

Standards for Tour Operator
Standards made by the Tourism Authority under Section 6(f) of the Tourism Authority Act

PART I

1. Background

1.1 Definition for Tour Operator

Presently, the Tourism Authority Act provides for Tour Operator only. Section 2 of the Tourism Authority Act 2006 defines a "tour operator" as:

“any person who, in respect of tourists and other persons, arranges for, advises on, or undertakes to provide -

- (a) accommodation;*
 - (b) destination management services;*
 - (c) travel arrangements in respect of inland travel;*
 - (d) organised excursions; or*
 - (e) such other facilities relating to the tourism industry as may be prescribed;*
- but does not include a person who holds -*
- (i) a taxi licence issued under the Road Traffic Act;*
 - (ii) a pleasure craft licence.”*

1.2 The term ‘Tour Operator’ includes the activities of **Tour Organiser, Destination Management Company, Outbound Tour Operator** and **Online Tour Operator** as described hereunder:

- i. **“Tour Organiser”** means a person who makes and sells locally-made arrangements for transport, excursions and trips inland or at sea and organises sightseeing on behalf of a Destination Management Company or free independent traveller.
- ii. **“Destination Management Company”** means a person who puts together itineraries comprising accommodation, activities, transportation and guest services that are contracted to international travel companies selling Mauritius as a tourist destination.
- iii. **“Outbound Tour Operator”** means a person who offers travel arrangements or packaged tours or other travel related services to people seeking to travel from Mauritius to foreign destinations.
- iv. **“Online Tour Operator”** means a person who:
 - a. is locally incorporated in Mauritius;

- b. sells, offers and markets travel arrangements including transportation, accommodation, excursions and other related activities online;
 - c. may market and sell the same services as a Destination Management Company online;
 - d. subcontracts such services through suppliers or third parties; and
 - e. may collect payment online.
- v. *but does not include a person who holds -*
(i) a taxi licence issued under the Road Traffic Act;
(ii) a pleasure craft licence.
- vi *The Authority may include such other facilities relating to the tourism industry as may be authorised;*

2. Scope of Services of a Destination Management Company

- a) provide services required for incoming tourists by experienced professionals, including but not limited to:
- accommodation
 - assistance at airport on arrival and for departure
 - transfers from airport to hotels and vice versa in private coaches and cars
 - makes travel arrangements in respect to inland travel
 - destination management services for MICE events (meetings, incentives, conferences and events (exhibitions)) and weddings
 - organisation of sightseeing tours with private coaches and cars and cruises with different kinds of vessels
 - organisation of any kind of special interest tours
 - professional and well-trained personnel including hotel representatives, tourist guides, airport staff and drivers.
- b) enter into contract with international outbound tour operators to act as their representative in the Republic of Mauritius and who is appointed to provide the above services to the clients of such tour operators.

3. Place of Business

3.1 Operators other than online tour operators shall have a place of business, where business transactions are executed.

3.2 Except for existing tour operators, new ones shall provide:

- a. an area of not less than 15 square meters as office space
- b. at least :
 - a reception area with sitting facilities
 - an office with desks, chairs, telephone and Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities
 - toilet facilities
- c. parking facilities as appropriate

3.3 Online Tour Operators

An Online Tour Operator shall have at least:

- a. professional ICT facilities and equipment;
- b. a permanent registered address;
- c. an interactive website; and
- d. online payment facilities through an accredited online payment system.

4. Information to prospective travellers

4.1 Any package displayed by an operator at his place of business or website or contained in any communication material (including leaflets and brochures) shall indicate inter alia, in a legible, comprehensible and accurate manner the:

- a. description of product/services on offer; and
- b. applicable prices at the date of booking.

NB: prices shall include all taxes and charges with no hidden costs.

4.2 Information to be provided by the operator shall include:

- i. general information on the destination (climate, time zone, exchange rate, hour of business);
- ii. the attractions to be visited, the different itineraries, meal plan (if any) and the proposed means of transport;
- iii. the type and rating of accommodation, its location, its main features, its meal plan and the accommodation website;
- iv. general information on passport and visa requirements
- v. health formalities required for the journey and stay;

- vi. mode of payment : the monetary amount or the percentage of the price which is to be paid upon reservation, and the schedule for payment of the outstanding balance;
- vii. cancellation policy.

4.3 A receipt (in paper or digital format) shall be issued for each transaction.

5. Staffing

5.1 Except for online tour operator, an operator shall at least have the following minimum personnel:

- (i) a manager with at least 5 years proven experience in a managerial position in the tourism industry (except for a tour organiser);
- (ii) one clerical staff with proven experience in the tourism or hotel industry;
- (iii) licensed tourist guide(s) if applicable;
- (iv) drivers holding a valid driving licence.

5.2 Staff shall be registered with the Tourism Employees Welfare Fund and for NPS/NPF.

5.3 A licensed operator must ensure that frontline staff are well groomed and can speak the relevant language suitable for the target market.

5.4 Condition 5.1 (i) shall also apply for online tour operator.

6. Transport facilities

6.1 The operator shall own or have a contract with one or more service provider(s) for the following:

- (i) a minimum of 3 cars, and
 - (ii) a minimum of 2 coaches
- with Public Service Vehicle Licence.

Copy of contract/MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)/ Letter of intent/copy of PSVL in case the Tour Operator owns the vehicles should be submitted to Tourism Authority at time of application.

6.2 At least 25% of car fleet shall be of either luxury Sedan, SUV or limousine type of 2000 cc for petrol and 2500 cc for diesel or electric or hybrid type.

Coaches shall be of luxury type, fully-built, air-conditioned with a minimum seating capacity of 7 passengers and fitted with public address and radio communication system.

6.3 Every vehicle shall:

not reckon more than five (5) years from the year of manufacture except for luxury Sedan, SUV or limousine type, which shall not be more than seven (7) years from the year of manufacture.

(i) have the company's name and logo imprinted at the rear and sides of the vehicle.

(ii) be equipped with :

- an air conditioning system
- clean and comfortable seats; and
- a first-aid kit

6.4 Drivers must be equipped with a mobile phone or any other communication device.

6.5 For coaches, the operator shall ensure that a licensed tourist guide is available for sightseeing tours.

6.6 Vehicles carrying persons with disabilities must at least be equipped with the necessary anchoring equipment, ramps and hoists.

6.7 An operator may subcontract services related to his business only to operators holding valid licences and insurance cover as at Para. (7) and satisfying all conditions of Para. (5).

6.8 The operator shall sign service agreements with subcontractors and carry out audits of vehicles, equipment, licences and insurance policies on a yearly basis.

7. Insurance

An operator must hold an insurance cover as may be prescribed by regulations under the Tourism Authority Act.

8. Health and Safety

An operator shall prepare a Safety & Risk Reduction Plan in accordance with international standards.

9. Records

An operator shall:

- i. keep a record of every transaction in English and in digital format or otherwise which he makes in relation to his business;
- ii. submit to the Tourism Authority a half yearly return of such records on or before 15 January and July of each calendar year and as may be requested.
- iii. keep every record relating to his business for a period of not less than 7 years for inspection upon request from competent authorities.

10. Investment by Non-citizens (Refer to Part II)

11. Prohibition

Only holders of Tourist Enterprise Licence for Tour Organiser, Destination Management Company, Outbound Tour Operator and Online Tour Operator shall be authorised to carry out activities as defined at paragraph 1.2.

*Tourism Authority
12 December 2017*

PART II

Criteria for Investment by Non-Citizens in Tour Operator

1. Local incorporation

The company must be locally incorporated.

2. Experience

The potential investor must reckon **at least 5 years experience** in tour operating activities.

3. Added value

The potential investor must bring added value and innovative schemes in the delivery of services.

4. Letter of Intent

The potential investor must produce a copy of letter of intent(s) or contract(s) from international tour operator(s) from the source market(s) where they intend to operate.

5. Bank Guarantee

The tour operator shall furnish and maintain a bank guarantee in the sum of **Rs 20 million** in favour of the Tourism Authority.

6. Passenger Liability Insurance

The tour operator shall have a Passenger Liability Insurance cover as may be prescribed by regulations made under the Tourism Authority Act.

The policy should be in the name of the Licensee.

7. Records

Upon the start of its operations, the tour operator will be required to -

- a. keep a record of every transaction which he makes in relation to his business.
- b. submit to the Tourism Authority a half yearly return of such records on or before 15th January and July of each calendar year.
- c. keep every record relating to his business for a period of not less than **7 years**.

8. Sustainability

The promoter should demonstrate how the project will benefit the local community.

Note: The above conditions will be over and above conditions imposed in the Standards for Tour Operator