

Guideline for Development and Classification of Hotels

1. Introduction

Hotels are an important component of tourism catering to international, regional or domestic guests. In recent times, the inflow of tourist continues to register significant growth in visitation both by international and regional tourists. Accordingly, growth in the number of hotels at all levels across the country is envisaged to continue.

In general, hotels for tourist accommodation are classified with a star-rating system based on the Accommodation Classification Standards 2016-2020 adopted by the Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) to adhere to the overall tourism policy of “High Value, Low Impact”. Currently, it is mandatory that international and regional tourists are hosted in a minimum of three star accommodation facilities. The Tourism Council of Bhutan monitors compliance of star rated hotels to the prescribed requirements. The focus of compliance monitoring currently is in 3-Star and above hotels, although classification guidelines also exist for one and two star hotels.

2. Rationale for Standardization of Basic Facilities in Hotels

Generally, a hotel is an establishment that provides paid lodging on a short-term basis providing its guests a clean, comfortable and safe place to stay. With the improvement in the transport infrastructure as well as the increased mobility of people, there is increasing demand for hotel facilities in different parts of the country. Added to this, the tourist attraction of the country draws large number of outside guests on short term visits. Accordingly, the demands for hotels at all levels have commensurately increased leading to development of different types of facilities. However, no uniform standard exists for hotels outside the star rating system nor is there a proper mechanism in place to monitor the quality and level of services provided. Thus, there is a need for basic standard setting and monitoring of these hotels. This has brought about the necessity to draw up basic standards for hotel as the safety, security and quality of services are critical to provide a comfortable stay to guests visiting the country as well as Bhutanese travellers.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to streamline/determine basic requirements for a hotel; set standards for hotels catering to e-permit system for regional tourists during the interim period as well as to establish a minimum standard for hotel catering to domestic travellers; and put in place effective monitoring mechanism.

4. Legal Context

The 8/2 Tourism Council Meeting held on 22nd June 2017 decided to “...TCB in collaboration with Ministry of Economic Affairs (MoEA) to draw up strategies to ensure that tourists are not kept in hired buildings and residences that are not certified/licensed by either TCB or MoEA. Further, MoEA to develop a strategy on

budget hotels by looking at past trends of number of budget hotels. Indicate whether TCB or MoEA will license and monitor budget hotels....”

The main aim of the meeting was to develop standards for hotels not covered under the star rating system to ensure safety, security and comfort of guests in all types of hotels in the country. Accordingly, as conveyed by Hon'ble Tengye Lyonpo, the Ministry of Economic Affairs was directed to develop basic standards for two categories of hotels namely i) Basic Facilities in any type of hotel; and ii) Basic Facilities in Hotels that can host regional tourist in the interim period.

5. Classification and Standardization of Hotel for Basic (B) and Basic+ (B+)

Besides the existing TCB hotel classification, the following types of hotels have been determined.

5.1 Category B: Basic Standard

All hotels in the country shall have the basic facilities and services specified under B category in the attached *Annex-I* to be eligible to host guests other than the regional tourists. This is to provide basic comfort, safety, health and hygiene in all hotels across the country.

5.2 Category B+: Basic Standard Plus

While the policy requires all tourists to be accommodated in three star and above hotels, there is shortage of such accommodation. Further, the demand for lodging from regional tourists exists in non-star rated hotels. Accordingly, the Ministry was directed to draw up the minimum standards required of any hotel to accommodate regional tourists. Accordingly, incremental basic requirements are proposed for hotels in B+ category as listed in the attached *Annex-II*.

5.3 Restaurant Services

This guideline does not set mandatory requirements to have restaurant in all hotels. However, if a hotel also has restaurant services, the standard for restaurant shall be in conformity to the rules and regulations of Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA). Restaurants shall be regulated by BAFRA.

6. Accommodation of Tourists

Subject to the directives of the Government on the type of hotels where accommodation may be provided, all hotels hosting tourists shall be required the following:

6.1 Registration with TCB

Hotels provided with access to e-permit system and permitted to host tourists shall register with the Tourism Council of Bhutan. TCB shall display the list of registered hotels in its website. Business License for this type of hotel shall be issued upon recommendation of TCB.

6.2 *Information sharing*

All hotels eligible to provide accommodation to tourists shall comply with the immigration system requirements and information sharing with the TCB, to ensure smooth movement and stay of the guests as well as necessary checks and record keeping by the relevant agencies. The TCB may prescribe the same at the time of registration.

7. Inspection and Monitoring of Hotels

7.1 *Hotels hosting Tourists*

The Tourism Council of Bhutan shall monitor all star rated hotels and hotels permitted to accommodate tourists as per the prescribed requirements. Further, taking cognizance of the manpower shortage with TCB, the compliance monitoring of B+ category hotels shall be carried out jointly by TCB and MoEA until the time the institutional set up and requisite capacity is developed in TCB. Should the hotel fail to maintain the prescribed standard, the hotels may not be allowed to host regional tourists.

7.2 *Other Hotels*

The Ministry of Economic Affairs through its Regional Trade and Industry Offices/ Dzongkhag Trade and Industry Offices shall inspect and monitor other hotels based on the B category requirements for hotels in the country. The Department of Cottage and Small Industry (DCSI)/ Department of Industry (DoI) shall be the apex agency for them.

8. Timeframe for Compliance

Existing hotels shall be provided a timeframe of two years from the date of the adoption of this guideline to conform to the B category standards. A review of the compliance shall be carried out after two years.

9. Establishment of New Hotels

All new hotels shall follow the requirements set for the different types of hotels based on their target customers. While the local government authority shall be responsible for approving hotel construction as per this guideline, the classification of hotels shall be carried out by DCSI/DoI upon completion of the hotel construction and inspection of hotels. This guideline shall be circulated to local government authorities responsible for approving hotel construction for necessary incorporation of the standards required in hotels. The guideline shall also be readily available from the RTIOs and websites.

Basic Standards for B Category Hotels		
Areas		Standards
Hotel Building	1	Hotel shall be constructed in conformity with existing building rules in vogue
	2	Hotel shall have at least 4 rooms
General	3	Proper signage to guide to the main entrance and guest rooms
	4	Corridors and stairs shall have proper lighting
	5	Should have proper designated entrance and directions
	6	Hotel premises shall be properly maintained at all times
	7	All furniture and equipment shall be of good quality, functional and well maintained
	8	Water supply shall meet the drinking water standard
	9	Proper segregation and disposal of waste
Safety and Security	10	Up-to-date fire extinguisher and first aid kits
Room Specification	11	All rooms shall have independent entrance with clear room numbering
	12	Minimum size of single rooms shall be 6 sq. meters
	13	Minimum size of double rooms shall be 7sq. meters
	14	All rooms shall have a window or proper ventilation
	15	Minimum size of bathroom shall be 2 sq. meters
	16	At least 50 % of the rooms shall have attached bathroom with the rest provided with access to bathroom on the same floor level
Room Facilities	17	Single bed size shall be at least 90 cm x 190cm
	18	Double bed size shall be at least 150 cm x 190 cm
	19	Mattress shall not be less than 10 cm thick, comfortable and in good hygienic condition
	20	Windows and door locking devices shall be technically fit with a spy hole or chain lock
	21	Appropriate window curtains
	22	Minimum one power socket in the room
	23	Standard rubbish bin (hygienically maintained)
	24	Clean bed sheets, pillow and case, blanket and/or quilt
	25	Adequate cooling and heating system
	26	Each room shall have independent control switches
	27	Regular change of bed linen/towels
	28	Room shall be clean and well maintained

	29	Proper lighting with adequate reading lights
Bathroom Facilities	30	24 hours water supply
	31	Rug/bath mat in front of the bathroom door
	32	Standard rubbish bin (hygienically maintained)
	33	Proper lighting
	34	Bathroom shall be clean and dry
General Services	35	Daily cleaning of hotel premises
	36	Daily room cleaning
	37	Trained staff to handle fire extinguisher and first aid kits

Pl. note: Bathroom means a facility with shower as well as toilet

Basic Standards for B+ Hotels		
Areas		Standards
Hotel Building	1	Hotel shall be constructed in conformity with existing building rules in vogue
	2	Hotel shall have at least 4 rooms
General	3	Proper signage to guide to the main entrance and guest rooms
	4	Corridors and stairs shall have proper lighting
	5	Should have proper designated entrance and directions
	6	Hotel premises shall be properly maintained at all times
	7	All furniture and equipment shall be of good quality, functional and well maintained
	8	Water supply shall meet the drinking water standard
	9	Proper segregation and disposal of waste
	10	Hotel shall have staff changing room (uniform to be provided for hygiene and standard)
	11	Hotel shall have common restroom
Reception Area	12	Proper reception counter
	13	Seating facilities for guests in the reception area
Safety and Security	14	Up-to-date fire extinguisher and first aid kits
	15	Proper fire exit signage
Room Specification	16	All rooms shall have independent entrance with clear room numbering
	17	Minimum size of single rooms shall be 7 sq. meters
	18	Minimum size of double rooms shall be 9 sq. meters
	19	All rooms shall have a window or proper ventilation
	20	Minimum size of bathroom shall be 3 sq. meters
	21	All rooms shall have attached bathroom with proper ventilation
Room Facilities	22	Single bed size shall be at least 90 cm x 190cm
	23	Double bed size shall be at least 150 cm x 190 cm
	24	Mattress shall not be less than 14 cm thick, comfortable and in good hygienic condition
	25	Windows and door locking devices shall be technically fit with a spy hole or chain lock
	26	Each room shall have low sitting chairs (1 per guest) with a table

	27	Appropriate window curtains
	28	Sheer Curtains
	29	Each room shall have a Wardrobe/shelf and luggage rack
	30	Dressing mirror
	31	Intercom facilities
	32	Information folder (services and facilities maintained)
	33	Minimum one power socket in the room
	34	Standard rubbish bin (hygienically maintained)
	35	Clean bed sheets, pillow and case, blanket and/or quilt
	36	Provision for additional pillow upon request
	37	Provision for additional blanket/quilt upon request
	38	Provision for additional bed upon request
	39	Adequate cooling and heating system
	40	Each room shall have independent control switches
	41	Regular change of bed linen/towels
	42	Room shall be clean and well maintained
	43	Proper lighting with adequate reading lights
Bathroom Facilities	44	24 hours water supply
	45	24 hours hot water supply(geysers or central heating system)
	46	All bathrooms shall have a wash basin with mirror
	47	Towel hooks/rails in the bathroom
	48	One clean bath towel per guest and new soap
	49	Rug/bath mat in front of the bathroom door
	50	Standard rubbish bin (hygienically maintained)
	51	Proper lighting
	52	Bathroom shall be stocked with toilet paper
	53	Bathroom shall be clean and dry
General Services	54	Daily cleaning of hotel premises
	55	Provision for filtered hot and cold drinking water
	56	English-speaking staff
	57	Daily room cleaning
	58	Reception desk open 16 hours and on call 24 hrs
	59	Luggage service on request
	60	Laundrying and ironing service on request

	61	Complaints from guests are processed seriously (proper documentation to be maintained)
	62	One trained manager and at least 50% of the staff should be trained in basic hospitality
	63	At least one staff for every two rooms
	64	Trained staff to handle fire extinguisher and first aid kits

Pl. note: Bathroom means a facility with shower as well as toilet