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Kerala's Responsible Tourism Mission gets four gold medals at ICRT international awards

10 September 2022, 01:18 PM IST



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Thiruvananthapuram: The Responsible Tourism (RT) Mission of Kerala has won four gold medals at the International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT) Indian Subcontinent Awards instituted by the Madhya Pradesh government and the UK-based ICRT International, earning the southern state a hat-trick of awards at any such venue.

RT Mission is the nodal agency formed by the Government of Kerala to spread and implement the initiatives of responsible tourism all over the state.

Kerala Tourism Minister P A Mohammed Riyas said RT Mission won the top honours in plastic waste elimination, water conservation (under the Water STREET Project), diversification in the tourism sector and revival of post-COVID tourism.

"With this, Kerala qualifies to the World Tourism Market awards in four RT categories," the Tourism Department said.

Riyas hailed the mission's contributions as a model to the participatory tourism initiatives in the country. "Efforts are on to develop more people-friendly tourism initiatives," he noted.

Kerala RT Mission State Coordinator K Rupeshkumar received the awards from Madhya Pradesh Tourism Minister Usha Thakur at a function in Bhopal.

The award jury, headed by ICRT founder Dr Harold Goodwin, lauded Kerala RT Mission's innovative project STREET (Sustainable, Tangible, Responsible, Experiential, Ethnic Tourism) in ensuring people's participation aimed at grassroots development.

Goodwin said the world can no more ignore the efforts of Kerala RT Mission towards green and sustainable tourism.

The panel noted that Kerala has consistently involved local administration bodies in the state's water conservation projects, catering to tourism promotion, the Tourism Department said in a release.

"The RT Mission's coordination with the state's hotels and resorts in ending use-and-throw of plastic products won international attention. Kerala succeeded in curbing the use of plastic bottles with four-fifths of the RT Mission units avoiding their use besides ensuring supply of non-plastic products to its accommodation units," the jury noted.

The ICRT jury also praised Kerala RT Mission developing work-at-home videos through its units, besides a string of activities it carried out through local administration.

"These include tourism resource mapping, village life, cultural-festival tour packages and agri-tourism network that promotes farm tourism, besides Experience Ethnic Cuisine Programme that serves regional food and dishes. Also, Kerala RT Mission is the country's best example in women empowerment," the jury observed.