify the pulse of the nation on tourism, was launched in 2024. The nationwide poll aims to engage with citizens to identify the most preferred tourist attractions and understand tourist perceptions across 5 tourism categories- Spiritual, cultural & Heritage, Nature and Wildlife, Adventure and others.
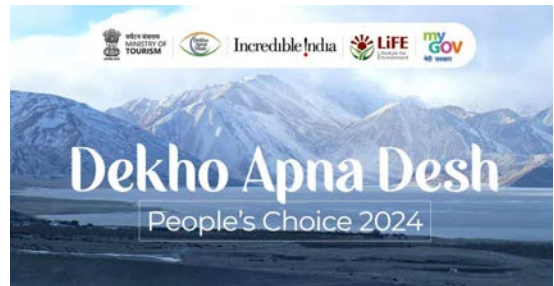
10. **Adopt a Monument Scheme,** Namma Smaraka is an initiative by the Department of Archeology, Museums, and Heritage in Karnataka under the 'Adopt a Monument' scheme. This initiative aims to highlight Karnataka's rich cultural and historical heritage, fitting perfectly with the state's brand promise, "One State, Many Worlds."

## Types of Tourism in India

India's tourism sector offers a diverse range of experiences that cater to various interests and preferences. Below is an overview of the key types of tourism in India:

1. **Adventure Tourism:** Involves engaging in thrilling outdoor activities such as trekking, mountaineering, river rafting, paragliding, and other extreme sports across India's diverse landscapes. India aims to become a global adventure tourism hub by 2047, targeting USD 800 billion from this sector[17]. The adventure tourism market in India is projected to grow at 20% annually, reaching about USD 2 billion by 2028.[18]

2. **Cultural Tourism:** Focuses on exploring India's rich heritage, history, art, and traditions. This includes visiting heritage sites, participating in cultural festivals, and experiencing traditional art forms. India has 40 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, out of which 32 are cultural tourism sites. According to the Ministry of Tourism, cultural tourism accounted for approximately 40% of the total tourist arrivals in India in 2023, marking a 12% increase from the previous year. This growth is fueled by the global interest in India's historical landmarks, festivals, traditional arts, and spiritual experiences.[19]

3. **Wildlife Tourism:** Involves visiting national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and biosphere reserves to observe India's diverse wildlife, including tigers, elephants, and rare species in their natural habitats. India has 104 national parks and 566 wildlife sanctuaries, 214 community reserves and 97 conservation reserves to lure wildlife enthusiasts from all over the world.[20]

4. **Medical Tourism**: Attracts international visitors seeking affordable healthcare services in India. This includes a variety of procedures, including: dental care, cosmetic surgery, fertility treatments, organ and tissue transplantation, and cancer treatment, among others. The number of medical tourists visiting India is projected to reach approximately 7.3 million in 2024, up from an estimated 6.1 million in 2023. This surge is attributed to India's reputation for providing affordable and high-quality medical treatments.[21] The medical tourism industry in India is estimated to be valued at US$ 10,362.9 million in 2024. It is projected to surpass US$

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[17] PIB on Adventure Tourism in India
[18] Skift: Adventure Tourism in India
[19] Hotelier India
[20] Bon Travel India
[21] Hindustan Times

50,670.5 million by 2034. The industry growth in India is expected to develop at a healthy 17.20% CAGR from 2024 to 2034.[22]

5. **Eco-Tourism:** Focus on responsible travel to natural areas, conserving the environment, and benefiting local communities. Popular ecotourism destinations include Kaziranga National Park and the Andaman Islands. India sustainable tourism market is estimated to reach ~USD 37.1 million in the year 2024 and is further forecasted to reach a valuation of ~USD 216.7 million in the year 2034 with a market CAGR of 19.3% between the years 2024 and 2034.[23]

6. **Religious Tourism:** Involves pilgrimages to India's sacred sites, such as Varanasi, Haridwar, Amritsar's Golden Temple, and the temples of Kedarnath and Badrinath, attracting millions of devotees each year. Religious tourism in India has been on an upward trajectory, projecting a CAGR of over 16% between 2023 and 2030. According to Ministry of Tourism data, religious tourism witnessed 1439 million tourists in 2022 and the places of religious tourism earned ₹1.34 lakh crore in the same year. The sector is expected to generate a revenue of 59 billion by 2028, creating 140 million temporary & permanent jobs by 2030.[24]

7. **Beach Tourism:** Offers relaxation and water-based activities along India's coastline. Popular destinations include Goa, with its vibrant beaches and nightlife, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, known for their serene beaches and snorkelling spots. With a vast coastline of 7517 kms studded with beaches of large diversity (sandy, rocky, coral & mangrove), India has immense potential in the coastal tourism segment[25].

8. **Rural Tourism:** Provides an authentic experience of Indian village life, allowing tourists to engage with local cultures, crafts, and traditions. Popular rural tourism states include Rajasthan, with its desert villages, and Kerala, known for its agricultural and artisanal experiences. Rural tourism is gaining importance in Indian tourism with its economic and social benefits. It estimated that Rs.4,300[26] crore additional revenue can be generated through Rural tourism. It is going to play a vital role in bridging the gap between Rural and Urban India by balancing urbanisation and counter urbanisation syndromes.

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[22] Future Market Insights Report on Medical Tourism in India
[23] Future Market Insights: Sustainable Tourism
[24] Hindu Business Line
[25] Sahoo, D. (2019). A Case Study On "Beach-Tourism Potential Of Odisha. Cuhp. https://www.academia.edu/39361050/A_Case_Study_On_Beach_Tourism_Potential_Of_Odisha
[26] International Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies (IJIMS)

9. **Business Tourism:** Involves travel for business purposes, such as attending conferences, exhibitions, and meetings. Major business tourism hubs include Bangalore, Mumbai, and Delhi, which also offer leisure options for travellers. In 2023, India's business travel spending surged by almost 25% reaching 78% of pre-pandemic levels. In 2024, the projected growth in business travel and meetings and events, is likely to grow 18%. India is the ninth-largest market globally for business travel expenditure and the fourth-largest in the Asia Pacific region.[27]

10. **Luxury Tourism:** Caters to affluent travellers seeking exclusive, high-end experiences. This includes luxury stays at heritage hotels, private guided tours of historical landmarks, and wellness retreats in destinations such as Rajasthan and Kerala. The luxury travel market in India is expected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 12.8% during the period 2021-2026[28]. The growth is primarily driven by rising disposable income, a growing number of high-net-worth individuals, and increasing awareness about luxury travel among Indians.

11. **Wellness Tourism:** One of the fastest-growing forms of international and domestic tourism, it involves travelling to different places to pursue activities that maintain or enhance personal health and wellness. This includes unique, authentic, or location-based experiences such as massages, body treatments, exercise programs, weight loss programs, nutrition consultations, and mind-body therapies.

12. **Cruise Tourism:** Involves travelling via cruise ships, often featuring luxurious amenities and itineraries that include various destinations such as backwaters of Kerala, Arabian sea, etc. Union Minister for Ports, Shipping & Waterways Shri Sarbananda Sonowal has asserted that Indian cruise market has the potential to grow 10 folds over the next decade, driven by rising demand and disposable incomes[29].

13. **Sports Tourism:** Involves travelling to participate in or watch sporting events, as well as engaging in sports-related activities. India's sports tourism market is projected to reach $53 billion by 2033[30].

14. **Educational Tourism:** Involves travel for educational purposes, such as studying or attending workshops, enhancing knowledge and skill like study exchange programs, conferences, etc.

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[27] Skift - What's driving India's Business Travel Recovery?
[28] Times of India - Trends in Luxury Travel in India
[29] PIB on Cruise Tourism in India
[30] Skift: Sports Tourism in India

## Art Forms in India

India has over 82 unique folk art forms. The overall market value of arts and crafts in India is projected to grow significantly, with estimates suggesting a market size of around ₹3,000 crore (approximately $400 million) for registered auction sales[31]. The Indian art market has seen significant growth over the years. In FY23, it achieved a turnover of approximately $144.3 million. According to the 'State of the Indian Art Market Report FY23' by Grant Thornton Bharat and Indian Art Investor, there is a 9% rise in turnover and a 6% rise in the number of works sold from the previous year, making FY23 the most successful year for Indian art at auction[32]. The performing arts market in India is currently valued at $3.8 billion and is projected to grow to $7 billion by 2027. This market has an addressable user base of 26 million individuals aged 8-25 years, indicating significant potential for growth in this sector[33].

## Cultural Tourism in India

The market for cultural tourism in India is poised for significant growth, driven by the country's rich heritage, diverse traditions, and government initiatives aimed at promoting this sector. Cultural tourism encompasses travel to experience local customs, arts, and historical sites, making India a prime destination due to its 40 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and a plethora of cultural experiences.

India's cultural tourism market is projected to reach approximately USD 7.32 billion by 2030, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.54% from 2024 to 2030[34]. The sector has seen a resurgence post-COVID-19, with foreign tourist arrivals reaching about 1.52 million in 2021, contributing around USD 8.8 billion to the economy[35]. This growth reflects a growing global interest in cultural experiences, as travellers seek authentic and immersive opportunities.

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[31] Fortune India
[32] Financial Express
[33] My Big Plunge
[34] Travel and Tour World
[35] India Business Trade

# Notes

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