

PROCEDURE FOR ISSUANCE OF CLERANCE LETTER FOR TOUR OPERATOR LICENSE:

Overview

The clearance letter issued by the Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) is a prerequisite formality that an applicant is required to complete before he/she approaches the Regional Trade & Industry Office (RTIO) for a trade license to undertake any tour operation in the country.

The clearance letter is addressed to the Regional Director, RTIO and it bears details about the applicant like name, Citizenship Identity Card number and the TCB registered name against the applicant. This clearance letter serves as an advisory notification to the RTIOs for issuance of a trade license for tour operation.

Legal Basis

The legal basis for the TCB clearance letter is based on the Rules and Regulations for Establishment and Operation of Industrial and Commercial Ventures in Bhutan 1997 and Tourism Rules and Regulations 2017.

Purpose

The TCB clearance letter serves a very simple, yet crucial purpose of advising the RTIOs about the applicant's name, nationality, and the name of the business entity as registered with them.

This is done to avoid duplication of business names. It is very important for TCB to ascertain that there is no complication while releasing tour payments during the operation phase. All tour payments made by guests are centrally collected by TCB on behalf of the tour operators, and are released later to individual operators after deducting government royalties and other taxes.

Who Can Apply?

Any Bhutanese national who is 18 years of age and above and fulfill the Licensing Requirements prescribed in TRR 2017.

Licensing Requirement

A person applying for a Tour Operator License shall furnish copies of following valid documents to TCB:

1. The correctly filled prescribed form with clear mention of operation name.
2. Copy of Citizenship Identity Card
3. Security Clearance Certificate
4. CV/academic transcript of the applicant or the person who intends to manage the business
5. Copy of Lease Agreement/Undertaking letter from the Landlord for office space or ownership certificate in case of own building.
6. Declaration signed by the applicant that he/she is not a Civil Servant, employee of a Government Controlled Organization or Corporate Body as set out in Annexure A of TRR 2017

Application form and declaration form are available on TCB website: www.tourism.gov.bt

Criteria for Selection of Establishment Name

The applicant while choosing the name for the establishment should avoid the following:

- Incapable of distinguishing the names of the entity.
- Natural name of the person or place, which may limit the individual right to obtain the name with same name and belonging to same place.
- Contrary to public order or morality.
- Likely to mislead the public in particular as regard geographical area.
- Identical with or an imitation of or contains the duplication with other names of the entity from within or outside of the country.
- The names of or the contains of an element like national flag and other emblem, a name or abbreviation or initial of the name of or official sign or hallmark adopted by, any state, intergovernmental organization or organizational convention, unless authorized by the competent authority of that state or organization.
- Identical with, or confusing similar to, or translation of, trade name which is well known and registered in Bhutan and in international which would create a misunderstanding and like to create issues and problem with such use.
- Similar to the names belonging to a different proprietor and already a registered entity.
- Names related to iconography, religious figures, institution of monarchy, national symbols, historical important dates and places, political parties and etc.
- Trade Marks or names relating to historical dates and event, which is popular in Bhutan.
- Any other name/names deemed inappropriate by TCB.

Lists of establishment names already issued are updated on TCB website.

Fees Payable

No fee applicable for the TCB clearance. However, the business license fee is payable at RTIO.

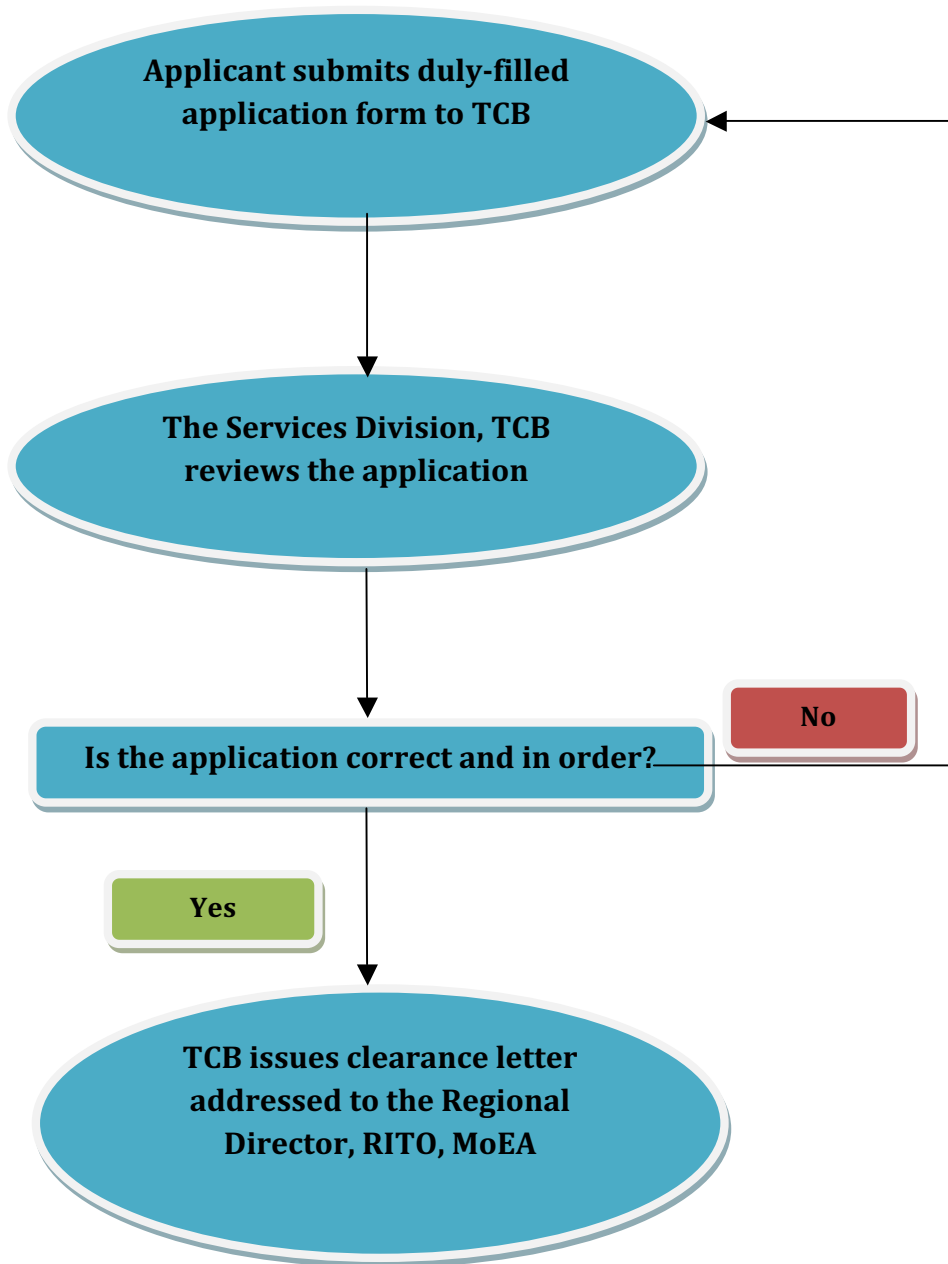
Validity of TCB Clearance

The TCB clearance letter is valid for 30 days from date of issue. The clearance will be automatically cancelled if the business license is not obtained within 30 days.

Submission and Time Taken

The application form along with the required documents should be submitted at the TCB reception/front desk. The Services Division will verify the application form and if the application is correct and in order the TCB clearance letter would be issued within 2 working days from date of submission.

Process Map (Application process)



Contact information:
Licensing Section, Services Division
Tourism Council of Bhutan
Tarayan Center, Thimphu.
Tele: 02 323251-221
Email: info@tourism.gov.bt
Website: www.tourism.gov.bt