

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

**GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNITION / RENEWAL AS AN APPROVED
TRAVEL AGENT**

[Revised with effect from 4th December 2009]

1. The aims and objectives of the scheme for recognition of Travel Agent 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 travel agencies to bring them in organized sector.
2. **Definition:** A Travel Agent is one who 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. The application for **recognition** shall be addressed to the Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Transport Bhawan, No.1, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001.
4. The recognition as an approved Travel Agent 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 TAAI**.
5. The application 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. Phone No. (033) 2282 5813 / 2282 1475, Fax: (033) 2282 3521, Email: indtour@cal2.vsnl.net.in
 - b) The Regional Director (West), India Tourism, 123, M. Karve Road, Opp. Church Gate, Mumbai – 400 020, Maharashtra. Phone No. (022) 2208 3263 / 2207 4333 / 2207 4334, Fax: (022) 2201 4496, Email: indiatourism@hathway.com, indiatourism@vsnl.com
 - c) The Regional Director (North), India Tourism, 88 – Janpath, New Delhi 110 001. Phone No. (011) 2332 0342 / 2332 0005 / 2332 0008, Fax: (011) 2332 0109, Email: goitodelhi@nic.in
 - d) The Regional Director (South), India Tourism, 154, Anna Salai, Chennai – 600 002, Tamil Nadu. Phone No. (044) 2846 0285 / 2846 1459, Fax: (044) 2846 0193, Email: indtour@vsnl.com, goitochn@tn.nic.in
 - e) The Regional Director (North – East), India Tourism, Asom Paryatan Bhawan, 3rd Floor, Near Nepali Mandir, A. K. Azad Road, Paltan Bazar, Guwahati – 781 008, Assam. Phone No. (0361) 273 7554, Fax No. (0361) 273 7553, Email: indtourguwahati@nic.in
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 TAAI, on an application made by the Travel Agent along with the requisite fee / documents.

7. The documents received from applicants after scrutiny in all respects will be acknowledged by the Travel Trade Division in respect of first approval and by the concerned Regional Director for renewal. The inspection for first approval / renewal shall be conducted by the Inspection Team within a period of sixty working days from the receipt of complete application.

8. The following conditions must be fulfilled by the Travel Agency for grant of recognition by Ministry of Tourism:-

- i) The application for grant of recognition / renewal shall be in the prescribed form and submitted in duplicate along with the required documents.
- ii) The travel Agency should have a minimum Paid up Capital or (Capital employed) of **Rs.3.00 lakh** 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 at least **150 sq. ft for rest of India and 100 sq. ft for hilly areas which are above 1000 meters from sea level**. 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 the Owner or a full time member who is adequately trained, experienced in matters regarding ticketing, itineraries, transport, accommodation facilities, currency, customs regulations and tourism and travel related services. Besides this, greater emphasis may be given to effective communication skills, knowledge of foreign languages, other than English.

There should be a minimum of four qualified staff out of which at least one should have Diploma / Degree in Tourism & Travel Management from a recognized University, IITTM or an institution approved by AICTE. The owner of the firm would be included as one of the qualified employees.

The academic qualifications may be relaxed in case of the other two staff members who are exceptionally experienced personnel in Airlines, Shipping, Transport and PR agencies, Hotel and other Corporate Bodies and those who have worked for three years with IATA / UFTA agencies and also those who have two years experience with Ministry of Tourism approved Travel Agencies.

For the agencies located in the North – Eastern region, remote and rural areas, there should be a minimum of two staff out of which one should be a qualified employee with a Diploma / Degree in Tourism & Travel Management from a recognized University, IITM or an institution approved by AICTE. The owner of the firm would be included as one of the qualified employees.

- vii) The Travel Agency should be an income-tax assessee and should have filed Income Tax Return for the current assessment year.
 - viii) **Disclaimer:** The Travel Agency should employ only Regional Level Guides trained and licensed by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and State Level Guides approved by the State Governments. The implementation of this clause would be subject to the decision of Hon'ble High Court of Rajasthan in Writ Petition No. 5607 / 2004 and other Hon'ble Courts.
 - ix) For outsourcing any of the services relating to tourists, the travel agencies shall use approved specialized agencies in the specific field of activity.
9. 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, Ministry of Tourism, in the form of a Bank Draft.
10. The recognition / renewal 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 Ministry of Tourism for recognition and concerned Regional Director for renewal and accepted by it.
11. The Travel Agency so granted recognition / renewal 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 by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.
12. Even though the scheme of granting approval of recognition to service providers of Travel Trade is voluntary, in nature, there is a need to have a pro - active role of Ministry of Tourism and Travel Trade to ensure that more and more service providers seek approval and then service the tourists. There is also a need

to educate the stakeholders as well as consumers against the potential risk of availing services through the unapproved service providers.

13. It shall be mandatory for an approved service provider of Travel Trade to prominently display the Certificate of approval of recognition given by Ministry of Tourism in the office by pasting it on a board or in a picture frame so that it is visible to a potential tourist.

14. The decision of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India in the matter of recognition / renewal shall be final. However, MOT may in their discretion refuse to recognize / renew any firm or withdraw / withhold at any time recognition / renewal 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.

15. The guidelines including application form may be downloaded from website www.tourism.gov.in

.....
Kavita / 04.12.2009

APPLICATION FORM FOR RECOGNITION / RENEWAL AS AN APPROVED TRAVEL AGENCY

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
I.
II.
III.
IV.

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 category) commercial residential
Reception area..... ..Accessibility to toilets (Please write Yes or No).....

6. Name of Bankers (please attach a reference letter on original letterhead from your Bankers).....

7. Name of Auditors.....
 A Balance - Sheet and Profit & Loss Statement pertaining to the travel 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 Travel Agency 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. Intangible assets should include goodwill expenses, tenancy and business rights, deferred revenue expenditure, accumulated loss etc.
- ii. Reserves should include balance of profit and loss Account and exclude taxation reserve.
- iii. Current liabilities and provisions would include taxation reserve.
- iv. Current assets should include sundry debts, loans advances, cash and bank balance.

8. A copy of Acknowledgement in respect of Income tax returns for the current assessment year should be enclosed

9. Whether any activities are undertaken by the firm besides travel related activities enclosed

10. Please indicate membership of International Travel Organizations, if any.....

11. Letter of approval of IATA and Certificate of Accreditation for current year should be enclosed. General Sales Agent (GSA) / Passenger Sales Agent (PSA) of IATA airlines should be enclosed (in this regard documentary proof to be attached).

12. The names of the Air/shipping / Railway ticketing agencies held by the firm.....

13. Enclosed 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:

Demand Draft No.....

Date.....

Amount

For Branch Office(s), please mention:

Demand Draft No(s).....

Date.....

Amount

Signature / Name of Proprietor/Partner/Managing Director

Rubber Stamp

Place:

Date:

NOTE:

- I. The guidelines including application form may be downloaded from website www.tourism.gov.in
- II. This application should be submitted in duplicate along with all supporting documents.
- III. Please quote reference number of Ministry of Tourism if the application is for renewal of recognition.
- IV. Separate application form to be filled in duplicate along with the required documents, when applying for Branch Office(s).

LIST OF DOCUMENTS (CHECK LIST) REQUIRED FOR FIRST APPROVAL / RENEWAL AS AN APPROVED TRAVEL AGENT

1. Application form in duplicate duly filled in.
2. Two attested photographs pasted on both the copies of application form.
3. Documentary proof (preferably registration certificates from Government) in support of beginning of operations of your firm.
4. A 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 concerned authority.
7. Certificate of Chartered Accountant stating your Paid-up Capital not less than Rs. 3.00 Lakh. For Travel Agents from the North – East region, 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.
8. A copy of IATA approval letter indicating Numerical Code Number and a copy of IATA Accreditation Certificate for the Current year.
9. Reference letter from Bank on its letterhead (Original) regarding your firm's bank account.
10. The details of staff employed giving names, designation, educational qualification & experience in tourism field and length of service in your organization (copies of certificates to be enclosed):
 - a) There should be a minimum of four qualified staff out of which at least one should have Diploma / Degree in Tourism & Travel Management from a recognized University, IITM or an institution approved by AICTE. The owner of the firm would be included as one of the qualified employees.
 - b) The academic qualifications may be relaxed in case of the other two staff members who are exceptionally experienced personnel in Airlines, Shipping, Transport and PR agencies, Hotel and other Corporate Bodies and those who have worked for three years with IATA / UFTA agencies and also those who have two years experience with Ministry of Tourism approved Travel Agencies.
 - c) For the agencies located in the North – Eastern region, remote and rural areas, there should be a minimum of two staff out of which one should be a qualified employee with a Diploma / Degree in Tourism & Travel Management from a recognized University, IITM or an institution approved by AICTE. The owner of the firm would be included as one of the qualified employees.
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. (the minimum office space should be at least 150 sq. ft for rest of India and 100 sq. ft for hilly areas which are above 1000 meters from sea level) and accessibility to toilet and reception area.
13. A Demand Draft for Rs. 3,000/- towards processing fees payable to Pay and Accounts Officer, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.
14. Documents duly attested by competent officer.

NOTE:

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