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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

Block- 'A', 3rd floor, N.S. Building

1, Kiran Sankar Roy Road, Kolkata- 700 001

No. 883-TW/5T-58/2017

Dated, Kolkata, the 29th May, 2017.

NOTIFICATION

WHEREAS, the Governor is of opinion that it is necessary and expedient to introduce a Homestay Tourism Policy for holistic development of Tourism in the State.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Governor is pleased to approve Homestay Tourism Policy as under;

1. Short Title

The policy may be called “West Bengal Homestay Tourism Policy-2017”

2. Commencement and Duration:

Unless specifically mentioned, it shall come into effect on and from 1st January 2017 in the whole of West Bengal and shall remain valid till 31st March 2022.

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 a 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. The total number of tourists visiting West Bengal has been consistently increased over the last 5 years increasing from 23.46 million in 2011 to 71.67 million in 2015.

- 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.
- 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. Policy Period

West Bengal Homestay Tourism Policy 2017 will come into force from 1st January 2017 to 31st March 2022.

4. Strategic Objectives

- 4.1. 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.
- 4.2. Skill upgradation and capacity building of local communities to ensure standardization of services thereby enabling smooth functioning of homestays.
- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. Promote local cuisine of West Bengal across the world to make a mark on the international culinary map.
- 4.5. Undertake steps to promote rich and varied handicrafts of West Bengal for conservation and preservation of cultural heritage, traditions and customs.
- 4.6. Safeguard the interest of tourists to provide sensitive, proactive, comfortable and quick mechanism as also to provide an effective grievance system.
- 4.7. Ensure responsible tourism through developing guidelines to control tourists' behavior and provide a pleasant experience.
- 4.8. Promote Inclusive Tourism strategies through community based tourism ensuring equitable sharing of benefits to the local communities.

5. What is a Homestay in West Bengal ?

A place where the owner of establishment along with family is physically residing in the same establishment and letting out minimum one room and maximum six rooms (12 beds) with western styled 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.
- A Police Clearance Certificate should be attached with the application as per Annexure D.
- There should be an easy access from the road to the homestay.

6. Registration of Homestays

- 6.1. 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.wbtourism.gov.in) or District Magistrate's Office addressing the Director of Tourism, Government of West Bengal (GoWB) indicating the category of homestay applied along with the Demand Draft in favour of Managing Director, West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation (WBTDC), drawn on any scheduled bank payable at Kolkata in the format as per Annexure A to this policy. The registration fee is non-refundable in case of disqualification of registration.

The registration fees applicable for Category A and Category B are as under:

| Classification | Registration Fees (in INR) |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| For Category A | 1000 |
| For Category B | 500 |

- On receiving the application for registration, Department of Tourism (DoT) will provide an acknowledgement receipt to the applicant.
 - Upon receiving the application, the concerned homestay has to be ready for inspection by the private agency or prescribed authority as appointed by the Department of Tourism/District Magistrate. Police verification will be done in coordination with the members of the Selection Committee to ensure satisfactory reputation of the homestay owner including his/her family. Requests for deferment of inspection shall not be entertained.
- 6.2. There will be a Selection Committee constituted for recommending categorization of homestays, consisting of the following:

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Director – Department of Tourism | Chairman |
| Additional Director/Joint Director – Department of Tourism | Member Convenor |
| Representative of Managing Director – West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation | Member |
| Representative from concerned District Magistrate | Member |
| Representative from Ministry of Tourism, Government of India | Member |
| Representative from concerned Municipal Corporation | Member |
| Representative from Institute of Hotel Management, Kolkata | Member |
| Representative from State Institute of Hotel Management | Member |
| Representative from recognized Tour Operator Associations | Member |

The Chairman and any two members will form the quorum. The recommendation of the committee should be approved by the Principal Secretary, Department of Tourism.

- Based on the observations and recommendations of the Selection Committee, homestay unit will be certified under the prescribed classification and registered by the Department of Tourism, GoWB.
- The Selection 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 there will be no refund of the extra fee.
- Classification process would be finalized within 60 days from the date of receiving the application by the Director of Tourism.

6.3. Expiry of Certificate of Registration

- 6.3.1. Registration of the Homestay will be valid for 5 years from the date of issue of registration of certificate.
- 6.3.2. The registration will be renewable after 5 years on payment of registration fees as laid down in this policy for registration within 6 months of expiry. An inspection will be carried out through the Department of Tourism/concerned District Magistrate before renewal of registration of the homestay.
- 6.3.3. In case the applicant is failed to pay the renewal fee within specified time, DoT has the right to cancel the registration/classification of the Homestay.
- 6.3.4. DoT/concerned District Magistrate may cause inspection of the registered tourism units by their authorized representatives any time without prior intimation. In case of any violation of any regulation stipulated, DoT is free to take any action against the concerned homestay including cancellation of the registration.

7. Terms and Conditions for Registration of Homestays

- 7.1. All applications for classification and reclassification must be complete in all respects including application form, registration fee, certificates, amongst others. Incomplete applications shall be summarily rejected.
- 7.2. In case of any dissatisfaction of the applicant regarding classification of the homestay, the matter will be brought to notice in front of the Principal Secretary of Tourism, GoWB for resolution. The Principal Secretary of Tourism will take decision in a meeting with the Selection Committee members and the decision will be final and binding.
- 7.3. If the owner of the homestay unit wishes to cancel the registration, he/she may simply apply to the Director of Tourism as per the format mentioned in Annexure G.
- 7.4. 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://indianfrro.gov.in/frro/FormC>) along with passport details to the nearest police station as done by the hotels while accommodating foreign tourists.
- 7.5. 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 the members of the DoT/District Magistrate.
- 7.6. Department of Tourism, 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.

8. General Guidelines for Homestay Owners

- 8.1. 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:
 - ✓ Suggestion/Complaint
 - ✓ Tourist registration book
 - ✓ Bill Book duly numbered in duplicate

9. Information to be displayed by the Homestay Owners

- 9.1. 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 DoT
 - 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*):

10. Assistance from the State Government

10.1. Incentives and Concessions

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

- Exemption from paying Luxury Tax for 3 years on reimbursement basis as per the 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

10.2. Skill Upgradation and Capacity Building

- 10.2.1. 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.
- 10.2.2. 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.
- 10.2.3. Ensure convergence of training programmes with central government schemes like Hunar se Rozgar Tak Yojana of Ministry of Tourism and other Ministries.
- 10.2.4. The Department will conduct Training Need Assessment (TNA) of homestay operators, select youths and women for skill building trainings and capacity development programmes.

- 10.2.5. 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.
- 10.2.6. 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.

10.3. Organic Farming

Department of Tourism in association with the Department of Agriculture, GoWB 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.

10.4. Familiarization Trips

The 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 homestays.

10.5. Pilot Projects for development of Model Homestays

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

10.6. Marketing and Promotion

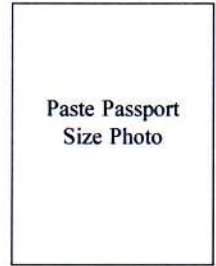
- 10.6.1. Department of Tourism will publish on its website, free of charge the list of all approved Homestay Units. Brochures, leaflets, fliers, amongst others will be developed and disseminated at airports, railway stations and national and international travel marts.
- 10.6.2. Launch aggressive campaigns on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc for promoting homestays of the State.
- 10.6.3. 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.
- 10.6.4. 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.
- 10.6.5. Invite travel bloggers around the world to promote local destinations of West Bengal
- 10.6.6. Department of Tourism in association with industry chambers and associations will organize an annual event exclusively on promoting homestays. The platform will be used to honour individual/organisations doing exemplary work in the field of homestay tourism in West Bengal.

By order of the Governor,

Principal Secretary to the Government of West Bengal.

ANNEXURE A: Application Form for Registration of Homestays

1. Name of the Homestay Unit (if any):
2. Category applied for:
3. Name of the owner:
4. Father'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/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 approved earlier, attach a copy of the earlier Certificate of Registration issued by DoT*)
14. Application fee / Registration Fee details:



| Classification | Classification/Reclassification fee (INR) | Details of DD |
|----------------|---|---------------|
| Category A | 1000 | |
| Category B | 500 | |

The Demand Draft should be drawn in favour of MD, WBTDCC on any scheduled bank payable at Kolkata. 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:

| Sr. No. | Documents Enclosed |
|---------|--------------------|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| | |

16. Undertaking:

I have read and understood all the terms and conditions mentioned in the Homestay Tourism Policy 2017 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 Department of Tourism 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 Director of Tourism, Government of West Bengal through concerned District Magistrate's Office 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*)
 - Police clearance certificate from Local Police Station Officer
 - If approved earlier, a copy of the earlier Certificate of Registration issued by the Department of Tourism.
- ✓ After inspection of the house by the private agency or prescribed authority as appointed by the Department of Tourism / District Magistrate, the DoT will register the Homestay as per the classification norm and if applied the owner has to submit the deference of fee as per the classification criteria.

ANNEXURE B: Quality of Tourism Amenities

| Sr. No. | Components | Maximum Marks | Marking Criteria | Total Marks Allotted |
|---------|-------------------------|---------------|--|----------------------|
| 1 | Location | 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Places of tourist destinations = 5 marks ● Located at scenic place = 5 marks | |
| 2 | Exterior | 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exterior environment = 4 marks ● Approach = 1 mark ● Landscape = 2 marks ● Exterior lighting = 2 marks ● Parking = 1 mark | |
| 3 | Type of Building | 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Furniture = 6 marks ● Furnishing = 2 marks ● Comfortable with good quality linen & bedding = 2 marks ● Comfortable bed = 1 marks ● Decor = 2 marks ● Room facilities and amenities = 2 marks (such as proper ventilation and lightings etc) | |
| 5 | Bathroom | 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilities = 2 marks ● Good Fittings = 3 marks ● Clean Linen = 2 marks ● Toiletries = 3 marks | |
| 6 | Public Areas | 04 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Furniture = 2 marks ● Decor = 2 marks | |
| 7 | Food | 07 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Traditional cuisine = 3 marks ● Multiple choice of cuisine = 2 marks ● Fresh and good food quality = 2 marks | |
| 8 | Kitchen | 07 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cleanliness = 3 marks ● State of repair = 2 marks ● Proper storage of food = 2 marks (pest free and Clean) | |
| 9 | Cleanliness and Hygiene | 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overall Impression | |
| 10 | Safety & Security | 07 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public area and room security = 5 marks ● Signage = 2 marks | |
| 11 | Communications | 02 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phone Service= 1 mark | |
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internet access = 1 mark | |

| Sr. No. | Components | Maximum Marks | Marking Criteria | Total Marks Allotted |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 12 | Eco-friendly practices | 08 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 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 Class) : 75 and above

Class B (Silver Class) : 50 - 74

Not qualified – Less than 50

ANNEXURE C: Checklist of facilities mandatory for approval of Homestays

| Sr. No. | Category | Details |
|---------|--------------|---|
| 1 | General | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Owner of the establishment 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minimum one lettable room and maximum 6 lettable rooms (12 beds) with attached western styled toilets. 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minimum size of bathroom 30 sq.ft ● Each western toilet 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Telephone facility ● Dining room with necessary furniture ● Non-plastic crockery & glassware |
| 5 | Kitchen | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 2017 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

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 2017.

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

Director of Tourism
Government of West Bengal

Copy forwarded to:

- 1) Concerned District Magistrate
- 2) Concerned Superintendent of Police for information
- 3) Mr/ Ms/ Mrs _____ of the Homestay Owner

Director of Tourism
Government of West Bengal

ANNEXURE F: Application for Renewal of Registration of Homestays

To,
The Director of Tourism,
Government of West Bengal

Sir,

I hereby apply for renewal of certificate of Registration of the Homestay under West Bengal Homestay Tourism Policy 2017. 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 _____, so I request you to renew the registration for another 5 years on the terms and conditions as laid down under the West Bengal Homestay Tourism Policy 2017. I further attach Demand Draft No. _____ payable to WBTDc as renewal fee.

Signature of Owner of the Homestay Unit

Date :

Place :

ANNEXURE G: Cancellation Form for Registered Homestays

To,

The Director of Tourism,
Government of West Bengal

Sir,

I hereby apply to cancel the certificate of registration of my Homestay under West Bengal Homestay Tourism Policy 2017. Following are the details for the registration:

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

Sincerely,

Signature of Owner of the Homestay Unit

Date :

Place :

By order of the Governor,

Principal Secretary to the Government of West Bengal.