



**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

**GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNITION / RENEWAL OR EXTENSION AS AN  
APPROVED INBOUND TOUR OPERATOR (ITO)**

[Revised with effect from 18<sup>th</sup> July 2011]

1. The aims and objectives of the scheme for recognition of Inbound Tour Operator (ITO) are to encourage quality standard and service in this category so as to promote tourism in India and abroad. This is a voluntary scheme open to all bonafide tour operators to bring them in organized sector.
2. **Definition:** An ITO is the one who makes arrangements for transport, accommodation, sight seeing, entertainment and other tourism related services for foreign tourists.
3. The application for **approval** shall be submitted online through [etraveltradeapproval.nic.in](http://etraveltradeapproval.nic.in). In this regard any query may be addressed to the Assistant Director General, Travel Trade Division, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Room No. 23, C – 1 Hutments, Dalhousie Road, New Delhi – 110 011, Tel No. 011 2301 2805, Fax No. 011 2301 9476, Email ID: [kalyansg@nic.in](mailto:kalyansg@nic.in)
4. The application for **renewal / extension** shall also be submitted online after being registered online as an approved tour operator through [etraveltradeapproval.nic.in](http://etraveltradeapproval.nic.in). In this regard any query may 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. (33) 2282 5813 / 2282 1475, Fax: (033) 2282 3521, Email: [indtour6100@dataone.in](mailto:indtour6100@dataone.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@vsnl.com](mailto:indiatourism@vsnl.com) , [regdir.indtour@gmail.com](mailto:regdir.indtour@gmail.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](mailto: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@dataone.in](mailto:indtour@dataone.in)
  - e) The Regional Director (North – East), India Tourism, Asom Paryatan Bhawan, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:indtourguwahati@nic.in)

5. The recognition as an approved ITO shall be granted by the Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Government of India (GOI), New Delhi initially, for five years, based on the Inspection Report / Recommendations of a Committee comprising the concerned Regional Director (RD) and a member of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO).

6. The renewal / extension, thereafter, shall be granted for five years after inspection conducted by a Committee comprising of concerned RD and a member of IATO, on an application made by ITO along with the requisite fee / documents.

7. The documents received from applicants after scrutiny in all respects would be acknowledged by the Travel Trade Division (TT Division) in MOT in respect of first approval and by the concerned RD for renewal or extension. The inspection for first approval / renewal or extension 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 ITO for grant of recognition / renewal or extension by MOT:

- i) The application for grant of recognition / renewal or extension shall be in the prescribed form and submitted online through [etraveltradeapproval.nic.in](http://etraveltradeapproval.nic.in) along with the required documents.
- (ii) ITO located in rest of India should have a minimum Paid up Capital (or Capital employed) of **Rs.3.00 lakh** and **Rs. 50,000/-** in the case of North – Eastern region, remote and rural areas, duly supported by the latest Audited Balance Sheet / certificate of the Statutory Auditor of the firm.
- (iii) The turn-over in terms of foreign exchange earnings by the firm from inbound tour operations only during the preceding financial year or calendar year should be a minimum of **Rs. 25.00 lakh** for rest of India and **Rs. 5.00 lakh** for the North – Eastern region, remote and rural areas duly supported by firm's Statutory Auditor's certificate. However, for the North – Eastern Region, the firm's turn – over in Rupee earnings would be treated as Foreign Exchange earnings, provided there is documentary evidence that such earnings are from inbound tour operations only. This could be certified by the firm's Statutory Auditor.
- (iv) ITO should have an office under the charge of the owner or a full time member of their staff, who is adequately trained / experienced in matters regarding transport, accommodation, currency, customs regulations and general information about tourism and travel 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 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, PR Agencies, Hotels and other corporate bodies and those who have two years experience with MOT approved tour operators.

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, IITTM or an institution approved by AICTE. The owner of the firm would be included as one of the qualified employees.

- (v) ITO should have been in operation for a minimum period of one year before the date of application.
- (vi) 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 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) ITO should be an income tax assessee and should have filed Income Tax Returns for the last or current assessment year.
- (viii) For the monuments protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites & Remains Act, 1958 (24 of 1958), the ITOs should deploy / engage the services of Regional Level Tourist Guides trained and licensed by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India or other guides authorized by the Government of India or under orders of the Hon'ble Court(s). For other monuments and destinations, the guides authorized under the orders of the appropriate authority, if any, of the concerned monument / destination should be deployed / engaged by ITOs.
- (xi) ITO shall contract / use approved specialized agencies in the field of adventure options and related services for the tourists

**9.** ITO would 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 would be made payable to the Pay & Accounts Officer, Ministry of Tourism in the form of online payment.

**10.** The ITO should adhere to the tenets of the Code of Conduct for “Safe & Honourable Tourism” for which the following action would have to be taken:

- (i) A signed copy of the pledge of commitment towards “Safe & Honourable Tourism” should be attached with the application. The pledge is attached in English & Hindi as **Annexure I & II**, respectively.
- (ii) On the day a staff member joins the ITO, he / she would be required to take / sign the pledge. The pledge would be incorporated in the appointment letter / joining report of the staff.
- (iii) Two focal points would be nominated (i.e., from HRD, security side etc.) at the time of applying for approval by the ITO in the case of organizations which have more than 25 personnel. In the case of ITO with less than 25 personnel, one focal point would have to be nominated.
- (iv) The training would be provided to the staff of the approved ITO by MOT under its Capacity Building of Service Providers (CBSP) scheme in connection with “Safe & Honourable Tourism”. The focal points of the ITO would be trained first within first six months of MOT approval. Subsequently, the trained focal points in turn would impart further in – house training to the staff which would be arranged within next six months.
- (v) The Pledge of Commitment towards “Safe & Honourable Tourism” would have to be displayed by the ITO prominently in the front office area / lobby of the service provider.
- (vi) The signatories of the Code of Conduct would be required to maintain a record of action taken by them in compliance of the provisions of this para, which shall be kept in their office & shown to the Committee(s) at the time of renewal.

**11.** The recognition / renewal or extension would be granted to the Head Office of the ITO. The Branch offices of ITO would be approved along with the Head Office or subsequently, provided the particulars of the Branch offices are submitted to MOT for recognition and for renewal or extension to the concerned RD and accepted by it.

**12.** ITO so granted recognition / renewal or extension 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 MOT, GOI.

**13.** ITO would have to report action taken by them in their Annual Report which shall be kept with them & shown to the Committee(s) at the time of renewal.

**14.** 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 MOT 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.

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

**16.** The decision of MOT, GOI in the matter of recognition / renewal or extension shall be final. However, MOT may in their discretion refuse to recognize / renew or extend 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 would be done after careful consideration and generally as a last resort. Circumstances in which withdrawal is effected would also be indicated.

**17.** Give details of:

- a) Volume of international tourist traffic handled. (Please submit a certificate from Statutory Auditor of the firm). This certificate should show the foreign exchange earnings receipts from inbound tour operations only during the current financial year or the year immediately preceding the date of submission of your application.
- b) Clientele: special tourist groups handled, if any, their size, frequency, etc.
- c) Steps taken to promote international 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 as brochures / folders / leaflets / posters concerning itineraries and website address of the agency.

**19.** Number of conferences handled, if any, and the details of total number of passengers for such conferences with details of locations, etc.

**20.** Number of incentive tours handled.



# Incredible India

## PLEDGE FOR COMMITMENT TOWARDS SAFE & HONOURABLE TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

*I/We solemnly pledge and reiterate our commitment to conduct our business in a manner that befits the culture and ethos of our rich and ancient civilization, and the tolerant and accommodating nature of our multicultural society and protects all individuals, especially women and children from all derogatory acts which are contrary to the spirit of our country. We hereby commit to abide by the Code of Conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism.*

*Recognizing that every earth resource is finite and fragile, I /We further pledge to fully implement sustainable tourism practices, consistent with the best environment and heritage protection standards, such that my/our present tourism resource requirements optimize both local community benefit and future sustainable uses.*

Signature: .....

Name: .....

On behalf of: .....

In the presence of: .....



# अतुल्य! भारत

सुरक्षित और सम्मानजनक पर्यटन और सतत पर्यटन का प्रति प्रतिबद्धता के लिए प्रतिज्ञा

मैं / हम हमारी समृद्ध और प्राचीन सभ्यता की संस्कृति और लोकाचार तथा हमारी बहु - सांस्कृतिक समाज की सहनशील और उदार प्रकृति को कायम रखते हुए अपना कार्य करने की सत्य निष्ठा से प्रतिज्ञा करता हूँ / करते हैं वचनबद्धता दोहराता हूँ / दोहराते हैं । हम उन सभी अपमानजनक कार्यों, जो हमारे देश की प्रवृत्ति के विपरीत हैं , से सभी व्यक्तियों विशेषकर महिलाओं और बच्चों की सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करते हुए उद्यम करेंगे । हम एतद्वारा सुरक्षित एवं सम्मानजनक पर्यटन हेतु आचार संहिता के पालन का वचन देते हैं ।

यह स्वीकार करते हुए कि पृथ्वी के प्रत्येक संसाधन सीमित तथा नाशवान है, मैं / हम सर्वोत्तम पर्यावरण और विरासत संरक्षण मानकों के अनुकूल सतत पर्यटन व्यवहारों को पूर्णतः कार्यान्वित करने की भी प्रतिज्ञा करता हूँ / करते हैं , ताकि मेरे / हमारे वर्तमान पर्यटन संसाधन की आवश्यकताओं का स्थानीय समुदाय के लाभ और भावी सतत उपयोगों, दोनों के लिए अधिकतम उपयोग किया जा सके ।

हस्ताक्षर

नाम

की ओर से

की उपस्थिति में

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS (CHECK LIST) REQUIRED FOR FIRST APPROVAL/ RENEWAL OR EXTENSION AS AN APPROVED INBOUND TOUR OPERATOR (ITO)**

1. Online application duly filled in.
2. Two attested photographs.
3. Documentary proof (preferably registration certificates from Government) in support of beginning of operations of your firm.
4. A signed copy of the Pledge of Commitment towards "Safe & Honourable Tourism". The pledge is attached in English & Hindi as **Annexure I & II**, respectively.
5. A copy of complete Audited Balance Sheet with Director's Report for the latest financial year.
6. Income Tax Acknowledgement for the latest assessment year.
7. Service Tax Registration number from the concerned authority.
8. The Inbound Tour operators located in rest of India should have a minimum Paid up Capital (or Capital employed) of Rs.3.00 lakh and Rs. 50,000/- in the case of North – Eastern region, remote and rural areas, duly supported by the latest Audited Balance Sheet / Statutory Auditors certificate.
9. Reference letter from Bank on its original letterhead regarding firm's bank account and address with telephone numbers.
10. Details of staff employed giving names, designation, educational qualification & experience if any, in tourism field, and length of service in the 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, IITTM 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, PR Agencies, Hotels and other corporate bodies and those who have two years experience with Ministry of Tourism approved tour operators.
  - 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, IITTM or an institution approved by AICTE. The owner of the firm would be included as one of the qualified employees.
  - d) Name of focal points.
11. List of Directors/Partners or name of the Proprietor.
12. Details of office premises, whether located in commercial or residential area, exact office space in sq. ft. (at least 150 sq. ft for rest of India and 100 sq. ft for hilly areas which are located above 1000 meters from sea level) and accessibility to toilet and reception area.
13. Certificate of Statutory Chartered Accountant on original letter head in support of turnover in foreign exchange from inbound tour operations only during the last financial / calendar year which should not be less than Rs. 25.00 Lakh in case of Inbound Tour Operator from rest of India and Rs. 5.00 lakh from the North – Eastern Region, remote and rural areas. However, for the North – Eastern Region, the firm's turn – over in Rupee earnings would be treated as Foreign Exchange earnings, provided there is documentary evidence that such earnings are from inbound tour operations only. This could be certified by the firm's Statutory Auditor.
14. Documents duly stamped & attested by the Managing Director / Managing Partner/ Proprietor of the firm.
15. **The payment of fee of Rs. 3000/- should be made online only through Debit/Credit Cards, e-banking etc.**

**NOTE:**

- I. The guidelines etc., may be downloaded from websites [www.tourism.gov.in](http://www.tourism.gov.in), [etraveltradeapproval.nic.in](http://etraveltradeapproval.nic.in) & [www.incredibleindia.org](http://www.incredibleindia.org) .
- II. The application form along with all supporting documents should be submitted online through [etraveltradeapproval.nic.in](http://etraveltradeapproval.nic.in) only.
- III. The application for **renewal / extension** shall also be submitted online after being registered online as an approved tour operator through [etraveltradeapproval.nic.in](http://etraveltradeapproval.nic.in).
- IV. When applying for Branch Office(s), separate application should be filled and submitted online along with the required documents, in duplicate.

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