

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

**GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNITION AS AN APPROVED
TOUR OPERATOR**

[With effect from 27.08.2007]

1. The aims and objectives of the scheme for recognition of Tour Operator are to encourage quality standard and service in this category so as to promote tourism in India. This is a voluntary scheme open to all bonafide tour operators to bring them in organized sector.
2. **Definition:** A tour operator is one which makes arrangements for transport, accommodation, sight seeing, entertainment and other tourism related services for tourists.
3. Applications for **recognition** shall be addressed to the Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Transport Bhawan, 1, Parliament Street, New Delhi- 110 001.
4. The **recognition** as an approved Tour Operator shall be granted by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, New Delhi initially, **for five years**, based on the **Inspection Report / Recommendations** of a Committee comprising of **concerned Regional Director and a member of IATO**.
5. Applications for **renewal/extension** shall be addressed to the Regional Director of the concerned region as per the following addresses:-
 - a) The Regional Director (East), India Tourism, "Embassy", 4, Shakespeare Sarani, Kolkata – 700 071, West Bengal.
 - b) The Regional Director (West), India Tourism, 123, M. Karve Road, Opp. Church Gate, Mumbai – 400 020, Maharashtra.
 - c) The Regional Director (North), India Tourism, 88 – Janpath, New Delhi 110 001.
 - d) The Regional Director (South), India Tourism, 154, Anna Salai, Chennai – 600 002, Tamil Nadu.
 - e) The Regional Director (North – East), India Tourism, Amarawati Path, (Opposite Dispur Post Office), Christian Basti, G. S. Road, Guwahati – 781 006, Assam.
6. The **renewal / extension** thereafter shall be granted **for five years** after **Inspection conducted by a Committee comprising of concerned Regional Director and a member of IATO**, on an application made by the Tour Operator along with the requisite fee / documents.
7. Documents received from applicants after scrutiny in all respects will be acknowledged by the Regional Director concerned. The inspection for renewal shall be conducted by the Inspection team within a period of two months from the receipt of complete application, failing which it will be deemed as renewed.

8. The following conditions must be fulfilled by the Tour Operator for grant of recognition by Ministry of Tourism:

- i) The application for grant of recognition shall be in the prescribed form and submitted in duplicate.
- ii) The Tour operator should have a minimum paid up capital (or capital employed) of **Rs.3.00 lakhs** duly supported by the latest audited balance sheet/Chartered Accountant's certificate.
- iii) The turn-over in terms of foreign exchange by the firm from tour operation only should be a minimum of **Rs. 10.00 lakhs** duly supported by Chartered Accountant's certificate.
- iv) The Tour operator has an office under the charge of a full time member of their staff, who is adequately trained /experienced in matters regarding transport, accommodation, currency, customs regulations and general information about travel and tourism related services. However, greater emphasis may be given to effective communication skills and knowledge of foreign language other than English.

There should be a minimum of four qualified staff out of which at least two should have Diploma/Degree in Travel and Tourism from recognized university, IITTM or an institution approved by AICTE.

The academic qualifications may be relaxed in case of experienced personnel in Airlines, Shipping, Transport, PR Agencies, Hotels and other corporate bodies and those who have two years experience with Ministry of Tourism approved tour operators.

Similarly, for the agencies located at North-east, religious, remote and rural areas, there should be a minimum of two qualified staff.

- v) The Tour Operator should have been in operation for a minimum period of one year before the date of application.
- vi) The minimum office space should be of **250 sq. ft** besides the office may be located in neat and clean surroundings and equipped with telephone, fax and computer reservation system etc. There should be sufficient space for reception and easy access to toilets.
- vii. The Tour operator should be an income tax assessee and should have filed Income Tax Returns for the last or current assessment year.
- viii. Tour Operator should employ only Regional Guides trained and licensed by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India and State level Guides approved by the State Governments.

- ix. The Tour Operator shall contract/use approved specialized agencies in the field of adventure options and related services for the tourists
9. The tour operator will be required to pay a non-refundable fee of **Rs.3,000/-** while applying for the recognition and renewal of Head Office as well as each Branch Office. ***The fee will be made payable to the Pay & Accounts Officer, Ministry of Tourism in the form of a Bank Draft.***
10. Recognition will be granted to the Head Office of Tour Operator. Branch offices will be approved along with the Head Office or subsequently, provided the particulars of the Branch offices are submitted to Ministry of Tourism and accepted by it.
11. Tour operator granted recognition shall be entitled to such incentives and concessions as may be granted by Government from time to time and shall abide by the terms and conditions of recognition as prescribed from time to time by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.
12. The decision of the Government of India in the matter of recognition shall be final. However, the Govt. of India may in their discretion refuse to recognize any firm or withdraw/withhold at any time recognition already granted with the approval of the Competent Authority. Before such a decision is taken, necessary show cause notice would invariably be issued and the reply considered on merit. This will be done after careful consideration and generally as a last resort. Circumstances in which withdrawal is effected would also be indicated.

**APPLICATION FORM FOR RECOGNITION / RENEWAL AS AN APPROVED
INBOUND TOUR OPERATOR**

Attested Passport size photograph of Managing Director / Managing Partner/ Proprietor

1. Name of the Organization
 Address of Head office.....
 Telephone Numbers.....
 Fax Numbers.....
 Email Address.....
 Website Name.....
 Address of the Branch offices (if any)
(Please fill up separate application form, in duplicate for Branch Office(s), if any).....

 2. Nature of the Organization (Proprietary concern, Partnership or Incorporation)
 Year of registration/commencement of business (with documentary proof)

 3. Name of Proprietor/ Partners/ Directors/ etc.
 Details of their interests, if any
 In other business may also be indicated.....

 4. Particulars of staff employed

	Name	Designation	Qualifications	Experience	Salary	Length of Service with the firm
1.
2.
3.
4.

 5. Details of office premises (Documentary proof/Rent Agreement/Ownership Deed to be made available) - Space in sq.ft.
 Location area *(please tick mark the right box)* commercial residential
 Reception area..... accessibility to toilets

 - i. Name of Bankers (please attach a reference letter on original letterhead from your Bankers)
 - ii. Name of Auditors
- A balance-sheet and profit and loss statement pertaining to the tour operation business, as prescribed under Company Law, must be

submitted by each applicant. These audited statements should be in respect of your establishment for the last completed financial year or for the calendar year immediately preceding the date of submission of your application. Also furnish details of your turnover in the following statement:-

Particulars of the Tour Operator concerned

a)	Paid up capital (capital employed)
b)	Loans:
	i) Secured
	ii) Unsecured
c)	Reserves
d)	Current liabilities and provisions
e)	Total (a to d):
f)	Fixed assets (excluding intangible assets)
g)	Investment
h)	Current assets
i)	Intangible Assets
j)	Total (f to i)

Notes:

- i) Reserves should include balance of profit and loss Account and exclude taxation reserve.
 - ii) Current liabilities and provisions would include taxation reserve.
 - iii) Current assets should include sundry debts, loans advances, cash and bank balance
 - iv) Intangible assets should include goodwill preliminary expenses, tenancy and business rights, deferred revenue expenditure, accumulated loss etc.
- iii. Copy of acknowledgement in respect of Income tax return for the current assessment year should be enclosed
 - iv. Whether any activities are undertaken by the firm should be enclosed
 - v. Please indicate membership of International Travel Organizations, if any
- vi.
 - a) Give details of volume of tourist traffic handled and domestic tourist traffic separately. (Please submit a certificate from a chartered accountant). This certificate should show the receipts from tour operation only during the financial year or the calendar year immediately preceding the date of submission of your applications).
 - b) Clientele: special tourist groups handled, if any, their size, frequency, etc.
 - c) Steps taken to promote domestic tourist traffic and details of the groups handled, if any.
 - d) Special programmes if any, arranged for foreign tourists
 - e) Please attach publicity material such brochures/folders/leaflets concerning itineraries and website address of the agency.

- vii. Number of conferences handled, any, and the total number of passengers for such conferences with details of locations, etc.
- viii. Certificate of Chartered Accountant on original letter head in support of your *turnover in foreign exchange from inbound tour operations only during the last financial/calendar year.*
- ix. Number of incentive tours handled.

Please enclose Demand Draft of Rs. 3,000/- for Head Office and Rs.3, 000/- for each Branch Office as fee **for recognition/renewal.**

For Head Office, please mention the D.D. No.....Date
 Amount

For Branch office(s) please mention the D.D. No.....Date
 Amount

Signature of Proprietor/Partner/Managing Director

Rubber Stamp

Place:
 Date:

- NB. I This application should be submitted in duplicate along with supporting documents.
- II Please quote the reference number of Ministry of Tourism if the application is for renewal / extension.
- III Separate application form to be filled in duplicate, when applying for Branch Office(s).

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL/ RECOGNITION AS AN APPROVED TOUR OPERATOR

1. Application form duly filled in.
2. Two attested photographs pasted on both the copies of application form.
3. Documentary proof (preferably registration certificates from govt.) in support of beginning of operations of your firm.
4. Copy of **Complete Audited Balance Sheet** for the **latest financial year**.
5. **Income Tax Acknowledgement for the latest assessment year.**
6. Service Tax Registration number from the concerned authority.
7. **Certificate of Chartered Accountant stating your paid-up capital not less than Rs. 3.00 lakhs.**
8. For Tour Operator from the North – East region, religious, remote and rural areas, the minimum **paid up capital (or capital employed) should be at least Rs. 50,000/-** duly supported by the Chartered Accountant's certificate.
9. Reference letter from Bank on its letterhead (**Original**) regarding your firm's bank account.
10. Details of staff employed giving names, designation, educational qualification & experience if any, in tourism field (**copies of certificates to be enclosed**), and length of service in your organization.
 - a) *As per the guidelines, any agency applying to Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, for recognition as an approved Tour Operator should have at least four employees as staff, out of which two should have Degree/Diploma in Travel & Tourism Management from a recognized University / Institution.*
 - b) *The academic qualifications may be relaxed in case of the other two staff members who are experienced personnel in Airlines, Shipping, Transport, PR Agencies, Hotels and other corporate bodies, Tourism related organizations and those who have two years experience with Ministry of Tourism approved tour operators.*
 - c) *Similarly, for the agencies located at North - East, religious, remote and rural areas, there should be a minimum of two qualified staff, out of which one should have Diploma / Degree in Travel & Tourism Management.*
11. List of Directors/Partners or name of the Proprietor.
12. Details of office premises (**whether located in commercial or residential area, office space in sq. ft. and accessibility to toilet and reception area**)
13. Certificate of Chartered Accountant on original letter head in support of your **turnover in foreign exchange from inbound tour operation only** which should not be less than **Rs. 10.00 Lakhs during the last financial/calendar year.**
14. For Tour Operators from North – Eastern States, religious, remote and rural areas, the turn over in terms of foreign exchange earned by the firm from **inbound tour operations only** during the last financial / calendar year should be a minimum of **Rs. 2.00 lakhs** duly certified by Chartered Accountant, on original letter head.
15. Documents duly attested by competent officer.
16. **DD for Rs. 3,000/-** towards processing fees payable to **Pay and Accounts Officer, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India.**

NOTE: I. The above - mentioned documents may be submitted in duplicate.
 II. Please fill up separate application form, in duplicate for Branch Office(s), if any.
 III. The guidelines including application form may be downloaded from website www.tourism.gov.in
