



Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for assessment and certification of 1 Star and 2 Star Hotels

Background

Subsequent to the Lhengye Zhungtshog order vide letter no. C-3/141/2023/1612 dated April 24, 2023, hotels below 3 star rating are allowed to provide services to tourists, subject to fulfillment of the minimum standards set by the Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment. Accordingly, non-star hotels meeting the criteria for Blue Poppy 1 and Blue Poppy 2 based on the assessment conducted by the Department of Tourism have been awarded One-Star and Two-Star rating, respectively.

Non-star hotels yet to be assessed by the Department are required to apply to respective dzongkhags for assessment and meet the minimum standards if they are interested to provide services to tourists.

Title

1. This document will be called the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Assessment and Certification of One-Star and Two-Star Hotels.

Objective

2. This SOP has been prepared with the objective to guide:
 - a) Hoteliers through the application procedures and requirements for one-star and two-star assessment and certification
 - b) Dzongkhags to ensure effective, efficient and timely conduct of assessment

Application Process

3. The application for assessment and certification of one-star and two-star hotels as well as for up-gradation from one-star to two-star should be addressed to Dasho Dzongda of the concerned Dzongkhag. The application should be accompanied by following documents:
 - a) Copy of the valid trade license
 - b) Copy of the occupancy certificate
 - c) Duly completed self-evaluation form (Attached as Annexure I)
 - d) Pictorial evidence of key facilities such as exterior of the structure, reception/lobby, restaurant, kitchen, guestrooms and bathrooms, common restrooms, staff facilities (locker room, cafeteria, and toilet)



- e) Duly filled staff details form (Attached as Annexure II)
- f) Copy of Bhutan Food and Drug Authority (BFDA) certificate

4. The Dzongkhag Administration will review the required documents within 7 working days from the date of receipt of the application. If the application is found to be incomplete, the Dzongkhag Administration will inform the applicant to submit the required documents. On other hand, if the application is deemed to be complete in all respects, the Dzongkhag Administration will communicate the date of assessment to the applicant.

Physical inspection and assessment

- 5. The physical inspection and assessment of the hotel will be carried out by a team of 3 Dzongkhag officials who have undergone the hotel assessors training conducted by the Department of Tourism or any agency/ institution as may be designated by the Department.
- 6. The owner or manager of the hotel should be present at the time of assessment to accompany the assessment team throughout the property.
- 7. Assessment should be conducted as per the Standards and Code of conduct for hotel assessors (Attached as annexure I and III respectively)
- 8. The assessment team will send the report as per the format (Attached as Annexure IV) with a cover letter signed by Dasho Dzongda to the applicant within 7 working days from the date of assessment. Among others, the cover letter will mention whether the star rating is approved or not.
- 9. The applicant should inform the Dzongkhag Administration in writing if there are queries or clarifications within 7 working days from the receipt of the assessment report. If no response is received within the stipulated timeline, the Dzongkhag Administration will consider the report as endorsed.
- 10. In the event that the hotel is found to be ineligible for one or two star rating, the applicant may reapply for assessment to the Dzongkhag Administration upon implementation of the recommendations highlighted in the assessment report.
- 11. The Dzongkhag Administration should seek guidance and support if required from the Regional Office of Industry, Commerce and Employment (ROICE).



Star Signage and registration

12. Hotels approved for one star or two star rating will receive a digital copy of the star signage signed by Dasho Dzongda.
13. Star signage will be valid for a period of 3 years and should be displayed at the reception areas as per the specification (Attached as Annexure V)
14. To renew the validity of the star signage, the hotel should apply to the Dzongkhag Administration for assessment 3 months prior to the expiry of the validity period.
15. The list of hotels approved for one star or two star rating along with their details should be uploaded on the website of the Dzongkhag Administration. The same list should be sent to the Department of Tourism to be posted on its website.
16. If a tourist accommodation hotel registration is suspended or revoked, the proprietor must remove the star signage with immediate effect.

Appeal Procedure

17. In the event that the applicant is not satisfied with the decision of the assessment team, the applicant may appeal to the Grievance Redressal Committee or any equivalent Committee in the Dzongkhag.

Composition of the Grievance Redressal Committee

18. The Committee will:
 - a) Be chaired by Dasho Dzongda or a representative nominated by him/her
 - b) Have 4 members from relevant agencies in addition to the chairperson.
 - c) Identify the Economic Development and Marketing Officer (EDMO) as the Member Secretary. In those Dzongkhags without EDMOs, the chairperson shall designate an official to function as the Member Secretary



Functions of the Committee

19. The Committee will review the complaints received formally in writing from hoteliers
20. The Committee will ensure that the decision taken is fair, transparent and objective
21. All members will be accountable for the decision taken
22. All members must declare Conflict of Interest
23. The Chair of the committee shall facilitate the meetings and summarize the final decisions at the end of the meeting

Appeal process

24. The Committee should deliberate on the appeal within 7 working days from the date of the appeal received, and form another assessment team if required.
25. Assessment should be conducted by the assessment team within 7 working days after the formation of the team
26. The assessment team should submit an assessment report within 5 working days after the assessment
27. The Committee after receiving the assessment report, should then render the final decision within 7 working days.
28. The Member Secretary should convey the decision the Committee to the appellant with a cover letter signed by Dasho Dzungda
29. The appellant aggrieved by the decision may appeal to the Department of Tourism within 10 working days after receiving the decision of the Committee
30. DOT should deliberate on the appeal within 10 working days from the date of the appeal received, and form an assessment team, if required.
31. The assessment team should submit an assessment report within 5 working days after completion of the assessment.
32. DOT after receiving the assessment report, should render the final decision within 10 working days.

**** DOT shall accept such appeal only after it has been reviewed by the Grievance Redressal Committee.**



Monitoring

33. The Dzongkhag Administration will:

- a) conduct regular monitoring at least on a quarterly basis to ensure that hotels comply with the required standards
- b) share the monitoring report with the hotels within 7 working days after the monitoring visit
- c) take action as per TRR 2022 if the hotels do not comply with the required standards
- d) carry out joint monitoring in collaboration with DOT and RoICE as and when required.

34. The Department of Tourism will review and improve the SOP from time to time based on feedback from Dzongkhags.