



SASCI Development of Iconic Tourist Centres to Global Scale

For Prelims: [Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment](#) , [Public-Private Partnership](#), [Jal Jeevan Mission](#) , [Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana](#), [Swadesh Darshan Scheme](#)

For Mains: Scheme of Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment, Sustainable tourism and infrastructure

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

The Union Government has allocated Rs 3,295 crore for the development of **40 tourism projects across 23 states** under the [Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment \(SASCI\)](#) - **Development of Iconic Tourist Centres to Global Scale**.

- While SASCI has been active since 2020-21, this is the first time funds have been specifically earmarked for tourism.

What is the SASCI Development of Iconic Tourist Centres to Global Scale?

- **About:** The Development of Iconic Tourist Centres to Global Scale component under the SASCI scheme focuses on developing tourism infrastructure in India, promoting less-visited sites like **Bateshwar (Uttar Pradesh), Ponda (Goa), and Gandikota (Andhra Pradesh)** to diversify tourism.
- **Objective:** The scheme provides **interest-free loans for 50 years to States** for developing iconic tourist centers, branding, and global marketing.
 - It aims to **boost local economies, create jobs, promote sustainable tourism** and strengthen the entire tourist value chain (includes Transportation, Accommodation, Activities, and Services) through challenge-mode projects.
- **Salient Features of the Scheme:** Funding is provided only for shortlisted proposals submitted by the State that meet the scheme's guidelines and objectives.
 - The **Ministry of Tourism** will evaluate proposals based on criteria such as **connectivity, existing tourism ecosystem, site capacity, utilities availability, project impact, financial viability, and sustainability**.
 - Proposals must follow the **challenge mode development process**.
 - The challenge mode development process selects the best proposals through **competitive evaluation based on set criteria**, ensuring high-quality, innovative projects.
 - States must provide **encumbrance-free land at no cost**. Projects must be sustainable, with long-term operation and maintenance.

- Completion time for projects is capped **at two years**, with funds available until 31st March 2026.
- The State Government is **solely responsible for the project's operations** and maintenance, potentially through [Public-Private Partnership \(PPP\) mode](#).
- States may offer incentives to attract private players for world-class tourist development.
- **Pattern of Assistance:** States can submit multiple projects, with a **maximum funding of Rs. 100 crores per project**.
 - For exceptional projects, the Ministry of Tourism may propose higher funding, subject to approval by the [Department of Expenditure \(DoE\)](#).
 - The Government of India will provide **100% of the project cost**, while States must contribute to peripheral infrastructure, safety, connectivity, and capacity building.
 - **No State will receive more than Rs. 250 crores**, with funds allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Implementation and Monitoring:** States are responsible for the implementation of projects, while the Ministry of Tourism will oversee their progress.

What is SASCI Scheme?

- **About:** The '**Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure**' was launched in 2020-21 due to the [Covid-19](#) pandemic. It was then implemented as the **Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment** in 2022-23 and 2023-24.
- **Objective:** Provides financial assistance to states in the form of 50-year interest-free loans.
- **Structure of the Scheme:** The scheme focuses on key development areas, including vehicle scrappage incentives, urban planning reforms, housing for police personnel, and promotion of national integration through Unity Mall projects.
 - It also supports the establishment of libraries with digital infrastructure at Panchayat and Ward levels to enhance educational access.
- **Objectives of the Scheme:** The scheme aims to boost the economy by stimulating demand and creating jobs, while accelerating key projects like the [Jal Jeevan Mission](#) and [Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana](#) through state funding.
 - It also encourages reforms in urban planning and finance to enhance quality of life and governance in cities.

Capital Expenditure

- **Capital Expenditure (Capex)** refers to government funds for acquiring or improving physical assets like infrastructure and machinery, enhancing economic productivity and employment.
- In the Union Budget 2024-25, Rs 11.11 lakh crore (or 3.4 % of [Gross Domestic Product \(GDP\)](#)) have been allocated for capital expenditure.

India's Initiatives to Enhance Tourism Sector

- [Swadesh Darshan Scheme](#)
- [Draft National Tourism Policy 2022](#)
- [Dekho Apna Desh Initiative](#)
- [Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat](#)
- [Incredible India Tourist Facilitator Certification Programme](#)
- [E-Visa](#)
- [Regional Connectivity Scheme - Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik \(RCS - UDAN\)](#)
- [National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive \(PRASHAD\)](#)
- **Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development Scheme :** Financial assistance for developing tourism infrastructure and cultural tourism.
- **Domestic Promotion & Publicity including Hospitality (DPPH) scheme:** Supports States/UTs in organizing tourism events, fairs, and festivals.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. How does the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment Scheme boost state capital expenditure while promoting sustainable tourism?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following is/are included in the capital budget of the Government of India? (2016)

1. Expenditure on acquisition of assets like roads, buildings, machinery, etc.
2. Loans received from foreign governments
3. Loans and advances granted to the States and Union Territories

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q.1 How can the mountain ecosystem be restored from the negative impact of development initiatives and tourism? **(2019)**

Q.2 The states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are reaching the limits of their ecological carrying capacity due to tourism. Critically evaluate. **(2015)**

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