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PART I—Orders and Notifications by the Governor of West Bengal, the High Court, Government Treasury, etc.

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Tourism Department, Establishment Cell,
N.S. Buildings Block-A, 3rd floor,
1, K.S. Roy Road, Kolkata-700001.

No. 1968-TM/1T-31/2022

Date: 08.09.2022

NOTIFICATION

West Bengal Homestay Tourism Policy, 2022

A. Short Title

The policy may be called “West Bengal Homestay Tourism Policy-2022”

B. Commencement and Duration:

Unless specifically mentioned, it shall come into force with effect from the date of issue of notification in the whole of West Bengal.

1. Preamble

- 1.1. Homestay is an emerging concept in tourism industry which is also considered to be the best alternative to hotel accommodation. Globally, homestay tourism is defined as the form of tourism where tourists can stay with the members of the family wherein social and cultural interaction takes place along with exploring various tourist destinations. India has been blessed with plethora of scenic locations, numerous serene gateways which are consistently explored by tourists across the world. This has resulted in the burgeoning of homestay-based tourism in different parts of the country. In Indian context, homestay means any house preferably located in the rural setup where the house owner or his/her family members are physically residing in the unit and earmarks some rooms exclusively for the tourists.
- 1.2. West Bengal is blessed with bountiful resources, consisting of high peaks of Himalayas in the northern extremes and coastal regions in the southern parts with plateaus and Ganges delta in between. The State has been well known for its rich culture and heritage.

- 1.3. Homestays of West Bengal can play an instrumental role in offering tourists a clean and affordable place for domestic and international tourists to stay with local families and experience customs, traditions and relish authentic cuisine, which can act as an alternative livelihood option for local communities. Homestay tourism shall also be promoted to encourage MICE tourism, Medical Tourism, Education tourism etc.
- 1.4. The key components of homestay which can attract tourists are the cultural diversity of the local communities, authentic native cuisines, pleasant hospitality amongst others. It can also play an imperative role in promoting rural tourism, ecotourism and cultural tourism thereby diversifying tourist offerings. Thus, there is an urgent need to provide impetus to these home owners through suitable guidelines and providing incentives and concessions with the aim of providing comfortable homestay facilities of standardized world class services to the tourists and to supplement the availability of accommodation in tourist destinations.

2. Vision

To promote homestays across West Bengal as an important driver of equitable growth and prosperity offering an alternative source of livelihood, development and growth in remote locations, preservation of local skills, enterprise development at the micro level thereby ensuring inclusive growth and sustainable environment management.

3. Strategic Objectives

- 3.1. Promote homestay tourism in such a way that it can make meaningful contribution to the employment generation, economic growth and bringing the tourists closer to the cultural heritage and traditions of West Bengal.
- 3.2. Skill upgradation and capacity building of local communities to ensure standardization of services thereby enabling smooth functioning of homestays.
- 3.3. Transform West Bengal as the cultural and traditional hub of the country by promoting the rich tribal culture of the State and harnessing the potential of fairs and festivals.
- 3.4. Promote local cuisine of West Bengal across the world to make a mark on the international culinary map.
- 3.5. Undertake steps to promote rich and varied handicrafts of West Bengal for conservation and preservation of cultural heritage, traditions and customs.
- 3.6. Safeguard the interest of tourists to provide sensitive, proactive, comfortable and quick mechanism as also to provide an effective grievance system.
- 3.7. Ensure responsible tourism through developing guidelines to control tourists' behaviour and provide a pleasant experience.
- 3.8. Promote Inclusive Tourism strategies through community-based tourism ensuring equitable sharing of benefits to the local communities.
- 3.9. Promote MICE tourism, Health tourism, Education tourism etc.

4. What is a Homestay in West Bengal?

A place where the owner of establishment or his/her family member is physically residing in the same establishment and letting out minimum one room and maximum six rooms (12 beds) with toilet facilities exclusively for tourists. Eligible applicants need to meet the following criteria for the purpose of registration of homestays:

- The owner or promoter of the homestay should also be the owner of the homestay which is functioning or proposed to function.
- The minimum floor area of the homestay should be 120 sq ft for double-bedded room, 100 sq ft for single room and 30 sq ft for bathroom.

- There should preferably be an easy access from the road to the homestay.

5. Registration of Homestays

- 5.1. Any homestay owner meeting the above eligibility and meeting the required criteria mentioned in the checklist of facilities as per Annexure C, may submit an application for registration through online (www.whomestaytourism.gov.in) or to respective District Magistrate's Office (offline) addressing the concerned District Magistrate indicating the category of homestay applied along with the Demand Draft drawn in favour of District Magistrate in any scheduled bank payable at the concerned district in the format as per Annexure A of this policy. In case of online application registration fee can be paid through prescribed payment mode. The registration fee is non-refundable in case of disqualification of registration. In case of receipt of offline applications office of the District Magistrate will upload these applications in the portal.

The registration fees applicable for Category A (Gold) and Category B (Silver) are as under:

Classification	Registration Fees (in INR)
For Category A (GOLD)	1000
For Category B (SILVER)	500

- On receiving the application for registration concerned District Magistrate will provide an offline or online acknowledgement receipt to the applicant, as the case maybe.
 - Upon receiving the application, the concerned homestay has to be ready for inspection by an Inspection committee constituted by the District Magistrate.
 - Inspection Committee in districts shall comprise of representative of District Magistrate, representative of BDO/Municipality and Tourist Supervisor (TS)/Tourist Development Officer (TDO) posted in the district. In absence of TS or TDO, District Magistrate may nominate any competent person to the said Committee. In Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) jurisdiction Inspection Committee shall comprise of Deputy Director of Tourism (Kolkata)/ Deputy Director of Tourism (CT), a representative of KMC and a Tourist Officer from the Tourism Directorate.
 - District Magistrate, in case of positive recommendation of the Committee, would send the case for police verification and would obtain police clearance certificate as per annexure D.
 - District Magistrate based on the recommendation of the Inspection Committee and after obtaining police clearance certificate would finally issue Certificate of Registration as per annexure –E.
 - In case of non-qualification, the applicant shall be informed in writing the reason/s for disqualification.
 - Bases on the observations and recommendations of the Inspection Committee, homestay unit will be certified under the prescribed classification and will be registered by the District Magistrate.
 - The Inspection Committee may suggest a category either higher or lower than the one applied by the homestay owner. In case of higher than the one applied for; the applicant will have to pay the fee for that particular category. However, in case of lower category recommendation there will be no refund of the extra fee.
 - Registration certificate shall be issued within 60 days from the date of receiving the application by the District Magistrate.
- 5.2. **Registers to be maintained at District Magistrate's Office:**– District magistrate will maintain a register for registered homestays in a format prescribed by Tourism Department, Government of West Bengal in MS excel format and will send the authenticated copies of the same through e-mail to the Department and Director, Tourism Directorate at the end of every month.
- 5.3. **Validity, Renewal and Cancellation of Certificate of Registration**
- 5.3.1. Registration of the Homestay will be valid for 3 years from the date of issue of registration of certificate.

- 5.3.2. The registration will be renewable after 3 years on payment of registration fees as laid down in this policy for registration within 6 months of expiry. Renewal can be applied through online or offline mode by the applicant. An inspection will be carried out by the office of the District Magistrate before renewal of registration of the homestay.
- 5.3.3. In case the applicant fails to apply and pay the renewal fee within specified time, District Magistrate will serve a notice to the homestay owner and the homestay shall be renewed within 3 months after following the renewal process and taking a penalty of Rs. 100/- from such owners. District Magistrate reserves the right to cancel the registration of the Homestay on grounds of non-fulfilment of the criteria mentioned in the policy at the time of renewal.
- 5.3.4. Tourism Department or concerned District Magistrate may cause inspection of the registered tourism units by their authorized representatives any time with or without prior intimation. In case of any violation of any regulation stipulated, Tourism Department or District Magistrate is free to take any action against the concerned homestay including cancellation of the registration.

6. Terms and Conditions for Registration of Homestays

- 6.1. All applications, whether online or offline for registration must be complete in all respects including application form, registration fee, certificates etc. Incomplete applications shall be summarily rejected.
- 6.2. In case of any dissatisfaction of the applicant regarding classification of the homestay, the matter will be brought to notice of the Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary/Secretary of Tourism Department, Government of West Bengal for resolution. The Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary/Secretary of Tourism Department will take decision in consultation with the District Magistrate and the Inspection Committee and the decision will be final and binding.
- 6.3. If the owner of the homestay unit wishes to cancel the registration, he/she may simply apply to the concerned District magistrate as per the format mentioned in Annexure G.
- 6.4. All the classified units should submit Form C as per the format mentioned in the Bureau of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India website (<https://indianfro.gov.in/fro/FormC>) along with passport details of the foreign tourists to the nearest police station as done by the hotels while accommodating foreign tourists.
- 6.5. The owner shall maintain a registration book similar to hotels and collect a copy of valid Photo ID for letting out rooms to the tourists, which can be inspected by District Magistrate or his authorised representatives. On demand details of the tourists shall be shared with the district administration as and when required.
- 6.6. Tourism Department, Government of West Bengal reserves the right to modify the guidelines/terms and conditions from time to time in accordance to the demand of the industry.

7. General Guidelines for Homestay Owners

- 7.1. Department of Tourism has framed certain guidelines that should be followed by the Homestay Owners all the time, as under:
 - The owners of the registered homestays shall not use the homestay unit for any other commercial purpose other than tourism activities.
 - Every homestay unit need to comply with the prescribed guidelines, maintain the basic infrastructure and quality standards as per the selection criteria.
 - Homestay owners should deal with the tourists promptly and courteously with enquiries, requests, reservations and complaints amongst others.
 - Maintain the registered homestay in a good state with proper hygiene for habitation of tourists at all times and comply with the prescribed rules respecting standards of health, safety and security.

- Every registered homestay unit shall maintain the books and upon demand shall produce the following records:
 - ✓ Suggestions/Complaints
 - ✓ Tourist registration book
 - ✓ Bill Book Duly numbered in duplicate

8. Information to be displayed by the Homestay Owners

8.1. Every registered Homestay unit should display a notice board for the tourists with the following information:

- a. Name of the Homestay
- b. Signed registration and classification certificate issued by the Tourism Department
- c. Check-in & Check-out time
- d. Dining closing time
- e. Guidelines for the tourists
- f. Prohibitions (*like smoking, drinking, loud music, illegal activities etc*):

9. Assistance from the State Government

9.1. Incentives and Concessions

The following incentives will be applicable for registered homestay units of the State subject to compliance with the prescribed guidelines:

- To promote homestay tourism in the State an amount of Rs. 1.0 lakh shall be disbursed to each registered homestay in two equal instalments.

A. Mandatory requirements for eligibility for financial benefit: –

Bedroom and Boarding: –

- Ease of access
- Security
- Privacy
- Cleanliness
- Storage
- Provision of basic availability of food
- Clean drinking water
- Adequate light and fan

Bathroom:

- Availability of adequate water supply
- Provision of hot water
- Clean sanitation facility and infrastructure
- Adequate cleanliness and waste disposal
- Provision of basic soft furnishing and amenities (towel, soap, doormats etc.)
- Adequate light

B. Approved list of activities that will be eligible for funding include the following: –

Approved expenditure list

- Sanitation
- Cleanliness
- Basic hygiene issue (including kitchen)
- Basic furniture and storage
- Basic soft furnishing
- Basic modification of rooms
- Recreational facilities like TV and WiFi (optional)

C. Mode of disbursement of incentive: –

- Rs. 50,000/-up-front after registration on submission of plan of approved expenditure to District Magistrate's office as first instalment.
- Rs. 50,000/- on completion of activities against submission of invoices to District Magistrate's office within six months from the date of disbursement of first instalment.
- Exemption from paying Luxury Tax for 3 years on reimbursement basis as per West Bengal Incentive Scheme, 2015
- Payment of Electricity and Water Charges at domestic rates
- Exemption from land conversion charges
- Property tax rates as prescribed for residential purposes will be applicable

9.2. Skill Upgradation and Capacity Building

- 9.2.1. Department of Tourism will assist the homestay owners (individual or groups) in skill building and capacity building in collaboration with the Department of Technical Education and Training, GoWB, which in turn will help the communities to run and operate the homestays professionally.
- 9.2.2. Department of Tourism will identify institutes like IHMs, IITMs, IIFM, NIM, birding and nature clubs and recognized local tour operators who can train these operators in various domains like hospitality, food and beverages, housekeeping and hygiene, general etiquettes and language, solid waste management, bird watching, rural immersion trainings, etc. The department will tie-up with these entities/institutes and organize trainings in regular intervals, keeping the tourism seasonality in mind. The cost towards the training will be borne by the department.
- 9.2.3. Ensure convergence with training programmes of the government.
- 9.2.4. The Department will conduct Training Need Assessment (TNA) of homestay operators, select youths and women for skill building trainings and capacity development programmes.
- 9.2.5. Strategies will be adopted to periodically identify interested youths, operators, students, entrepreneurs for imparting capacity building and training for the homestay owners – Naturalist, Heritage Monument Guides, etc.
- 9.2.6. The Department will encourage and promote homestay owners to form small groups (cooperatives or societies) of homestay owners at village level, which is ideal for concerted efforts and boosting the community affinity required for such rural and culture based tourism.

9.3. Organic Farming

Tourism Department in association with the Department of Agriculture, Government of West Bengal will encourage local communities to adopt organic farming in their local areas through various skill-building programmes. Dovetailing organic farming with tourism package will increase the variety of recreational packages where tourists may plant a tree and learn the process of farms operation.

9.4. Familiarization Trips

Tourism Department will organize Familiarization Trips (FAM Trips) for the homestay operators to famous homestay organizations/ tourism entities promoting rural, cultural and nature tourism. This will be done in order to encourage the youths and women who are doing outstanding work in running homestay.

9.5. Pilot Projects for development of Model Homestays.

Tourism Department may develop Model Homestays as pilot projects in potential rural setups of the State. Tourism Department will organize FAM trips and showcase these pilot projects in the domestic and international platforms.

9.6. Marketing and Promotion

- 9.6.1. Department of Tourism will publish on its website, free of charge, the list of all approved homestay units. Brochures, leaflets, fliers, amongst others will be developed and disseminated at airports, railway stations and national and international travel marts.
- 9.6.2. Launch aggressive campaigns on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, etc for promoting homestays of the State.
- 9.6.3. West Bengal has a strong base for cultural fairs and festivals having immense potential to attract tourists. Homestay based tourism activities will be promoted as packages in major fairs and festivals of the State to ensure economic benefit of the local community.
- 9.6.4. Facilitate tie up with homestay service providers to provide market linkage to homestay owners for attracting wide range of market segments including young people, families and international tourists.
- 9.6.5. Invite travel bloggers around the world to promote local destinations of West Bengal
- 9.6.6. Tourism Department in association with industry chambers and associations will organize an annual event exclusively on promoting homestays. The platform will be used to honour individual/ organizations doing exemplary work in the field of homestay tourism in West Bengal.

By order of the Governor,

DR. SOUMITRA MOHAN, IAS
Secretary to the Government of West Bengal
Tourism Department

ANNEXURE A : Application Form for Registration of Homestays

1. Name of the Homestay Units (if any) :
2. Category applied for :
3. Name of the owner :
4. Father's /Husband's Name :
5. Age :
6. Postal address :
7. Contact Number (Tel. No., Mobile No., Fax, Email) :
8. Location of the Homestay along with full address :
9. Details of the building :
 - Area of existing house :
 - No of rooms :
 - No of bathrooms/Indian/Western toilets
 - Location Plan showing access to the Homestay from the main approach road
 - Proof of ownership of the house/property
10. Details of location
 - Plot number along with area of ownership :
 - Distance from nearest town (w.r.t. village) :
 - Distance from nearest railway station :
 - Distance from nearest airport :
 - Distance from nearest bus stand :
 - Distance from nearest shopping center :
 - Distance from nearest Hospital/Dispensary :
11. Nearest tourist spot (Please describe the tourist attractions nearby) :
12. Details of additional facilities, if available :
13. Registration No. :
(If registered earlier, attach a copy of the earlier Certificate of Registration issued by DM)
14. Application fee/Registration Fee details :

Classification	Classification/Reclassification fee (INR)	Details of DD
Category A (GOLD)	1000	
Category B (SILVER)	500	

The Demand Draft should be drawn in favour of District Magistrate on any scheduled bank payable at the district. The registration fee is non refundable in case of disqualification of registration. Please attach the DD with the application form.

15. Copy of documents enclosed along with the application :

Sl. No.	Documents Enclosed
1.	
2.	

16. Undertaking :

I have read and understood all the terms and conditions mentioned in the West Bengal Homestay Tourism Policy 2022 also with respect to the approval and registration of the Homestay units and hereby agree to abide by them. I further confirm that I shall abide by the same and such other conditions as may be laid down time to time by the Tourism Department for the Homestay Certification. I am not involved in any sort of illegal activities and shall adopt responsible tourism practices for integrated environment management around the surrounding areas. The information and documents provided are correct and authentic to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature :

Place :

Date :

Note :

- ✓ Submit the application form addressing the concerned District Magistrate along with the Demand Draft and documents in duplicate as under:
 - Proof of ownership of the house or property
 - Location plan showing access to the building from the major roads (need not be to scale)
 - If approved earlier, a copy of the earlier Certificate of Registration issued by the DM.
- ✓ After inspection of the house by the Inspection Committee of the District Magistrate, the DM will register the Homestay as per the classification norm and if applied the owner has to submit the difference of fee as per the classification criteria.

ANNEXURE B : Quality of Tourism Amenities

Sl. No.	Component	Maximum	Marking Criteria	Total Marks Allotted
1	Location	10	- Places of tourist destinations = 5 marks - Located at scenic place = 5 marks	
2	Exterior	10	- Exterior environment = 4 marks - Approach = 1 mark - Landscape = 2 marks - Exterior lighting = 2 marks - Parking = 1 mark	
3	Type of Building	8	- Heritage building, Farm houses, Estate bungalow = 8 marks - New construction in traditional architecture = 6 marks - Normal structure = 4 marks - Old tiled houses without much heritage value = 4 marks	
4	Guest Rooms	12	- Furniture = 6 marks - Furnishing = 2 marks - Comfortable with good quality linen & bedding = 2 marks - Comfortable bed = 1 mark - Decor = 2 marks - Room facilities and amenities = 2 marks (such as proper ventilation and lightings etc)	
5	Bathroom	10	- Facilities = 2 marks - Good Fittings = 3 marks - Clean Linen = 2 marks - Toiletries = 3 marks	
6	Public Areas	04	- Furniture = 2 marks - Decor = 2 marks	
7	Food	07	- Traditional cuisine = 3 marks - Multiple choice of cuisine = 2 marks - Fresh and good food quality = 2 marks	
8	Kitchen	07	- Cleanliness = 3 marks - State of repair = 2 marks - Proper storage of food = 2 marks (pest free and clean)	
9	Cleanliness and Hygiene	15	Overall Impression	
10	Safety & Security	07	- Public area and room security = 5 marks - Signage = 2 marks - Fire extinguisher	
11	Communications	02	- Phone Service = 1 mark - Internet access = 1 mark	

Sl. No.	Component	Maximum	Marking Criteria	Total Marks Allotted
12	Eco-friendly practices	08	• Proper waste management=2 marks • Proper recycling practices=2 marks • No plastic=1 mark • Water conservation/harvesting=1 mark • Pollution control air/water/sound/light=1 mark • Alternative energy usage=1 mark	

Note:

Class A (GOLD): 75 and above

Class B (SILVER): 50-74

Not qualified: less than 50

ANNEXURE C : Checklist of facilities mandatory for approval of Homestays

Sl. No.	Category	Details
1.	General	- Owner of the establishment or his /her family members should physically reside in the same unit proposed to operate as homestays - Clean and hygienic environment - Bedrooms, bathrooms, public areas and kitchens serviced daily while there are tourists - All floor surface clean and in good repair - Safety & Security
2.	Guest Rooms	- Minimum one lettable room and maximum 6 lettable rooms (12 beds) with attached Indian or western styled toilets. Western toilets are preferable and not mandatory. All rooms to have good ventilation. - Minimum size of bedroom excluding bathroom has to be 120 sq.ft - A clean change of bed and bath linen daily and between check-in - Minimum bed width for single is 3ft and double 5 ft - Mattress minimum 4 inches thick - coir, cotton, foam or spring " Minimum bedding 2 sheets, pillow, blanket, mattress, bedcover - Sufficient lighting - A 5 AMP earthed power socket - Chairs - preferably one per bedding - Wardrobe with minimum 4 cloth hangers per bedding - Shelves or drawer space - A wastepaper basket - Proper drinking water - A mirror, at least half length (3 feet)
3	Bathrooms	- Minimum size of bathroom 30 sq.ft. - Western toilet, if any, to have a seat and lid, toilet paper 1 bath towel and 1 hand towel to be provided per guest - Guest toiletries on request. Minimum 1 new soap/guest - A clothes-hook in each bath/shower room - A sanitary bin - Floors and walls to have non-porous surfaces - Hot and cold running water available 24 hours - Water saving taps/shower
4	Public Areas	- Telephone facility - Dining room with necessary furniture - Non-plastic crockery & glassware
5	Kitchen	- Refrigerator/oven depending upon the region - Daily germicidal cleaning of floors - Clean utensils - All food grade equipment, containers - Ventilation system - Purified drinking water - Garbage to be segregated - wet and dry and disposed/treated

ANNEXURE D: Police Clearance Certificate

This to certify that Mr./Ms./Mrs. _____ Son/daughter/wife of _____
residing at _____ since _____ and applying for registration of Homestay
Establishment under the West Bengal Homestay Tourism Policy 2022 bears a good reputation and there is no adverse
remarks and entries made against him/her or any other members of the family at this Police Station.

Signature of Police
Inspector of Concerned Police Station

Date:

Place:

ANNEXURE E: Certificate of Registration**Registration number****Date:**

It is certified that the house (located at) _____ Owned by Mr/Ms/Mrs _____
is registered for GOLD/ SILVER category under West Bengal Homestay Tourism Policy 2022.

This certificate is issued on _____ and shall remain valid till _____ or until further
orders whichever is earlier.

District Magistrate
(Name of the district)

Copy forwarded to:

- 1) ACS/Principal Secretary/ Secretary, Tourism Department
- 2) Concerned Superintendent of Police for information
- 3) Mr/Ms/Mrs _____ (name of the Homestay Owner)

District Magistrate
(Name of the district)

ANNEXURE F: Application for Renewal of Registration of Homestays

To

The District magistrate

(Name of the district)

Sir/Madam,

I hereby apply for renewal of certificate of Registration of the Homestay under West Bengal Homestay Tourism Policy 2022. Following are the details for the registration:

- ✓ Name of the Establishment with complete address
- ✓ Date of registration with date of validity (attach copy of certificate of registration)

As the period of validity of registration is expiring on _____, I request you to kindly renew the registration for another 3 (three) years on the terms and conditions as laid down under the West Bengal Homestay Tourism Policy 2022. I further attach Demand Draft No. _____ of Rs. _____ drawn in favour of District Magistrate as renewal fee.

Signature of Owner of the Homestay Unit

Date:

Place:

ANNEXURE G: Cancellation Form for Registered Homestays

To

The District Magistrate

..... district

Sir/Madam,

I hereby apply to cancel the certificate of registration of my Homestay under West Bengal Homestay Tourism Policy 2022. Following are the details for the registration:

- ✓ Name of the Establishment with complete address
- ✓ Date of registration (attach copy of certificate of registration)

Sincerely yours,

Signature of Owner of the Homestay Unit

Date:

Place: