

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM**

**GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNITION AS APPROVED TRAVEL AGENT WITH  
EFFECT FROM 27.11.2003**

1. The aims & objectives of the scheme for recognition of Travel Agent 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 travel agencies.
2. **Definition:** A Travel Agency is one which makes arrangements of tickets for travel by air, rail, ship, passport, visa, etc. It may also arrange accommodation, tours, entertainment and other tourism related services.
3. All applications for recognition shall be addressed to the Additional Director General (Tourism), Ministry of Tourism, Transport Bhawan, No.1, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001.
4. The following conditions must be fulfilled by the Travel Agency 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 travel Agency has a minimum paid-up capital (or capital employed) of Rs.3.00 lakhs duly supported by the audited balance sheet/Chartered Accountant's Certificate.
  - iii) The Travel Agency should be approved by International Air Transport Association (IATA) or should be General Sales Agent (GSA)/Passenger Sales Agent (PSA) of an IATA member Airlines.
  - iv) The Travel Agency should have been in operation for a minimum period of one year before the date of application.
  - v) The minimum office space should be 250 sq.ft. Besides, the office may be located in a neat and clean surrounding and equipped with telephone, fax and computer reservation system etc. There should be sufficient space for reception and easy access to toilet facilities.
  - vi) The Travel Agency should be under the charge of a full time member who is adequately trained, experienced in matters regarding ticketing, itineraries, transport, accommodation facilities, currency, customs regulations and travel and tourism related services. Besides this, greater emphasis may be given to effective communication skills, knowledge of foreign languages, other than English. There should be minimum of four qualified staff out of which at least two should have Diploma/Degree in Travel and Tourism from recognised University, IITM or Institutions approved by AICTE.

The academic qualifications may be relaxed in case of exceptionally experienced personnel in Airlines, Shipping, Transport and PR agencies, Hotel and other Corporate Bodies and those who have worked for 3 years with IATA/UFTA Agencies.

The academic qualifications may also be relaxed in cases where the travel agency companies are located at North-east, religious, remote and small cities. There should be a minimum of two qualified staff.

- vii) The Travel Agency is an income-tax assessee and has filed Income Tax Return for the current assessment year.
  - viii) The Travel Agency should employ only Regional Guides trained and licensed by the Department of Tourism, Government of India and State level Guides as well as local guides approved by State Governments.
  - ix) For outsourcing any of the services relating to tourists, the travel agencies shall use approved specialised agencies in the specific field of activity.
5. Recognition as travel agency will be granted for 3 years and renewal thereafter for 5 years on an application made by travel agency along with fee.
  6. The Travel Agency 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 payable to the Pay and Accounts Officer, Department of Tourism, in the form of a Bank Draft.
  7. Recognition will be granted to the Head Office of the Travel Agency. Branch Offices will be approved along with the Head Office or subsequently, provided the particulars of the Branch Offices are submitted to Department of Tourism and accepted by it.
  8. The Travel Agency granted recognition shall be entitled to such incentives and concessions as may be granted by the Government from time to time and shall abide by the terms and conditions of recognition as prescribed from time to time.
  9. The decision of the Government of India in the matter of recognition shall be final. However, the Government 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 as a last resort and circumstances in which withdrawal is resorted would also be indicated.

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