



**Guideline for Operation of
Tourist Information Centers
under the Nishorgo Support Project of the
Forest Department**

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Prepared for
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Ecotourism has already been identified globally as a key instrument for linking revenue generation to nature conservation. Nishorgo Support Project, in its efforts to create a model for conservation of the Protected Areas in Bangladesh, has taken initiatives to develop tourism infrastructure to support eco-tourism development in these PAs. As part of these initiatives, the project is setting up Information Centers at the PAs to provide basic informational and educational support to the incoming visitors. At the same time the centers will act as outlets to sell Nishorgo branded products to generate revenue for the co-management council funds.

In order to ensure that these information centers work smoothly, following are a set of guidelines outlined on different operational issues of the co-management committee.

General Management

The Co-management Committee will be solely responsible to manage the center. The management of the center cannot be let out to a third party. The committee:

- may, at its discretion, appoint suitable person to operate the day-to-day affairs of the center. The payments related to the appointment will be borne by the committee fund.
- will ensure the cleanliness and security of the center. It will also require ensuring that the center is manned properly at regular visitation hours to provide support to the visitors efficiently.
- will undertake required maintenance from time to time. The fund will be arranged from the co-management fund.
- may seek grants/support funds from different development agencies/donors for major maintenances of the information center, keeping in view the objectives of Nishorgo program

Tourist Management

The Information center will be the first point of contact for all incoming tourists visiting the PAs. It will also be the focal point for information and guidance for PA visitation. Following guidelines are to be followed for tourist management at the information center

- All visiting tourists are to be issued with tickets for entering the protected area
- Co-management committee will ensure that all relevant information related to the PA is readily available at the center

- The center will have contact information of the eco-guides available. The eco-guides will also have access to meet the tourist on arrival to provide them guided tours in the PA
- All tourist transports should be guided to the parking area and tickets to be issued for parking. CMC will ensure the security of the parked vehicles.

Sales and Inventory Management

The information center will have provisions for selling different items of tourist attraction and requirements. As a principle, the products to be sold at centers are to be of high quality befitting the beauty of the PAs, even when this means prices may be higher than for similar products sold elsewhere. Because the CMC Centers are selling products in part to raise funds for conservation, they can be allowed to sell at a price higher than "normal" retail outlets.

The sales of products are subject to the following guidelines:

- All products sold at the information center must be under Nishorgo Labeling (except for bottled mineral water).
- No party other than the co-management committee will be allowed to sale any products at the center.
- Co-management committee will be responsible to display, sale and replenish the stock of the products sold at the center. They may appoint suitable person to look after the sales activities on a monthly remuneration basis. The remuneration will be borne by the co-management committee fund.
- The list of items and their maximum allowable retail sale price available for sale at the information center is attached in Annexure-A. Any addition to the item list will require approval in the meeting of the Co-management Committee and, in particular the CF Wildlife.
- CMC will take necessary steps to ensure availability of all sellable items at all times. In this regard, CMC will maintain liaison with the third-party suppliers.
- The CMC will only obtain and sell those products and specifications meeting the quality criteria set by the CF/Wildlife. Necessary steps are to be taken to ascertain the purchased items meet the minimum standards to ensure quality.

Financial Management

Since the Information Center will have considerable monetary transactions, due considerations are to be given to ensure financial transparency. The CMC are required to ensure the following:

- All transactions are to be recorded in the book following proper accounting procedures.
- Every information center should have individual bank accounts for banking transactions.

- The proceeds of the day are to be deposited to the bank within the next working day.
- Separate record is to be maintained for proceeds from ticket sales as a portion of the revenue will be deposited to government exchequer.
- CMC will submit the financial statement to the Co-management council meeting for review.
- Financial activities of the Centers, including statements of earnings and expenditures, are to be posted on a quarterly basis no later than 30 days after the end of the quarter, for purposes of transparency, in a location at the Center easily visible to the public.
- A copy of the year-end financial statement has to be submitted to the CF, W&NC of the Forest Department through respective DFO/ACF.

These basic guidelines have been prepared to ensure smooth operation of the Information Centers being set up in all the PAs under the Nishorgo Program. The respective Co-management Committee is expected to follow these guidelines strictly. Any addition and/or deletion of these guidelines are subject to approval of the Co-management Council sessions.

Annexure A

List of Sellable Items at Information Center

Sl.	Items	Suggested Retail Price (Tk.)
1	Cap	100.00
2	T-Shirt (color print)	175.00
3	Polo Shirt (with color print)	450.00
4	Sweat Shirt (embroidered)	650.00
5	PA Brochure (Bangla)	25.00
6	PA Brochure (English)	25.00
7	Guidebook	125.00
8	Post Card	10.00
9	Posters	15.00
10	Annotated Trail brochure (Bangla)	25.00
11	Annotated Trail brochure (English)	25.00
12	Mineral Water (500 ml)	12.00
13	Mineral Water (1.8 ml)	25.00