

[MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2018-03, April 11, 2018]

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROGRESSIVE ACCREDITATION SYSTEM (PAS) AND ITS IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES

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Pursuant to the authority vested in the Department of Tourism (DOT) by Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as the Tourism Act of 2009, to maintain international standards of excellence in all tourism facilities and services, and promote the country as a safe and wholesome tourist destination, the guidelines for the Progressive Accreditation System are hereby promulgated to implement the intent and purpose of the Tourism Act of 2009.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The Philippine tourism industry came to its peak and has achieved unprecedented milestones during the last six (6) years. These include an uninterrupted increase in the tourism industry's key growth indicators namely: domestic and international tourist arrivals, domestic and international tourism receipts, length of stay of international tourists as well as increase in the contribution of tourism to the national gross domestic product (GDP) and employment.

1.2 Concomitant to the influx of tourists in the country is the rapid increase in the establishment of tourism enterprises to answer the demand of the country's growing patronage. Multitudes of tourism enterprises of various types and levels were seen to be established during the past years. As such, the formulation of a progressive accreditation system is timely to address the need of these enterprises for an accreditation system that recognizes their various levels of development and standards of operation.

1.3 The DOT, thus, deemed it best to establish the Progressive Accreditation System (PAS) that will cover primary tourism enterprises, prescribing not only the minimum standards for Basic Registration and Regular Accreditation, but also reflecting customers' expectations for the Premium or Star-Rating Accreditation.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

2.1 To make DOT accreditation system more inclusive;

2.2 To motivate stakeholders to maintain and improve the quality of their property's facilities and services; and

2.3 To develop a database of primary tourism enterprises in the country.

3.0 PROGRESSIVE ACCREDITATION SYSTEM (PAS)

The PAS is a three-level recognition scheme of the DOT for Primary Tourism Enterprises entailing progressive minimum standards and reflecting customers' expectations, thus:

3.1 Basic Registration

Basic Registration shall be issued to a tourism-oriented enterprise found to be compliant with the Basic requirements set by the DOT.

Basic Registration applies to primary tourism enterprises as stated under Section 4.0 of this guidelines, except for Hotels, Resorts, Apartment Hotels, Homestays, Tourist Land Transport Operators and Online Travel and Tour Agencies.

Basic Registration shall be valid for a period of one (1) year from the date of issuance unless sooner cancelled for a cause.

3.2 Regular Accreditation

Regular Accreditation shall be issued to a tourism enterprise found to be compliant with both basic and minimum standards for the operation of tourism facilities and services.

Regular Accreditation shall be valid for a period of two (2) years and shall be renewable thereafter unless sooner cancelled for a cause.

3.3 Premium Accreditation and Star Rating Accreditation

3.3.1 Premium Accreditation shall be issued to a tourism enterprise found to have complied with the minimum standards prescribed under Regular and Premium Accreditation. It shall apply to all primary tourism enterprises as stated under Section 4.0 of this guidelines, except for Hotels, Resorts, Apartment Hotels and Online Travel and Tour Agencies.

Premium Accreditation shall be valid for a period of three (3) years and shall be renewable thereafter unless sooner cancelled for a cause.

3.3.2 Star-Rating Accreditation shall be issued to Hotels, Resorts and Apartment Hotels found to have complied with the minimum standards under the National Accommodation Standards (NAS).

Star-Rating Accreditation shall be valid for a period of three (3) years and shall be renewable thereafter unless sooner cancelled for a cause.

4.0 SCOPE

As defined, the following primary tourism enterprises shall be covered by the PAS, thus:

4.1 Accommodation Establishments

- a) Hotel - shall refer to full service accommodation with reception and guest rooms generally offering private facilities with dining facility and services.
- b) Resort - shall refer to full service accommodation located in a more natural, relaxed environment, with reception and guest rooms generally offering private facilities with dining and recreation facilities and services.
- c) Apartment Hotel - shall refer to serviced apartments offering self-contained units with access to kitchen and laundry facilities. A number of bedrooms may share one bathroom in the unit.
- d) Mabuhay Accommodation - shall apply to Tourist Inns, Pension Houses, Motels, Bed and Breakfasts, Vacation Homes, Hostels and other similar accommodation establishments.
- e) Homestay - shall refer to an alternative form of tourism where tourists will stay with the host family in the same house to experience the everyday way of life of the family and the local community.

4.2 Travel and Tour Agencies

- a) Tour Operator - shall mean an entity engaged in the business of inbound and/or local tour operation such as organizing and/or conducting tours as well as making online reservations, arranging and booking for transportation and accommodation for a fee, commission, or any form of remuneration.
- b) Travel Agency - shall mean an entity engaged in the business of providing travel-related services such as transportation or accommodation reservations/bookings, documentation of travel papers, sale and/or issuance of tickets and selling of outbound tours for a fee, commission, or any form of remuneration.
- c) Travel and Tour Agency - shall mean an entity engaged in the business of providing both Tour Operator and Travel Agency services, as defined in (a) and (b).
- d) Online Travel and Tour Agency - shall mean an entity whose operations are solely conducted through websites and other online platform dedicated to travel and tour operations.

4.3 **Tourist Land Transport Operator** - shall mean an entity regularly engaged in providing land transport services exclusively, for tourist use for a fee or any form of remuneration.

4.4 **MICE Organizer** - shall mean an entity engaged in the business of managing or organizing congresses, conventions, meetings/ conferences, exhibitions or similar events in a professional manner for a fee or any form of remuneration.

4.5 **MICE Venue/Facility** - shall mean a physical space designed and provided for events, exhibitions, meetings/conferences and conventions for a fee or any form of remuneration.

5.0 REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Documentary Requirements

The documentary requirements for primary tourism enterprises for each category are attached as Annex A*.

5.2 Physical Requirements

The physical requirements for primary tourism enterprises for each category and each level are attached as Annex B*.

The criteria/requirements under the National Accommodation Standards (DOT Memorandum Circular 2012-02) are incorporated by way of reference.

6.0 SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM (SAF)

The SAF is a document or checklist (copy attached as Annex C*) where the applicant tourism enterprise pre-determines its qualification for Basic Registration, Regular Accreditation or Premium/Star-Rating Accreditation by evaluating the degree of their compliance with the minimum requirements/ standards set by the Department.

The SAF shall be made available in the DOT-Regional Office's (RO) and on the website of the DOT at all times for tourism enterprises' reference and use.

7.0 RENEWAL PERIOD AND VALIDITY OF ACCREDITATION

The following schedules shall be observed in the filing of application for accreditation with corresponding date of expiry:

Entity type	Renewal Period	Accreditation Expiry
Accommodation Establishments	August 1 to October 31	October 31
Travel and Tour Agencies	April 1 to June 30	June 30
Tourist Land Transport	February 1 to	April 30

Operator	April 30	
MICE Organizer and MICE Venue/ Facility	April 1 to June 30	June 30

8.0 PROCEDURE

A tourism enterprise who wishes to apply for DOT Registration/Accreditation may submit a Letter of Intent or duly accomplished Self-Assessment Form (SAF) to the DOT-Regional Office or file an application through Online Accreditation System.

An inspection shall then be scheduled and conducted at the designated time, and in the presence of the owner or his authorized representative. The DOT Accreditation Officer shall discuss with the General Manager or Authorized Representative the results/findings, after which both parties shall sign the Inspection Checklist.

8.1 BASIC REGISTRATION

8.1.1 If found to be compliant with the requirements for Basic Registration upon inspection, the DOT shall issue the Certificate of Registration to the tourism enterprise.

For *mabuhay accommodation*, registration may be extended for another year upon compliance with at least 50% of the identified physical requirements (marked ***) of the regular accreditation. Corresponding validation shall be conducted by the DOT.

8.1.2 The Certificate of Registration to be issued by the DOT shall bear the following disclosure and, terms and conditions, thus:

(FRONT)

DISCLOSURE FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION AND
CONSUMER PROTECTION

This Certification does not serve to guarantee the quality of the facilities and services of this tourism enterprise.

(DORSAL)

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The tourism enterprise in favour of which this Certificate was issued shall be bound to comply with all the laws, rules and regulations being implemented by DOT as well as the other government agencies.

Filing of any complaint for violation of these laws, rules and regulations determined to be with merit by DOT will result in automatic cancellation of the Basic Registration issued to the afore-named tourism enterprise.

8.1.3 If the tourism enterprise failed to meet the basic requirements, the DOT shall give the tourism enterprise a period of six