



**GUIDELINES FOR TOURS/TREKS FOR  
EXPATRIATES AND THEIR DEPENDENTS BASED  
IN BHUTAN 2021**

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**A. Title**

1. These guidelines shall be called the “Guidelines for tours/treks for expatriates and their dependents based in Bhutan 2021” (hereinafter “Guidelines”)

**B. Commencement**

2. These Guidelines shall come into force on 17 December 2021 and shall remain valid until further notice.

**C. Rationale**

3. Like Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) paying tourists, there is a growing trend and demand by expatriates and their dependents based in Bhutan to go for tours and treks. At present, there are no guidelines to govern trekking and tours for expatriates based in the country. In this context, the Guidelines have been drafted so that trekking and tours by expats based in Bhutan can be facilitated in an organized manner as is the case for SDF paying tourists.

**D. Purpose and Objective**

4. The purpose and objective of the Guidelines is to:
  - (i) document, regulate and manage trekking/tours by expatriates
  - (ii) ensure expatriates have a good and enjoyable experience
  - (iii) ensure the safety and well-being of expatriates
  - (iv) ensure hassle free and well organized trekking/tours at par with tourist standards
  - (v) ensure compliance with norms, sensitivities and requirements during tours/treks
  - (vi) generate revenue for the government
  - (vii) provide business opportunities for TCB certified travel companies
  - (viii) ensure accountability and security for both the service provider and client

**E. Categories**

5. The following are the categories of expatriates based in the country:
  - (i) Diplomats and their dependents
  - (ii) Officials of international organizations such as the UN bodies, Work Bank and Asian Development Bank based in Bhutan, etc. and their dependents
  - (iii) Officials of foreign resident missions such as JICA, KOICA, Austrian Development Agency, AVID, SAARC Development Fund based in Bhutan, etc. and their dependents

- (iv) Work Permit holders (professional category only) and their dependents
- (v) Uniformed personnel of IMTRAT and Project DANTAK and their dependents

#### **F. Criteria**

6. Expatriates and their dependents based in the Bhutan may be permitted to go on tours and treks along government approved routes subject to the following:
  - (i) Package is organized by a TCB certified travel company
  - (ii) Expatriates are accompanied by a TCB licensed guide
  - (iii) Expatriates must have lived in the country for at least three months

#### **G. Implementation Modality**

9. Expatriates who wish to go on treks/tours shall be required to submit an application to the Department of Immigration along with the following documents:
  - (i) Letter from TCB with the following details:
    - a. Name of the TCB certified travel company organizing the tour/trek
    - b. Detailed itinerary
    - c. Name and license number of TCB certified guide
    - d. Name and details of all individuals going for the trek/ tour along with copies of their passports/work permits
  - (ii) Letter from respective office or employer in Bhutan to the Department of Immigration
10. Once the above conditions are fulfilled, the Department of Immigration may consider and approve the application and issue clearance if the Department is satisfied that the purpose is genuine and meets all other requirements prescribed by the Immigration Act and/or Rules and Regulations.

#### **H. Amendment**

11. The Guidelines may be amended by the Department of Immigration in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, whenever deemed necessary.

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