





## An initiative of THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT Govt. of Assam

Implementing Agency: ASSAM TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD. AAMAAR AALOHI





## Rural Homestay Scheme 2016-17

## Introduction:

**'Aamaar Aalohi' - Rural Homestay Scheme** is framed by the Tourism Department, Govt. of Assam, with the objectives of giving a new dimension and thrust to the Rural Homestay Facilities in the State of Assam and creation of self-employment opportunities for educated youths in rural and semi-urban areas of tourism potential and importance.

## Short title & name of the scheme:

The name and title of the scheme is "AAMAAR AALOHI Rural Homestay Scheme 2016-17".

## Concept of the rural homestay scheme:

The concept of rural homestay basically means private residential houses in rural areas in good conditions and also easily accessible, of which two-three rooms would exclusively be used for tourist accommodation and food etc. against payment of reasonable charges. These houses would be located in the rural/non-urban areas with clean toilet facilities, reasonably furnished and ready for providing accommodation to tourists and should have motorable road connectivity and preferably close to tourist spots. The facilities would be such that the tourists may enjoy the unique culture of village life through participation in events, or experiencing the local cuisine, or buying ethnic goods, and in the process also improve the welfare of the local people. As per the guidelines of Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, Rural Homestay Tourism provides a mix of various tourism concepts in a non-urban setting with rural essence for the benefit of local community while preserving rural assets, values and heritage. It inculcates the following concepts :

- Heritage & Culture (Ethnic Tourism),
- Learning and education from natural environment about rural life style, art and culture (Ecotourism),
- Scenic Value (Nature Tourism),
- Religious value (Pilgrim tourism),
- Adventure/sports based activities (Adventure tourism)
- Rural/agrarian lifestyle.

## Definition :

**Homestay unit** is a house occupied by a family with at least one room up which is ready to accommodate tourists, where the tourist and the hosting family interact with each other to experience the local customs and traditions and such accommodation is recognized by Tourism Department, Govt. of Assam.

**Applicant** means the owner of the establishment along with his/her spouse who applied for registration as homestay unit under this scheme or applies to avail incentives for new homestay unit under this scheme.





Tourist means a person who pays for staying in a homestay unit.

Form means the form appended to this scheme.

Selection Committee to be constituted by Tourism Department, Govt. of Assam will conduct the process of selection of beneficiaries and properties for the scheme.

**Standard and Quality Assurance Committee** is a Committee comprising different officials from Department of Tourism, Directorate of Tourism and ATDC Ltd. which evaluates the quality of the facilities and services of various properties.

**Rural:** means area outside the jurisdiction of a duly constituted urban local body i.e. Municipal Corporation, Town Committee etc.

### Aim of the present scheme:

The present scheme aims at providing comfortable homestay facilities of standardized services to the tourists, and to supplement the availability of accommodation in the rural tourist destinations. The State Government of Assam in the Tourism Department is going to introduce *Aamaar Aalohi* -- Rural Homestay Scheme in rural and non-urban locations. The basic idea is to provide a clean and affordable place for foreigners and domestic tourists alike including an opportunity for foreign tourists to stay with Assamese families to experience Assamese customs and traditions and relish authentic Assamese/local cuisine. Under this scheme the following two categories will be executed:-

### (a) Registration of existing Home Stay unit across the state of Assam under Assam Tourism:

Each existing homestays which will be registered under the Assam Tourism Home Stay Scheme will be classified as followed as per the facilities and services provided. This evaluation will be done **Standard and Quality Assurance Committee** during the inspection of the house at the initial registration and will be re-classified at the renewal of license every year at the annual inspection.

**Super-Deluxe:** Those which score more than 80% of the total marks received as per the criteria.

**Deluxe:** Those which score between 60% and 80% of the total marks received as per the criteria.

**Standard:** Those which score between 50% and 60% of the total marks received as per the criteria.





# (b) Setting-up of new Home Stay Units by providing subsidy / margin money assistance from Tourism Department, Govt. of Assam :

Subsidy / margin money assistance and other support will be provided for setting-up of new Homestay (as per specifications) to the selected beneficiaries. These units would be selected after identification of existing houses with their premises and must have scope for construction of small units with ethnic design within the same premises. For this purpose, adequate **land measuring at least 1 Katha and above must be available within the same premises in and around important tourist spots** and must be suitable and secured for setting up the new units under the present scheme.

Amar Alohi units, once approved by Department of Tourism, Assam will be duly publicized. **A directory of all such approved establishments will also be prepared** so as to enable domestic as well as foreign tourists to live in a homely environment and to take advantage of the scheme.

## **Objectives of the Scheme:**

According to the Govt. of India, Ministry of Tourism, "any form of tourism that showcases rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefitting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience, can be termed as Rural Homestay Tourism". It further says that "Rural Homestay Tourism is essentially an activity which takes place in countryside".

The objectives of the present schemes are :-

- to empower local community by creating tourism related employment and distributing economic benefits through tourism;
- to support the demand for supplementary accommodation in and around potential tourism areas of the State;
- to enrich sustainable and responsible development of eco and rural tourism;
- ✤ to conserve nature, culture, heritage and traditions;
- to create positive environmental benefits for rural people and their surroundings;
- $\diamond$  to increase the value for local cultures and strengths;
- to make accreditation for homestay units by the Tourism Department;
- to broaden the stakeholders' base in tourism;
- to expand tourism related activities to rural and interior areas;
- to enhance education and awareness of environment and culture amongst hosts and visitors to provide quality experiences for both;
- to strengthen participation and decision-making in tourism of rural committees, especially of marginal groups such as women;
- to provide a new experience in a sparsely populated natural environment;





to make influence and introduce policies and schemes that benefit the rural tourism industry, e.g. incentives, subsidies, regulations, site focus etc.

## Standardization of Aamaar Aalohi Rural Homestay units:

Standardization of the Homestay units are as follows :-

- (a) The selected existing houses shall fulfill the minimum requirement of having at least one room for accommodation with attached toilet facility which will be made available to the tourists as Home Stay facilities and will be classified as under: Super-Deluxe, Deluxe and Standard.
- (b) Accommodation under the scheme would mean the room accommodation of minimum standard sizes with attached toilet facility reasonably furnished (as per eligibility requirement vide Annexure-I) and ready for letting out to the tourists / guests as prescribed under the said scheme.
- (c) The newly constructed units under this scheme will have standard type (as per specification) with minimum uniform colour scheme and in their look and get up depending upon the actual locations (hill area / plain area / riverine area), heritage, ethnicity & culture of the local people so that these are easily identifiable.
- (d) The owner of the homestay are fully responsible to maintain a good internal décor, furniture & furnishing, curtains etc. which will be based on local culture, heritage, themes, environment etc.
- (e) An estimated cost for newly setting-up of **Rural Homestay** of Assam Type Cottage (Type I) and Stilted Assam Type Cottage with attached toilet and bathroom are as per Annexure III & IV respectively.

### Selection process of units / beneficiaries & criteria:

Suitability criteria for selection of the houses and their premises, their locations would be one of the most important criteria. The houses should not only be from a rural/non-urban area, these should be close to important tourists spots and may also be in such locations where some important tourism events like fairs and festivals etc. are held which draw large number of visitors from different places.

# (a) The selection process for registration of existing Home Stay units will be depends on the following :-

(i) Step – I: They have applied by submitting the prescribed Application Form (vide Annexure – III) alongwith the necessary documents / testimonials within the stipulated time mentioned in the Advertisement.





- (ii) Step II : On the basis of their application, the Standard and Quality Assurance Committee will inspect their property and recommended the suitable applicants on the basis of their property by submitting an Inspection Report before the Selection Committee.
- (iii) Step III: The Selection Committee will examine their Application Form and the Inspection Report and on the basis of that they will be shortlisted the applicants for the training programme to be organized by ATDC Ltd.
- (iv) Step IV : On the basis of the performance in the Training Programme on hospitality & housekeeping services and management skills to run Home Stay Units, the Selection Committee will finally selected the suitable Homestays for registration under the scheme.

## (b) The selection process of beneficiaries for providing Subsidy / Margin money Assistance to set-up new Home Stay unit will be as follows :-

- (i) Step I: Assam tourism development Corporation Ltd will issue open advertisement inviting offers from interested individual families and shall apply in prescribed Application Forms. These applications alongwith their submitted (as per the Application Form) documents / testimonials would be examined for shortlisted, if necessary, shall call them for discussion before shortlisted. The applicants should have the following :
  - > The applicant should have minimum educational qualification of minimum  $12^{\text{th}}$  standard pass.
  - The age of the applicant will not less than 26 years and not more than 55 years as on 01.01.2017.
- (ii) Step II : The Standard & Quality Assurance Committee will inspect the premises, locations of the shortlisted applicants proposals and further shortlisted their applications for the training programme to be organized by ATDC Ltd. on hospitality, housekeeping services and management skills to run Home Stays.
- (iii) Step III : After the training programme, the Selection Committee will select the suitable beneficiaries on the basis of the report of the Standard & Quality Assurance Committee and their performance in the training programme for providing subsidy / margin money assistance to set up new Rural Home Stay Unit.

Apart from above, The Applicant will also have taken **necessary clearance of district / subdivisional authorities on credential and other relevant issues including status of land etc.** for Registration of existing Home Stay Unit or setting-up of the proposed Home Stay Unit. A **Police Verification Certificate** has also to be obtained for selection.





## Incentives / Assistance to be given under the scheme:

#### (i) The existing Homestay units will get the following incentives under the scheme :-

- (a) Recognition through online-registration as an authorized tourist establishment register under Assam Tourism;
- (b) Professional advice for improvements of homestays & guest services by experts in the respective fields;
- (c) Free training on homestay and hospitality services, basic accounts, attitude building, marketing etc.;
- (d) Free publicity and marketing opportunities through official websites of Assam Tourism;
- (e) Listing the accommodation guide and homestay directory published by Assam Tourism;
- (f) Free of charge listing in the periodically printed brochures and advertisement;
- (g) Free marketing opportunities via national and international information counters, travel fairs, tourist directories, guidebooks and social media networks;
- (h) Allow eligible homestay unit to display the Assam Tourism homestay logo as a registered establishment;
- (i) Familiarization trips (FAM trips) for homestay operators to famous homestay organization / tourism entities promoting rural, cultural and nature tourism.
- (j) Encourage local communities to adopt organic farming techniques.

## (ii) For newly set-up Homestay units will be entitled for the following incentives / financial assistance under the scheme along with the aforesaid incentives under (i) above:

- (a) Limit of subsidy for the type of construction :-
  - (i) Assam type cottage (type 1): Assistance of 80% of the project cost as per Annexure IV;
  - (ii) Stilted Assam type cottage (type 2): Assistance of 80% of the project cost as per Annexure V;





- (b) The **remaining fund** (20% of project cost) would have to be arranged from bank or such other sources by the beneficiaries.
- (c) The Govt. of Assam or ATDC Ltd. shall not provide any guarantee for the loan components nor shall be liable for any financial liability of the beneficiaries in any manner under this scheme at any point of time to any party for any reason whatsoever.

## Release of financial assistance and time limit for completion:

The State Govt. assistance 80% would be released in the following phases :

- (a) **20% of the assistance** immediately after selection, approval and registration of the units and on production of documentary proof of arrangement of the remaining fund for the project apart from the subsidy / margin money assistance.
- (b) **The second instalment of 50%** would be released after spot verification by authorized officials and on being satisfied that construction up a reasonable extent have been completed with the first installment from his/her own contribution of 20% of the project.
- (c) **The final instalment of 30%** would be released after completion of the civil works and the unit is ready for commissioning.
- (d) The **time limit** for completion of the units would be **6 months from the date of** release of the 1<sup>st</sup> instalment.

### Guidelines:

- (a) The Scheme shall be operative in entire Assam.
- (b) It is compulsory that all Homestay units, under the scheme, should have register and obtain license from ATDC Ltd.
- (c) The proprietor of the house to be registered under the scheme should submit the prescribed Application Form to ATDC Ltd. with all information and relevant documents.
- (d) Proper land (Miyadi Patta) documents have to be produced at time of document verification and a set of same (duly certified) have to be submitted alongwith the Application Form.
- (e) Each selected candidates/individual under this scheme should process certificate of homestay training program (**certified and organized by ATDC**) without which they won't be eligible to seek assistance under this scheme. The training is mandatory for shortlisted candidates/individuals alongwith his or her spouse.





- (f) An Agreement will have to be executed between ATDC Ltd. and the beneficiary with all the terms and conditions mentioned in the scheme and the same which will be valid till 7 years from execution of the agreement. A draft copy of the MOU is enclosed vide Annexure VI. The signed MOU will be sent to the Deputy Commissioner(s) of the concerned district for further necessary compliance. Some of the basic terms are given below :-
  - (i) the unit will not be sold / leased out / transferred to any other party within the stipulated period of 7 years;
  - (ii) the unit will have to be used only for homestay purpose. If any unit will be used for any other means other than homestay then the entire subsidy amount will be recovered from the beneficiary as a part of arrear of land revenue (Bakijai);
  - (iii) the name of the scheme and prescribed inscription should have to be displayed properly so that tourist can identify the property easily;
  - (iv) the newly constructed units under this scheme will have standard type (as per specification) with minimum uniform colour scheme and in their look and get up depending upon the actual locations (hill area / plain area / riverine area), heritage, ethnicity & culture of the local people so that these are easily identifiable;
  - (v) the owner of the homestay are fully responsible to maintain a good internal décor, furniture & furnishing, curtains etc. which will be based on local culture, heritage, themes, environment etc.;
- (g) The minimum number of rooms that can be constructed under this scheme will be limited to 1 (one).
- (h) Each new homestay should necessarily be having a minimum vacant land for construction of the unit approximately 1 katha of land.
- (i) Each unit should consist of a bedroom and an attached toilet with modern fittings and a walk in closet.
- (j) Entrepreneur's contribution would be the remaining portion of the total project cost.
- (k) The homestay units under this scheme have to be registered as a homestay unit. The registration will be provided by ATDC Ltd. The registered units will be featured in the online portal of the Tourism Department.
- (1) Standard and Quality Assurance Committee would ensure to conduct an inspection of the premises within thirty (30) days of submitting the application before registering the unit as Homestay. This is to ensure that the architectural design is in conformity with location and the surrounding environment and the unit has hygienic, clean





facilities and is secure for tourists. On application for registration/renewal, the unit will have to be ready for inspection, without prior notice, by the Committee. No request for deferment of inspection will be entertained.

- (m) It is recommended to prepare and display in order to specify the type of meals to be offered with the charge and the visitors will have to be informed in advance so as to avoid unnecessary disputes.
- (n) The quality of the facilities and services will be evaluated by the Standard and Quality Assurance Committee. Due preference will be accorded to homes which are able to provide Assamese experience by way of décor, traditions and authentic cuisine.
- (o) A registration fee of  $\Box$  1000.00 should be paid when submitting the Application Form for registration as existing / new homestay unit and a renewal fee of  $\Box$  500.00 will be paid yearly.
- (p) A certificate of registration will be issued on evaluation of the standard as per the Mark sheet.
- (q) Compulsory tie-up with all the homestay service providers associated with ATDC Ltd., however the units are free to tie-up with other agencies subject to prior approval from ATDC Ltd.
- (r) Any deficiency / short comings notified by the committee during inspection will be informed on the spot, and to be rectified within a period of time agreed by the owner of the establishment (less than three months) and informed to ATDC Ltd.
- (s) The Standard and Quality Assurance Committee will decide and may recommend registration in a category either higher or lower than the one applied for. In case the category applied for its lower than the one recommended by the committee, then the applicant has the right to reapply for required category after fulfilling the standard.
- In case of dissatisfaction with the decision of the Committee, the proprietor may appeal in writing to the Senior-most Secretary of Department of Tourism, Government of Assam within thirty (30) days of the official communication.
- (u) The homestay unit is expected to maintain required standard at all the times. Assam Tourism will conduct a surprise inspection of the house at any time without any previous notice. In case of failure to maintain required quality and service standard, hygiene condition, misbehavior or malpractices, the registration will be cancelled by ATDC Ltd. as suggest by the Committee, after giving reasonable time period to rectify the same.





- (v) Any complaint from any guest regarding accommodation of any of the homestay establishment will be investigated and if found guilty the registration will be cancelled by ATDC Ltd.
- (w) Any change in facilities, refurbishment / upgrading or extensions should be informed in writing to ATDC Ltd. within 30 days. If the clause is in violation and it comes to the notice of the committee, the classification will stand withdrawn / terminated.
- (x) The registered homestay units are permitted to market and to promote their respective units and activities.
- (y) ATDC Ltd. will organize training program on hospitality services which need to provide with good quality service and facilities in homestay establishments for tourists.
- (z) The license/classification will be valid for one calendar year. A renewal application with relevant documents and fee should be submitted to ATDC Ltd. three months prior to the expiry of the license for re-inspection / re-evaluation (The application can be downloaded from www.assamtourism.gov.in)

## Eligibility requirements:

It is essential to have the requirements mentioned from 1-10 below to be eligible to register as a Homestay unit in Assam.

- (a) Location: The locality and environment should be suitable for the tourism purpose as per the definition of the Homestay. The Homestay units should be located only in the notified tourism areas (within the radius of 30 KM from tourism area) as notified by Tourism Department, Government of Assam from time to time.
- (b) Access/Approach: Access/Approach should be suitable for the tourism purpose. If it is a property that goes with the themes such as village/ adventure/wildlife etc. necessary security and accessibility arrangements should be made for the safety of the tourist.
- (c) House/Accommodation Unit/Land: The layout and the condition of the house/accommodation unit should be suitable for the operation of the Homestay Unit and should be confirm to the standards set under the Assam Homestay Scheme. Sufficient Mayadi land should be available for the construction of the Homestay unit under this Scheme. (Documents of land title/Namjari/patta/etc. will have to submit along with Applications).
- (d) **Compound/Garden:** The compound/garden should be well laid out and maintained in a manner befitting a Homestay unit.





- (e) **Maintenance:** Maintenance of all areas of the house / accommodation unit including the compound/garden furniture, equipment, fixtures, fitting, etc. should be of a standard befitting the tourism purpose and standard set by the guidelines under the Assam Homestay Scheme.
- (f) **Parking:** A proper parking arrangement (with adequate security) should be available.

#### (g) Front Sitting Area/Hall:

- Should be pleasantly arranged to accommodate guests.
- Should have clean, spacious, well maintained front sitting area/hall.
- The sitting area/hall should have adequate ventilation and natural or artificial lighting.
- The sitting area/hall should have adequate, good quality furniture/seating arrangement in very good condition befitting respective theme.

#### (h) **Bed Room/Sleeping Area:**

- Should have bed room/a proper sleeping arrangement with separate guest bathroom.
- Bed room/sleeping area should be spacious, clean, well ventilated and well maintained.
- Minimum size of the single bed room/sleeping area for one person should not be less than 100 sq.ft. and minimum size of the double bedroom/sleeping area for two people should be less than 120 sq.ft. The safety and privacy of the tourist should be assured especially within the bedroom/sleeping area.
- Bed room /sleeping area should have windows suitably curtained or fitted with blinds or equivalent preserving security/privacy of the tourist.
- Electric fans/air conditioners/blankets should be available depending on the climate.
  The guideline will not be mandatory only in special situations such as eco lodge etc.
- A dressing table with mirror/or a wall fitted with mirror with a shelf, wardrobe or wall cupboard and/or cloth hangers, a small lockable cupboard to store valuables, a towel rack (optional), a luggage rack (optional) or equivalent and a waste-paper basket must be available inside the room. Clean and comfortable bedding/sleeping arrangement should be provided in keeping with the respective theme.
- Size of the bed should not be less than (78 inches X 3 ft) and size of the double bed should not be less than 78 inches/6.3 ft X 5 ft).
- Bed linen should be changed at least once in 02 days for staying guest. Fresh linen should be provided with each new guest.





- All bedrooms should have separate guestrooms with AC, overhead showers and the main floor area should not be less than 30 sq. ft, with moderate sanitation in very good working order.
- Bath room floor should be clean and hygienic.
- Bath room walls should be preferably tiled up to 5ft or furnished with smooth cement/tiled or washable rubber paint or equivalent in keeping with the respective theme.
- Bath room should have wash basin, mirror, towel rails, cloth hooks etc. or equivalent facilities in keeping with the respective theme.
- Should have adequate good quality, absorbent towels and have to be changed on regular basis.
- Iron board (optional) and iron should be available on request.
- Home with electricity supply should supply a plug point inside in each guest room.

#### (i) **Dining Area :**

- Should have a clean, well maintained dining area with good quality comfortable serving and seating arrangement.
- Should have adequate stock of good quality cutlery, crockery, tableware and table linen or equivalent authentic material serving the same purpose will be considered.

#### (j) General :

- Should maintain a guest register with name, address, contact details, passport number/national identity card number, date of arrival/departure etc. with guest signature for references. All transactions should be issued with valid receipt and record to be maintained accordingly.
- Clean, hygienic and uninterrupted water supply should be assured for, tourist.
- If food is served, there should be a list of food items/ type of meals available and the charges. If not self-cooking facility should be available with all required cooking utensils.
- Should have adequate stock of good quality bedding, towels, cutlery, crockery and glassware.





- First aid facilities should be available.
- Path ways, stairs, elevator should be well lit for safety.
- Garbage should be stored in covered bins until they are disposed.
- Facilities should preferably be arranged to hire vehicle for excursions, transfer of guest etc.
- In case of sickness, there should be an arrangement to contact qualified medial officer or nearby hospital.
- Should preferably be disable-friendly.

#### Responsibility of the House Owner under the Scheme:

- (a) Every homestay unit owner shall get the unit registered with the ATDC Ltd. and follow the guidelines framed there under for the Aamaar Aalohi Rural Homestay Scheme 2016-17 which shall be binding on the owner of the homestay units.
- (b) The owner of the homestay unit shall maintain the minimum standards of the cleanliness, sanitation, quality food etc. at all times
- (c) In case, complains of overcharging, unhygienic conditions, mis-behaviour, malpractices, failure to maintain required standards etc. the registration of the Homestay unit will be cancelled after giving a reasonable opportunity to the owner. The cancellation will be done by the Corporation and the Corporation shall take such action as may be deemed fit which will include refund of the assistance as per the provision of MOU.
- (d) The owners shall maintain a register for letting out the rooms to the tourists, which can be inspected by the Govt. of Assam/ATDC Ltd. The register will have the same format as those presently being used in the Hotels/Guest Houses/Tourist Lodges of Assam.
- (e) The owners shall maintain a bill book/homestay pad for issuing the bills to the tourists.
- (f) The owner shall submit Form 'C' as per the format mentioned in http://indianfrro.gov.in/frro/Form C with Passport details to the nearest Police Station as done by the hotels while accommodating foreign tourists.





- (g) The owners shall display a registration certificate and rate list issued by the Corporation at the counter (in the premises) of the Homestay unit for the information of the tourists.
- (h) All the Homestay unit holders shall to submit details of tourists/guests to the nearest Police Station on day to day basis for both domestic and foreign tourists.
- (i) The owner shall display prohibition (e.g. smoking / drinking / loud music / illegal activities etc.)

## Involvement of local community/Village Tourism Committee:

As the units will serve the causes of local tourism potential, it is desired that there will be **community participation** for their promotion. Wherever local **Village Tourism Committee** exists or formed they will monitor the different aspects regarding cleanliness, safety and security of the tourists and such other issues so that their day to day management are transparent and conducive to the image of the localities.

## Registration of the Home Stay:

The registration of Home Stays Units will be done as per the instructions to be issued in this behalf. The Assam Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. will issue a Registration certificate and rate list to the Home Stay Unit. The registration of the Home Stay Units will be renewed after every year. If the owner wants to cancel the registration of the unit, he/she may apply to the Department of Tourism, Govt. of Assam or to the Corporation.

## Assistance in Reservation/Marketing:

and electronic media and such other means.

The Department of Tourism/ Assam Tourism Development Corporation Ltd shall list on its web site, free of charge, the approved Home Stay units. ATDC shall also include them in their online Reservation system, on payment of commission as fixed by ATDC from time to time. Moreover, Assam Tourism will provide publicity and marketing support to the units through print

## Implementing Agency:

The scheme will be implemented by Govt. of Assam, Tourism Department through Assam Tourism Development Corporation Ltd.

Managing Director, Assam Tourism Development Corporation Ltd., Guwahati, Assam