

Regulatory and governance framework for the management of Pekoe Trail

**Tourism Resilience Project (TRP) Implemented by International
Executive Service Corps (IESC), The European Union**

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for the management of
Pekoe Trail**

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For the

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Abbreviations

CEA	Central Environmental Authority
CECB	Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau
CF	Conservation Forest
CGF	Conservator general Of Forest
DFC	Department of Forest Conservation
DG	Director General
DMO	Destination Management Organization
DWC	Department of Wildlife Conservation
EPA	Environment Protection Area
ERM	Emergency Response Mechanism
ESAP	Environment Sensitive Area Policy
FFPO	Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance
FO	Forest Ordinance
FR	Forest Reserves
FSMP	Forestry Sector Master Plan
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HPNP	Horton Plain National Park
JEDB	Janatha Estate Development Board
NBT	Nature Based Tourism
NEA	National Environment Act
NGO	Non Government Organization
NP	National Park
NWCP	National Wildlife Conservation Policy
PA	Protected Area
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SLTDA	Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority
TDP	Tourism Development Policy
TSP	Tourism Strategic Plan

1. Executive Summary

The Pekoe Trail is nearly a 300km long walking path passing through different land uses of the central highland landscape spreading across in Kandy, Nuwaraeliya and Badulla districts of Sri Lanka. Having a rich biological diversity and recreational potentials, the trail has a big demand for Nature Based Tourism (NBT). The lands in which the trail goes through are owned by the Tea Estates and state conservation agencies; Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) and the Department of Forest Conservation (DFC). The trail is segmented into 22 stages and each stage is 8-14km long. Stage 1 of the trail lies within an Environment Protection Area (EPA) declared by the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) under the provisions of National Environment Act (NEA).

Once the “Pekoe Trail” comes into practice it will establish an effective governance structure and their by the biodiversity traversed by the trail will be protected while enhancing the benefits out of the NBT. This report provides recommendations to the Pekoe Trail on what should be prioritized and done as a responsible and ethical partner of the conservation. As such, the main scope of this assessment is to establish visitor management guidelines, restricted activities under the legislation; Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (FFPO) and the Forest Ordinance (FO), provide recommendations for collaborative visitor management with the state agencies and the way of supporting to comply with the ordinances and responsible monetizing Protected Areas (PAs¹) via tourism. It has also been discussed on a mechanism to liaise with state agencies and other stakeholders in terms of the governance of Pekoe Tail.

As an strategy on compilation of the information, the literature in relation to the regulating and governance of tourism and biodiversity conservation of Sri Lanka were cited. Discussions were held with the estate management to assess ground level status of the trail and to understand their concerns. Semi-structured/open discussions were held with the state agencies; the DWC and DFC, while making them aware on the trail and trail management concepts. Consultative meetings with conservation communities were held to grasp their views and concerns by edifying them on the trail and trail management.

Establishment of Pekoe Trail directly supports the Tourism Development Policy (TDP) of Sri Lanka by consolidating advanced & allocentric tourism and thereby the support of local communities and the country economy as a whole. The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) has established the standards of tourism facilities that could be taken as the minimum standards of the Pekoe Trail services. Furthermore, the SLTDA could act as a coordinating body when the trail requires policy or operational level discussions with other government agencies or the Ministries as well. As the conservation is a priority aspect while ensuring the benefits for the present and future generations, the Pekoe Trail supports the National Wildlife Conservation Policy (NWCP) and the Forestry Sector Master Plan (FSMP) too. The Environment Sensitive Area Policy (ESAP) is also supported by the Pekoe Trail by recognizing the sensitive habitats located in the trail and paying special attention for the protection of such habitats.

While managing tourism in a guiding principles of conservation, visitor enjoyment and rural economic development, the establishment of Pekoe Trail will directly and indirectly support to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the agenda 2030 of the United Nation.

The legislation on the FFPO and the FO directly applies to the conservation of fauna and flora along the trail. The fauna and flora species listed under the FFPO and their habitats are protected from any

¹ Both Wildlife Protected Areas and Forest Reserves

human disturbances. Attention is also drawn to the key wildlife habitats located along the trail recognized as ESAs by the biodiversity survey. Trees and forested lands are protected under the FO and removing trees or clearing forested lands are considered punishable offence. Entering and staying in a PA without permission is also prohibited. Harming or disturbing any fauna, flora and natural functions of the ecosystems is also punishable offenses under the NEA. The Environment protection Area (EPA) comes directly under the legislation of NEA and the activities withing the EPA should be permitted by the EPA committee.

Nearly 80% of the Pekoe Trail goes through tea estates and their owners have principally agreed to establish the trail within their lands. Both the departments; the DWC and DFC also agreed and supportive to the establishment of the trail through their lands. The Horton Plains National Park (HPNP), one of a key destinations of the trail allows tourism as a conservation activity under its management plan. The process of developing the Management Plans for the Forest Reserves (FRs) located along the trail has not been completed yet. However, a tourism management plan for the FRs will be developed by the DFC as an interim arrangement for the establishment of Pekoe Trail.

A charity based organization shall be established as the governance panel of Pekoe Trail and the representatives from land owners, conservation agencies, tourism agencies, community conservation groups, and few independents could be the members of the organization. Policy level decisions and major directives of the trail management will be made by the governance panel. As partners of the trail management, the state agencies could be in the advisory panel of the organization. An executing unit could be established separately as an operational arm of the program and the trail marketing, finance and operational interventions will be the key responsibilities of the unit.

The governance setup, their responsibilities and the legality may be subject to update from time to time with the advancement of the Pekoe Trail, and a continuous dialogue among land owners is required to bring the program into practice, since the land owners possess different disciplines and interests. A suitable mechanism for financing and benefit sharing needs to be established under the existing legal and governance framework of the country with a standard auditing mechanism.

The Pekoe Trail as a managed tourism destination, the number of visitors of the trail would be controlled by issuing “trail passes”. While expecting responsible visitation, visitors are aspired to obtain a trail pass in advance from the online booking system. The facilities may also available to take passes physically from selected locations of the townships at trail hubs. When visitors enter a PA, a permit from DWC or DFC is needed.

Both the DWC and DFC are practicing tourism within the PAs under specific regulations and guidelines imposed by the relevant legislation. The visitor management guidelines and regulations of the Pekoe Trail to be strictly be followed and monitored to ensure visitor safety and to manage the negative environment impacts from the visitors. The relevant information on the applicable laws, regulations and guidelines should be readily available and the visitors should be made aware on such laws, regulations and guidelines at trail entrances too. Random checking and checking at entrances of the trail stages would be possible.

The maintenance and ground level administration of the trail will be scrutinized by the respective land managers. With the boosting of tourism, opportunities will be available to generate an additional income by offering some visitor services. Tourism packages unique to each stage can be developed and marketed under the name of Pekoe Trail. The icon of Ceylon/Sri Lankan tea would also be further popularized among tourists. In terms of the safety of the visitors, strengthening of existing safety mechanism of the estates, connections and collaboration with local police stations and a

mechanism to deploy local youngsters as naturalists/guardians would be appropriate suggestions. Noncompliance with the warning signage, breaching of rules may result in causing severe impacts for the visitors. To ensure the safety of the visitors and environment, guided visitations shall be encouraged in the early stages of the trail.

Respectful naturalist/guardian service would be a key for boosting the visitation. Knowledge on nature interpretation, language ability and the hospitality are the key factors to become a recognized naturalist. Establishing a pool of well qualified and well recognized naturalists/guardians comprising trained local youngsters would be an added recognition to the trail. Selected youngsters from local community could be channeled to the existing training and capacity building footings of the country. Launching a system to train the selected persons from estate community on tourism aspects is also needed and the trail management could coordinate such training with the existing training opportunities of the country.

The estate community will have an opportunity to improve their livelihood by earning extra money from tourism. They are encouraged to come up with small scale economic activities. Local traditions and culture is the key potential of NBT that can be marketed at the trail. However, exposing the existing living condition of the estate workers with fictitious messages could create bad image to the estates and the country as well. Also there is a possibility to beg money from the foreign visitors and it would create negative impact to the society. Therefore, it is recommended to expose all the information including the living condition of the local community in the website of the Pekoe Trail and there by the unexpected burden could be minimized. A strong Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is also needed to address such issues when necessary.

As the Pekoe Trail goes through different land uses of the central highland, and by exposing it to the world through NBT, establishing the trail would definitely be an entry point in the development of community livelihood of the central highland landscape. The Pekoe Trail can also act as a responsible partner of the conservation by managing the visitors under well established guidelines, and promoting conservation partnerships between community and conservation agencies and there by directly and indirectly supports the local livelihood. As such, establishing the Pekoe Trail within such extended landscape, aiming to boost new tourism experience while ensuring conservation and community benefits will be a bench mark for the tourism development in the central highland and the country as whole.

2. Key Recommendations

2.1 Trail Management Organization (TMO)

Since the lands through which the trail runs are owned by different entities, having different disciplines, they should come to a common agreement in terms of the trail management to ensure smooth functioning of the trail. A charity based organization would be a suitable platform to bring them to a common agreement. The TMO would come in to practice in three levels; the governing body, trail administrators and the trail advisers.

2.1.1 The governing body

The board is a group of appointed individuals. They're all responsible for the governance and strategic direction of the organization, and hold legal liability. Initially the representatives from estate companies, key representatives from conservation & tourism sectors and few outside independents will be boarded in the governance capacity of the trail management. The key responsibilities of them would include making policy level decisions on;

- Ensure effective organizational planning.
- Provide sufficient resources.
- Make sure the organization fulfills legal obligations.
- Provide proper financial oversight.
- Appoint and evaluate the trail executing arm.
- Improve the organization's public standing.

2.1.2 The trail administrators

The ground level estate managers and the PA managers are the administrators of the trail and the responsibilities on day to day operations of the trail are fixed with of them. It includes;

- Trail maintenance and cleaner management
- Policing and visitor security
- Monitoring and field level visitor management including random checking and entrance maintenance

2.1.3 The trail advisers

The protection of flora, fauna and their habitats along the trail comes under the legislation executing by the DWC, DFC and CEA. Therefore, the trail management needs collaborative assistance from these agencies. The Sri Lanka Tourism development Authority (SLTDA)² as a regulatory/coordination body of the tourism in Sri Lanka shall give necessary guidance and assistance for tourism management in the trail. These entities will be boarded in the organization in the advisory capacity and they could be placed at a higher level of the setup. Their key responsibilities include;

- Guiding conservation related activities and events
- Facilitating the monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity conservation aspects
- Facilitate protection and law enforcement along the trail
- act as a coordinator for the policy level discussions with government agencies and with the Ministries when needed

²file:///C:/Users/L380/Desktop/Pekoe%20Trail/Supporting%20documents/Design%20Guideline_V1.0_Approved%202023.01.20213639911527.pdf

2.1.4 The trail operational unit

A functional unit shall be established separately as an operational arm of the organization to execute the trail management. The key responsibilities of the unit will be;

- Manage data and reports of the trail.
- Keep records and reports up to date.
- Help maintain the budget plan.
- Organize and schedule meetings and events.
- Handle technical issues in their area of expertise.
- Trail marketing and financing.
- Coordination with other agencies for biodiversity conservation and protection.
- Coordination of the training and capacity building.

2.2. The visitors

The trail passes will be issued by the TMO on the demand basis. The visitors are expected to book the passes in advance from the established online system and to have a valid trail pass when they are within the trail. When visitors are entering the PAs, the pass should be a permit issued by the DWC or DFC. Facilities may also available to take passes from selected locations of the townships at trail hubs in addition to the online system.

Since the Pekoe Trail goes through the sites which possess a rich biodiversity and sensitive wildlife habitats, conservation aspects take priority over any other matter. To ensure conservation of biodiversity and to control the adverse impacts on the environment, the visitors are expected to abide by the guidelines. Once the pass is obtained, visitors are abide by the rules, regulations and guidelines of the Pekoe Trail. The guidelines are readily available and visitors are advised to be familiar with them before booking the trail pass. The guidelines for visitor management, avoid disturbances to the natural environment and animal habitats, bird watching, watching butterflies & dragonflies, visitor safety and guidelines for champers that have been scheduled under the Pekoe Trail are detailed in the box 1- 7 in the chapter 3 of the report. Within such background; the visitors are recommended to;

- Make advance booking trough the established web platform.
- Be familiar with the guidelines and regulations of the Pekoe Trail prior to book the trail pass.
- Be strictly abide by the regulations and guidelines of the Pekoe Trail.

2.3. The land owners

A majority of the land owners of the trail are the estate companies. The estates located within first three stages of the trail are owned by the “Janatha Estate Development Board” (JEDB) which is managed as a state entity. Others have been managed by the private companies. Some stages of the trail are passing through the protected areas managed by the DWC and the DFC. The details of the land ownership has been summarized in the annex No 1 &2.

The land owners have principally granted their consent to establish the trail through their lands. Once the trail is formally established, the responsibility of day to day maintenance of the trail and the trail security arrangement lies with the trail administrators; estate managers and PA managers. The trail administrators are encouraged to establish tourism packages which could be unique to each stage of the trail and the they are expected to come up with;

- A system for effective trail maintenance
- A system for visitor monitoring and supervision
- A stage specific visitor service packages
- An effective visitor security arrangement program

2.4. DWC and DFC

Protecting biological diversity while ensuring conservation benefits is a key objectives of both the DWC and the DFC. Establishing the Pekoe Trail aiming at biodiversity conservation and enhancing NBT, directly supports these departments to achieve the objective. The conservation outside the PAs of the central highland will be strengthened by establishing the Pekoe trail. Advancing this opportunity, the DWC and the DFC are recommended to;

- Be a partner of the governing body of the trail
- Grant formal consent or come up with a legal agreement to establish the trail trough their lands to ensure smooth functioning of the trail.
- Collaborate with the trail management to establish an effective financing system
- Advice the trail management for effective and sound-full conservation along the trail
- Advice the trail management to react on any emergency conservation issues

2.5. The community

The opportunities will be created to improve local livelihood by establishing new income generation activities through the Pekoe Trail. The community is encouraged to come up with new services and products, targeting the visitors. Local products, food culture, provision of sanitary facilities and accommodation and showcasing of local cultural events are some of the activities that can be practiced by them to earn an additional income. When grasping benefits from conservation aspect, the local community tends to move for the protection of forest and associated fauna and flora and they could be a better partner of the conservation and field level administration of the trail.

However, some may get used to earning money by begging tourists. This would be a severe negative impact to the society. This leads to the exposure of the living conditions of the local people with a fictitious message and thereby creating a bad image for the country and the living conditions of those people as a whole. Such situation should strictly control by educating the visitors by exposing the truth of the local livelihood in advance. The elders of the community are also need to be guided and instructed to not to do such activities and to advise or urge their children to not engage in such activities. Under such situation, the key aspects that the communities are recommended to;

- Be liaised with trail administrators and come with NBT events
- Support trail administrators to enhance visitor security
- Be trained as naturalists and serve the trail management to establish a high quality tracking experiences
- Educate local community not to involve any type of begging or create disturbances to the visitors other than providing some services for money.

2.6. Proposed strategic partnerships

Inter-sectoral cooperation between tourism, finance, local administration, academic institutions, and agencies dealing with natural resource management need to be a partner of the trail management program. Adopting a conservation based approach to maintain biodiversity along the Pekoe Trail and surrounding community while providing an enriched and engaged visitor experiences, the inter-sectoral partnerships is important to mitigate cumulative and varied impacts of ad-hock practicing, placing and designing of visitor services.

It is also necessary to strengthen capacity in the trail management to build partnerships to cater to up-market nature based tourism in the “new normal”, while providing a variety of high quality outdoor experiences to different visitor categories, supported by interpretive facilities, and clean safe & eco-friendly small group accommodations, etc. In such a background, working with local communities, tour operators, local tourist accommodation & food outlets, researchers, academics & professionals, and local administrative networks, are key possible partnerships that can be considered.

2.7. Strengthening research to protect wildlife and their habitats to enhance the tourism

In order to withstand the expected increased inflow of tourists to the Pekoe Trail in future, conservation of the integrity and resilience of the trail landscape should be maintained through establishing knowledge capitals by enhancing the knowledge on wildlife, wildlife habitats, species, conservation and habitat management etc. Research on fauna and flora, climate change impacts on the trail ecosystem, species and their behavior, impact of tourism, impact to the local community will help enhance tourism and develop trail interpretation. Further the weather data and air quality can be measured at key points of the trail and the visitors may also like to be involved in such activity. All relevant research papers and documents will be made available in the Pekoe Trail web site.

3. Key Findings of Relevance

3.1 Trail Guiding Principles

Managing tourism in sustainable way to ensure its endurance for both present and future generations would be an underlying factor guiding the Pekoe Trail tourism, in which resource conservation, visitor enjoyment, rural economic development, and marketing have been given consideration under the guiding principle. The table 1 is given the key guiding principles and their relationships to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Table 01: Guiding principles and their relationships to the SDGs

Guiding principles	Corresponding SDGs
The tourism development will support conserving the natural and cultural heritage value of the trail and trail vicinity and will be in harmony with the nature and culture of the area	11,14,15
Tourism activities at the Pekoe Trail will be guided by protected area objectives and its general management plans for conservation and recovery of the site's natural and cultural environment and protection of critical wildlife habitats	4,15,16
Local community will have priority in deriving benefits from tourism through involvement in tourism activities; including provisioning of naturalist/guardian services, tourist accommodations; showcasing traditional lifestyles, and other related activities to generate and sustain local employments, revenue and developments	1,2,3,4,5,8,10,11,12
Infrastructure designs and other tourism related facilities, services and skills will be enhanced to provide a high quality nature and culture experiences to visitors that will enable a great understanding of Sri Lanka's natural and cultural environment	8,9,17
Visitor, trail staff, and service provider health and other safety requirements will be considered a priority for all aspects of tourism development at the trail	3
Partnerships will be built among major categories of stakeholders including private sector entities, communities, local administrations, state agencies, to provide a high quality tourism experiences for visitors seeking varied nature based experiences at the trail	17
Tourism planning development and management activities will consider Triple Bottom Line Approach (People, Profit and Planet) for sustainability	all

3.2 The Organization and the responsibilities

The entire path of the Pekoe Trail is segmented into 22 stages³. Each stage is 8 - 14km in length and physically managed by the respective land owners. It begins from Hanthana tea estate in Kandy district and ends in Pedro estate in Nuwaraeliya district via tea estates and PAs. Since the trail goes through different lands which are having different interests and disciplines, bringing the land owners into a common platform is vital in terms of smooth and uninterrupted functioning of the trail.

A charity based organization with common agreement on policy decisions is a suitable mechanism for better management of the trail. The governance level decisions will be taken by a group consists with land owners, representatives from tourism and conservation agencies/community and volunteer independents etc.

³ The entire trail setup and personal communication with YouLead officers

Since the trail goes through DWC/DFC lands and a segment through an EPA declared under the National Environment Act (NEA) by the CEA, the DWC, the DFC and the CEA are the main partners of the program. The protection of wildlife outside the PAs, comes under the purview of the DWC and animals and their habitats are protected under the provisions of Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (FFPO). Protection and management of trees and the forested lands comes under the DFC. As such, the organization needs collaborative assistance from both the departments and the CEA. The SLTDA as a regulatory body of the tourism in Sri Lanka shall give necessary guidance and assistance for tourism management in the trail. These entities will be boarded in the organization in the advisory capacity too to advice the trail management for conservation and can act as coordinators for any conversations with state agencies or even with the ministries when needed.

The key responsibilities of the operational arm established for executing the trail management are issuing trail passes, pricing and financial management, maintenance of digital platforms on the trail administration, training and awareness for service providers, naturalists/guides and local communities, coordination with enforcement agencies on conservation aspects, maintenance of sign boards and signage and monitoring the maintenance, etc. The estate managers and the managers in charge of PAs are the key to the field level operations and trail administrations. Day to day maintenance, checking and monitoring, visitor security and providing facilities to the visitors would be the main responsibilities of the trail administrators. Figure 01 has summarized the responsibilities of the different layers of the organization.



Figure 1: Responsibilities of the different levels of trail management organization

3.3. Trail Passes/Permits

Trail passes will be issued by the trail operational unit of the organization on the demand basis. Facilities are available for online booking. In addition to the online booking facilities, trail passes could be obtained from selected locations of the townships at trail hubs. The visitors are free to book the passes for entire trail or for any selected stage or stages. The fee of the pass will be determined accordingly. The fee for other facilities as per the interest of the visitors can be added to the trail pass itself or on-site payments could be arranged.

When the visitors are in a PA of FR, they should have a valid permit issued by the DG of the DWC or CGF of the FD. Since issuing both trail passes and permits by a single unit will be more convenience to the visitors, an appropriate mechanism needs to be established with the collaboration of the DWC and FD. However, when the visitors are in the trail, they should have a valid trail pass or a permit issued by the relevant authority.

Introducing an automated online system for trail pass reservation is the key to provide varied products to different categories of visitors in the systematic and transparent way; and to maintain a flow of visitors to the trail within its carrying capacity. Carrying capacity of the Pekoe Trail needs to be calculated once the trail is functioning for certain period of time.

3.4. The Visitors

Visitors are allowed to enter or walk through some stages of the trail currently. Local as well as foreign tourists are rarely seen traveling through these stages of the trail. A systematic visitor management has not been established yet. As such, Pekoe Trail aims to establish a system to regularize the visitation. Issuing trail pass is one of the controlling mechanism. Once the trail pass is obtained by the visitor, he/she is abide by the rules, regulations and guidelines established under the Pekoe Trail.

One who travels through this trail will be able to enjoy the beauty of nature to the fullest. A quiet observer walking through this trail will be able to gain insight into the unique behavior patterns, vocal combinations and authentic communication strategies of wild animals. One needs to keep one's eyes open and senses alert in this wonderful place to learn a lot about the habits and behavior of animals. For a quiet, patient and slow walker, this is a wonderful place to observe the tracks, trails, droppings and spoor of animals.

Visitors should keep in mind to take the trail without going off the trail. Also, care should be taken not to litter the trail and pollute it. Spilling of chemicals, oils and leaving behind plastic packets and non-biodegradable wastes could cause irreparable damage to the environment. Size of the visiting group should be kept small. When using camera, it is advisable to use the one with a zoom arrangement so that in order to take a better shot one should not go closer to the animal and risk a contact. It is better not to use flash while taking snaps to bother animals. When encountering animals it is better to keep a safe distance and not to stalk the animal.

Bigger the size of the group, bigger will be the commotion and sound pollution which will scare the animals away. Inside the forest, it is advisable to avoid using devices that generate electronic emission and waves. This is a silent killer particularly having an adverse impact on birds. Hand feeding of animals in the wild and cuddling wild life cubs are strictly prohibited as it is an easy way for flow of diseases.

For the safety of visitors, it is better to wear knee length leather boots in case of protecting from poisonous insects and snakes. Keeping a guide map and a compass would be important fact. Fancy and colorful luggage must be avoided. It is advisable to make sure that the visitors are properly prepared, equipped and clothed for the terrain in which they wish to walk.

For the purpose of protection and better management of the trail random pass checking would be possible. In the event of any revoking of the pass/permit under the FFPO or the FO, and after informing on such revocation to the pass/permit- holder/s, such person/ persons shall return the pass/permit to the order of the officer who issued the pass/permit and shall not remain within the trail/PA/FR longer than the time that deems reasonable for making necessary preparations for the departure and for departing outside the limits of the trail.

3.5. Limiting visitor numbers and understanding the Carrying Capacity

This will involve by developing of an online pre-booking system that will automatically cut-off visitor at a time for a given day, on each designated stages of the trail. Visitor can then reserve and pay for an entrance ticket ahead of time and arrive at the allocated time for their activities.

Techniques to sustainable manage and regulate the recreational use of natural areas include;

- Physical control such as limiting visitor use to define spatial areas (Paths, roads and facilities for visitors) to reduce the impact on sensitive areas.
- Direct control in the form of rules, regulations, permits and chargers that ban or restrict visitor behavior that could have negative impacts in the natural environment .
- Development of a pre-booking systems such as online web based booking.
- Development of monitoring systems to detect overcrowding related impacts⁴. Maintaining an unhampered visitor flow within the trail in space and time within its carrying capacity is an undisputed pre-requisite to maximize visitor enjoyment at the attractions the Pekoe Trail has offer⁵.

In terms of understanding the Visitor Carrying Capacity (VCC) of the trail, the calculation will be considered three levels; the Physical Carrying Capacity (PCC), the Real Carrying Capacity (RCC) and the Effective Carrying Capacity (ECC). Each level constitutes a corrected estimation of the previous one based on the specific factors involved in each case that is studied. The relationship can be presented as: $PCC > RCC > ECC$ ⁶. Refer section 5.5 of the report for further details of the carrying capacity. there are several types of carrying capacity considered in PAs worldwide, defined in terms of social carrying capacity, economic carrying capacity, ecological and environmental carrying capacity.

3.6. Environment safety guidelines

The guidelines are readily available to the visitors and they are advised to be familiar with them before booking the trail pass. The general guidelines that the visitors are expected to abide by is given in the box 01. As the Pekoe Trail goes through the sites which possess a rich biodiversity and sensitive wildlife habitats, conservation aspects take priority over any other matter. To ensure biodiversity conservation and to control adverse effects on nature, the visitors are expected to abide by the guidelines given in Box 02. Bird watching will be a popular activity in the Pekoe Trail that

⁴ Orams, M.B. 1996 Using Interpretation to manage Nature Based Tourism, Jurnal of sustainable tourism

⁵ Kourandeh, H.H. and Fateai, E. (2013) Estimation of Tourism Carrying capacity of Fandoqloo Forest in Ardebil Province Iran, Bull Env Pharmacol Life Science.

⁶ Somarriba-Chang, M. Garnier, M. and Laguna, V. (xx) Estimation of tourist carrying capacity of the Natural Reserve Mombacho Volcano, Granada, and the Natural Reserve Datanli-El Diablo, Jinotega, Nicaragua.

most of the visitors are looking for. To avoid disturbances to the birds and their habitats the basic guidelines the bird watchers are expected to follow are given in Box 03. Similarly the guidelines for butterfly & dragonfly watching, Herpetofauna watching are given in Box 4 & 5 respectively. Visitor safety is a key aspect and to avoid accidents, injuries and/or any unexpected damages, visitors are expected to follow the security guidelines listed in the Box 06. Box 07 summarizes the guidelines stipulated for the campers.

Box 1:
General Visitor Management Guidelines

1. Visitors should obtain a trail pass/permit from the Trail management organization/DWC/FD through online application by providing their information.
2. The trail pass/permit holder should accompany his/her group (If any) throughout the stay/walk in the trail. When two or more persons are named as the pass/permit-holders each person shall be jointly and similarly responsible for the due and proper observance of the relevant ordinance, the regulations made thereunder and the conditions.
3. Trail Pass/Permit- holder/s shall before entering the trail declare the name of every person to be introduced by him/them under the authority of the permit. Any such person found within the trail specially in a PA shall, if his/her name has not already been declared on the pass/permit be liable to be ordered to level the trail/PA by any officer of the Trail Administrator/DWC/DFC.
4. The pass/permit- holder/s and the persons authorized to be introduced by him/them shall not enter the trail before 6.00 am or after 12 noon. The aforesaid persons shall not remain in the trail therein after 6.00 pm.
5. The pass/permit-holder/s or any person declared shall not travel/walk in the Trail, between the hours of 6.00 p.m. of the day and 6.00 a.m of the following day.
6. The pass/permit- holder/s any person declared shall not take any animals as pets or other wise into the Trail.
7. The pass/permit- holder/s any person declared shall not bring any automatic military firearms, any rifle, any shot gun, or any air gun or air rifle into the Trail.
8. The pass/permit-holder/s or any person declared shall not while walking in the Trail discharge any play and musical instrument, sing, shout, clap or make any noise which is likely to disturb any animal or other visitors.
9. The pass/permit- holder/s and the persons declared by him/them under this pass/permit shall not enter any part of the Trail/Trail side which has been closed or unauthorized under the orders of the Trail administrator/DWC/DFC.
10. The pass/permit- holder/s any person declared shall not remove any part of any animal/plant or any object of geological, prehistoric, archaeological, historical, or other scientific interest from the trail and surrounding environment.
11. The pass/permit- holder/s shall not camp at night along the trail or in the vicinity under the tents or shelters or in the open except with the written approval of the relevant management authority. If the permit-holder/s has/have not obtained such written approval or has/have not been allotted accommodation for one or more nights at an accommodation located within a particular stage of the trail, the pass/permit shall be valid for one day only and the persons authorized under the pass/permit shall not remain in the trail after 3.00 pm on the day.
12. The pass/permit- holder/s or any person declared in the pass/permit shall not use any artificial light for any purpose other than that of illuminating the track of the trail, while traveling along the trail.
13. The pass/permit- holder/s and the persons declared in the pass/permit shall obey such directions given to him/them by any officer of the Trail Administrator/DWC/DFC as may be considered necessary or desirable by that officer for the safety of visitors or in the interests of the fauna/flora.
14. The pass/permit- holder/s shall produce the pass/permit whenever called upon to do so by any officer of the Trail Administrator/DWC/DFC.

Box 02:

Guidelines to avoid disturbances to the natural environment and animal habitats

1. Conservation of Biodiversity and ecosystem should be ensured through minimum use of land area, and the visitor/s shall not walk off-track and disturb natural ground cover vegetation.
2. The visitor/s shall not discharge any firearm or play and musical instrument or sing, shout, clap or make any noise which is likely to disturb any animal inhabited along the trail and its vicinity.
3. The visitor/s shall not use any fire and fire-generators while walking in the trail or staying within the trail other than the prescribed places to stay at night.
4. The visitor/s shall not remove from the trail and surrounding environment any animal/plant, any part of them or any object of geological, prehistoric, archaeological, historical, or scientific interest.
5. The visitor/s shall not cause any pollution to any natural water sources and streams located along the trail and in the vicinity by dumping empty bottles, plastics, food and organic stuff, oils and or any other foreign matter.
6. The visitor/s shall not feed wild animals or shall not dump food wastes along the sides of the trail where wild animals may attract and colonized.
7. The visitor/s shall not involve in any activity which could harm the floor and soil forms of the trail and block/damage any drainage and drainage paths of the trail.
8. The visitor/s shall not use direct flash lights or any of such obstacles to the wild animals for any purpose.
9. The visitor/s shall keep sufficient distance from the wild animals when observing them. Maintaining a minimum of 1.5m distance from small animals such as lizard spp., butterflies and dragonflies, other reptiles amphibians and birds. At least 50m distance from medium sized animals and for predators such as leopards a minimum distance of 100m is advised.
10. The visitor/s shall not block the moving paths of the animals that have been recognized and demarcated in the trail or any animal movement is observed.
11. The visitor/s shall maintain sufficient distance from the wild animals for photographing and for video recording of wild animals but without using flashers that may disturb the animals.

Box 03:
Bird Watching Guidelines

1. The bird watcher/s would require equipment such as a binocular, camera, recorder and others for easy and effective bird watching.
2. The bird watcher/s should keep quiet and be patient to not to disturb the normal behavior of the birds.
3. The visitor/s shall not reach closer to the bird or a bird nest for any purpose.
4. The visitor/s shall not articulate or replay any bird calling, songs or use any artificial attraction to attract the birds.
5. The visitor/s shall not collect any birds, parts of the bird, bird nest or any parts of the bird nest, eggs or chicks for any circumstances.
6. The visitor/s shall not feed birds or shall not dump food wastes along the sides of the trail where the birds may attract and colonized.
7. The visitor/s shall keep distance to the breeding sites/roosting sites or any site/tree where their nests are found.
8. The visitor/s shall stop reaching the birds if they exhibit aggressive behavior or try to escape from the site.
9. The visitor/s shall not use direct flash light for spotting birds.
10. The visitor/s shall not use flasher to take photos of birds or their chicks or their nests with eggs.
11. The visitor/s should wear clothing that will blend into the habitat such as camouflaged colors or subdued shades of brown, green, and gray so as to avoid scaring the birds away.
12. If a rare bird or its habitat is found, it should not be published in social media to avoid unnecessary burden to that bird species.
13. If any damaged or injured bird (any animal) encountered, visitor/s are expected to inform nearest DWC/FD office.

Box 04:
Butterfly and Dragonfly Watching Guidelines

1. The visitor/s shall not involve in any activity which could harm the host plants on which the butterfly sp depend.
2. Butterflies are very sensitive and possess limited tolerance capabilities on environment changes and pollution. As such the visitor/s shall not involve in any activity that may lead to an environmental change or pollution.
3. The visitor/s shall keep distance from Butterfly sp.
4. The visitor/s shall not introduce any artificial fragrance, flowers, fruits or any artificial attractants to attract the butterflies.
5. The visitor/s shall not collect any butterfly, parts of the butterfly, butterfly eggs or any pupae stage of the butterfly life cycle for any circumstances.
6. The visitor/s shall not dump food wastes along the sides of the trail where the animals may attract and colonized.
7. The visitor/s shall not reach closer to the breeding sites of the butterflies or any site/plant where any stage of their life cycle is found.
8. The visitor/s shall not use direct flash light for spotting the Butterflies.
9. If a rare or a migrant Butterfly sp is encountered it shall not be published in social media to avoid unnecessary burden to that Butterfly sp.
10. Availability of undisturbed clean water is vital for the Dragonfly to lay their eggs and therefore the visitor/s shall not engage in any activity that may harm the water bodies in the trail.
11. Dragonflies are mostly active in early morning and evening time. Therefore, observations could be arranged accordingly.
12. The visitor/s needs to be extremely patient to watch and observe Dragonflies.
13. The visitor/d shall not catch or collect Dragonflies, their parts of any stages of the life cycle of the Dragonfly.

Box 05:
Herpetofauna (Amphibians and Reptile) Watching Guidelines

1. The visitor/s shall not involve in any activity which could harm the habitats of amphibian and reptile sp depend.
2. Amphibian and reptile sp are very sensitive and possess limited tolerance capabilities on environment changes and pollution. As such the visitor/s shall not involve in any activity that may lead to an environmental change or pollution.
3. The visitor/s shall keep distance from amphibian and reptile sp.
4. The visitor/s shall not introduce any artificial fragrance, flowers, fruits or any artificial attractants to attract the amphibian and reptile sp.
14. The visitor/s shall not collect any amphibian or reptile, parts of the amphibian or reptile, eggs of amphibians or reptile or any pupae stage of the their life cycle for any circumstances.
5. The visitor/s shall not dump food wastes along the sides of the trail where the animals may attract and colonized.
6. The visitor/s shall not use direct flash light for spotting the amphibians and reptiles.
7. If a rare amphibians or reptile sp is encountered it shall not be published in social media to avoid unnecessary burden to that them.
8. Availability of undisturbed clean water is vital for the amphibians to complete their life cycle, therefore the visitor/s shall not engage in any activity that may harm the water bodies in the trail.
9. Amphibians are mostly active in dark, early morning and evening time. The visitor/s needs to be extremely patient to watch and observe them.

Box 06:
Visitor Safety Guidelines

1. The visitor/s when hiking/walking shall not deviate from the demarcated trail path and guided tracks without permission from the respective authority.
2. The visitor/s shall keep information on Emergency Response Mechanism (ERM) that has been set in each stage and ask assistance in case of any emergency by calling the nearest possible office or the rescue team.
3. The visitor/s while walking along the trail and staying within the trail is/are encouraged to be accompanied by one more travelers or a naturalist/guide who was trained and has recognized by the Pekoe Trail.
4. The visitors while walking in the trail may keep basic first-aid stuff with them and their personal medical requirements along with necessary instructions.
5. The visitor/s are not allowed to walking along the streams, bathing in the streams or water bodies, and playing in natural/man-made water bodies.
6. The visitor/s shall wear suitable clothes/dresses, shoes and hat to cover the body to avoid direct contact of insects, leaches and other small animals.
7. The visitor/s shall avoid any locations where the dangerous animals such as snakes, leopards, and other wild animals could be encountered.
8. The visitor/s may wear camouflage clothing to blend with the surrounding.
9. The visitor/s shall keep minimum stuff of their backpack, but essentially a short eat, drinking water, an extra cloth, flash light, and rain-coat etc.
10. The visitor/s shall use the mobile tracking part of the trail to avoid misleading or losses in the trail path and shall follow the guidelines and instructions given by the sign boards.
11. The visitor/s shall immediately return to a nearest rescue site when a sudden change in weather is visible with heavy rain, lightning or any kind of unfavorable condition.
12. The visitor/s shall not eat wild fruits, mushrooms or any herbaceous parts of the plants and drink water from any natural/man made streams or water bodies located within and vicinity of the trail.
13. The visitor/s shall not allowed to smoke, take alcoholic drinks, use strong fragrant while walking in the trail or stay within the trail.

Box 07:

Guideline for campers

Follow the guidelines for each campsite that can be viewed and downloaded from the website. Noted that specifications vary at each campsite.

1. Campers should adhere to the provisions of the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance and Forest Conservation Ordinance; nor can they damage any state property, animal or plant or disturb animal behaviour and movement.
2. Any violation of the applicable rules by visitors will be reported by service providers/campsite operators/guide to the FD/DWC and will carry with it a penalty.
3. Each campsite is limited to a maximum 10 people, and one campsite should be booked by one group only.
4. The campsite should be accessed before 4.00pm from the entrance of a particular stage of the trail. The campers and naturalist/guide should leave the site the latest by the 10.30am on the day after the final night at the camp.
5. Meals should be cooked by the visitors at safe cooking site designated at the campsite.
6. Food should not be made accessible for animals at all times and animals should never be fed .
7. Separated garbage should be taken away by campers or deposited safely at a designated disposal site at a trail entrance or taken away out from the trail.
8. Visitors should bring their own drinking water and conserve water provided for washing and toilet as much as possible.
9. All lights at the camp after dark should be shaded so that the light falls on the ground and would not disturbed animals nearby.
10. Any torch lights trained on the forest to look animals should have a red filter and this should only be done with the guide/naturalist and never after 8.00pm
11. Flash lights are strictly prohibited and only night vision cameras are permitted after dark.
12. Campers are allow to walk after dark on their own or even with a guide or other service staff.

3.7. Visitor safety instructions

Ensuring visitor safety is a crucial factor in Pekoe Trail. Since this trail goes through wildlife and forested areas associated with habitats for wild animals like leopards, snakes, stinging insects and leeches, visitors may be vulnerable to attacks by them.

Leopards are unpredictable animals and could harm the visitors when encounters. They have been recorded in several places of the trail.

Not only the attacks by the animals, sudden weather changes can pose various challenges and risks and also tourists may likely to get lost in the forest due to not following the designated trail.

The safety instructions/guidelines to avoid such incidents and to help create a safe and enjoyable experience are given in the Box No 08 - 14.

Box 08

General instructions for visitor safety

1. To avoid many of the potential risks, get the assistance of experienced and certified guardians/guides who are familiar with the trail and wildlife.
2. Recommend to wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes with good traction for walking on the terrain. Long sleeves and pants help the visitors to protect against scratches and insect and leech bites.
3. Monitor the weather conditions, and cancel or postpone the visit if there are extreme weather conditions like heavy rain, storms, or extreme heat.
4. Limit the size of the visitor groups to ensure better control and supervision.
5. Carry an adequate supply of water and snacks to prevent dehydration, especially in humid environments.
6. Keep an emergency kit that includes essential items such as water, non-perishable food, first-aid supplies, flashlights, batteries, blankets, and important documents and keep them in an easily accessible position.

Box 09

Instructions to the TMO to ensure visitor safety

1. Install clear signage along the trail, indicating safety guidelines and rules for visitors. Especially the area where the leopards have been recorded and other sites where there are snakes, stinging insects and leech etc are found. The Environment Sensitive Area (ESA) that could be identified by the Biodiversity Survey, carried out under the project shall be notified by the signage with site specific instructions.
2. Regularly maintain and clear the trails to minimize the risk of accidents and injuries. Daily checks and reporting for any signs of wildlife activity or changes in the trail conditions are useful.
3. Designate few safe areas along the trail, such as flat open areas with safe shelter to room the visitors in case of sudden weather changes.
4. Conduct a thorough pre-trip orientation to inform the visitors about the trail, potential risks, and safety procedures. Emphasize the importance of following the guardian's/guide's instructions.
5. Clearly communicate the physical fitness requirements of the visitors. Advise the visitors to disclose any health concerns or medical conditions before they enter the trail. Provide necessary safety gear, such as walking sticks if necessary.
6. Educate the visitors on the possibility of encountering the wildlife and the importance of observing them from a safe distance. Also emphasize the importance of not feeding or approaching the wild animals.
7. Establish clear emergency response procedures, including communication protocols and evacuation plans.
8. Ensure that the trail operates within the regulations imposed by local authorities and obtain any necessary permits. Clearly communicate rules and regulations of such authorities to the visitors.
9. Implement time restrictions to minimize the duration spend in the trail and reduce potential risky encounters.
10. Ensure that guides/guardians undergo regular training on wildlife behavior, emergency response, and visitor management.
11. Have a well-stocked first-aid kit available and ensure guides are trained to handle common injuries. Provide information on the nearest medical facilities and evacuation procedures.
12. Ensure that guides/guardians have reliable communication devices such as radios or phones. Educate on the emergency procedures and communication plans.

Box 10
Instructions to the Guides/Guardians

1. Wear the guide/guardian ID card and clad in the uniform provided when you are with the visitors.
2. Always give accurate information to the visitors.
3. Ready with an update on the climatic and weather condition of the area to edify the visitors on inclement weather conditions.
4. Develop the skills to give information as a story to the visitors, improve interpretative skills and capacities.
5. Should carry safety equipment, such as first-aid kits and communication devices, in case of emergencies.
6. Advise visitors to wear appropriate clothing and footwear considering the terrain and weather conditions. To avoid or minimize animal bites, advise them to wear long pants, sturdy boots, and high socks.
7. Edify the visitors on the importance of environmental conservation and the impact of their actions on the ecosystem.
8. Provide a detailed safety-briefing at the beginning of the trail, covering: what to do if a leopard or other animal is spotted, proper behavior during the trail, emergency procedures, etc.

Box 11

Visitor safety instructions to avoid leopard attacks

1. Leopards are unpredictable wild animals and therefore it is highly recommended that visitors should be accompanied by trained and experienced guides/guardians who are familiar with the behavior of the leopards and the other animals.
2. It is best to travel in groups in leopard-infested areas.
3. Limit the size of visitor groups to ensure better control.
4. Leopards are skilled at hiding in dense vegetation. Stick to well-marked paths and avoid dense vegetation.
5. Leopards are more active during dawn and dusk. Try to avoid walking and staying in the trail during these times.
6. If you encounter a leopard, remain calm and never approach it closely. Do not run, as this can trigger their predatory instincts. Back away slowly. Do not stare at it in its eyes to avoid direct eye contact as it may be perceived as a threat.
7. Maintain a safe distance and use binoculars or spotting scopes for closer observation.
8. Stay together and avoid straying from the designated trail.
9. Observe quietly to not to disturb the wildlife.
10. Do not feed or attempt to interact with leopards. Feeding them can alter their behavior and create dependence on human food sources.
11. Be aware of local emergency contacts for wildlife control or assistance. Report any leopard sightings to the appropriate authorities.

Box 12

Visitor safety instructions to avoid snakes, stinging insects and leech bites.

1. Be aware of the surroundings, especially when in areas with tall grass, rocks, or bushes which are good hiding places for snakes. Walk only on visible paths and avoid walking through tall grass, undergrowth, or areas where visibility is limited.
2. Be cautious when stepping over rocks or logs, as snakes may be hiding in these areas. Stick to well-established trails and avoid wandering off into unknown areas.
3. If a snake is encountered, give it a plenty of space to move and do not attempt to touch/handle it. Most snake bites occur when people try to interact with or kill the snake.
4. If you need to move vegetation or other items where a snake may be hiding, use a long stick or pole rather than using your hands.
5. Snakes may be attracted to areas where food scraps or garbage are available. Keep your site clean to avoid their attraction.
6. Learn about the types of snakes in the area, their habitats, and their behavior. This knowledge can help you avoid their encounters.
7. Be cautious around water sources because snakes are often found near water sources.
8. If you are bitten by a snake, seek immediate medical attention. Do not attempt to suck out venom or use a tourniquet, as these outdated methods can be harmful. Instead, remain as calm and immobile as possible while waiting for medical assistance.
9. Protecting yourself from insects like bees and wasps is important, especially if you are allergic to their stings.
10. In areas where bees, bumblebees or wasps around, stay calm to avoid their attacks. Sudden movements of the human being can provoke them.
11. These insects are attracted to the strong scents including perfumes, lotions, and bright colored clothing. Try to minimize the use of such products.
12. Be cautious around known nest locations. If you spot a nest, back away slowly without making sudden movements.
13. Wear long sleeves and pants to provide additional protection.
14. Apply insect repellent on exposed skin to deter bees and wasps. Citronella can help keep insects away from outdoor areas.
15. Keep the food covered, when eating outdoors to avoid attracting bees and wasps.
16. Avoid sweet drinks, bees are attracted to sugary substances, so be cautious with sweet beverages.

Visitor safety instructions to avoid snakes, stinging insects and leech bites.

17. Learn to identify nests, be aware of common nesting areas and be able to identify them. Avoid disturbing nests.
18. Carry a suitable medicine for those with allergies to insect bites.
19. If you are stung, it can be painful, try to remain calm. If a stinger is left behind, scrape it out with a credit card or your fingernail. Do not use tweezers, as squeezing the stinger can release more venom. Wash the sting site with soap and water. Use a cold compress or ice pack to reduce swelling. Pain relievers can help alleviate pain and reduce inflammation. If you experience severe symptoms or have a known allergy, seek medical attention immediately.
20. Cover your body as much as possible by wearing long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and tucking your pants into your socks or boots. This reduces the exposure of your skin to leeches.
21. Consider wearing leech socks, which are specially designed to prevent leeches from crawling up your legs. These are often made of tight-knit fabric that leeches can't penetrate.
22. Use insect repellent on exposed skin. Some repellents may also deter leeches.
23. Wear closed shoes or boots, preferably with tight ankle support. Leeches often target areas with easier access, such as ankles and feet.
24. Stick to well-trodden paths and avoid walking through tall grass, dense vegetation, or swampy areas where leeches are more common.
25. Avoid brushing against trees, bushes, or other vegetation where leeches may be waiting.
26. Periodically check your clothing and body for leeches. If you find one, remove it promptly. Use a flat, blunt object (like the back of a knife) to gently scrape it off without squeezing it, as squeezing may cause the leech to regurgitate into the wound.
27. Some people find that natural substances like Citronella, Eucalyptus oil, or Neem oil may help repel leeches. You can apply these to your clothing or skin.
28. Consider applying duct tape or rubber bands around your ankles and wrists as an additional barrier to prevent leeches from getting under your clothing.
29. Leeches are more active in wet conditions. Try to stay as dry as possible, and if it's raining, take extra precautions

Remember that prevention is the key, and being aware of the surroundings can help minimize the risk of encounters with leopard, snakes, and stinging insects.

Box 13

Instructions to act in a sudden weather change

1. Regularly check the weather forecast and updates through reliable sources such as weather websites, apps, or local news channels. Plan the visit accordingly. Sign up for weather alerts and notifications on your mobile device.
2. Dress appropriately for the current weather conditions. Layer clothing in cold weather and wear lightweight, breathable fabrics in hot weather. Stay hydrated during periods of extreme heat and use appropriate insulation in cold weather.
3. Quickly move to a designated safe areas of the trail when storm, heavy rain, lightning or sudden weather changes occur.
4. Be aware of flood-prone and vulnerable areas for flooding and landslide and avoid them during heavy rainfall. If severe weather is expected, consider delaying travel plans.
5. Beside the established emergency response by the trail management, it is recommended to establish a communication plan with family members or friends to stay in touch during emergencies. Share the whereabouts and plans, especially if need to evacuate.
6. Keep an adequate supply of necessary medications, and ensure the access to medical records. Be aware of emergency medical facilities in the area.
7. Evacuation Plan, Be aware the evacuation routes and shelters in the area, follow official evacuation orders promptly. Specific weather conditions may require tailored responses, so always follow guidance from local authorities and emergency services. Stay vigilant and prepared to adapt to changing circumstances.

Box 14

Instructions to act when getting lost from the designated path

1. Keep a clear head and try to remain calm. Panic can cloud the judgment and make the situation worse.
2. Stop moving and assess the surroundings. Look for any recognizable landmarks or signs that may help to get back on track.
3. If possible, backtrack along the route until you find the last known point.
4. If you have a map, compass, or GPS device, use them to determine your location and the direction you need to go to get back on track.
5. If it is unable to find the way back, signal for help. This can include using a whistle, mirror, or any other signaling device you have. Three loud blows on a whistle is a universally recognized distress signal.
6. Leave noticeable markers or signs (such as arrows made with sticks) to indicate the path. This can be helpful for search and rescue teams or for the own reference if need to retrace the steps.
7. Ensure having an adequate supply of water. Dehydration can impair cognitive function, making it more difficult to make sound decisions.
8. If it gets dark and unable to find the way, consider staying put for the night. Moving in the dark increases the risk of injury. Use this time to rest and conserve energy.
9. In case of spending the night, construct a simple shelter to protect yourself from the elements. This could be a lean-to, debris hut, or any other makeshift shelter.
10. Wear brightly colored clothing or use reflective materials to increase the visibility, especially in an area where search and rescue teams may be looking for.
11. In cooler climates, maintain the body heat by layering clothing and staying close to the ground. Avoid sweating, as wet clothing can lead to hypothermia.
12. If you have an emergency kit, use any relevant gear, such as a space blanket, emergency whistle, or fire-starting tools.

Remember that prevention is the best strategy. Before embarking on the trek, make sure to be well-prepared with the right gear, maps, and knowledge of the area. If you are not familiar with tracking, consider hiring a guide or going with an experienced group.

3.8. The land managers

Nearly 80% of the trail length is passing through tea estates owned by private companies. The estates located within first three stages of the trail belongs to the JEDB. Several segments of some stages are passing through the PAs which have been declared under the FFPO and FO. Annex 01 has summarized the lands and the land ownership of the trail. The forest reserves located along the trail is summarized in Annex 02.

Since the lands belong to different entities having different interests, a common agreement in terms of trail management is must for smooth functioning of the trail. The agreement shall be initially on the trail maintenance, benefit sharing, trail financing and protection & conservation. The consent from the DWC and the DFC would be enough initially for the establishment of the trail within the lands belonging to them. When functioning the trail, the state agencies can go for an agreement for financing and benefit sharing. This can be practiced as a venture for private public partnership.

The trail has been used by local communities and the estate management for certain period of time. Therefore, it does not need major renovations or improvement. However, periodic maintenance of the trail path and cleaning is operative and the responsibility of such maintenance lies with the respective land managers.

Since the outsiders are not allowed to enter the tea estates or PAs without permission, the security issues would be minimal. However, the existing security arrangements will be further strengthen to ensure the visitor safety.

3.9. Service accreditation

The Pekoe Trail will be an unique program of NBT in Sri Lanka. The services associated with the trail should be maintained in internationally accepted standards. When the services are up to the standard there is a possibility to get the Pekoe Trail accredited by the agencies concern. Each visitor package could be accredited by local and foreign accrediting entities with a view to establish a high quality service. Green certification is also possible, since the Pekoe Trail will be a leading conservation partner of the central highland landscape. Managing the trail for advanced tourism would also be a qualification for green certification.

3.10. Proposed strategic partnerships

3.10.1. Other private sector entities

The innovative private sector led interventions that empower local communities, stimulate community based tourism businesses and deliver explicit conservation gains to the Pekoe Trail while maintaining authority over any action that happen within the Trail could be considered for a partnership. When working with private sector, especially tour operators and other service providers the legal aspect as such collaborations should be considered and where necessary enter in to a legal agreement or other effective means. Tourism services, promotional books, photos and films could be encouraged through the private sector.

3.10.2. Local communities

The local community members working in tourism (i.e. lodging, food, Guiding & Interpretation, local cultural shows, etc), can be a key partner of the program. They may need assistance from the trail management to improve their capacity on tourism related activities.

Being the partners of the Pekoe Trail, the community would invest their time and effort in supporting collaborative conservation activities in the Pekoe Trail and associated forested lands. The

best practices during tours or contributing time to support environmental education, reforestation or monitoring activities, etc. However, It's up to the trail operators to identify opportunities in which local community stakeholders can and should participate in conservation activities.

Security partnership can be made with local youngsters. They could be volunteer for the trail security when the trail will be recognized by them as a part of their livelihood. Also the possibilities are available to establish a pool of guardians at strategic locations for emergency response. A pool of trained naturalists can also be established within entrances to the trail.

It is also important to note that “community engagement has been recognized in the 2030 Agenda of the United Nation as a key to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

3.10.3. Tour operators

Managing tourism at the Pekoe Trail requires dealing successfully with the groups of tour operators, as they are vital for the development of NBT within the area. This would involve maintaining good working relations with the group for mutual cooperation and assistance while implementing regulations that has been established via guidelines and best practice expected of tour operators. This would include;

- Understanding of natural and cultural heritages offered at the sites and do they respect such features
- Sensitive to local lifestyles, customs and religious rituals and not to use them for harmful propaganda
- Using locally owned accommodations and food outlets for their tour groups
- Allow interaction between the trail administrators and tourist for information gathering on the trail
- Local services adequately compensated
- The arrangements made in advance, on-site and reliable

Any regulations should be legally enforceable to be effective. On the other hand trail administrators can offer advice on what type of tourist would appreciate the trail attractions. The highest attractions are suitable for promoting the tour and provide services from the trail that would make tour memorable.

3.10.4. Local tourist accommodations and food outlets

Making contacts with hotels and food outlets near the trail (Entrances and exits of stages of the trail) can be mutually beneficial. The trail administrators can refer tourists to these places for meals or overnight stays, while the hotels could have promotional materials to pass onto visitors about the trail.

3.10.5. Researchers, academics and professionals

Researchers, academics and professionals are important resource persons for training programs for the trail administrators and naturalists. Species identification, strategic communications, and hospitality requirements for tourist industry are key aspects that the trail administrators to be trained. Partnerships with Universities especially on designing visitor centers if any, hides, innovative camping sites and IT based developments, will be mutually benefited to the trail management and University students as well.

3.10.6. Support from other networks

At present coordination of activities within District/Divisional secretariat divisions is enabled through civil administrative structures. The District/Divisional Secretariat are dealing with tourism activities

of the relevant Districts or Divisions. Provincial Tourism Development Authorities are also working for development of tourism in the respective provinces thus they regularly hold training programs for home based tour accommodations, tour guides etc.

3.11. Role of Naturalist / Guides / guardians

The local naturalist/guides/guardians can bring Pekoe Trail to life with dynamic interpretative information and local natural and cultural history stories. Training local naturalists and guardians also helps to create much needed jobs within local communities and monitor visitor behavior and potential impacts. An intensive interpretative guide training course should take place with naturalist from the existing training facilities of the country.

4. Strategy and approach

The major scope of the study is to provide recommendations to the TMO to be a responsible partner with the conservation. It is further specified as;

- Provide recommendations on extensive and practical visitor management guidelines that optimize balance between visitation and Protected Area (PA) protection
- Provide recommendations on how the Destination Management Organization (DMO) and PA agencies (DWC,FD, CEA etc.) can collaborate on visitor management
- Provide recommendations for restricted activities and other conditions
- Provide recommendations on how the FFPO and FO can be leveraged to take disciplinary action against irresponsible visitors and how the DMO can support as a responsible and ethical partner
- Any other recommendations in the spirit of making the Pekoe Trail and its nature based experiences and examples of responsible and impactful model for monetizing PAs from tourism

The national polices, regulations, guidelines and strategic plans pertinent to the conservation and tourism management were consulted and taken into consideration. The project rationale was described by the project proponent of the trail (YouLead) along with the interventions therein. The project management concept proposed by the project proponent was taken into consideration to synchronize with the existing administration systems of tourism and conservation.

Land owners were interviewed to obtain their views on the trail and their readiness for accommodating the tourism within their premises. Field level managers of relevant estates, the regional wildlife and the forest officers who are responsible for field level administration were interviewed at the field itself. Consultative discussions were held with high level officers who are assigned with the duty of tourism management of the DWC and DFC at their offices. Those discussions were mainly focused on policy level collaborations in the Pekoe Trail management. The concerning issues of the key stakeholders including conservation community were grasped through a consultative meeting and one to one discussions. The leading conservation NGOs, biodiversity research groups and state agencies were consulted during the discussions.

Table 02: Field level discussions

Date	Name of the estate
20 May	Loolkadura, Grate Valley and Delthota
21 May	Hanthana
12 June	Thalawakele, St Clair, Crystal Farm, Deryclara, Yulifield, Holyrood
13 June	Stockholm and Mahanelu
30 Oct	Udaweriya, Glenanroe, Beauvais, Haputhale, Pitarathmale, Dabethanna and Nayabedda
20 Nov	Wanaraja, Bogawanthalawa, Kotiyagala and Bogawana

Table 03: Office based discussions

Date	Officers met and summary of the action
08 May	Meeting at YouLead office, Initial introduction of the Pekoe Trail program by the YouLead
12 May	Discussion with the Field team of the Pekoe Trail program.
15 May	Initial discussion with the Director General, DWC
22 May	Initial discussion with the senior officers of the DFC
26 May	Discussion with conservation communities
31 May	Follow-up meeting of the conservation community discussion
21 June	Discussion with the Director, DWC
27 June	Discussion with Conservator of Forest, DFC
27 June	Discussion with YouLead
06 Oct	Discussion with Conservator of Forest, DFC
08 Nov	Discussion with CGF and other officers, DFC
16 Nov	Discussion with the Minister Wildlife and Forest Conservation

5. Key highlights

5.1 Policies

The Pekoe Trail is basically aiming the improvement and establishing unique tourism experiences in the country while enhancing the conservation of biodiversity. It is in line with all the key policies and legislation on conservation and tourism that have been enacted within the country. Furthermore, establishing the Pekoe Trail is important for the economic and social development of the local community and the country as well. There by the Pekoe Trail supports directly to the TDP of the country. Exposing the wilderness experiences of the trail while ensuring the conservation and benefit to the present and future directly supports the NWCP. Tourism has been identified as a strategy for wildlife conservation. The Pekoe Trail is coming into function with biodiversity conservation and the local community supports the FSMP too. Provisions are available to recognize the area outside the PAs as ESAs through the findings of Biodiversity Survey that are being conducted under the the project. Recognizing the area as ESA will not directly affect the functions of the trail, but will lead to pay additional attention to facilitate to protect such areas for their long term conservation upon the recommendations of the survey. Thereby, the Pekoe Trail directly support the Environment Sensitive Area Policy of the country. The existing policies relevant to the Pekoe Trail are summarized in Annex 03 for details.

5.2 Legislation

Protection of wildlife and wildlife habitats along the Pekoe Trail is falling under the provisions of FFPO. Collecting and keeping wildlife and/or a part of them within the premises of any one or in their custody and destroying or disturbing any of wildlife or their habitat are liable to be fined under the ordinance. Also, staying within the premises of a national reserve, is restricted without permission from the Director General (DG) of the DWC. Under such provision, entrance and staying within the HPNP that is a segment of the Pekoe Trail, needs permission from the DG of the DWC. Similarly entering and staying within FR are controlled under the provisions of the FO. Therefore, permissions is required to enter and stay in FRs within the Pekoe trail is passing through, from the Conservator General of Forest (CGF).

Hanthana, The segment located within first stage of the trail in Kandy District has been declared as a EPA under the provisions of NEA. An important feature of this act is its ability to make regulations to prohibit, restrict, and approve certain types of activities within such areas. Taking into account the management of the Hanthana section of the Pekoe Trail, directly influence by the NEA . Therefore, the consent from Hanthana EPA management committee needs to be obtained. Annex 04 has summarized the existing legislation in relation to the conservation and tourism management of the country.

5.3 Existing Guidelines

A specific visitor guidelines, regulations and ethics for wildlife tourism have been formulated and practiced by the DWC. The DG of the DWC grants permits under specific terms and conditions to the visitors to stay within a national park. The visitors are abide by the terms and conditions when they obtain a permit to stay in a national park. The DFC has also drafted an operational guidelines for tourism within the forest reserves. It includes the guidelines for tracking, hiking, camping, accommodations and even for bird watching etc. It has also emphasized the need of the enhancement of community benefits out of conservation and forest management.

The guidelines for visitor accommodations, tourist facilities and services, travel agents, tour operators and tour crews have been developed by the SLTDA. These could be taken as the minimum standards of the services that have been planned to be established along the trail. The Pekoe Trail would directly help to fill the gaps identified by the Tourism Strategic Plan (TSP) of the country that has

been developed for the fulfillment of the achievement of tourism sector targets 2025. The gaps identified by the TSP i.e. a). need to build a more resilient tourism industry, b). need for holistic positioning, branding and marketing, c). need for inclusive and equal opportunity creation and d). need for institutional improvement with better coordination and regulation have also been recognized by the Pekoe Trail.

5.4. Management plans of PAs

Under the existing management plan of the HPNP, the tourism activities including walking, hiking and night stay are allowed. The Diagama entrance of the HPNP that has been identified by the Pekoe Trail as a part of the trail has been recognized as a visitor path recently by the DWC. Thangamale sanctuary which is also a part of the trail has not been opened for visitors. Allowing tourism within a sanctuary would not be an issue. However, obtaining permission from the DG of DWC to practice tourism within the sanctuary is advisable.

In terms of Forestry Management plans, the DFC is in the process of developing management plans for the forest reserves located within the trail. The tourism plans will be a sub plan of the management plan. According to DFC officers, tourism management sub plans will be developed for the forest protected areas as an interim arrangement for establishment of the trail. However, with the permission of CGF the tourism could be allowed through the identified forest reserves.

The tourism management guidelines established by the DWC and DFC are summarized in Annex 05.

5.5 The Carrying Capacity

The United Nations World Tourist Organization has defined Tourism Carrying Capacity as “The maximum number of persons that could visit a location within a given period, such that local environmental, physical, economic, and socio-cultural characteristics are not compromised, and there is no reduction of tourist satisfaction”⁷.

The carrying capacity is conventionally defined as the number of visitors an area can sustain without degrading natural resources and visitor experiences. However, newer the definitions of carrying capacity for PAs such as National Parks and Wilderness Area, centre on acceptability of natural resources and human impacts of visitation, and consider bio-physical characteristics of a PA (soil, Topography and vegetation) social factors (location and mode of travel, seasons of use, visitor group size, and behavior of visitors) and management policies (visitor use restrictions) as more important determinants of carrying capacity than the visitor number⁸.

Person Day per Year Capacity Standard; This uses a capacity standard which is simply Person Days (12 Hours) per year in the park based on the People At One Time (PAOT) daily capacity, in other words, there would be a limit on the number of people allowed into a particular wilderness on any given day. The intent would be to provide to control over the peak use period that result in the creation of new sites and/or larger sites. The capacity standard is based on used data gathered from each wilderness in question⁹.

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is a system for classifying and managing the areas according to the recreational opportunities and experiences they provide or for which they are suited.

⁷ UNWTO, 1999, Global code of ethics for tourism , Proc of Thirteenth session of General Assembly, Santiago, Chile.

⁸ Prato, T. (2001), Modelling carrying capacity for national park, Ecological Economics39 (2001)

⁹ Cannon, K. and Rowan, M. (1980) Wilderness resource protection environment assessment.

based on three criteria; physical setting, social setting, and managerial setting¹⁰. Other techniques developed recently are based on Limits of Acceptable Changes (LAC), where the question asked is “what natural conditions are desired here?”. The LAC approach involves opportunity classes for wilderness areas, leading to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS).

Meeting the challenge of carrying capacity assessments requires “defensible quantitative procedures for assessing and compiling with bio-physical and social carrying capacities” None of these was feasible during the period of this assessment since the supportive information is not available. The carrying capacity for each stage of the trail could be determined after the trail is functioned for a certain period when required data will be sufficient.

5.6 Discussion with estate managers

According to the estate management, the trail is currently being used by the visitors, but occasionally. A system has to be established to regulate the visitor activities and a systems for financing and benefit sharing. When a proper system is established, the estate management is ready to undertake the responsibilities of the maintenance and management of the trail. However, assistance is required for them to develop suitable tourism packages. The Pekoe Trail management may coordinate such developments. This may come under the tourism development plan of the trail. When such tourism packages are developed, it can be marketed separately by the estates themselves but under the Pekoe trail umbrella. However, it is important that the service of the packages should be tally with the standards that shall be accredited as the Pekoe Trail services. When managing such services up to the standards, a Green Certification for Pekoe Trail is also possible.

As per the observations of the estate managers, there is no specific security issue along the trail when passing through the areas that have been managed intensively. But in the areas where the management and human activities are less, there would be a security issue. Therefore, a system needs to be established to ensure the safeguarding of the visitors. This could include the strengthening of existing security mechanism of the estates and strengthening the connections and collaboration with local police stations. A mechanism to deploy local youngsters as guardians or naturalists would also help to overcome potential security issues.

The officers of the estates are not much familiar with tourism management as their mandate is different from NBT. Therefore, it is recommended to launch a system to train the selected persons from estate community especially on tourism destination development, nature based tourism and its implementation, trail maintenance, visitor hospitality, guiding and interpretation and so on. The trail management could coordinate such training with the existing training opportunities of the country. Selected persons of the local community could also be trained on guiding and interpretation, hospitality, languages, rescue operations, first aid, emergency response and so on. The task could gradually be implemented with the boosting of the tourism.

According to the officers, the poor community will have an opportunity to earn extra money by providing services or by selling their own produces to the visitors. A good market place is anticipated to showcase their traditional cultural practices and events too. In addition to the economic benefits, the estate managers visualized the improvement of living condition of the estate community with the improvement in visitations.

¹⁰ Marlene, T. and Finley, M.T. (1990) McDonald Forest, A case study in the use of the recreation opportunity spectrum planning framework in the near urban forest, MSc theses submitted to Oregon Stat University.

Tourists as well as the residents are inconvenienced when passing the line rooms of the estates. This often creates an unfavorable impression on the living conditions of the estate people. Moreover, some people may beg for money from tourists. This is truly a negative social impact to the society. To avoid this situation, it would be appropriate to avoid these line rooms and to get an early understanding, it is advisable to post the living conditions of the estate people, on the Pekoe Trail website.

The managers have highlighted the need of warning signage at the places where any risky situation is possible. Visitors should be encouraged to strictly comply with the warning signage and not to breach the rules which may result in causing injuries or severe impact. As such, taking alcohol and smoking while walking along the trail specially within the forested habitats should be strictly controlled. Shouting and playing musical instruments along the trail would not be allowed. Pets should strictly not be allowed.

If any wild animal is encountered while walking, visitors are advised to keep a sufficient distance from the animal. Chasing or attempting to catch the animals is not allowed. Uprooting plants and collecting tree or tree branches in live or dead is also not allowed.

The warning and advice should also include the potential risk in sudden weather changes and heavy rains. In case of any sudden change in weather, it is strongly advisable to return to the nearest possible rescue place. Emergency Response Mechanism (ERM) is to be established specially at vulnerable areas.

With the increment in the number of visitors, social and cultural impacts could be anticipated. Therefore, a system on continuous impact assessment and a GRM need to be established at the initial stages of the trail management.

5.7 Discussions with YouLead

According to the YouLead administration, the trail path has already been established and no further improvement will be carried out. However, the required maintenance will be done for easy walking. The facilities including washrooms and toilet, resting areas, necessary trail renovations will be identified by the Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau (CECB) and they will make recommendation to improve such facilities. It would follow the designing guidelines for tourism accommodation and facilities published by the SLTDA to maintain minimum standards .

The trail is segmented into 22 stages and each stage would be nearly 8-14km long. Twenty three (23) townships have been identified as trail hubs, expecting visitors to stay there after walking through one or few stages of the trail. Accommodation and other facilities including banking, health care, transport and market place to buy basic commodities is a must within such tourism hubs¹¹.

Youngsters from the local community could be trained as naturalist/guides of the Pekoe Trail. They need to be trained by a recognized training institute with extensive field practices. The wildlife and forestry sector curricula needs to be included in the training modules and a possibility to accept the services of such guides by the DWC and DFC to be sorted out. Establishing a pool of trained/registered guides would fulfill the future demands too.

For the administration and management of the Pekoe Trail, a charity based organization shall be established. The land owners of the trail will be in a Governing Board which would make policy

¹¹ Personal discussion with field officers of the estate sector and villagers

level decisions and major directives of the trail management. The trail marketing, finance and operations will be under the responsibility of a unit established under the Board. The estate managers as the persons with the responsibility of ground level implementation of the trail management activities, would be guided and instructed by the unit. PA managers also should be in this circle as the persons with the responsibility of ground level implementation of tourism activities within the PAs. The state institutions that have been authorized for protected area management, biodiversity conservation and tourism will be in advisory level of the system. However, since the entire trail is owned by different entities possessed with different disciplines and interests, a strong consultation is required to bring the system into practice. Composition of the each layer of the governance structure, their responsibilities and the legality of the structure to make decisions are required to be sorted out by having strong-full consultations and through in-depth situation assessments.

The biodiversity survey that is being conducted under the project would help to identify the sensitive habitats for important fauna species, animal movement paths and unique micro habitats etc. Prior to the formal establishment of the trail, it needs to recognize such sensitive habitats and natural areas located along the trail. Specific guidance for the protection of such locations needs to be clearly exhibited. Apart from that, the direction signage with the distance to the next destination and location/stage names are to be fixed at each and every junction of the route. The signage with basic instructions to the visitors need to be erected with location information at the each entrance. This will be an assistance especially to the self guided visitors.

5.8 Discussion with DWC and DFC

The DG of the DWC has agreed to recognize the Diagama trail of the HPNP and Thangamale Sanctuary as sections of the Pekoe Trail. The DWC wishes to improve the existing accommodation facilities of the HPNP as a trail hub. They are willing to obtain services from the local community to for the purpose of providing food and meals for the visitors. The general visitor management guidelines and regulations will be applied to the Pekoe trail visitors as well, when they are within the park.

Tourism can be practiced within the forest reserves when the activities have been scheduled in a management plan and endorsed by the CGF. The DFC is ready to establish a mechanism for tourism at the forest reserve in which the trail is passing. However, it has been emphasized that an accountable financial system and a benefit sharing mechanism needs to be established under the existing legal framework of the country.

5.9 Consultative meeting with conservation community

A consultative discussion was held with the leading conservation communities of the country to grasp their views and suggestions on the Pekoe Trail program. Concerns and issues raised by the the participants at the consultative meetings are summarized below.

5.9.1 The Trail Management Organization (TMO)

The plantation companies who own nearly 80% of the lands through which the trail goes could be a decision making level at the organization. The suggestion of the conservation community was, the representatives from the main government bodies; DWC, DFC, CEA and any others also need to be on board at the decision making level of the trail management. The positions and level of the structure of the TMO need to be clearly set out. The TMO should be in an existing legal framework of the country.

Key responsibilities of the DMO are convening of meetings, holding discussions, coordination with land owners, monitoring and reporting on the maintenance, pricing and financial management,

benefit sharing, issuing trail passes, maintenance of sign boards and signage, trail marketing, maintenance of digital platform on trail administration, training and awareness for service providers, naturalists/guides and local communities, and coordination with enforcement agencies on conservation aspects.

The visitor management guidelines and regulations needs strictly be followed. When the visitors are in village, township or any public places, general visitor management guidelines could be applied. However, it is recommended that these guidelines and regulations should not be applied if it is a harassment for the visitors. Therefore, all the relevant information with the applicable laws, regulations and guidelines should be readily available and the visitors shall be made aware on such laws in advance.

5.9.2 The activities that are currently being practiced

It is observed that the land owners manage the activities within their own lands. All the activities other than the traditional practices need permission from the respective land owners. Specific activities such as conducting research or practicing traditional cultural events are also permitted by the relevant respective agencies. The mechanism that is currently being adopted to manage such activities remains same without any changes due to the establishment of Pekoe Trail.

5.9.3 Environment Sensitive Areas

The biodiversity survey that is being conducted under the program, shall identify the sensitive habitats/sites located along the trail. Based on the findings, special attention will be drawn to manage the visitors within such areas and recommendations can be made for managing the sites under the ESA policy. Signage is to be erected at such locations with site-specific information and guidelines.

5.9.4 Over visitation and controlling misbehavior

The trail could be formally established as a guided trail. Self guided visitation and walking alone shall be discourage initially. Improper and misbehavior actions of the visitors could be controlled by accompanying a trained guide/naturalist.

A system for continuous monitoring of the visitation and visitor impacts needs to be established. By reviewing the data on the impact of visitors, the number of visitors that can be accommodated (Carrying Capacity) in the trail or in a particular stage of the trail can be determined. This could be practiced every year and based on such information, the management organization can decide on the number of visitors that could be accommodated. It is also advisable to enter into an agreement among the land owners on the maximum number of visitors that the trail can handle at a time in a stage. This will help to manage the over visitation. But over the time there may be some pressure from outside to increase the number of tourists. Therefore, a carrying capacity assessment needs to be done each year using the visitor information and impact data and action must be taken with the agreement of all members of the organization.

Some trail segments are remotely located and isolated from human activities. Issues may arise with regard to security of the visitors in such locations. This problem arises especially regarding the safety of valuable equipment or money carrying by foreign tourists. In such cases, establishing the policing and an effective communication systems with local police is vital. In case where the the number of visitors are high, regular trail patrolling could be practiced by the relevant agencies. This could be facilitated by providing training, communication equipment and suitable uniform etc. The risk could be minimized when a trained tracker/naturalist/guardian is accompanied by the visitors. Therefore, it is recommended to encourage guided tracking especially for foreign visitors. For locals, the risk would not be that much high, but can not be ignored. Therefore, proper instructions should be given

to all the visitors at each entrance and warning signage to be erected frequently at suitable locations. Each visitor should be aware on the ERM system for any emergency response.

For the purpose of minimizing the impact to the natural habitats, it is recommended to limit the hours for walking in day time from 6.00 am to 6.00 pm. Issuing a Trail Pass could be a way of control visitations. However, this should be properly managed and authorized under the existing laws and regulations.

Annex 01 - Lands and the land ownership of the trail

Trail Stage	Stage Name	Province	District		Estate
1	Hanthana - Galaha	Central	Kandy	JEDB	Hanthana(Galaha Group)
2	Galaha - Lookandura	Central	Kandy	JEDB	Delthota(Galaha Group)
					Grate Valley (Galaha Group)
					Lulkandura/Loolecondera(Hewaheta Group)
3	Lookandura - Thawalantenna	Central	Kandy / Nuwaraeliya	Damro Plantations	Stellenburg Estate
					Glenoch Estate
4	Thawalantenna - Kumbaloluwa	Central	Nuwaraeliya	Private Estate	
5	Kumbaloluwa - Watagoda	Central	Nuwaraeliya	Aitken Spence - Elpitiya PLC	Meddakumbura Estate
6	Watagoda - Kotagala	Central	Nuwara Eliya	Hayleys-Thalawakale PLC	Watagoda Estate
				Hayleys-Thalawakale PLC	Holyrood Estate
				Arpico - Maskeliya PLC	Thalawakale Estate
				Arpico - Maskeliya PLC	St. Clair Estate
				Lankem - Kotagala PLC	Derryclare Estate
7	Kotagala - Norwood	Central	Nuwara Eliya	Lankem - Kotagala PLC	Drayton Estate
				Lankem - Kotagala PLC	Chrystlers Farm Estate
				Hayleys-Kelanivalley Plantation PLC	Battalgalla Estate
				Lankem - Kotagala PLC	Yulliefield Estate
				G&G - Hatton PLC	Hatton Estate
				Bogawanthalawa PLC	Poyston Estate
				Bogawanthalawa	Wanaraja Estate

				PLC	
8	Norwood - Bogawantalawa	Central	Nuwara Eliya	Bogawantalawa PLC	Norwood Estate
				Hayleys - Horana Plantation	Stockholm Estate
				Hayleys - Horana Plantation	Mahanelu Estate
				Bogawantalawa PLC	Bogawantalawa Estate
				Bogawantalawa PLC	Kotiyagalla Estate
				Madulsima Plantations	Kew Estate
				Madulsima Plantations	Venture Estate
9	Bogawantalawa - Dayagama	Central	Nuwaraeliya	Bogawantalawa PLC	Bogawana Estate
				Bogawantalawa PLC	Kotiyagalla Estate
				Lankem - Agarapathana Plantations	Sandringham Estate
10	Dayagama - Horton Plains	Central	Nuwaraeliya	Lankem - Agarapathana Plantations	Dayagama West Estate
					Dayagama East Estate
				Department of Wildlife	Horton Plains
11	Horton Plains - Udaweriyaya	Central / Uva	Nuwaraeliya / Badulla	Lankem - Agarapathana Plantations	Lyburn Estate
				Lankem - Agarapathana Plantations	Ohiya Estate
12	Udaweriyaya - Haputhale	Uva	Badulla	Railways Department	Idalgashinna
				Department of Wildlife	Thangamale Sanctuary
				Lankem - Agarapathana PLC	Upper Ohiya Estate
				Lankem - Uva PLC	Udaveria Estate
				Lankem - Uva PLC	Glenanroe Tea Estate
				Lankem - Uva PLC	Beauvais Estate
				Lankem - Uva PLC	Golconda Estate
13	Haputhale - St. Catherine	Uva	Badulla	Private Tea Estate	Greenfield Estate
				Lankem - Uva PLC	Dambathenna Estate
				Lankem - Uva PLC	Pitarathmali Estate

				Lankem -Uva PLC	Nayabedda Estate
				Department of Forests	Kinigama Forest Reserves
14	St. Catherine - Makulella	Uva	Badulla	Arpico - Maskeliya Plantation	Liyangahawela Estate
15	Makulella - Ella	Uva	Badulla	Forestry Department	Ella Reserve Forest
				Railways Department	Kithalella
16	Ella - Demodara	Uva	Badulla	Railways Department	Ella
				Railways Department	Nine Arch bridge
				Railways Department	Demodara
				Finlays Tea Estate Lanka PLC	Demodara Estate
17	Demodara - Haliela	Uva	Badulla	Malwatte Valley Plantations (Finlays)	Attampitiya Tea Estate
18	Haliela - Ettampitiya	Uva	Badulla	Malwatte Valley Plantations (Finlays)	Dickwella Estate
19	Ettampitiya - Loonuwatta	Uva	Badulla	Finlays Tea Estate - PLC	Waldemar tea estate
20	Loonuwatta - Udupussalawa	Uva/central	Badulla / Nuwaraeliya	Finlays Tea Estate - PLC	Annick Tea Estate
					Downside Estate
					Loonuwatta Estate
					Warallahinna Estate
					Kondagala Estate
					Waldemar Group
					Gordon Tea Estate
21	Udupussalawa - Kandapola	Uva/central	Badulla/Nuwaraeliya	Finlays Tea Estate - PLC	Heritance Tea Estate
					St Margaret
					Concordia Tea Estate
					Waldemar Group
					Oulton Estate
					Amherst Estate
					Kadawatte Estate
					Gracelyn Estate
Hethersett Estate					

					Goatfell Estate
					Alnwreck
22	Kandapola - Nuwara Eliya		Nuwaraeliya	Hayleys - Kelanivalley Plantations	Pedro Estate
				LOLC - Browns Plantations	Courtledge Estate
				LOLC - Browns Plantations	Park Estate

Annex 02 - Pekoe Trail Intersection Points and Distances of Forests Coming Under DFC

Trail Stage	Forest Name	Declared Type	Intersection ID	Distance (m)	Distance (km)
2	Lulkandura	CF	1	55	0.055
			2	20.2	0.020
			3	23.8	0.024
3	Piduruthalagala	CF	4	77.7	0.078
			5	37.6	0.038
			6	117	0.117
	Lulkandura	CF	7	181	0.181
			8	127	0.127
			9	219	0.219
	Kachchimale	TRF	10	456	0.456
			11	231	0.231
			12	274	0.274
4	Kikiliyamana	TRF	13	365	0.365
5	Kikiliyamana	TRF	14	133	0.133
9	Agra-bopath	CF	15	90	0.090
			17	1778	1.778
	Rilagala	TRF	16	118	0.118
11	Thotupalakanda	CF	18	1149	1.149
12	Welegama	CF	19	482	0.482
	Thotupalakanda	CF	20	619	0.619
			21	1236	1.236
13	Haputhale Park	TRF	22	625	0.625
			23	706	0.706
14	Liyangahawela	TRF	24	132	0.132
			25	209	0.209
15	Kinigama	RF	26	1698	1.698
			27	2222	2.222
21	Kandapola	CF	28	2731	2.731
Total Length (m)				16112.3	16.112

CF - Conservation Forest (Gazetted)

RF - Reserve Forest (Gazetted)

TRF - To Be Gazetted (Not Declared)

Annex 03 - Summary of policies in relation to the conservation and tourism

Policy	Summary of key relevance
Tourism Development Policy (TDP)	<p>The TDP (Draft) has recognized the tourism sector as an important strategy¹² for the economic development of the country. It has recognized a responsible use of natural resources and the fair involvement of local communities as essential component to ensure Sri Lanka to be a competitive quality tourism destination. It has been identified that trans-sectoral collaboration on tourism development as a requirement to ensure gaining benefits by all stakeholders. The TDP aims to provide an effective framework and the necessary impetus to enhance the structure of tourism's institutional frameworks, reform its regulatory frameworks, upgrade the information management process, and improve the market environment to drive a more sustainable, efficient and effective tourism development in the future. It has also been identified several conditions that should be met through integrated strategies such as participation in governance, responsibility towards cultural and natural assets and a resurgent, skilled and resilient private sector with world class destination and product development. The policy aims to offer numerous opportunities for strategic change in the sector such as increased efficiency, competitive wages, new promotion strategies, new tourism products and markets, climate and nature-conscious development, increased connectivity, and a more effective organization and transparent participation of the private sector. This will enhance the competitiveness of Sri Lanka as a tourism destination, while preserving its cultural and natural values.</p> <p>The concept and the proposed activities of the Pekoe Trail are in line with the TDP of the country. The policy recommendations will be fulfilled by the Pekoe Trail and there will be no any actions against the TDP.</p>
National Wildlife Conservation Policy	<p>The National Wildlife Conservation Policy (2000)¹³ has emphasized the sustainable use of wild species and the commitment of Government to conserve wildlife resources for the benefit of present and future in a transparent and equitable manner. It does so by linking together the activities, interests and perspectives of the people who use and benefit from wildlife resources with those of professional wildlife managers and scientists. It has recommended to define a strategy to implement this policy through Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan, supported by such legislative measures as may be necessary to achieve harmony and success among all those who seek to promote conservation and sustainable development in Sri Lanka.</p> <p>Among the key objectives of the National Wildlife Conservation</p>

¹² Tourism Development Policy of Sri Lanka (Draft), SLTDA, file:///C:/Users/L380/Desktop/Pekoe%20Trail/Supporting%20documents/Draft_National_Tourism_Policy_English_-_Uploaded.pdf

¹³ National wildlife policy 2000, http://env.gov.lk/web/images/downloads/policies/national_wildlife_policy.pdf

	<p>Policy are to conserve wildlife resources through protection, research, education, maintain ecological processes and life-sustaining systems, ensure sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits, arising from the direct and indirect use of wildlife resources for the benefit of present and future generation, and encourage the private sector and communities to join as a full partners in all aspects of the wildlife-conservation process.</p> <p>Tourism has been identified under the Wildlife Policy as a strategy for wildlife conservation. Pekoe Trail is coming into function with not only the tourism but with conservation. Ensuring the benefit to the local community from conservation will lead them to engage in conservation.</p>
<p>Forestry Sector Master Plan (FSMP)</p>	<p>The forestry sector master plan is currently being updated¹⁴ and it recognizes the Nature Based Tourism (NBT) as a cross cutting event for sustainable development in and around the forestry sector. Management plans for forest reserves should be developed and approved by the Conservator General of the Forest (CGF), then it will be a legal document for the management of such forest reserves. NBT plan will be a sub plan of the forest management plan.</p> <p>When passing down the benefits of the conservation to the local communities through the Pekoe Trail, they should be in line with the objectives of FSMP, thus ensure community benefits out of the conservation.</p>
<p>National Environment Policy</p>	<p>The National Environment Policy is aiming to promote sound management of the environment while balancing social and economic development needs by linking together the activities, interests and perspectives of different stakeholders with equitable sharing of benefits and costs¹⁵. It maintains the premises for alternative mechanisms to provide incentives while minimizing compliance costs to benefit the environment, the society and the economy of the country. It has emphasized the wise use and management of nature and natural resources bearing in mind that future generations have as much right to these resources as our own. The policy has recognized the impact of human activity individually and on the environment as a whole in relation to the four basic natural resources of land, water, atmosphere and biological diversity. The application of the National Environmental Policy has also focused on achieving the outcomes of Industry and Tourism within the country.</p>

¹⁴ Draft updates of Forestry sector master plan, DFC, 2023

¹⁵ National environment policy, CEA, <https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/node/3885#:~:text=The%20National%20Environmental%20Policy%20renews,sustainable%20development%20in%20Sri%20Lanka.>

<p>Environment Sensitive Area policy</p>	<p>Protected Areas (PA) are declared to conserve nature and biodiversity with its associated ecosystem services and cultural values, but there is a significant extent of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) outside the PAs across the country without an effective conservation and management framework. Accordingly, such areas which are identified as exceptionally specific areas for achieving specific outcomes to conserve biodiversity could be defined by this policy as ESAs. It is vital for the long-term conservation of biodiversity and services thereof to ensure ecological, economic and cultural benefits to the local community and as well as to the nation and global community as a whole. These areas are essential to conserve, manage and ensure the well-being of the human and the environment, resilience communities and sustainable development. This policy provides a suitable mechanism to identify the sensitive land parcels, management models and novel economic models that enable continuous use of services by the nation.</p> <p>The sensitive areas located outside the PAs and along the Pekoe trail could be identified by the biodiversity survey and the recommendations for the conservation of such areas can be made under the ESA policy.</p>
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Annex 04 - Summary of the legislation which directly and indirectly influence the Pekoe Trail

<p>Tourism Act No 38 of 2005 which came into effect in October 2007¹⁶</p>	<p>Tourism development is currently governed by guidelines, frameworks, and codes of the Tourism Act No 38 of 2005 which came into effect in October 2007. Under the provision of this Act, regulations can be made prescribing the tourist services, commercial and other activities which may be carried out within an area declared in terms of subsection (1) of the Act. Such areas may include lists of facilities and places of historical or environmental interest which have tourist attractions. The regulations and guidelines in terms of tourism and the management thereof within such area can be made by the competent authority.</p>
<p>Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (FFPO)¹⁷</p>	<p>The declaration and management of PAs has been regulated under the provisions of the FFPO. In addition, this enactment plays a pivotal role in affording protection to indigenous species of animals and plants and their habitats even they are located outside PAs. Protection of wildlife and wildlife habitats along the Pekoe Trail is falling under the provisions of FFPO. However, the Director General of the DWC as the custodian of the implementation of FFPO can make regulations to the activities within the PAs even outside the PAs in the context of protection and management of wildlife and their habitats. Tourism is the only activity that has been identified and practiced so far for enhancing tangible benefit of the wildlife conservation. Therefore, tourism in relation to the wildlife and wildlife recreation is allowed.</p>
<p>Forest Ordinance (FO)¹⁸</p>	<p>Forest Ordinance is also provisioning the protection of forested lands and regulating their management. Conservator General of the Forest (CGF) as the custodian of the implementation of FO can make regulations for forest management thus NBT has been recognized and regulated by the CGF as a key strategy of local livelihood development and to improve the relationship between local community and forest management authorities. Since the Pekoe Trail goes through several forest reserves, legislation under the FO will directly influence its management.</p>
<p>The National Heritage Wilderness areas Act No 03 of 1988¹⁹</p>	<p>The Act is to provide protection to habitats that are important in terms of biodiversity, as well as for other aspects such as aesthetic value, areas with geologically and hydro logically important. The protection provided to an area declared under this act permits the entry into such areas and allows only non-extractive uses such as tourism and recreation. It has the potential to afford much needed</p>

¹⁶ Tourism act 38, 2005, <https://www.slttda.gov.lk/storage/documents/705ea88c529f9a0eb40cb7e6d34389ed.pdf>

¹⁷ Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance, 1937, <http://citizenslanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Fauna-and-Flora-Protection-Ordinance-No-02-of-1937-E.pdf> and amended act 22, 2009 https://stepbysteptrade.lk/media/ordinanceeng_1.pdf

¹⁸ Forest Conservation Ordinance, 1908, citizenslanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Forest-Ordinance-No-16-of-1907-E.pdf, Amendment 2009, <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/srl102123.pdf>

¹⁹ National Heritage and Wilderness Area act, 1988, <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/srl28858.pdf>

	protection to places that have high biodiversity value.
The National Environmental Act, No.47 of 1980²⁰	<p>The intention of this enactment is to provide for the protection, management and enhancement of the environment and for the prevention, abatement and control of pollution. The main activity under this act is the protection of physical environment through a process of licensing by regulating the discharge of substances that may cause pollution. The legislation on environmental management has been enacted under the act for management and conservation of natural resources, thus the management and conservation of fisheries, wildlife, forestry and soil has been regulated under the provisions. Several gazette notifications for many activities such as issue of environment protection license for emission or disposal of waste, have also been issued under the Act²¹.</p> <p>In addition, provisions in this act can designate areas as Environmental Protection Areas (EPA) where the biodiversity value of a particular area merits conservation. An important feature of this act is its ability to make regulations to prohibit, restrict, and approve certain types of activities within such areas. Taking into account the management of Pekoe Trail, the stage 1 of the trail is passing through Hanthana EPA and the provisions of the act directly influence the trail management.</p>
Antiquities Ordinance No 24 of 1998²²	The ordinance indirectly supports biodiversity conservation through the declaration of archaeological reserves which may serve as habitats for species. This ordinance and its amendments provides for the Director General of Archaeology to declare certain areas as Archaeological Reserves, where encroachment of any kind is prohibited. It also empowers the Director General of Archaeology to conduct an Archaeological Impact Assessment for the areas that may be affected by development, industrial or other projects proposed by anyone and to implement any mitigation measures required.
Plant Protection Act No. 35 of 1999²³	This act provides for the protection of wild plants, seeds and prevention of plant diseases and control the introduction of new plant species. The intention is to protect native and agricultural species from the diseases and any form of attacks from introduced herbivorous invertebrates. To a certain extent, this Act can control the entry of invasive alien species.
New Municipal Councils Ordinance No. 29 of 1947 (as amended). Act No 34 of 2014²⁴	The Municipal Council Act has a direct bearing on solid waste and water pollution. This Ordinance provides for the establishment of Municipal Councils and outlines their powers, duties and

²⁰ National Environment Act, 47 of 1980, <https://www.cea.lk/web/images/pdf/acts/act47-80.pdf>

²¹ <https://www.cea.lk/web/en/acts-regulations>

²² Antiquities Ordinance (Amended) No 24 of 1998, <http://citizenslanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Antiquities-Amendment-Act-No-24-Of-1998-E.pdf>

²³ Plant Protection Act 35 of 1999, https://www.customs.gov.lk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/PLANT_PROTECTION_ACT_No._35_OF_1999.pdf

²⁴ <http://citizenslanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Municipal-Councils-Amendment-Act-No-34-of-2014-E.pdf>

	<p>responsibilities in relation to the built environment and matters such as waste disposal and sanitation. Waste and sanitary management of the Pekoe trail and the proposed tourism hubs are directly under the purview of respective Municipal Council.</p>
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Annex 05 - The tourism management guidelines established by the state agencies

<p>The tourism management Guidelines</p>	<p>DWC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The permit- holder / permit - holders shall be accompanied throughout his/their stay in the National park by an officer nominated for that purpose by the game ranger or the officer -in - charge of the national park. The permit-holder / permit - holders shall give the officer so nominated accommodation, free of charge in the vehicle used by him/ them. 2. Where two or more persons are named as the permit-holders each such person shall be jointly and severally responsible for the due and proper observance of the ordinance, the regulations made there under and these conditions. 3. Permit- holder / permit - holders shall before entering the national park insert in the space provided for the purpose in the permit, the name of every person to be introduced by him/them under the authority of this permit as a guide, chauffeur, carter, servant or laborer. Any such person found within the national park shall, if his name has not already been, entered on the permit be liable to be ordered to leave the national park by any officer of the Department of Wildlife conservation. 4. The permit- holder / permit - holders and the persons and animal authorized to be introduced by him/them shall not enter the national park before 5.00 am or after 6 pm on the first date or remain therein after 6.30 pm on the second date specified on the face of this permit. Where this permit is valid for on e day only. The aforesaid persons and animals shall not enter the national park before 5.00 am or after 6.00 pm or remain therein after 6.30 pm on that date. 5. The permit- holder / permit - holders shall not take any automatic military firearms, any rifle of less than 30 bore, any shot gun of less than 16 bore, or any air gun or air rifle into the National Park. 6. The permit-holder/permit-holders or any person mentioned in this permit shall not travel in the National Park, on foot or by vehicle, between the hours of 6.30 p.m. and 5 a.m. 7. The permit-holder/permit-holders or any person mentioned in this permit shall not while traveling. Within the National park on foot or by vehicle discharge any firearm, play and musical instrument, sing, shout, clap or make any noise which is likely to disturb any animal. 8. The permit- holder/permit-holders and the persons and animals authorized to be introduced by him/them under this permit shall not enter any part of the National park which has been closed on the orders of the warden. 9. The permit- holder / permit - holders shall not , without the previous approval of the warden remove from the national park any part of any animal or any object of geological, prehistoric, archaeological, historical, or other scientific interest.
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	<p>10. The permit- holder / permit - holders shall not camp at night in the national park under tents or shelters or in the open except with the written approval of the warden. If the permit- holder / permit - holders has/have not obtained such written approval or has/have not been allotted accommodation for one or more nights at a circuit bungalow within the National park, this permit shall be valid for one day only and he/ they, the persons and animals authorized to be introduced by him/ them shall not remain in the national park after 6.30 pm on the day.</p> <p>11. The permit- holder / permit - holders or any person mentioned in this permit shall not, while traveling along any road, track or path in the national park on foot or by vehicle, use any artificial light for any purpose other than that of illuminating such road, track or path and such light shall not be used except between the hours of 5.00am and 6.00am and 6.00pm and 6.30pm</p> <p>12. The permit- holder / permit - holders and the persons mentioned in this permit shall obey such direction given to him / them by any officer of the Department of Wildlife conservation as may be considered necessary or desirable by that officer for the safety of visitors or in the interests of the fauna.</p> <p>13. The permit- holder / permit - holders shall produce this permit whenever called upon to do so by any officer of the Department of Wildlife conservation.</p> <p>14. In the event of this permit being revoked under section 54 of the ordinance, and on the permit- holder or any one of the permit - holders being informed of such revocation he / they shall return this permit to the order of the officer who issued it and shall not remain within the national park longer than is reasonable necessary for making preparations for his/ their departure and for departing outside the limits of the national park.</p>
<p>DFC tracking Guidelines</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use only the demarcated and guided tracks and trails for nature observation 2. It is advisable to keep information on alternative routes, location of the FD office, contact details for emergencies. 3. It is advisable to be at least 2 persons in a group, not to walk alone in rural forested areas. 4. Natural sites located along the trail needs to be maintained without any disturbances. 5. Fire is allowed only within prescribed sites. 6. Natural water sources and streams should be kept clean without any foreign matter. 7. Walking is allowed only along the trail without harming its natural vegetation. 8. Feeding wild animals and disturbing their natural habitat is not allowed. 9. Cutting, digging and/or harming the soil and earth is not allowed. 10. Respect the rights of other visitors, shouting and rushing could harm them and the nature. 11. Keep the basic stuff of First- Aids in case of any emergency. 12. Alternative routes or short cuts will miss your destination and distracted/confused.

	<p>13. Walking along the streams, bathing, and playing in natural water bodies are not allowed.</p> <p>14. Be concern on your health and energy that need to pass the entire trail segment.</p> <p>15. Be aware of the bees, insects, leeches and other small animals that could harm you.</p> <p>16. Wear suitable cloth/dress, shoes and hat to cover the body to avoid direct insect bite. A camouflage dress is recommended.</p> <p>17. It is advisable to carry limited stuff in your backpack, be ensure the availability of an extra cloth, enough water, short-eats for quick energy, note book & pen, rain-coat and first-aid kit.</p> <p>18. Ensure you are in right track by using mobile app on tracking and observing prominent land marks available along the trail.</p> <p>19. Be aware of the warning signs located along the trail.</p> <p>20. Be aware of sudden weather changes, heavy rains may cause accidental flooding and land slides. In such cases, it is strongly advisable to return to the nearest safer site without proceeding further.</p> <p>21. Eating wild fruits, mushrooms, and drinking of water from streams located within the forest would make you ill and uncomfortable.</p> <p>22. Ask assistance in any emergency by calling the nearest office or the rescue team located nearby.</p> <p>23. Smoking or using strong fragrant are not advisable when you are in a forest.</p> <p>24. Staying under a tree, within a bush, on grassland or accumulated leaf litter could be subjected to animal attack.</p> <p>25. Throwing away empty boxes, bottles, plastic bags, food wrappers or tit bits along the trail is not allowed.</p>
<p>SLTDA tourism guidelines and summery of TSP</p>	<p>Under the Sri Lanka tourism operational guidelines with health protocols 2020²⁵ developed by the SLTDA, the procedures and practices of the entry procedure to the country, procedure at the Air Port, the Airport transfers and travel options within the country are summarized. The guidelines for visitor accommodations, tourist facilities and services, travel agents, tour operators and tour crews have also been developed by the SLTDA. It also includes the responsibility of security personnel and tourist police in the management of tourism in the country.</p> <p>Instructions and procedures that need to be followed by the foreign visitors in each of the steps are available in these guidelines. Guidelines for Tourist-Friendly Eating Places are also available for managing food and eating facilities for the visitors²⁶. Guidelines for guides²⁷, and recommendation for healthy visitor operation in the country has been formulated and published as general tourism management guidelines.</p>
<p>Tourism Strategic Plan (TSP) 2017-2020</p>	<p>Tourism Development Strategy for 2011-2016 has included environmental, social, cultural, economic, institutional, and promotional components that aligned with the National Development Agenda and the Tourism Strategic Plan (TSP) 2017-2020. It has been developed as a framework to help move towards Sri Lanka’s Tourism Vision 2025. The TSP has recognized four major gaps; 1. Need to build a more Resilient tourism industry, 2. Need for holistic</p>

²⁵ https://www.srilanka.travel/pdf/SL_Tourism_Operational_Guidelines.pdf

²⁶ https://sltta.gov.lk/storage/common_media/5286efc781c665efb538490bd814a44a.pdf

²⁷ <https://www.srilankatourismalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Sri-Lanka-Tourism-tour-guides-infographic.pdf>

positioning, branding and marketing, 3. Need for inclusive and equal opportunity creation and 4. Need for institutional improvement with better coordination and regulation that to be fulfilled for the achievement of 2025 target of the tourism sector of the country. Establishing the Pekoe Trail would directly help to fill these gaps to a certain extent.

The TSP has recognized 10 pillars of concepts for tourism development and among them, a majority is directly relevant to the trail concept and would bring into action by the development of Pekoe Trail i.e. Friendly, Non-aligned, Foreign Policy, an administration free from corruption, new constitution that fulfills the people's wishes, people-centric economic development, technology based society, development of physical resources and sustainable environmental management. Out of the 17 activities that have been recommended by the TSP; Identify new attractions in the country for foreign tourists, set up tourist service centers at the road junctions connecting main tourist cities, introduce e-based facilities for reservation of hotels, transport, guides, domestic air tickets and admission card (single booking software system and electronic gate system), initiate a strategic marketing and advertising programme to promote tourism, initiate an enabling environment for local performers to attract tourists, develop household related and community-based tourism, register, train and certify all tourists guides and drivers to prevent unnecessary harassment of tourists, ensure security and protection for the tourists and establish tourist police service near tourist centers are the activities that directly and indirectly relevant to the development of Pekoe Trail.