

The Kolkata Gazette



सत्यमेव जयते

Extraordinary
Published by Authority

KARTIKA 12]

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2023

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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. 2288-TM/IT-24/2023

Date: 30.10.2023

NOTIFICATION

West Bengal Tourism Service Provider Capacity Building Scheme, 2023

1. Introduction

The Department of Tourism, Government of West Bengal is actively involved in strengthening of the Tourism sector. To ensure appropriate service standards across the State amongst the Service Providers, Government of West Bengal, Department of Tourism introduced the 'Guidelines for Recognition of Tourism Service Providers of West Bengal 2021'.

The Guidelines stipulated certain minimum educational qualification in Degree/Diploma in Tourism/Travel management which resulted in certain bottle necks due to which the desired numbers of Tourism Service Providers could not be registered and recognized. The Tourism Service Providers associations have requested to the Tourism Department for relaxation of the minimum education qualification to facilitate recognition of Tourism Service Providers. Tourism Department has since relaxed the requirement through Amendment of the Guidelines.

The Tourism Service Provider has a key role to play in attracting the tourists as they are the first point of contact with the tourists. The Tourism Service Providers play a significant role in designing and promoting the various kinds of products and destinations of the State for inbound tourists. Hence, it is crucial for Tourism Service Providers to be appropriately trained on communication skills and be well versed about the tourism destinations, culture and heritage of West Bengal. In this backdrop, the Tourism Department has felt the need for capacity building scheme for training of the service providers so that they will be able to provide standardized service in the tourism sector.

2. Sphere of work of Tour Operators, Travel Agents & Tourist Transport Operators

- 2.1 Tour Operator plans, promotes and operates tours and makes arrangements for transport, accommodation, sightseeing, entertainment and other tourism related services and activities for tourists visiting destinations within the state of West Bengal.

Tour Operator can be divided based on the tourism sector they are involved in:

- Inbound Tour Operator
- Domestic Tour Operator(Inter & Intra State)
- MICE Tour Operator
- Cruise Tour Operator
- Adventure Tour Operator

The definition of the above operators is as per the definition in the Guidelines for the Recognition of Tourism Service Providers of West Bengal, 2021.

- 2.2 A Travel Agent provides travel services and makes arrangements of travel related services such as tickets for travel by air, rail, ship, passport, visa or accommodation etc. for the tourists visiting West Bengal, including through the online mode. They may also arrange accommodation, tours, entertainment & other tourism related services directly or through tour operators.

- 2.3 Tourist Transport Operator (TTO) is one, who provides tourist transport like cars, coaches, boats etc. to tourists for transfers, sightseeing and journeys to tourist places etc. within West Bengal, including via online mode.

3. Eligibility

The Eligibility criteria for new and experienced Service Providers is as per the Guidelines for the Recognition of Tourism Service Providers of West Bengal, 2021. In addition, any amendments to the Guidelines will affect this scheme's eligibility criteria as well.

4. Registration Process

The Tourism Service Providers who are recognized under Recognition of Tourism Service Providers of West Bengal, 2021 but do not have stipulated minimum educational qualification will register for training on capacity building.

5. Course Outlay

- a. Mode and Duration of Course

The training module will be in physical mode for duration of 2 days for the Tourism Service Providers.

- b. Training Module

The module will consist of multiple aspect of the Tourism domain, Training module will be designed on topics such as Soft Skill training; Course on West Bengal with focus in multiple tourism sectors (such as MICE/River/Heritage/Culture/Adventure/etc.), Geographical and Historical background of the district; and local information of the tourist attractions.

This would be developed by Tourism Department in consultation with representatives from different associations of Tourism Service Provider. A brief outlay of the training module will be as below-

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|------------------------------|--|--|
| ● Soft skill training | ● Course on West Bengal and specific district's History & Geography | ● Local information |
| ○ Manner/ Etiquettes | ○ Overview on West Bengal as a tourist destination | ○ Hotels / Home stay facilities available near tourist destinations. |

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|------------------------|---|--|
| ○ Behavioral Skills | ○ Information on traditional tourism sub segments and upcoming tourism sub segments in West Bengal. | ○ Information on availability of connectivity of tourist destination via road, rail and air. |
| ○ Communication Skills | ○ Information on the top destinations, famous cuisines and festival of the state. | |
| ○ Language proficiency | ○ Information on top tourist districts including history and geography of the district. | |
| | ○ Information on popular tourism circuits. | |

c. Resource Person for the Training

The training will be conducted in two steps—

- Training of the Master Trainers : Master Trainers from each district would be shortlisted by the respective districts. The Trainers would be selected in consultation with Tourism Service Providers, Tourism Associations and relevant stakeholders. Each district may nominate – 2 - 4 Master Trainers. The course module for the Master Trainers will be created in collaboration with State Institute of Hotel Management. The Master Trainers would be trained by State Institute of Hotel Management and would receive certification from SIHM on successful completion of the course. Master Trainers need to meet the following minimum qualification to be eligible –
 - (A) 7 - 10 years of experience in travel and tourism industry
 - (B) Basic knowledge of West Bengal Tourism Ecosystem
 - (C) Should be able to communicate in English, Hindi and Bengali
- The Training of Master Trainers will be carried out zone-wise in following locations :
 - (A) Kolkata, South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly, Nadia at Institute of Hotel Management, Taratala, Kolkata.
 - (B) Purulia, Bankura, Paschim Bardhaman, Purba Bardhaman and Birbhum training at State Institute of Hotel Management (AAHORAN).
 - (C) Malda, Murshidabad, Dakshin Dinajpur and Uttar Dinajpur at Murshidabad.
 - (D) Purba Medinipur, Paschim Medinipur and Jhargram at any convenient place at Kharagpur.
 - (E) Coochbehar, Darjeeling, Alipurduar, Kalimpong and Jalpaiguri at Mainak Tourism Property, Siliguri.
- Training of the Service Providers : Master Trainers from respective district will provide the training to the recognized Service Providers of the respective district. The training would be conducted in the district at a suitable training center to be identified by district administration at the district headquarters/convenient locations as decided by the District Magistrate of the districts. Apart from physical training the service providers would also be provided soft copies of training material for their consumption post training.

Post completion of the course, each Tourism Service Provider would have to undergo an assessment (duration of assessment -1 -1.5 hours). Service Providers clearing the assessment would be furnished completion certificate. The assessment of each Tourism Service Provider would be carried out by districts and the consolidated report of assessment would be uploaded online for the Tourism Department. The District Magistrate of the district will furnish certificate towards completion of the training to the successful Tourism Service Providers and will upload the list of such successful trained Tourism Service Providers in the website of the respective districts.

6. Miscellaneous

- 6.1 The Registered Tourism Service Provider will be authorized to work in the State on a full-time basis independently or can be engaged by the stakeholders of the tourism sector.
- 6.2 Adequate provision for training (Including facility arrangement, printing cost of material, light snacks etc) has been budgeted for training of Master Trainers and Tourism Service Provider. Budgetary allocation of Rs 24,00,000 (including GST) for a period of 02 years has been made for training of Tourism Service Providers under the HOA 52-3452-80 — 003-00-002-98-00-V.
- 6.3 The Department reserves the right to suitably amend & modify the provisions in these schemes as suited to the evolving changes in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry.

This Scheme would become operational from the date of notification.

By order of the Governor,

NANDINI CHAKRAVORTY

Principal Secretary to the Government of West Bengal