

TOURISM REFERENCE KIT

Strengthening Tour Operator Associations in Bhutan and Costa Rica,
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i. Executive Summary

The Tourism Reference Kit (TRK) is an informative document for tourism stakeholders in particular new tour operators. The main purpose of developing TRK is to provide value addition services to member tour operators through sharing of specific and important information. TRK is a collection various information such as tourism related policy, various rules and regulations, attractions and procedures and formalities for various operations. This TRK is a dynamic document that needs to be updated frequently based on the changing needs and introduction of new tourism products and services.

Besides, important information, TRK provides opportunity for new tour operators to know various formalities and forms required to complete those formalities for tour operation business. Further, TRK provides information related to tour payment procedures and International bank details for payment/hard currency transaction. Such information is vital for national and international travel agents, tourists and general public to understand hard currency transaction system.

TRK provides basic information on the requirements of Royal Bhutan Airline, Drukair that is crucial for both tour operators and their clients. This TRK serves as a directory if there is a need to contact Druk Air office both within and outside Bhutan.

This TRK is developed as a part of project activity under the Strengthening Tour Operator Associations in Bhutan and Costa Rica Project. The information will be further refined by the Association and make it more user friendly in the years to come.

1 Draft Tourism Policy Paper

1.1 Introduction

Tourism has consistently been one of the highest revenue generators for the country. Its tremendous potential as a truly indigenous industry for socio-economic progress, in particular to alleviate poverty and create employment, have yet to be fully explored. This and the clear comparative advantages Bhutan enjoy make for a compelling logic to promote Bhutan as a high-end tourism destination in a manner which accords with the premises of Gross National Happiness. The time is now for a paradigm shift to seize the opportunity for tourism. It primarily entails product diversification and enhancement of services which will enable spatial and a more equitable distribution of tourism benefits. Such a shift will need a vigorous policy for tourism promotion. A policy with a clear set of principles and strategies that will serve the realization of a vision through shared commitment to it.

This paper merely attempts to draw an outline for a policy paper and seeks to seed a discourse which will culminate in a comprehensive tourism policy for the nation.

1.2 Vision

Foster a vibrant industry as a positive force in the conservation of environment, promotion of cultural heritage, safeguarding sovereign status of the Nation and for significantly contributing to Gross National Happiness.

1.3 Principles

The tourism policy for the Kingdom of Bhutan will guide all tourism development endeavours and will be anchored on the bedrock of “High Value –Low Volume” principle. The policy will serve to develop forms of tourism which have minimum negative impact on our natural and cultural heritage while contributing to their promotion and sustainable development.

1.4 The Bhutanese Way

The rationale of the national tourism policy will be to promote tourism in a sustainable manner that will meet the needs of the present tourists and destinations while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. This ethos shall underpin all tourism activities in the country as it is in harmony with the aspirations of Gross National Happiness. The implementation of the policy will be a shared responsibility that requires the commitment and participation of every stakeholder and indeed the visitor. Such a responsible approach can only lead to harnessing the true potential of the tourism industry. An approach that will

enable promotion of tourism that is economically viable, environmentally sustainable and culturally acceptable.

A strong positioning of the tourism industry is critical and will bear the following characteristics:

Responsible; Engender a more equitable socio-economic development while promoting and conserving our cultural and natural heritage. The responsibility of achieving these mutually reinforcing goals of GNH and sustainable tourism will be shared by all stakeholders including the visitors.

Unique; The 'living' culture and rich traditions, and the harmony thriving between tradition and modernity, between people and nature are major tourism assets which facilitate immersion in the experience of Gross National Happiness.

Authentic; The exiting pattern of social, cultural and environmental authenticity adds to the visitors' genuine experience. This not only includes historical timings of traditional events but also authentic folklores, handicrafts and cuisines that make up the mosaic of the daily Bhutanese lifestyle.

Quality; It is not merely a mathematical function of high price and luxury. It is rather a delivery on the 'quality promise' that encompasses exclusivity, excellence in both services and amenities which contribute to a unique travel experience.

1.5 Guidelines

The following guidelines will form an integral part of the policy

1. Visitor levels and activities shall be managed according to our absorptive capacity to ensure promotion of our natural and cultural heritage through high value tourism.
2. An overall promotion and marketing strategy shall be pursued that will enhance the image of our country and contribute to tourism development philosophy.
3. Product diversification shall be regulated by an apex tourism body to ensure sustainable tourism development for balanced growth and enhance the guest experience.
4. Tourism services in the country shall be a primarily private sector led and shall be monitored by an apex tourism body in collaboration with agencies concerned to match the industry demand. Whilst infrastructure development remains a mandate of Royal Government, private sector will lead the development of tourism superstructure in line with regulations.

1.6 Objectives

1. Promote the image of the country which establishes Bhutan as a high-end destination and ensure a rewarding experience for the visitors.
2. Contribute to overall socio-economic development by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the fastest growing economic sector at the global level.

3. Constitute 25% of GDP by 2015.
4. Promote tradition and culture by developing cultural industries and conserving heritage through direct economic returns to communities.
5. Engender a more equitable and balanced development and address the seasonal nature of tourism.
6. Contribute to the efforts of conservation of the environment by generating economic returns through non-consumptive use.
7. Create gainful employment opportunities by harnessing the vast employment potential of the industry.
8. Boost foreign exchange earnings for the country.
9. Broaden the national economy to offset excessive dependence on few economic sectors.
10. Encourage domestic tourism to augment the benefits of international tourism and promote social cohesion.

1.7 Strategies

1.7.1 Price model

Liberalise the tourism sector by 2013 to allow for more competition, incentivise services, and offer greater choices to visitors for equitable spread of benefits. While the regulated minimum tariff will eventually be phased out, the system of Royalty will be maintained as a USP and actively advocated as a contribution for a unique experience.

1.7.2 Product Diversification

Whilst Culture and Nature will be the focus areas, other potential products such as Community Based Tourism, MICE and Wellness will be explored and actively pursued.

1.7.3 Promotion and Marketing Strategy

A comprehensive promotion and marketing strategy will be developed by an apex tourism body that will include destination branding. The responsibility to implement the strategy will be shared by all stakeholders including other government agencies and the private sector to ensure that limited resources are utilized to maximize benefits.

1.7.4 Infrastructure Development

Inadequate infrastructures such as air and road connectivity are some of the major challenges that need to be urgently addressed so as to improve the overall performance of the tourism industry. While government agencies are mandated to address these issues, other options of transport including ropeways which are cost effective and environment friendly will be explored. Coordination amongst government agencies will be strengthened to expedite infrastructure development initiatives. Tourism superstructures will be regulated by an apex tourism body to meet the growing demand.

1.7.5 Developing Cluster Destinations

Tourism clusters will be developed in tourism deficient areas to consolidate varied tourism products for developing attractive itineraries to facilitate higher incidences of visitation.

1.7.6 Development of SMEs

SMEs and other employment avenues such as handicraft and souvenir shops, internet cafes, coffee houses, restaurants and road side amenities will be encouraged. The development of SMEs and required skills for employment created by tourism will be collectively facilitated by concerned government and non-government agencies.

1.7.7 Foreign Direct Investment

FDI in tourism sector will be encouraged with a view to promoting competition and achieving excellence in standards of service. The apex tourism body will be mandated to ensure that it is aligned with the tourism policy as per international practice.

1.7.8 Accommodation

A comprehensive classification system for accommodation will be implemented to improve the accommodation standards and services. Accommodation development will be encouraged to use local materials in authentic Bhutanese style while ensuring all modern amenities are incorporated. Implementation of such developments shall be incentivised.

1.7.9 Monitoring and evaluation

Excellence in standards of products and services is important in establishing the country as a high-end destination. Regular monitoring and evaluation mechanism involving all stakeholders will be a key strategy in achieving this objective.

1.7.10 Other Services Quality

Apart from ensuring standards and services of hotels, restaurants and other accommodations through the Accommodation Classification System, relevant government agencies will be mandated to improve other services such as payment facilities, medical services, rescue operation, guiding and transportation to ensure quality services to the visitors.

1.7.11 Tourism Zoning

Tourism potential areas across the country will be identified and protected from inappropriate development by zoning with clear development and management plans for each zone. This will promote conservation and sustainable use of aesthetic, cultural and natural resources. Leasing of land for tourism purposes will adhere to this policy.

1.7.12 Tax and Incentives

A detailed tax and incentive scheme will be prepared in consultations with relevant government agencies and private sector to ensure ownership of the scheme and efficacy in its implementation. This will incentivise the improvement of services and amenities.

1.7.13 Decentralisation

The planning and management of tourism will be decentralized to achieve the overall objective of sustainable tourism development through the empowerment of local governments and communities.

1.7.14 Domestic Tourism

Appropriate infrastructure and recreational facilities such as parks, theme-based attractions and accommodation facilities will be promoted for domestic tourism. It is a viable addition to international tourism which will augment employment opportunities and economic returns. This will promote social cohesion and appreciation of our own culture and tradition while stimulating increased spending within the country.

1.7.15 Capacity Building

There is a critical need for the capacity of all tourism stakeholders to be enhanced in a holistic and comprehensive manner that will meet the emerging challenges of the planned growth of the industry. The regional training centers of excellence in hospitality and other areas will be developed to produce highly skilled human resource. Relevant government agencies and private sector will coordinate their efforts for capacity building supported by laws of the country including Labour and Customs Acts.

1.7.16 Awareness Building

Sustained awareness campaigns will be undertaken at various levels by an apex tourism body to create awareness of tourism and its multi-sectoral nature to public and private sectors.

1.7.17 Conducive environment for tourism

An apex tourism body in coordination with agencies concerned shall work on creating a conducive environment for tourists through the establishment of mechanisms to address issues relating to tourist safety and security, waste, dog and unethical practices.

1.7.18 Addressing Seasonality

Measures will be taken to address the seasonality of tourist visitation through product development and diversification, adopting a suitable pricing model, enhancement of services, aggressive marketing and regulating the timing of MICE events.

1.8 Conclusion

This policy will provide the much needed compass to steer the direction and thrust of tourism development in the country for all round socio-economic progress of the country. Further, an act by the National Parliament for tourism will be required to ensure its effective implementation and provide for a periodic evaluation and review of the policy.

2 Rules and Regulations for Tour Operations (1999)

The tour operations in the kingdom shall be governed by the following Rules & Regulations, which shall come into force with effect from 1 February 1999.

2.1 Tour Operation Licences.

2.1.1 Eligibility.

- The applicant must be a Bhutanese national.
- An applicant shall have attained the age of majority.

2.1.2 Documents and Formalities

- An applicant shall submit a Police Clearance Certificate along with the application for a license; and complete all other formalities prescribed by the Rules and Regulations for Establishment and Operation of Industrial and Commercial Ventures in Bhutan, 1997, to obtain a license.

2.1.3 Fees

- A sum of Nu. 1,000/- (Ngultrums one thousand) only, shall be payable as registration fees.
- A sum of Nu. 12,500/- (Ngultrums Twelve thousand five hundred) only, shall be payable as annual license fees.

2.2 Grant of License

A tour operation license may be granted to the applicant by the Licensing Authority upon clearance of TCB.

2.3 Establishment

A Tour Agent shall establish an office with adequate communication facilities and a proper postal Address, which must be registered with the TCB. Any change in address, phone/fax numbers must be intimated to the TCB immediately.

2.4 Employees

Tour Guides employed temporarily or permanently by the Tour Agents shall be required to possess valid Guide Licenses issued by the TCB. The Tour Agent shall ensure that the guides abide by the Code of Conduct for Guides given at annexure II of the Rules and Regulations.

- a. The Drivers employed temporarily or permanently by the Tour Agents must possess valid driving licenses issued by the Road and surface Transport Authority (RSTA).
- b. All employees of Tour Agents shall be required to produce Police Clearance Certificates at the time of employment and no individuals with known criminal record shall be employed.
- c. Tour Agents all employ only Bhutanese nationals at all times.

2.5 Transport

- a. Vehicles used for transporting tourists must have valid fitness certificate issued by the RSTA and such vehicles shall be registered with the TCB for inspection and certification as may be necessary from time to time.
- b. Vehicles used for transporting tourists all have valid comprehensive insurance coverage.

2.6 Accommodation & Food

- a. All tourists shall be lodged only in accommodation approved and classified by TCB in accordance with the Accommodation Classification Standards given at Annexure I under the Rules & Regulations on Accommodation for International Tourists, 1999.
- b. The Tour Agents shall ensure that tourists are provided high services and shall strictly follow the Minimum Meal Entitlements given at Annexure III of these Rules & Regulations.

2.7 Visas & Permits

- a. All applications for tourist visas shall be submitted by the Tour Agents in the prescribed visa Application Form in triplicate to TCB in advance to allow time of one week for processing with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- b. As far as possible, 3 copies of original passport size photographs must be furnished with the visa applications. However if this is not possible, the photographs must be presented by the tourist on arrival to the Visa officer at the entry point.
- c. All requests for visa, visa extensions and cancellations for tourists shall be routed through the TCB and no Tour Agent shall accept any tourist whose visa has been processed through other channels.
- d. All requests for other types of permits required for tourists shall also be routed through TCB.

2.8 Tariff & Payment Procedures

The minimum daily package rate to be applied by tour Agents shall be fixed by the Royal Government. This daily package rate will be an all-inclusive rate. The break-up of the daily package rates into its component items viz. agent commission, discounts, royalty and other levies and the details of payment procedures are given in the Schedule of Tariff for International Tourists, 1999 at Annexure I of these Rules and Regulations.

2.9 Restricted Areas

Tour agents shall ensure that tourists visiting Bhutan through their establishments are not taken to places closed to tourism. A list of places open to tourists will be issued by the Royal Government from time to time.

2.10 Penalties

Violation of any of these Rules and Regulations shall make the offending Tour Agent subject to the following fines and penalties:

- a. A fine of Nu. 5,000/- (Ngultrums five thousand) only, for every violation of any rule or regulation in the first instance.
- b. A fine of Nu. 10,000/- (Ngultrum ten thousand) only, for every violation of any rule or regulation in the second instance.
- c. Cancellation of the Tour Operation Licence of the offender and imposition of a ban on issue of such licence to him on violation of any rule or regulation for the third time.

2.11 Interpretation of Rules and Regulations

In case of any dispute in the interpretation of these rules and Regulation, the decision of TCB shall be final and binding.

2.12 Annexure I: Schedule of Tariff for International Tourists

2.12.1 Section 1: Minimum Tourist Tariff

- a. The minimum tariff for tourists visiting in a group of 3 persons or more are as follows:

High Season Tariff - US\$200 per person per night halt. High Season Months are designated as February, March, April, May, August, September, October, November and December with effect from 1st July 2009 (Reference: as per the announcement, **TCB/DG-21/2008/5258 dated 1st August 2008 and TCB/DG-21/2009/416 dated January 9, 2009**)

Regular Season Tariff - US\$165 per person per night halt. Regular Season months are designated as January, June and July (Reference: as per the announcement, **TCB/DG-21/2008/5258 dated 1st August 2008 and TCB/DG-21/2009/416 dated January 9, 2009**).

- b. The minimum daily package rates shall be inclusive of the following:
 - Royalty
 - Charges for accommodation
 - Food and beverages as per the “Minimum Meal Entitlements”
 - Service of guides
 - Transport within Bhutan
 - Riding ponies and pack animals on treks.
- c. The rates given above are applicable per tourist per night halt in Bhutan. On the day of departure, the local agents’ host obligation shall be limited to breakfast only and any extra requirements shall be payable on actual basis.
- d. The rates shall apply uniformly irrespective of locations and the type of accommodation provided/ asked for. List of hotels and lodges approved for international tourist accommodation updated from time to time shall be issued by the DOT.

2.12.2 Section 2: Tariff for Individuals and Small Groups (FITs)

- a. Individual tourists and smaller groups of less than three persons shall be subject to surcharge, over and above the minimum daily rates applicable, as follows:
- b. Single individual - US\$ 40 Per night halt
- c. Group of 2 - US\$ 30 Per night halt per person
- d. The 10% agency commission payable to agents abroad shall not be deductible from the surcharge.
- e. The surcharge will not apply to representatives of foreign travel agents on business study or promotional visit duly approved and cleared by TCB.

2.12.3 Section 3: Agency Commission

- a. As per international norms, 10% of the gross tour payment shall be payable to the principal agents abroad as commission and shall be deducted by these agents at source.
- b. This commission shall be calculated from the net amount after deducting the discounts under Section 5 below where applicable.

2.12.4 Section 4: Royalty & Other Levies

- a. Royalty of US\$ 65/- per tourist per night halt shall be payable during the high season months.
- b. Royalty of US\$ 55/- Per tourist per night halt shall be payable during the off season months.
- c. A sum of US \$ 10/- tourist per visit shall be payable towards Tourism Development Fund. This amount shall be deducted at source by TCB from the tour payments received.

2.12.5 Section 5: Discounts on Tourist Tariff

The following discounts on daily rates shall be allowed:

- a. DIPLOMATS from foreign embassies/missions accredited to Bhutan shall be given a 25% discount on the daily rates, which has been discontinued with effect from 1st July 2009 (Reference: as per the announcement, **TCB/DG-21/2008/5258 dated 1st August 2008 and TCB/DG-21/2009/416 dated January 9, 2009**)
- b. There shall be no charge for CHILDREN upto the age of 5 years. However, those between the age of 6 to 12 years accompanied by elders/ guardians shall be given 50% discount on daily rates.
- c. Full time STUDENTS below the age of 25 years holding valid identity cards from their academic institutions shall also be given a 25% discount on daily rates.
- d. A discount of 50% on daily rates shall be given to one person in a group of 11 to 15 persons. A 100% discount shall be given to one member in a group exceeding 16 persons.

- e. Duration discount will be offered on Royalty only and will be effective from 9th night as follows:
 - Peak Months: US\$ 45 per night
 - Regular Months: US\$ 40 per night

Note: Duration discount has come into effect from 1st July 2009 as per the announcement, **TCB/DG-21/2008/5258 dated 1st August 2008 and TCB/DG-21/2009/416 dated January 9, 2009**)

- f. Visitors availing discounts under sections a) b) and shall not be eligible for discount under e)

(Note: Discounts on daily rates shall mean inclusive of royalty)

2.12.6 Section 6: Payment Procedure

- a. All tour payments shall be made in US dollars or in any convertible currency acceptable to the Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan and shall be made in advance to TCB for the visas to be processed.
- b. When advance payments are not possible, the Tour Agent shall arrange to deposit its counter value in local currency which shall be released on receipt of the tour payment in convertible currency.
- c. The TCB shall not process tourist visa applications of those Tour Agents who are not able to deposit advance payments either in convertible or in local currency.
- d. The exchange rates shall be based on the rates published by the RMA from time to time. Any loss or gain resulting from exchange rate difference or fluctuation shall be entirely at the risk or to the benefit of the tour operator/ agents.
- e. As far as possible, all tour payments shall be routed through either Bank of Bhutan or Bhutan National Bank.
- f. Payments must be received either by telegraphic transfer to an overseas account of the two banks mentioned above or by means of a bank draft or banker's cheques drawn in favour of Tourism Council of Bhutan. In all the cases, the name of the local tour agent as the "beneficiary" shall be clearly stated.
- g. Bank charges involved shall be borne by local tour operator or agent abroad as maybe mutually agreed between them. TCB shall have no responsibility in this regard.
- h. Any other modes of payments other than ones mentioned under f) above, especially in cash, are illegal and are discouraged by TCB. However, under certain circumstances where payments are received in such forms, tour operators shall declare them to TCB along with proper documentary testimonials supporting the mode of payments and the amount. Any such payments without the supporting documents shall be considered illegal and shall be liable to confiscation as per foreign exchange rules.

2.12.7 Section 7: Cancellation

Tour programs booked and subsequently cancelled shall be subject to cancellation charges as follows:

Within 30 days of the start of the tour programme - Free

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| a. Within 21 days | - 10% of the rate |
| b. Within 14 days | - 15% of the rate |
| c. Within 7 days | - 30% of the rate |
| d. Less than 7 days or cancellation without notice | - 50% of the rate |
| e. After arrival in Bhutan | - 100% |

2.12.8 Section 8: Delayed Arrival/Departure

- a. There shall be no charge for the number of days of delays in arrival of visitors due to weather conditions, Druk Air problems or roadblocks.
- b. The Tour Agents shall immediately notify TCB in writing about the change in tour itinerary as a result of situations explained under a) and b) above.

2.13 Annexure II: Code of conduct for Tour Guides

All cultural/trekking tour guides shall adhere to the following Code of Conduct and the **Do's** and **Don'ts** very strictly while on duty:

2.13.1 Punctuality

It is particularly important for guides to be punctual. All guides must report for duty well ahead of the appointed time to be ready for the task ahead and be prepared for any contingencies.

2.13.2 Personal Appearance/Dress

It is important for guides to maintain a high standard of personal cleanliness and hygiene. Always be formally attired (full Gho for men and full Kira for women) to present a respectable appearance.

Guides on treks should wear appropriate trekking outfit.

2.13.3 Do's

- a. Always be polite, courteous and helpful.
- b. If you do not know something, admit it honestly but don't concoct something or misinform your group.
- c. If you have promised to do something, fulfill it.
- d. In your efforts to please and be helpful to your clients, understand your own limitations.

- e. You are not expected to be able to do/provide anything that is beyond your competence/means or such things that are inappropriate.
- f. Keep your group of tourists or the team leader well informed and fully briefed of local culture, etiquette, itinerary, schedule and other matters such as exchanging money, meals, etc.

2.13.4 Don'ts

- a. Refrain from SMOKING and eating Doma in the company of your guests.
- b. Avoid DRINKING while on duty or in the company of guests.
- c. Do not leave your guests unattended by themselves for long periods. For trekking guides, keep pace with your tourists so that they do not get lost and to ensure access to water and snacks.
- d. Don't be partial or give an impression of it by paying too much attention only to certain people and thus making others feel neglected. Give equal attention and treatment to all the group members.
- e. Don't have romantic involvement or sexual liaison with guest.
- f. Don't be involved in any commission or "Kick-back" practices with the local merchants.
- g. Don't keep your tourists unaware of local culture, etiquettes and sensitivities.
- h. For trekking guides, don't leave waste and litter after camping. Dispose of the same appropriately.
- i. Don't ask for favours from your guests nor expect any gifts or tips.

2.14 Annexure III: Minimum Meal Entitlement per Tourist

2.14.1 Cultural Tours

2.14.1.1 Breakfast

- a. Canned juice with choice of orange, mango, pineapple, apple etc.
- b. Porridge/cornflake/cereals
- c. Fresh fruits
- d. Sausages/bacon
- e. Toast, butter and jam
- f. Eggs cooked to order
- g. Tea/ coffee/ hot chocolate

2.14.1.2 Lunch

- a. Salad
- b. Rice
- c. 2 non vegetable items
- d. 2 vegetable items

- e. Roti/naan
- f. Desert
- g. Tea, coffee

2.14.1.3 Pack lunch

- a. Vegetable cutlet/sandwich/boiled potato
- b. Chicken roast/ roast beef
- c. Boiled eggs
- d. Roti or naan
- e. Choice of fresh fruits
- f. Canned juice – orange, pineapple, pepsi/ coke
- g. Bottled drinking water

2.14.1.4 Evening tea

- a. Tea/ coffee
- b. Cookies/sandwich
- c. Biscuits/pastries

2.14.1.5 Dinner

- a. Soup
- b. Salad
- c. Rice
- d. Noodles
- e. 2 non-vegetable items
- f. 2 vegetable items
- g. Desert
- h. Tea/coffee

2.14.2 On trek

2.14.2.1 Breakfast

- a. Canned juice with choice of orange, mango, pineapple, apple etc.
- b. Porridge/cornflake/cereals
- c. Fresh fruits
- d. Sausages/bacon
- e. Toast, butter and jam
- f. Eggs cooked to order
- g. Tea/ coffee

2.14.2.2 Pack lunch

- a. Vegetable cutlet/ sandwich/boiled potato
- b. Chicken roast/roast beef
- c. Boiled eggs
- d. Roti or naan
- e. Choice of fresh fruits
- f. Canned juice- orange, pineapple, pepsi/coke
- g. Bottle drinking water

2.14.2.3 Evening tea

- a. Tea/ coffee
- b. Cookies/sandwich
- c. Biscuits

2.14.2.4 Dinner

- a. Soup
- b. Salad
- c. Rice
- d. Noodles
- e. 2 non-vegetable items
- f. 2 vegetable items
- g. Desert
- h. Tea/coffee

Note: *The list is only a minimum guide and the Tour Agents can provide their clients beyond what is mentioned here. Where items mentioned are not available, appropriate substitutes must be provided.*

Tourism Council of Bhutan has introduced the following amendments and additions to the Rules and Regulations in Bhutan – 1999 pertaining to Tourist Visa and Permits, Tariff and Payment Procedures and Penalties respectively. These rules shall be applicable in conjunction with the existing rules and regulations.

2.15 Annexure IV: Tourist Visa and Permits

2.15.1 Application Procedure

- a. All applications for tourist visa and various permits required for tourists and extensions thereof shall be strictly channeled through the Tourism Council of

Bhutan. Obtaining tourist visa and permits through other channels shall be considered serious and punishable offence.

- b. All applications for tourist visa shall be submitted to the Tourism Council of Bhutan well in advance. Apart from time required by the Department of Immigration (DoI), sufficient time shall be allowed for processing the applications within the council, particularly during peak seasons.

The following documents shall be submitted:

- 3 copies of forwarding application (Doc. 1)
 - 2 copies of the information sheet for data (Doc.2) duly completed in all respects.
 - 4 copies of Visa Application Form (Doc. 3) with passport photos. If it is not possible to submit photographs with the applications, visitors must be advised to bring along the photographs and present them on arrival to the Visa Officer at the point of entry.
 - Original copies of Tour Payment Deposit Slip (issued by the Banks), Payment Declaration Form (Doc.4) and Invoice (Doc.5) showing calculation of of tour payments and other charges for the group , royalty and other deductions etc.
- c. Visa application documents as specified above must be complete in all respects. Incomplete visa applications shall not be processed.
 - d. The visa applications to be forwarded to DoI shall consist of the following documents:
 - 2 copies of Doc. 1 duly signed by the Visa Officer at the appropriate space and stamped with the council seal.
 - 3 copies of Doc. 3 as per DoI.
 - e. The duration of stay shall be stated correctly in the visa application form and other documents as required.

2.15.2 Delayed Tour Payment

- a. All visa applications shall be accompanied by tour payment (ref-2.15 above). Delayed payment shall be admissible only in cases of FITs and groups of less than 4 persons for shorter duration visits. However, only one tour payment outstanding will be allowed at a time.
- b. An outstanding tour payment shall be cleared no later than 5 (five) days after the group has left the country. Delayed tour payments shall be subject to a levy of panel interest as stipulated below:
 - 5% of the total tour payment after the grace period of 5 days up to the 10th day.
 - 10% of the amount thereafter for the delay of up to 30 days from the due date.

- c. Meanwhile no further visa applications shall be entertained from the Defaulting tour operator.

2.15.3 Finalization of Tour Invoice & Royalty Computation

- a. All tour invoices shall be finalized by the Visa Section based on duration of stay of tour groups in the country. For the purpose of immediate settlement of all payment claims, the duration of stay as declared by tour operators in the tour programme/invoice and subsequent changes such as cancellations, delayed arrivals and early departures notified in writing by tour operators shall be initially accepted as declared and payment released after deducting the royalty portion.
- b. All changes and amendments of tour duration and programme entailing reduction in number of night halts shall be intimated by tour operators in writing, as far as possible, before the group(s) leave the country. A delay of up to 5 days after departure of the group shall be accepted. Notifications of such changes and group shall be accepted. Notifications of such changes and amendments after this grace period shall not be at all entertained and invoice shall be finalized based on the original duration of stay.
- c. All tour invoices initially finalized on the basis of duration declared by tour operators will be subject to a process of verification subsequently. Tour Operators shall be liable for any discrepancies found and shall be dealt with in accordance with the penalty provisions as specified below:

2.15.4 Visa Extension

- a. All application for tourist visa extension shall be submitted to the Tourism Council of Bhutan on time for processing. The extension request shall be accompanied by information sheet (Doc.2) duly completed showing the tour programme for the extended period.
- b. Payment for the extended period shall be accepted as follows:
 - By TT from the overseas agent. An advance notice to this effect shall be furnished to the Tourism Council of Bhutan and payment deposited no later than 5 days after departure of tour groups
 - By cash or TC from the client directly, in which case the regulation 1.c ii of Tour Payment Rules shall apply.

2.15.5 FIT Groups & Surcharge

- a. As per provisions of the Tourism Rules 1999, all tourists coming in a group of less than 3 persons are subject to an FIT surcharge as specified. Tour groups consisting of three or more persons whose visa has been applied for and granted, as a group shall not be subject to FIT Surcharge.
- b. However, if any group member(s) has/have different arrival or departure dates or these dates are revised subsequently, they will be treated as FIT and relevant surcharge will be levied for the whole duration of stay. Such groups will be divided into groups of 1 or 2 depending upon the dates of their arrival / departure. This regulation shall also apply to be different during the verification process. This rule shall apply irrespective of whether or not the group has originated from the same travel agent abroad and have identical tour programme content.

2.15.6 Application for route and RBA trek permits

Application for route permits for travel within the country and for trekking in certain sensitive areas shall be submitted as follows:

2.15.6.1 Route Permit

- a. Route Permit Application Form (from DoI) duly completed – 2 copies
- b. Visa Clearance (from DoI)
- c. Tour / Trek Programme (Doc.6)
- d. Names and passport particulars of guests (Doc.7)

2.15.6.2 RBA Trek Permits

Trekking in areas with Army installations shall require Army Permits for which the following documents shall be submitted:

- a. Visa Clearance (DoI)
- b. Tour /Trek Programme (Doc.6)
- c. Names and passport particulars of guests (Doc.7)

These applications shall be forwarded to the concerned authorities by the department under the signature of the visa officer or in his/ her absence by a person duly authorized.

2.16 Annexure V: Tariff and Payment Procedure

2.16.1 Tour payment rules and procedures

All payments shall be made in US Dollars. The Tourism Council of Bhutan shall accept payments in the following forms:

- a. **Telegraphic Transfer** shall be the preferred mode of making tour payments. All such transfers shall be made in favour of the Tourism Council of Bhutan with name of the local tour operator stated as the 'beneficiary' in the payment advice. All such transfers shall be credited to the Council`s account at the Bhutan National Bank and Bank of Bhutan. No such transfers shall, under any circumstances be credited to tour operators` accounts.
- b. **Demand Draft** in favour of Tourism Council of Bhutan with name of the tour operator as the beneficiary will be accepted. However, the tour operator as the beneficiary will be accepted. However, the tour operator shall be required to authorize immediate crediting of the amount to the Council`s account by paying the necessary bank charges (2% of the amount).
- c. Payment by cash and travelers cheque is discouraged and the council will generally not accept this form of payment. However, In the light of genuine difficulties faced by some independent tourists to arrange payment by telegraphic transfer or demand draft , the council shall accept payment in this mode only if:
 - The tour group is an FIT
 - The client concerned reports to the F&A Section of the council in person with his her passport and declare the amount he/she wishes to deposit in cash /TC against the tour payment.

The F&A Section shall issue an authorization to the client /tour operator to deposit the amount in question in the council`s account.

- d. Tour Operators shall submit with every tour payment, visa applications and all relevant documents as specified in the visa application procedure. In other words, tour payments deposited by tour operators without the relevant documents shall not be accepted. Deposits thus made shall be immediately paid back to the tour operator in local currency.
- e. All transfers of payments shall be directly credited to the account of the Council and not into the accounts of the tour operators.
- f. Tour Operators shall ensure that all tour payments remitted by clients / agents overseas are in order in terms of amount to be paid for the visitors as per nvoice. Clients and agents overseas must be advised that remittance charges are to be borne by them separately and not deducted from the amount to be remitted. The council will refuse payments that are short of the actual amount payable.
- g. On application from the tour operator, up to 50% of the amount deposited shall be released as advance. The balance amount will be released to the tour operators after deducting the royalty amount payable as determined by Visa Section.
- h. Tour payment once deposited with the details of the group visiting shall not be immediately refunded to the tour operator in local currency or on application from overseas client /agent in writing to the council, refund will be made in hard currency directly to the account of the client/ agent abroad after deducting the bank charges.

- i. In the event of cancellation by tour groups who have been issued Visa and payments have been received, the refund of the tour payment shall be made after deducting the cancellation charge that tour operators may likely to levy. The tour operator shall inform the Council in writing about the amount to be deducted and paid to their account before refund is made. The balance amount shall be remitted to the account of the client / travel agent overseas directly by the council by debiting the bank charges to the amount being refunded.
- j. Tour operators shall not permit their name(s) and bank accounts to be used for receiving funds or making payments in foreign currency by other individuals and organizations.

2.17 Annexure VI: Penalties

An effective Visa and Immigration control system has been set up in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Immigration and Census and the Department of Revenue and Customs to deal with all irregularities in tourist visa which have resulted in substantial loss of revenue to the Royal Government.

However, should there be cases of irregularities and violation of rules, the offending tour operator should be subject to fines and penalties stipulated below:

- a. For under invoicing and overstay of groups beyond the approved visa duration, tour operator shall be charged 3 (three) times the amount of royalty involved in the first instance and twice this fine amount in the second instance. If the offence is committed the third time, the license of the tour operator shall be revoked by the Government and the licensee, whether single proprietor or a group shall not be eligible for the tour operating license in the future.
- b. If a tour operator is found to be handling land arrangements for tourists groups whose visa has not been processed through the Council, unless the tour operator is specifically instructed to provide such arrangements by the Council or any Government agency(the request for which will be made to the Council) for certain category of Government sponsored visitors, the tour operator shall be liable to pay fines as stipulated under a. above.
- c. The penalties of Nu. 5000 and Nu. 10,000 as stipulated under the Rules and Regulations for Tour Operation in Bhutan 1999 shall continue to be levied for all other offences committed.

2.18 Annexure VII: Application Forms

2.18.1 Doc.1: Application Form, TCB

DATE

The Visa Officer
Tourism Council of Bhutan
THIMPHU

Sir/Madam,

Please find visa application forms in respect of tourist group _____ x _____ pax
wishing to visit Bhutan from _____ to _____ 2010. The Group wishes to
enter via _____ and exit via _____ and consist of the under named
individuals.

Sl.#	NAME	SEX AND AGE	NATIONALITY	PASSPORT #	VALIDITY

SIGNATURE

Forwarded to :
The Visa Officer
Department of Immigration
Ministry of Home & Cultural Affairs
THIMPHU

TAB/VISA- /2010/

VISA OFFICER

2.18.2 Doc. 2: Group Application Form

TOURISM COUNCIL OF BHUTAN TOURIST GROUP APPLICATION FORM

Application Date.....

☐ Original

☐ Ammended

Ref. No.

Tour Operator :

Arrival Date :

Name of Group :

Departure Date :

Total Pax in Group :

Total Days :

Primary Nationality :

Total Nights :

ENTRY AND EXIT INFORMATION :

SOURCE OF BOOKING :

Arrival :

☐ Direct

☐ Travel Agent

☐ By Air Flight No :

Name :

☐ By Road Entry point :

Country :

Other :

Departure :

☐ By Air Flight No :

☐ By Road Entry point :

LODGING SUMMERY :

PAX	NIGHTS	LOCATION	LODGING

ACTIVITIES :

TREKKING INFORMATION :

Pax	Days	Description		Pax	Days	Route
		Cultural				
		Bird Watching				
		Fishing				
		Botanical				
		Biking				
		General Sightseeing				
		Religious				
		Business				
		Business				
		Trekking				

2.18.3 Doc. 3: Visa Application Form, DoI

VISA APPLICATION FORM FOR KINGDOM OF BHUTAN

(Please fill in block capital)

1. Name in Full: _____
(Surname)

2. Date of Birth: _____
(Day) (Month) (Year)

3. Sex : ☐ Male ☐ Female Marital Status: Married ☐ Single ☐

4. Nationality : _____

5. Passport No: _____ Place of issue: _____

Date of Issue: _____ Valid until: _____
(DD- MM-YYYY) (DD- MM-YYYY)

6. Nature of Passport: ☐ Diplomatic ☐ Official ☐ Ordinary ☐ N Laissez Passer

7. Permanent Address: _____

Tel No. _____

8. Occupation/Profession: _____

9. Period for which visa is required: from _____ to _____
(DD-MM-YYYY) (DD-MM-YYYY)

10. Port of entry/exit into Bhutan: Entry Port _____ Exit Port _____

11. Purpose of visit to Bhutan: _____

12. Is this your first visit to Bhutan? Yes ☐ No ☐ If No, give details of earlier visit

I hereby declare that the statement given above is true and correct. I fully understand not to indulge in any activity which, are inconsistent with the purpose for which I have stated above. I understand that the period of stay to be granted is decided by the Bhutanese Immigration Authorities upon my arrival.

Date : _____

Place: _____

Signature of Applicant _____

For Official use only

Type of Visa : _____

Visa Number : _____

Attach passport

Size Photograph

2.18.4 Doc. 4: Tour Payment Declaration Form

Name of Tour Operator _____

Name of tour group _____

Dates of visit Entry Exit _____

Amount deposited US \$ _____ Dollars _____

Mode of payment ☐ TT ☐ DD ☐ TC ☐ CASH

PARTICULARS	AMOUNT US \$
1. Land cost/Tour Payment a) Rate X No. of Pax X Night Halt b) Less discounts if any :	
2. Surcharge 3. Visa Fee	
4. Other Charges (Please specify) ¹ a. b. c. d. e.	
TOTAL AMOUNT	

Date

Signature & Seal

¹ These relate to charges for single supplement, any special services requested, fees and charges for any special activity or programme (e.g. amateur radio, rafting, kayaking royalty/security deposit etc.)

2.18.5 Doc. 5: Tour Invoice

(TOUR INVOICE)

Name of Tour Operator :
 Group Name & No :
 No.of Pax :
 Date of visit Entry :
 No.of Night halts :

Date :

Exit :

PARTICULARS	RATE	NIGHTS	PAX	AMOUNT	TOTAL AMOUNT
1. LAND COST :-					
a) High season :- (tariff)	200.00				
(after 10% Agent comn.)	180.00				-
Discounts:-					-
Children 50% on net	90.00				-
Students 25% on net	135.00				-
Duration:-					-
Discount after 8th night	160.00				-
b) Low season:- (tariff)	165.00				-
(after 10% Agent comn.)	148.50				-
Discounts:-					
Children 50% on net	74.25				-
Students 25% on net	111.37				-
Duration:-					
Discount after 8th night	133.50				-
	A. TOTAL LAND COST				-
	:				
Visa Fee					
	Total Tour Payment				0.00
2. SURCHARGE: (1PAX)	40.00				-
(2 PAX)	30.00				-
D. Total Surcharge			:		-
E. 20% S/Charge					-
F. (D - E)					-
TOTAL TOUR PAYMENT : (TOTAL A + D) :					-
1. ROYALTY :	65				-
a) High season :- (tariff)	65				-
Discounts					
Children 50% on rate	32.50				-

<i>Student 25% on rate</i>	48.75				-
Duration:-					-
<i>Discount after 8th night</i>	45.00				-
b) Low season:- (tariff)	55				-
Discounts					
<i>Children 50% on rate</i>	27.50				-
<i>Student 25% on rate</i>	41.25				-
Duration:-					
<i>Discount after 8th night</i>	40.00				-
C. TOTAL ROYALTY :					-
G. GROSS AMOUNT (A - C TOTAL):					-
GROSS AMOUNT PAYABLE TO OPERATOR (G + F)					-
<i>2% Withholding tax on gross amount :</i>					-
<i>US \$ 10 per tourist for Tourism Development Fund:</i>					
NET AMOUNT PAYABLE TO OPERATORS :					-

(Signature& Seal)

2.18.6 Doc.6: Tour /Trek Programme Form

Name of Tour Operator : _____

Name of the Group : _____

Name of the Travel/Trek Route : _____

No. of Pax : _____

Date of Visit: Entry : _____ Exit _____

DATE	FROM	TO	ACCOMMODATION

SIGNATURE

2.18.7 Doc. 7: Names & Passport Details of visitors

Name of Tour Operator :

Name of the Group :

No. of Pax :

Sl. #	Name	Age	Sex	Nationality	Passport No.

SIGNATURE

2.18.8 Application Form to obtain Special Permit



**DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION
MINISTRY OF HOME AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
THIMPHU: BHUTAN**

Tel. +975 -2 - 323127/334498(PABX) ,
327045(Director), 333522,328386,331756,331787 Fax –
321078 Immigration Head Office, Post Box No. 1338
Thimphu,



APPLICATION FORM FOR SPECIAL PERMIT FOR RESTRICTED AREAS (TOURIST AND OTHERS)

1.Name in full (Capital Letter) Mr.Mrs./Miss. _____

2. Nationality: _____ 3. Place and date of birth _____

3. Profession/ Occupation _____

4 Permanent Address _____

PARTICULARS OF PASSPORT OR OTHER TRAVEL DOCUMENT

a) No: _____

b) Date of issue: _____ c) Place of Issue: _____

5 Proposed place (s) of visit in Bhutan: _____

6 Addresses in Bhutan: _____

7 Duration of visit/stay in Bhutan: _____

From: _____ to: _____

8 Reason for visiting Bhutan: _____

Signature of applicant

Recommendation of the department/ ministry in Bhutan (if applicable).

Name: _____

Designation: _____

NOTE 1. If any particulars furnished above are found to be incorrect in Visa/Permit if granted is liable to be cancelled at any timing.

2.18.9 Entry Permit Application form: Indian National



DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION
MINISTRY OF HOME AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
THIMPHU: BHUTAN Tel. +975 -2 - 323127/334498(PABX),
327045(Director), 333522,328386,331756,331787 Fax – 321078
Immigration Head Office, Thimphu,
Post Box No. 1338



Entry Permit Application Form

1. Name in full Mr. /Mrs. / Miss.....
2. Gender..... Male/Female.....
3. Father's name.....
4. Nationality..... Date of Birth.....
5. Place of Birth.....
6. Profession/Occupation.....
7. Permanent address.....

PARTICULARS OF TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

8. (a) Travel document: Passport/Voter's identity card/identification papers
(b) Number.....
(c) Date of Issue.....
(d) Place of issue.....
9. Proposed place of visit.....
10. Address in Bhutan.....
.....Tel/Mobile no (in Bhutan).....
11. Duration of visit/stay fromTo.....
12. Visit group.....
13. Reason for visiting Bhutan.....

RECOMMENDATION OF MINISTRY/DEPARTMENT IN BHUTAN (if applicable)

- (a) Name..... (b) Designation.....
- (b) Recommendation from Ministry/Department/Organization.....
- (c) Reference no.....

(Signature of applicant)

NOTE: If any of the particulars furnished above are found to be incorrect the permit if granted is liable to be cancelled at any time.

2.18.10 Permit to Enter Protected Area



**Royal Government of Bhutan
Ministry of Agriculture
Department of Forest
NATURE CONSERVATION DIVISION
Thimphu**
“Managing Bhutan’s Natural Heritage”



APPLICATION FOR ISSUANCE OF PERMIT TO ENTER THE PROTECTED AREA

**The Chief Forestry Officer
Nature Conservation Division
Department of Forest
Ministry of Agriculture
Thimphu**

The undersigned hereby applies for the permit for visiting the Protected Areas as per the details given below:

Name of the tour company/agency/individual (with in-country address)

.....
.....

Group name/total number, Nationality & Average age of

group.....Name of the tour

**Guide.....License No.....Purpose of visit (also
specify route/area and
dates).....**

.....
.....
.....
.....

Special Permit for Restricted Areas

With visa number

(Seal from Immigration)

Place.....

Date.....

Address.....

Name, Signature & Seal of applicant

Contact No..... Email

3 Tour Payment Procedures

- a. Bank receives tour payment for tour operators from foreign countries.
- b. Tour operator will follow up with Bank on the payment.
- c. Tour operators instructs bank to transfer fund to either TCB or Druk Air Corporation or Luxury hotel (as specified by the tour operators).
- d. Bank makes the necessary fund transfer and issues the advance accordingly. Two advances and duplicate customer copy is then handover to individual tour operators.
- e. Tour operator takes the original advance to TCB and Druk Air Corporation and retains the duplicate copy for references.

3.1 International Bank Details to Transfer Tour Payment

Below is the bank transfer detail to transfer tour payment through Bhutan National Bank, Thimphu from abroad.

3.1.1 New York

- a. Beneficiary Bank:
 - Bhutan National Bank, P.O Box 439, Thimphu, Bhutan
 - Swift Code BNBTBTBT
 - Account No. 36023474(USD A/C)
- b. Bank Address:
 - Citibank N.A, 111 Wall street, 19th floor New York, NY 10043
 - Swift Code CITIUS33
 - ABA No.0210-0008-9
 - Chips Routing No. 008
- c. Ultimate Beneficiary (Tour Operator):
 - Account No.....of.....maintained with BNB, Thimphu, Bhutan

3.1.2 American Express

- a. Beneficiary Bank:
 - Bhutan National Bank, P.O Box 439, Thimphu, Bhutan
 - Swift Code BNBTBTBT
 - Account No. 734061(USD A/C)
- b. Bank Address:
 - American Express Bank Ltd.,300 Boulevard East Weehawken, NJ 07087-6702
 - Swift Code AEIBUS33
 - ABA No. 120471889
- c. Ultimate Beneficiary (Tour Operator):

- Account No.....of.....maintained with BNB, Thimphu, Bhutan

3.1.3 London

- a. Beneficiary Bank:
 - Bhutan National Bank, P.O Box 439, Thimphu, Bhutan
 - Swift Code BNBTBTBT
 - Account No. 0124672096(EURO A/C)
- b. Bank Address:
 - Standard chartered Bank, 37Gracechurch street London EC3V OBX
 - Swift Code SCBL GB 2L
- c. Ultimate Beneficiary (Tour Operator):
 - Account No.....of.....maintained with BNB, Thimphu, Bhutan

3.1.4 Germany

- a. Beneficiary Bank:
 - Bhutan National Bank, P.O Box 439, Thimphu, Bhutan
 - Swift Code BNBTBTBT
 - Account No. 18155200 (EURO A/C)
- b. Bank Address:
 - American Express Bank GMBH, Portfact 11 01 62 Theodor-Heuss- Allee 112 D-60036 Frankfurt am Main
 - Swift Code AEIB DE FX
- c. Ultimate Beneficiary (Tour Operator):
 - Account No.....of.....maintained with BNB, Thimphu, Bhutan

3.1.5 Japan

- a. Beneficiary Bank:
 - Bhutan National Bank, P.O Box 439, Thimphu, Bhutan
 - Swift Code BNBTBTBT
- b. Account No. 313006318(YEN A/C)
- c. Bank Address:
 - American Express Bank Ltd., Tokyo, Japan
 - Swift Code AEIB JP JX
- d. Ultimate Beneficiary (Tour Operator):
 - Account No.....of.....maintained with BNB, Thimphu, Bhutan

3.1.6 Singapore

- a. Beneficiary Bank:
 - Bhutan National Bank, P.O Box 439, Thimphu, Bhutan
 - Swift Code BNBTBTBT
 - Account No. 017-005970-7(USD A/C)
- b. Bank Address:
 - Standard Chartered Bank, 6 Battery Road Singapore 049909
 - Swift Code SCBL SG SG
 - Sort code 60-91-04
- c. Ultimate Beneficiary (Tour Operator):
 - Account No.....of.....maintained with BNB, Thimphu, Bhutan

3.1.7 Bangkok

- a. Beneficiary Bank:
 - Bhutan National Bank, P.O Box 439, Thimphu, Bhutan
 - Swift Code BNBTBTBT
- b. Account No. 999-6-00369-0(USD A/C)
- c. Bank Address:
 - Export-Import Bank of Thailand Bangkok, Thailand
 - Swift Code EXHTBXXX
- d. Ultimate Beneficiary (Tour Operator):
 - Account No.....of.....maintained with BNB, Thimphu, Bhutan

3.1.8 Siliguri, India

- a. Beneficiary Bank:
 - Bhutan National Bank, P.O Box 439, Thimphu, Bhutan
 - Swift Code BNBTBTBT
 - Account No. 0031-580007-001(INR A/C)
- b. Bank Address:
 - Centurion Bank Ltd., 136/115, Hillcart Road Siliguri 734 401, West Bengal (any CBL branch in India will accept the transfer)
 - Swift Code SCBL GB 2L
- c. Ultimate Beneficiary (Tour Operator):
 - Account No.....of.....maintained with BNB, Thimphu, Bhutan

3.1.9 Nepal

- a. Beneficiary Bank:

- Bhutan National Bank, P.O Box 439, Thimphu, Bhutan
- Swift Code BNBTBTBT
- Account No. 01185233751(USD A/C)
- b. Bank Address:
 - Standard chartered Bank Nepal Limited, G.P.O.Box Naya Baneshwor Kathmandu.
 - Swift Code SCBLNPKXXX
- c. Ultimate Beneficiary (Tour Operator):
 - Account No.....of.....maintained with BNB, Thimphu, Bhutan

4 Familiarization Tour Regulation

These regulations provide for visits to Bhutan by overseas travel company representatives on familiarization tour or business purposes without having to pay the prescribed tourist tariff/royalty. Such visits are intended to help foreign travel agencies gather first hand information about tourism attractions, infrastructure and facilities available in Bhutan so that they can appropriately promote Bhutan as a destination. For travel companies already in the business of promoting tourism to Bhutan, these regulations facilitate visits of their representatives for business purposes or to explore new ideas and areas of interest.

FAM visits are normally organized in cooperation with the Bhutanese tour operators who provide the local support and land arrangements while the visitors pay their air passage and actual cost of visit. FAM visits constitute one of the most effective and inexpensive means of creating awareness and promoting a holiday destination.

Title and Commencement

These rules shall be called FAM Regulations 2000 and shall apply with immediate effect.

4.1 Application

These Regulations shall apply to local tour operators and overseas travel agencies wishing to undertake a FAM visit on behalf of their companies. The local tour operator hosting the FAM visits shall be exclusively responsible for strict compliance with these regulations and fulfillment of all obligations by the visitors.

4.1.1 Eligibility

- a. FAM visits are permissible only for representatives of foreign travel companies which are legitimate business entities duly registered with or licensed by authorities in their respective countries. Where necessary, the Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) will verify the status of the company before entertaining any communications from them.

- b. Generally, only the CEO/President/Proprietor of a company or a Senior Marketing Executive of a travel company will be permitted FAM tours. In all cases, however, where the person undertaking the tour is not the CEO, President or the Proprietor of the Company, the request for FAM must be made by the CEO/President/Proprietor of the Company to TCB on behalf of the person visiting.

4.1.2 Regulations

4.1.2.1 Application Procedure

- All requests for FAM tours shall be addressed to the Director, TCB. The requests shall be accompanied by FAM Application Form (provided herewith) duly completed in all respects. The application documents shall be directly mailed/e-mailed/faxed to the Department of Tourism **at least two weeks in advance.**
- Visa Application form for the visitor(s) shall be submitted by the host tour operator along with other requisite documents to the Department stating the status (FAM) of the visitor in their covering letter.
- All approvals for FAM tours shall be granted exclusively by the Director and in his absence by an officer of TCB duly authorized for the purpose. Such approvals shall be communicated by TCB in writing to the applicants with information copy to the host tour operator.

4.1.2.2 Number of Visits & Group Size

- Subject to fulfillment of all procedural requirements, FAM applications shall be considered on a case by case basis. TCB shall permit a maximum of 2 FAM visitors per tour operator in a year.
- FAM visitors in excess of the limit prescribed above shall require specific approval of the Ministry of Trade & Industry.
- Family members accompanying a FAM visitor shall not be eligible for FAM status. On specific request of the visitors, however, spouse may be granted FAM status by TCB but such spouse visits will be treated as FAM availed by the tour operator.

4.1.2.3 Visitors' Obligations

- All FAM visitors, at the end of their visit, shall call on TCB. During this call, the visitors shall present an introduction of their company and provide copies of their Company profile, marketing brochures, literature etc. TCB in turn shall inform the visitors about the official policies and guidelines on tourism as well as the plans and programs for the future.
- Where necessary, TCB shall request the FAM visitors to furnish a feedback on their experience and findings with their views and comments.

- Based on fulfillment of these obligations, their performance in promoting Bhutan and in maintaining regular interactions with TCB, these tour companies shall be listed as official “promoters” of tourism for Bhutan.

4.2 Visits of Representatives of Listed Travel Companies

Representatives of foreign travel companies qualifying for listing as per criteria outlined under c iii of Regulations above shall be accorded “official guest status” as and when they visit the country.

4.2.1 Application procedure

The visitors shall directly communicate to TCB their travel plan, purpose and duration of visit. Their visa applications shall be submitted by the local tour operator hosting the visit.

4.2.2 Visitor Obligations

The listed companies shall be required to furnish to TCB information relating to their companies from time to time and keep the Council updated on new developments in their activities/operations for Bhutan.

While in the country, the visitors shall call on the Council to meet the relevant officials to discuss and exchange ideas on issues of interests.

4.2.3 Listed Companies

Based on the information available and contacts and interactions maintained with TCB, foreign travel companies eligible for listing are given in Annexure. The list will be subject to revision from time to time as new companies become eligible or old ones disqualify in terms of the criteria specified above.

Tour operators may submit applications for listing their partner companies giving complete information about the companies, duration of business association, volume of business generated by them, area of operation (culture, nature/trek, adventure, other special interests etc). Such applications shall be accompanied by a written request for listing from the foreign travel company.

4.3 Application Form

TOURISM COUNCIL OF BHUTAN
APPLICATION FOR VISITING BHUTAN ON FAMILARISATION TOUR

(Please Print)

4.4.1 Form 5: Part I

Name(s) of visitor(s) _____

Official Designation _____

Name of Company _____

Full postal address _____

Phone and Fax numbers _____

4.4.2 Form 5: Part II

Proposed date/duration of visit _____

State the specific area/activity/product of your interest:

Proposed places of visit _____

State the nature and extent of assistance/facilitation required from DOT for the proposed

visit _____

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

4.4.3 Form 5: Part III

Recommendations of the Head/Chief of the Company _____

Signature _____

Name _____

Designation _____

4.5 Annexure: Company Listed with TCB

Foreign travel companies listed with TCB as of December 2000

USA

- Bhutan Travel Inc. New York
- Geographic Expeditions
- Far Fung, California
- Excellent Adventures, North Carolina

GERMANY

- Aviation & Tourism International, Alzenau,
- Marco Polo GmbH

JAPAN

- Saiyu Travels, Tokyo

UK

- Himalayan Kingdoms
- Karakoram Experience

5 Filming Regulations

The Department of Information and Media (DoIM), Ministry of Information and Communications, is pleased to issue the following notification to all concerned with regards to the procedure to be followed for processing the visits of foreign media personnel:

5.1 Foreign Journalists/reporters

- a. *All foreign journalists/reporters* wishing to visit Bhutan to *cover events write print and TV news items/articles* etc are required to process their visits through the local travel operators/Department of Tourism, Bhutan. Visa application processing, flight bookings, airport transfers, hotel reservations and traveling within Bhutan are best handled by the travel operators.

Generally all such visitors are required to pay the daily tourist tariff that covers all of the above arrangements plus meals. Media personnel from countries who do not need visa for Bhutan are also encouraged to avail the services of the travel operators for the services they provide.

- b. The specific purpose of their visit must be clearly stated in their visa application form.
- c. If they wish to meet with or have interviews with the government officials and dignitaries, they must notify DoIM accordingly prior to their arrival in Bhutan and the following information/documents must be furnished:
 - Personal CV
 - Profile of the news/broadcast agency they represent and a recommendation from the head of the agency;
 - Names/Titles of government officials/dignitaries they would like to meet along with an outline of topics they would like to discuss.
 - Travel itinerary

DoIM will assist in arranging the appointments and interviews by way of a written request on their behalf, but cannot provide any assurance. All communications in this respect may be sent to dpenjor@gmail.com or wie172002@yahoo.com.

- d. Those visiting Bhutan to cover important events may apply for accreditation (not mandatory) by Bhutan Information Communication and Media Authority (BICMA). The application for accreditation can be downloaded from <http://www.bhutan.gov.bt/government/governmentFor ms.php> and forwarded

to the DoIM with two passport size photos. The Accreditation Certificate is issued by BICMA upon payment of a fee of Nu.1, 000 (One thousand) only.

5.2 Filming and Documentary making

All filming and documentary making in Bhutan by foreign film and television companies are governed by Bhutan Filming Regulations (2006). The Regulations can be downloaded from www.bhutan.gov.bt/government/rulesandRegulations.php?av_id=0. The application and approval process is summarized below:

- a. A covering letter from the film agency or the travel operator on behalf of the agency, addressed to the Director, DoIM accompanied by the following documents:
 - Filming Application Form duly completed in all (relevant) respects. The Application Form can be downloaded from www.bicma.gov.bt.
 - A Synopsis of the film
 - CVs of the film crew
- b. DoIM processes the Government approval for the filming application and upon receipt of the approval, the Filming Permit is issued by the BICMA against payment of the requisite fee and the Security deposit. Generally all applications will be approved within 1 working day and forwarded to BICMA for issuance of the Permit.
- c. All government agencies, NGOs, foreign agencies, missions and embassies are requested to adhere to the procedure outlined above to obtain the approval and the Filming Permit.
- d. The prescribed filming fee of US\$3000 and the security deposit of US\$ 2000 are mandatory for all. The provision in the earlier regulations for waiver of the fee for certain categories of films has been done away with.

5.3 Restricted locations/establishments

All locations of shooting are to be specifically stated in the Application Form date-wise. In case a location is a restricted area, the DoIM will process for permission from the concerned agencies in accordance with their policies and regulations.

5.4 Validity of Film Permit

- a. The film permits issued by BICMA are valid for the locations and for the period indicated in the Permit. Where Special Permits have been issued for the

restricted locations, copies of such Special Permits will be attached to the Filming Permit.

- b. Filming agencies or their counterparts (travel operator/local agency) are advised to contact the local authorities and inform them of the filming program particularly where restricted areas are involved.

5.5 Authority to check for Permit

Local authorities (Dzongkhags, Municipal authorities) are authorized to check if the filming crew has all the valid permits and documents for filming in their localities.

Please refer to the Bhutan Filming Regulations 2006 for details. For any enquiry, send us and e-mail - gaydyn@hotmail.com or dpenjor@gmail.com.

6 Trek

6.1.1 Trekking Season

NAME OF THE TREK	TREKKING SEASONS											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dur Hot Spring Trek			G	G					G	G	G	
Gangtey Winter Trek	G	G	G	G	G	G			G	G	G	G
Samtengang Winter Trek	G	G	G	G	G	G				G	G	G
Chele La Nature Trek			G	G	G	G			G	G	G	
Druk Path Trek			G	G	G	G			G	G	G	
Punakha Winter Trek			G	G	G				G	G	G	G
Jumolhari Trek I + II			G	G	G	G			G	G		
Laya Gasa Trek				G	G	G			G	G	G	
Snowman Trek							G	G	G			
Bumthang Cultural Trek			G	G	G	G			G	G	G	
Gasa Hot Spring Trek		G	G							G	G	G
Dagala Thousand Lakes				G					G	G		
Wild East Rodungla Trek										G	G	
Nabji -Korphu	G	G	G	G	G				G	G	G	G
NOTE: Normal Weather conditions. “G” refers to good season for trekking.												

6.1.2 Overview of Trekking Routes

Name of Trek	Possible Months	No. of Days	Max. Elevation	Highest Camp	Difficulty
Duer Hot Spring Trek	Mar, Apr, Sep, Oct and Nov	9	4700m	3400m	medium-hard
Gangte Winter Trek	All except Jul and Aug	3	3480m	3330m	easy
Samtengang Winter Trek	All except Jul Aug and Sep	3	2000m	1980m	easy
Druk Path Trek	Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Sep, Oct and Nov	6	4200m	4110m	easy-medium
Punakha Winter Trek	Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Sep, Oct, Nov and Dec	4	3400m	3360m	easy
Jomolhari Trek I	Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Sep and Oct	9	4930m	4080m	medium
Jomolhari Trek II	Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Sep and Oct	8	4890m	4080m	medium
Laya Gasa Trek	Apr, May, Jun, Sep, Oct, Nov	14	5005m	4220m	medium-hard
Snowman Trek I	Jul, Aug, Sep	25	5320m	5050m	hard
Snowman Trek II	Jul, Aug, Sep	25	5320m	5120m	hard
Bumthang Cultural Trek	Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Sep, Oct, Nov	3	3360m	2800m	easy-medium
Gasa Hot Spring Trek	Feb, Mar, Apr, Oct, Nov, Dec	5	2430m	2250m	easy
Dagala Thousand Lakes Trek	May, Jun, Sep, Oct, Nov	6	4520m	4300m	medium
Wild East Rodung La Trek	Apr, Oct, Nov	10	4160m	3680m	medium-hard
Nabji-Korphu Community-based Nature Trek	Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec	5	1500m	1500m	Very easy

7 Driving Distance and Travel Time within Bhutan

From/To	Distance	Travel Time
Thimphu – Paro	65 km	1 hr 30 min
Thimphu – Phuntsholing	176 km	6 hrs
Phuntsholing – Bagdogra (India)	170 km	4 hrs
Thimphu – Ha	115 km	3 hrs 30 min
Ha – Paro	60 km	2 hrs 30 min
Thimphu – Wangdue Phodrang	70 km	2 hrs
Thimphu – Punakha	77 km	2 hrs 15 min
Punakha – Wangdue Phodrang	21 km	30 min
Wangdue Phodrang – Trongsa	129 km	4 hrs
Trongsa – Bumthang	68 km	2 hrs 30 min
Bumthang – Mongar	129 km	4 hrs
Mongar – Trashigang	90 km	3 hrs
Trashigang – Trashi Yangtse	55 km	2 hrs

8 Attraction Timing

8.1 National Library

Day	Time	Status
Monday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Tuesday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Wednesday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Thursday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Friday	Whole Day	Close
Saturday	Whole Day	Close
Sunday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open

8.2 Folk Heritage Museum

Day	Time	Status
Monday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Tuesday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Wednesday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Thursday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Friday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Saturday	10:30 A.M to 1:00 P.M	Open
Sunday	11:30 A.M to 3:00 P.M	Open

8.3 Textile Museum

Day	Time	Status
Monday	9:00 A.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Tuesday	9:00 A.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Wednesday	9:00 A.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Thursday	9:00 A.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Friday	9:00 A.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Saturday	9:00 A.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Sunday	Whole Day	Close

8.4 Handicrafts Emporium

Day	Time	Status
Monday	9:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 2:00 P.M to 6:00 P.M	Open
Tuesday	9:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 2:00 P.M to 6:00 P.M	Open
Wednesday	9:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 2:00 P.M to 6:00 P.M	Open
Thursday	9:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 2:00 P.M to 6:00 P.M	Open
Friday	9:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 2:00 P.M to 6:00 P.M	Open
Saturday	9:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 2:00 P.M to 6:00 P.M	Open
Sunday	9:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 2:00 P.M to 6:00 P.M	Open

8.5 Gold/Silver Smith, Near RSTA

Day	Time	Status
Monday	9:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 2:00 P.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Tuesday	9:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 2:00 P.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Wednesday	9:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 2:00 P.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Thursday	9:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 2:00 P.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Friday	9:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 2:00 P.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Saturday	Whole Day	Close
Sunday	Whole Day	Close

8.6 RAPA

Day	Time	Status
Monday	3:30 A.M to 4:30 P.M	Open
Tuesday	3:30 A.M to 4:30 P.M	Open
Wednesday	3:30 A.M to 4:30 P.M	Open
Thursday	3:30 A.M to 4:30 P.M	Open
Friday	3:30 A.M to 4:30 P.M	Open
Saturday	Whole Day	Close
Sunday	Whole Day	Close

8.7 Zorig Chusum

Day	Time	Status
Monday	9:00 A.M to 12:00 & 1:00 P.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Tuesday	9:00 A.M to 12:00 & 1:00 P.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Wednesday	9:00 A.M to 12:00 & 1:00 P.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Thursday	9:00 A.M to 12:00 & 1:00 P.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Friday	9:00 A.M to 12:00 & 1:00 P.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Saturday	Whole Day	Close
Sunday	Whole Day	Close

8.8 Incense Factory

Day	Time	Status
Monday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Tuesday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Wednesday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Thursday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Friday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Saturday	Whole Day	Close
Sunday	Whole Day	Close

8.9 Institute of Traditional Medicine

Day	Time	Status
Monday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Tuesday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Wednesday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Thursday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Friday	9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Saturday	Whole Day	Close
Sunday	Whole Day	Close

8.10 Trongsa Museum

Day	Time	Status
Monday	9:00 A.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Tuesday	9:00 A.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Wednesday	9:00 A.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Thursday	9:00 A.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Friday	9:00 A.M to 4:00 P.M	Open
Saturday	9:00 A.M to 12:00 noon	Open
Sunday/gov holiday	Whole Day	Close

8.11 Jungshi Handmade Paper Factory

Jungshi Handmade Paper Factory, Above Hotel River View, Contact # 323431		
Day	Time	Status
Monday	8:30 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 1:30 P.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Tuesday	8:30 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 1:30 P.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Wednesday	8:30 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 1:30 P.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Thursday	8:30 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 1:30 P.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Friday	8:30 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 1:30 P.M to 5:00 P.M &	Open
Saturday	8:30 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 1:30 P.M to 5:00 P.M	Open
Sunday	8:30 A.M to 1:00 P.M & 1:30 P.M to 5:00 P.M	Open

9 Druk Air

9.1.1 Flight Timing

- a. Passengers are advised to maintain a minimum of 24 hours connection time to avoid misconnection
- b. All passengers are advised to maintain flexible tickets on connecting carriers.
- c. The reporting time for is two hours prior to flight departure. All counters will close 30 minutes prior to scheduled departure of the flight.
- d. Check-in counters in Delhi will close one hour prior to scheduled flight departure.

9.1.2 Check in formalities

- a. The reporting time is two hours prior to flight departure. All counters will close 30 minutes prior to scheduled departure of the flight.
- b. However, check-in counters in Delhi will close one hour prior to scheduled flight departure.
- c. Itinerary receipts and travel documents must be presented at the time of check-in.
- d. For all travel, it is the ticket holder's responsibility to ensure that all required visas have been obtained and presented at check-in.
- e. The Carrier reserves the right to refuse carriage to a passenger who fails to present the necessary travel documents.
- f. Time shown on the itinerary receipt is the departure time of the aircraft and the check-in counters close 30 minutes prior to departure time.
- g. If a credit card is used to purchase electronic ticket, the credit card must be presented at the time of check-in.

9.1.3 Documents required in case passenger is a patient

- a. Fit to travel by air certificate signed by a Physician
- b. CID of patient and escort if travelling to India and passport if travelling to other countries.
- c. Child Health Card or Birth Certificate if the patient is minor and travelling to India and Passport if travelling to other countries.
- d. Reservation of 5 seats incase stretcher is required and one day prior information to Drukair is required.
- e. Oxygen cylinder can be provided upon payment of Nu. 1000 at the check-in counter

9.1.4 Reconfirmation of Reservation

All reservations must be reconfirmed at least 72 hours before scheduled departure. Failure to reconfirm will result in cancellation of booking without any notice.

9.1.5 Ticket validity

Tickets issued against full fare are valid for a period of one year, except as otherwise provided in the ticket.

9.1.6 Air Port Tax

Air port tax is payable by all passengers before embarking a flight.

9.1.7 Insurance Surcharge (YQ) & Fuel Surcharge (YR)

Both (YQ) & (YR) are collected at the time of the ticket issuance, however if erroneously omitted in the ticket, air line check –in personnel will collect.

9.1.8 Passenger Service Fees (PSF)

For travel ex-India , a passenger Service Fee of Rs. 230 is levied on passengers for tickets issued in India and USD 6 in equivalent to local currency for tickets issued outside India. The PSF is collected at the time of issuance of ticket, however if omitted in the ticket airline check in personnel will collect the PSF.

9.1.9 Change in Fares

Fares are subject to change without notice. In the event of a passenger commencing journey after a revised tariff becomes effective, the differences between the fare paid and the fare applicable will be collected from the passenger before embarkation.

9.1.10 Refund & Cancellation

Refund of ticket can only be made at the issuing office .For the conditions of refund and cancellation, please check with any Druk air Offices.

9.1.11 No Refund can be made against Lost Documents

Passengers are particularly requested to note that tickets are cash value documents and must be physically presented for refund.

9.1.12 No – Show

Please check with any Druk Air office for no show rules.

9.1.13 Valuable articles

Currency, precious metals, jewellery, negotiable instruments, securities, personal identification documents and other items of value are best carried with the passenger in the cabin.

9.1.14 Carriage of Firearms

Carriage of firearms, ammunition and other weapons on the passenger's person is expressly prohibited. These should be handed over to Druk air office before embarking for delivery at the destination.

9.1.15 Security Checks

All passengers and their baggage are subjected to security checks before boarding a flight. Transit passengers are therefore requested to remain on board at the transit stations as; otherwise, they will be again subject to security checks.

9.1.16 Food and beverages on board

Meals are served after a flight is airborne for reasonable duration.

The timings are:

Breakfast : 0730 – 1030 hours

Lunch : 1030 – 1430 hours

Dinner : 1830 – 2130 hours

On one hour sector flight, snacks are served. Refreshments and drinks are served throughout the duration of the flight.

9.1.17 Security

According to security regulations, passengers are advised:

- Not to accept any baggage/ packet from unknown persons
- Not to leave baggage unattended at anytime especially within airport area. Unattended baggage may be removed by Airport/ Security staff as object of suspicion.
- To declare before check-in, if carrying any arms or explosive substance. Concealment is an offence under Aircraft Act and Rules
- To remove battery cells/ dry cells from radios, transistor sets, two-in-ones and other such electrical/ electronic items and hand them over to the airline staff before security check or carry them in registered baggage

9.1.18 Baggage Allowance

9.1.18.1 Free Baggage Allowance

The free baggage allowances on scheduled international flights are as follows:

- Business Class 30 Kg (68 pounds)
- Economy Class 20 Kg (44 pounds)

- Infants: Infants paying only 10% of the applicable air fare are not entitled to any free baggage allowance.

The following Articles may be carried free of charge over and above the Free Baggage Allowance

- A lady's handbag, pocket book or purse, which is appropriate to normal traveling dress and which is not being used as a container to carry articles which would otherwise be regarded as baggage.
- An overcoat wrap or blanket
- An umbrella or walking stick
- A small camera and/or a pair of binoculars
- A reasonable amount of reading matter for the flight
- Infant's food for consumption in flight and infant's carrying basket
- An invalid's fully collapsible wheelchair and/or crutches or other prosthetic device for the passenger's use provided the passenger is dependent on them

All other articles - such as flight bags, briefcases, typewriters, ladies vanity cases, large size cameras, etc... - will be weighed and, if applicable, excess baggage charges will be levied.

9.1.18.2 Unchecked Baggage/cabin Baggage

- Regulations issued by the Drukair Corporation stipulate that your cabin baggage must be placed under the seat in front of your own. Therefore the overall dimensions are limited to 45 + 35 + 20 cm (17 1/2 + 13 1/2 + 8 inches). The weight must not exceed 5 kg (11 pounds)
- These regulations shall ensure that the cabin baggage will not impede evacuation of aircraft cabin in case of emergency.
- Please consider this when packing your baggage and kindly ensure that any item exceeding the above limitations is sent as checked baggage.
- Spot checks will be performed during embarkation to ensure that these regulations are being followed

9.1.19 Baggage guidelines

- For the purpose of easy identification, please label all baggage on the inside as well as on the outside with your name, address and telephone no.
- Name labels are available at all Drukair offices and check-in counters.
- Remember to lock your baggage to prevent it from falling open.
- The Carrier is not liable for loss of, damage to or delay in the delivery of fragile or perishable articles, money, jewellery, silverware, negotiable papers, securities or other valuables, business documents or samples or medicines or drugs which are included in the passenger's baggage, whether with or without the knowledge of the carrier.
- Please note that all Airline Members of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) are required to observe the following baggage regulations

9.1.20 Excess Baggage

The charge per kg of excess baggage is equivalent to 1.5% of the highest normal adult one way economy class fare.

9.1.21 Dangerous articles in baggage

For safety reasons, dangerous articles such as those listed below, must not be carried in passenger's baggage.

- a. **Compressed gasses** – (deeply refrigerated, flammable, non-flammable and poisonous) such as butane, oxygen, liquid nitrogen, aqualung cylinders
- b. **Corrosives** such as acids, alkalis, mercury and wet cell batteries
- c. **Explosives**, munitions, fireworks and flares
- d. **Flammable liquids and solids** such as lighter fuel, **matches**, paints, thinners, fire-lighters
- e. **Radioactive materials**
- f. **Brief-cases and attaché cases with installed alarm devices**
- g. **Oxidizing materials** such as bleaching powder, peroxides
- h. **Poisons and infectious substances** such as insecticides, weed-killers and live virus materials Other dangerous articles such as magnetized material, offensive or irritating materials Medicines and toiletries in limited quantities which are necessary or appropriate for the passenger during the journey, such as hairsprays, perfumes, and medicines containing alcohol may be carried. Many of these listed articles can be carried as air cargo provided they are packed in accordance with the cargo regulations

9.1.22 Travel Tips

- a. All passengers are advised to maintain a minimum of 24 hours connection time to avoid misconnections due to weather, which is one of the major causes of for misconnections.
- b. Passengers travelling to Dhaka, Bangladesh, are required to submit their embarkation/disembarkations forms online prior to date of travel.
- c. As per the notice circulated to all airlines by the Thai Immigration office, visa on arrival for passenger holding one way or open ticket will not be extended. Therefore such passengers are advised to obtain necessary prior visa from the concerned diplomatic representations abroad to avoid being inconvenienced and deported.
- d. Through check – in facility is yet to be introduced in Drukair. Therefore, all transit passengers are requested to observe the following procedures pertaining to transit check-in.
- e. Travel ex-Paro (International - International)
 - On arrival at Bangkok, transit passengers must proceed to the Thai Airways transfer desk on the 2nd floor at concourse G.
 - Ensure that your baggage tags have been received from the last carrier.
 - Handover baggage tags to the transfer desk personnel for baggage to be transferred to Druk Air and ensure that it has been received and re-tagged to Paro.

- f. Travel ex Paro (International – domestic)
- Transit check-in and transit transfer of baggage is not permitted from the international to Domestic flights except for Thai Airways to Thai Air Ways flights and on some airlines on special arrangements.
 - If otherwise on arrival, you must collect your baggage from the baggage belt, proceed through passport and customs formalities and check-in for the domestic flight on the 4th floor.

9.1.23 Passport and Visa requirements for Bhutan

9.1.23.1 Foreigners

- All foreigners visiting Bhutan must have a valid visa clearance letter issued by the Department of Immigration of Bhutan prior to boarding of flight.
- Passengers are required to produce a copy of the visa clearance letter issued by the Department of Immigration- Bhutan at the time of check-in.
- Initial Reference letter issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not valid for Travel. Any passenger without valid visa clearance letter will be denied at Check-in counter and Drukair will not be liable for any claims.

9.1.23.2 Indian Nationals

- All Indian Nationals visiting Bhutan do not require visa to enter Bhutan. Travel documents required are passport or voters ID card or Citizenship ID card.

9.1.23.3 Bangladesh & Maldives Nationals

- All Bangladesh and Maldives National does not require visa to enter Bhutan. Travel documents required is passport.

***Note:** All passengers are advised to check their passport validity which should not be less than 6 months from the date of travel. Drukair will not be liable and will refuse check-in of those passengers whose passport does not meet the validity requirements.

9.1.24 Druk Air Offices

9.1.24.1 Paro

Druk Air Corporation Ltd. (Head Office)

Royal Bhutan Airlines,

Nemeyzampa,

Paro, Bhutan

Phone : +975 -8- 271856/57/58 and +975-8-271861

Fax : +975- 8 -271861

E-mail : reservationparo@drukair.com.bt

Paro Airport

Nemeyzampa
Paro, Bhutan
Phone : +975-8-271423
Fax : +975-8-271855
E-mail : parostation@drukair.com.bt

9.1.24.2 Thimphu

Druk Air Corporation Ltd (Branch Office)

Chang Lam Plaza Building,
Chang Lam,
Thimphu, Bhutan
Phone : +975-2- 322215 / 323420 / 322825
Fax : +975 -2- 322775
E-mail : specontrol@drukair.com.bt
drukairthimphu@druknet.bt

9.1.24.3 New Delhi

Druk Air Corporation Ltd (City Office)

Ansal Bhawan Building, G Floor-3,
16 KG Marg, Connaught Place,
New Delhi – 110001
Phone : +01-11-47125100/01/02
Fax : +91-11-23357768
E-mail : sales.delhi@drukair.com.bt

Druk Air Corporation Ltd (Airport Office)

Room No 43, New Visitor's Lounge,
IGI Airport, Terminal II,
New Delhi
Phone: +91-11-25653207
Fax : +91-11-25653147
E-mail : delkkkb@drukair.com.bt

9.1.24.4 Kolkata

Druk Air Corporation Ltd (City Office)

Royal Bhutan Airlines,
51, Tivoli Court,
1A, Ballygunge Circular Road,
Kolkata – 700019
Phone : +91-33-22902429/22805376
Fax : +91-33-22900050
E-mail : reservation@drukaireccu.com/cityoffice@drukaireccu.com

Druk Air Corporation Ltd (Airport Office)

Room No 16, (International Building), NTB

N.S.C.B.I. Airport

Kolkata – 700017

Phone :+91-33-25119976/25111973

Fax :+91-33-25117094

Email :aic@drukairccu.com/airport@drukairccu.com

9.1.24.5 Gaya**Druk Air Corporation Ltd.**

Happy Guest House,

Near Mahabodhi Society of India,

Bodh Gaya, Bihar 824231

Phone :+91-631-2200264

Fax :+91-631-2200264

E-mail :peman@drukair.com.bt/pemagaya@drukair.com.bt

9.1.24.6 Myanmar**Druk Air Corporation Ltd**

No. 52, Phyapon Street,

Sanchaung, Yangon

Myanmar

Phone :+95-1-527724

Fax :+95-1-537873

Email :drukair@mptmail.net.mm

9.1.24.7 Nepal**Danfe Travel Centre (P) Ltd**

P.O. Box 4429

Dubarmarg,

Kathmandu, Nepal

Phone :+977-1-4239988/4239922/4239651

:+977-1-4471712 (Airport)

Fax :+977-1-4239658

E-mail :sales@drukair.danfetravels.com/ktmkkkb@drukair.com.bt(Airport)

Malla Treks (P) Ltd

P.O. Box 5227

Leknath Marg

Kathmandu, Nepal

Phone :+977-1-4410089
Fax :977-1-4423143
E-mail :info@mallatreks.com

9.1.24.8 Thailand

Druk Air (Airport Office)

Royal Bhutan Airlines,
Room No Z 3 – 013 (3rd Floor)
Airlines Office Building
Suvarnabhumi International Airport
999/Moo 7
Racha Thewa, Bang Phi
Samut Prakan 10540
Phone :+66-2-1343040/1343041
Fax :+66-2-1343042
E-mail :drukairbkk@drukair.com.bt

Druk Air (City Office)

5th Floor, Suite No.141/4, Skulthai
Surawong Tower,
Suriyawong Bangrak,
Bangkok 10500
Thailand
Phone :+66-2-2379201/203
Fax :+66-2-2379200

9.1.24.9 Bangladesh

Druk Air Corporation Ltd,

Zia International Airport,
Terminal 2, Second Floor,
Room No.52
Dhaka, Bangladesh
Phone :+880-2-8911066/8917347
Fax :+880-2-8913038
E-mail :dhaka@drukair.com.bt

For details: log on www.drukair.com.bt



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