

**Standard Operating Procedure
for
facilitation of business guests in Trading Sector
under Non-Tourist Category (Amended) –
May 2025**

Department of Trade
Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment
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Standard Operating Procedure for facilitation of business guests in Trading Sector under Non-Tourist Category (Amended) - May 2025

1. Background

In pursuant to Serial No 17 of the Guidelines issued by the Cabinet Secretary vide Letter No:C-3/7SLZ/2023/1657 dated 1 June 2023, the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment (MoICE) adopted this SOP from 1st August 2023 to facilitate the visit of business guests of corporations and business entities under the trading sector to Bhutan.

In order to reduce administrative burden, streamline the process and incorporating feedback received from relevant stakeholders, the MoICE revised and approved the amended SOP on 28th April 2025 during the 22nd PPCM meeting. The amended SOP comes into effect from 1st May, 2025.

2. Scope

The SOP outlines necessary procedures, processes and documentations required to be fulfilled for processing visa/entry permits for business related visits to Bhutan. The application of this SOP is limited to business falling under the trading sector only.

3. Title/Commencement

This SOP shall be called the ‘Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Approval of Business Guest Visa/Permit for trading sector under Non-Tourist Categories (Amended) and shall remain in force till further notice.

4. Eligibility

3.1. All trading businesses, with the exception of those holding Micro Trade Registration Certificate, are eligible to apply for Recommendation letter to process for business visa/entry permits related to their businesses. The requests for the visit must be directly related to the core business and shall be for the following purposes only.

- a. Business Expansion/support in setting up of Showroom/technical backup services
- b. Product inspection and Monitoring of expired/damaged goods.
- c. Business meeting/workshop for knowledge transfer.
- d. Participation in approved trade fairs conducted by legitimate and licensed organizers in Bhutan.

Bill/due collection will not be eligible under this SOP and will be governed separately by the SOP for Entry Permit for Business Person/Merchant 2024 issued by Department of Immigration.

3.2. The destination of visits of the business guest(s) shall be limited to the actual location of operation of business with EXCEPTION to the following business visits upon submission of documentary evidences:

- a. To provide technical backup services.
- b. Installation of equipment/Infrastructure.
- c. Expansion of business.
- d. To visit sources of exportable products.

5. Number of guests

- a. Three business guests shall be facilitated at a time for any business categories under the trading sector. The request for more than three business guests may be approved by the Ministry on genuine grounds.
- b. Trade Fair invitees shall be limited to a maximum of two participants per company. Any additional requirements may be approved by the Ministry on genuine grounds.

6. Duration and Frequency of Visits.

Subject to the fulfillment of the conditions mentioned under sub section 3.1 of this SOP, the duration and frequency of the visits/invitations shall be limited as follows:

- a. Duration of maximum of five days including travel shall be facilitated for a single visit.
- b. Permissible duration of stay for trade fair participants shall be for actual duration of fair excluding travel time.
- c. A maximum of three visits/invitations for business guests in a year for retail traders.
- d. A maximum of five visits/invitations for business guest(s) in a year for large scale retail business and Wholesale/Dealership businesses.
- e. However, business guest visas/permits applications requiring additional days beyond the permissible period/duration, extension may be approved by the Ministry/Department on genuine grounds.

7. Requirements

The proponents shall submit a duly completed Business Guest Application Form Annexure I with the following supporting documents to the MoICE at least two three working days before the proposed visit.

- a. Detail of previous visits
- b. A Copy of valid Trade License
- c. A copy of the guest(s) passport with more than six months validity, OR
- d. A copy of a valid Voter Card
- e. Credentials of the guest(s)- Company profile/membership card of business chamber/Trader association.
- f. Detailed day wise program/travel itinerary.
- g. Invitation letter from Bhutanese trader

8. Procedures

The proponent/Guest shall submit the duly completed form as mentioned under Section 7 (Requirements) to the Department of Trade (DoT) via dotvisa@moice.gov.bt or other digital platforms that are subsequently rolled out. The DoT shall then process the applications as below:

- a. The authorized official shall review the application and process for issuance of Recommendation letter with details as specified in **Annexure I**.
- b. The authorized official shall share the status of the application as and when enquired by the proponent.
- c. The Department shall review, verify and submit verification note to the Secretary of MoICE for approval.
- d. The focal official shall maintain records of the applicants for future reference.
- e. The authorized officials may also facilitate manual submission of applications as part of service delivery and during redundancy.

9. Turn Around Time (TAT)

The DoT shall, subject to fulfillment of all conditions stipulated in the SOP, process and convey the final status within two working days from the receipt of the application.

10. Authority

The MoICE shall be the sole authority for issuing a Recommendation letter for all business - related visits. The focal agency for implementation of this SOP is the DoT. The issuance of the Recommendation Letter shall be subject to fulfillment of all conditions laid down in this SOP and does not guarantee the approval of VISA/Entry permit. The final authority shall rest with the concerned authority.

11. Accountability

The invitee shall be held accountable in the event:

- a. of any misuse of VISA/Entry Permit by their business guest
- b. of providing any false information knowingly or unknowingly while processing a VISA/Entry permit.

12. Penalty.

In the event of any misuse as stated in Section 11 above, the MoICE shall :

- a. not facilitate recommendation for visa in favour of guest(s) involved in violation for a period of one year, and
- b. levy fines and penalties on the invitee in accordance with Trade and Industry Rules, 2023 and other relevant regulations in place.

13. Amendment and Interpretation.

The MoICE reserves the right to amend and interpret the provisions of this SOP.

**DEPARTMENT OF TRADE
MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND EMPLOYMENT
ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN**

APPLICATION FORM FOR BUSINESS GUEST (For Bhutanese Trader)

- 1 **Name of the applicant in full** :.....
- 2 **Designation/Position Title** :.....
- 3 **Citizenship Identity Card No** :.....
- Phone/Mobile No** :.....
- Email Address** :.....
- 4 **Business Establishment Name** :.....
(Retail / Wholesale) Tick your registered business category
- 5 **Business License No** :.....
6. **Location of business** :.....

7 a) Detail of guest(s)

Name of the guest(s)	Nationality	Gender	Passport No/Voter Card No
1.			
2.			
3.			

b) Additional Information of the guest(s)

Name of the guest	Designation/Position Title	Business name and address
1.		
2.		
3.		

C) Duration of visit and address in Bhutan

From	To	No. of days (Duration)	Name of the hotel the guest is staying

8. Detailed reason(s) for visit (Separate sheet may be attached if necessary)

.....

9. Detail of previous visit of any guest(s) invited.

Name of the guest

Country

Date of visit

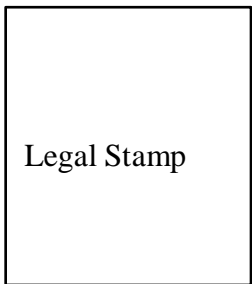
i) _____ ii) _____ i) _____

i) _____ ii) _____ iii) _____

i) _____ ii) _____ iii) _____

9. Declaration

- a) I hereby declare that all the information furnished by me in this application is true and correct. Should any false or misleading information be provided or this privilege be abused then the applicant is liable to be penalized. I also agree to abide by the following conditions for the issue of a “Business Guest Visa” for the above-mentioned person.
- b) The visiting guest is not a tourist and, in the event, it is established that the guest is a tourist, I undertake to refund the entire tourist charges and bear the applicable fines as may be imposed by the relevant Agencies.
- c) Be responsible for the cost of his/her stay in the kingdom and repatriation thereof, if necessary.
- d) Comply with the provisions of the Immigration Act and any regulations made thereunder or any notification thereof for the time being in force in the Kingdom of Bhutan.
- e) Not engage in any form of employment paid or unpaid unless he/she is holding a work permit or in any business, profession or occupation or any activity and does not engage in any activities detrimental to the security, reputation and well-being of the Kingdom.



(Signature of the applicant)

Checklist of documents required for Business Guest Visa recommendation:

1. Duly completed BusinessGuest application form	
2. A copy of Trade License	
3. Credentials of the guest(s)- Company profile/membership card of bus chamber/Trader association.	
4. A copy of Passport/voter card of the guest (<i>The passport must be valid for at least six months from the intended date of departure from Bhutan</i>)	
5. Detailed day wise program of the visit.	

Important information for the applicant:

1. The duration of the visa will be for five days including travel period for a single visit and an undertaking to this effect will have to be signed by the Bhutanese applicant or his/her authorized person (legal stamp required).
2. The frequency of visits/invitations shall be limited to a maximum of three visits/invitations for any business guests in a year and no more than three guests shall be facilitated at a time.
3. The duly completed business visa application form along with required supporting documents shall be submitted to Department of Trade via dotvisa@gmail.com atleast **three** working days before the intended visits.
4. After receiving the complete set of documents, the Department of Trade will process them and convey the status within **two** working days.
5. For any clarification and queries, please submit them to us via dotvisa@gmail.com



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 ཚོང་འབྲེལ་ལས་ཁུངས་ རྩམ་སྤྲུག་།

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ANNEXURE II

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE
 MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND EMPLOYMENT
 ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN

BUSINESS VISA VERIFICATION NOTE

1. Detail of the applicant.

Name of the applicant & Designation	
Business Establishment Name	
License category (Retail/Wholesale)	
Business License No	
Contact No	
Email Address	
Location/address of business	

2. Details of guest(s):

Name of the guest(s)	Passport/voter card No	Nationality	Gender
Guest 1:			
Guest 2:			
Guest 3:			
Occupation/Job Title of the guest(s) :			
Guest 1.			
Guest 2.			
Guest 3.			
Work place/home address of the visiting guest:			

3. Duration of visit.

Arrival Date	Visit/Meeting Date	Departure Date	Total Days	Destination of visit

4. Purpose of visit.

5. Recommendation /Remarks.

Document checked and verified by:

Cross-checked and endorsed by:

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Authorized Officer

()
Division Chief

()
Head of the Department

SECRETARY