

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

**GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNITION AS APPROVED TOUR OPERATOR
WITH EFFECT FROM 27.11.2003**

1. The aims & objectives of the scheme for recognition of Tour Operator is 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.
2. **Definition:** A tour operator is one which makes arrangements for transport, accommodation, sight seeing, entertainment and other tourism related services for tourists.
3. All applications for recognition shall be addressed to the **Additional Director General(Tourism)**, Ministry of Tourism, Transport Bhawan, 1, Parliament Street, New Delhi- 110 001.
4. The following conditions must be fulfilled by the Tour Operator for grant of recognition by Department 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 recognised 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 2 years experience with Department of Tourism approved tour operators.

Similarly, for the agencies located at North-east, religious, remote and small cities, 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 Operators should employ only Regional Guides trained and licenced by the Department of Tourism, Govt. of India and State level Guides as well as local 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.
5. The recognition as Approved Tour Operator shall be granted for three years and renewal thereafter every five years on an application made by the tour operator along with the required fee.
6. The tour operator will be required to pay a non-refundable fee of Rs.3000/- 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, Department of Tourism in the form of a Bank Draft.

7. Recognition will be granted to the Headquarter Office of the Tour Operator. Branch offices will be approved along with the Headquarters Office or subsequently, provided the particulars of the Branch offices are submitted to Department of Tourism and accepted by it.
8. 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 Department of Tourism, Government of India.
9. 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 recognise 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 resorted would also be indicated.

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****Gandhi-2003/Guidelines/Guidelines TO/27.11.2003****