

INDUS TREE CRAFTS FOUNDATION

**SITES (SPIRITUAL, CULTURAL, ECOLOGICAL, SOCIAL,
ECONOMIC, AND RELIGIOUS) PROTECTION POLICY**



1. Introduction

- At Indus Tree Crafts Foundation, we recognize the invaluable importance of preserving and safeguarding spiritual, cultural, ecological, social, economic and religious sites within our bamboo plantation projects under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®) framework. This policy outlines our commitment to protecting these sites and ensuring their conservation in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, respect for indigenous and local communities, and the preservation of cultural and natural heritage.

2. Objectives:

The objective of this policy is to ensure:

- Identify and document spiritual, cultural, ecological, and religious sites within the project area.
- Establish mechanisms to protect and conserve these sites in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.
- Incorporate traditional knowledge and practices into conservation efforts.
- Foster community engagement and participation in the preservation of these sites.
- Ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws, regulations, and guidelines relating to the protection of spiritual, cultural, ecological, economic, social and religious sites.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of conservation measures implemented.

3. Definitions:

- **Spiritual Sites:**

Areas of special significance or reverence for spiritual and religious practices.

- **Cultural Sites:**

Places that hold cultural value, including archaeological sites, monuments, traditional settlements, and historic structures.

- **Social Sites:**

Places that hold significance for local communities and contribute to their social well-being. These sites may include communal gathering places, recreational areas.

- **Economic Sites:**

Places that have economic importance and provide livelihood opportunities for local communities and tribes such as non-timber forest products collection area.

- **Ecological Sites:**

Areas with high ecological value, such as critical habitats, biodiversity hotspots, and sensitive ecosystems.

- **Religious Sites:**

Places of worship or pilgrimage for religious communities.

4. Protection and Conservation Measures:

- Develop site-specific conservation plans that consider the unique characteristics and significance of each spiritual, cultural, ecological, and religious site.
- Implement appropriate protective measures to prevent damage or degradation of these sites.
- Promote sustainable land use practices and natural resource management to maintain the integrity of the surrounding ecosystems.
- Monitor and assess the condition of these sites regularly and adjust conservation strategies as needed.

5. Capacity Building and Education:

- ICF shall provide training and capacity-building programs to empower local communities, project staff, farmers and relevant stakeholders with the knowledge and skills necessary for site protection and conservation.
- Promote awareness and understanding of the significance of spiritual, cultural, ecological, social, economic and religious sites through educational initiatives.

6. Stakeholder Engagement:

- ICF shall Collaborate with indigenous communities, local residents, and other relevant stakeholders to understand their perspectives, values, and concerns related to the protection and conservation of these sites.
- Facilitate meaningful and inclusive engagement processes to involve stakeholders in decision-making and management plans.

7. Reporting:

- ICF will prepare and publish periodic reports on the progress, challenges, and achievements of site protection and conservation efforts if any site is located within project boundaries.
- ICF will make relevant information available to stakeholders, regulatory bodies, and the public.

9. Authorized Signatory:

Name: Ms. Remya Devan
Designation: Project Manager
Indus Tree

