

**POLICY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF
HOUSE BOAT TOURISM
IN ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS**

1. INTRODUCTION:

A&N Islands constitute one of the hot spots of biodiversity with variety of ecosystem. The floral and faunal diversity of the islands is one of the distinct and richest in the country. Wetlands and mangrove creeks are the ecologically important ecosystems and popular tourist attractions.

Houseboat tourism in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands will offer a captivating and immersive experience in one of India's most pristine and breath taking destinations. Nestled in the Bay of Bengal, this archipelago boasts stunning landscapes, turquoise waters, and rich biodiversity, making it an ideal setting for houseboat adventures.

Exploring the islands on a houseboat will allow the tourists to witness the mesmerizing beauty of the archipelago at a relaxed pace. They can cruise through the emerald waters, meander along the scenic backwaters, and soak in the panoramic views of pristine beaches and dense exotic mangroves creeks.

Houseboat tours in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands can be customized based on the preferences and duration of stay of tourists. One can opt for day trips, overnight stays, or even multi-day cruises to fully immerse in the tranquility of the archipelago.

To tap the potentials, it is necessary to have a well-defined houseboat tourism policy with the aim to promote house boat tourism through private sector.

The policy also will ensure that the operation of house boats is performed with due consideration of various aspects such as regulatory framework, navigational requirements, safety norms, requirement of sewage treatment etc.

2. DEFINITIONS

- a) **“House Boat”** means a boat that has been designed or modified to be used primarily as a temporary accommodation, kept stationary at a fixed point and often tethered to land to provide utilities/facilities of a luxurious stay.
- b) **“Tourist”** means a person or group of persons “visiting the destination for pleasure, adventure, sports or pilgrimage” from any part of India or outside India: Tourist also means a person who travels for pleasure or other reasons which:
- i. In relation to a foreigner shall mean a person visiting A&N Islands on a foreign passport, staying at least twenty four hours in A&N Islands, the purpose of whose journey is leisure, recreation, business, holidays, health, study, religion and sports, business, family, mission or meeting; and
 - ii. In relation to domestic traveler shall mean a person who travels to A&N Islands from outside A&N Islands or within A&N Islands to a place other than his usually place of residence and stays at the hotel or other accommodations, establishments (such as Tourist Bungalows, Guest Houses, Paying Guest Houses, Lodges, Youth Hostels) or such other places for a duration of not less than twenty four hours or one night for the purpose of pleasure (Holidays, Leisure, Sports etc.), pilgrimage, religious, social functions/gathering, business conferences/meetings, study and health.
- c) **“Sustainable Growth”** means growth through tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental aspects, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.
- d) **“Mooring Site”** means a location where a house boat may be allowed to be placed.
- e) **“Malpractice”** includes dishonesty, cheating, touting, impersonation, obstruction in allowing free choice for shopping, stay or travel management, charging remuneration/rate/price higher than that is permissible or fixed by the Government/Competent Authority, failure to display, price label on the

article, failure to give cash menu and willful failure to execute an order within the stipulated time or according to terms agreed.

- f) **“Responsible Tourism”** means is about “making better places for people to live in better places for people to visit” Responsible tourism requires that operators, hoteliers, governments, local people and tourists take responsibility, take action to make tourists more sustainable.
- g) **“Local Community”** means the local residents/Islanders residing in A&N Islands, specially around the area of operation of house boats.
- h) **“Designated Area”** Area of Operation will be within IV limits, as per zone prescribed in the certificate of registry issued by Dy. Commissioner (South Andaman/North & Middle Andaman/Nicobar)/ IV Chief Surveyor for boats under I.V. Act.
- i) **“Eco-friendly practices”**: Eco-friendly practices is actions, processes, and habits that minimize harm to the environment, conserved natural resources, and promote sustainability.

3. ABOUT HOUSE BOATS:

House boat is a boat that has been designed or modified to be used primarily as a temporary accommodation. Some houseboats are not motorized, because they are usually moored at specified mooring sites, kept stationary at a fixed point and often tethered to land to provide utilities. However, many are capable of operation under their own power.

The House Boat provides all the facilities of a luxurious stay, which is an attraction in itself and overnight stay on a House Boat is a unique experience. Houseboats are a unique transformation of a simple concept of the house on water.

4. MINIMUM FACILITIES IN HOUSE BOATS WOULD INCLUDE:-

- i. Bed rooms with attached toilets.
- ii. Clean and good quality linen and toiletries
- iii. Life Saving Appliances/Fire Fighting Appliance as per type of registration.
- iv. Dining room

- v. Kitchen using fire proof materials
- vi. Good quality crockery and glassware
- vii. Purified drinking water
- viii. Common toilet
- ix. Good quality furniture
- x. Provision for 24 hour electricity on board the houseboat for lights and fans
- xi. Alternate sources of energy for fuel, like solar power, to be used for heating, lighting, etc.
- xii. Use of LED lamps
- xiii. Sufficient fire extinguishers and tools as per requirements of Fire Department.
- xiv. Proper arrangement for discharge of waste and waste management.

5. CLASSIFICATION OF HOUSE BOATS:

The classification of House Boat will be done under 3 categories i.e. Silver, Gold & Diamond as per the classification criteria enclosed at **Annexure-E**. The classification of house boats will be carried out by Directorate of Tourism, A&N Administration as per the recommendations of the Monitoring Committee.

6. CLEARANCES / PERMITS / APPROVALS REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION / RENEWAL:

The following clearances /permits will be required:

- i. Registration of vessels under Inland Vessels Act 2021 with the registering authority i.e. Deputy Commissioner (South Andaman/North & Middle Andaman/Nicobar).
- ii. The House Boat which will ply in the area of operation/route allotted by the competent authority after successful bidding of the route.
- iii. Builder Certificate issued by Classification Society i.e. member of International Association of Classification Society (IACS) approved by Director General of Shipping.
- iv. Registration and Seaworthiness certificate of Houseboats from Dy. Commissioner (South Andaman/North& Middle Andaman/Nicobar) / IV Chief Surveyor for boats under I.V. Act.
- v. Clearance for Pollution and Waste Management/Disposal from

- Pollution Control Committee, Deptt. of Science & Technology, A&N Administration.
- vi. Food Safety Certificate from Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.
 - vii. Fire Safety Certificate from Fire Department.
 - viii. NOC from Port Management Board (PMB) for operations.

However, the applicant can submit the application with required documents along with fee in the Single Window System of Directorate of Tourism, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, not individually to all authorities/agencies mentioned above. It will be the responsibility of the Tourism Department to facilitate clearances/permits/approvals from all the authorities /agencies mentioned above.

7. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

7.1 FOR PLYING PERMIT:

- i. Registration and Seaworthiness certificate from Dy. Commissioner (South Andaman/North& Middle Andaman/Nicobar) / IV Chief Surveyor for boats under I.V. Act.
- ii. IRS Survey Certificate
- iii. Built under Class certificate issued by Classification Society i.e. member of International Association of Classification Society (IACS) approved by Director General of Shipping.
- iv. Certificate of Competency (COC) in respect of all the Crew members as per Safe manning as per IV Act.
- v. Insurance Policy/documents for hull & Machineries and Crew & Passengers.

Checklist for registration of Inland Vessel under Inland Vessel Rule, 2016 (New Registration) and Renewal : Annexure-A-1 (02 pages)

Form No. 15(Rule 44)-Application for Registration: Annexure-A-2

Form No. 16 [Rule 47 (i)] – Declaration of Ownership: Annexure A3

Form No. 14 [Rule 43 (i)] – Book of Registration : Annexure A4

Form No. 8 [Rule 27 (i)] – Declaration of Survey : A5 (04 pages)

Form No. 12 [Rule 30] – Certificate of Survey – Category B Vessels:
A6 (02 pages)

Inspection report for new registration of Inland Vessel: A7

7.2. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR FIRE SAFETY CERTIFICATE:

1. Application form for Fire Clearance certificate – Annexure B

7.3. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR CLEARANCE FOR POLLUTION AND WASTE MANAGEMENT/DISPOSAL:

1. Schedule-I : Common Application for Consent under Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act,1974, Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act,1981 and Authorization under the Hazardous and other Wastes(Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules 2016, As amended : Annexure C-1.
2. List of documents required for obtaining Consent to Establish (CTE), Consent to Operate (CTO) and for Renewal of CTO: Annexure C-2.

7.4. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR FOOD SAFETY CERTIFICATE:

1. List of documents required for Licensing & Registration of Food Business Operator –Annexure D-1
2. Form ‘A’ – Application for Registration under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. – Annexure D-2
3. Form ‘B’ -Application for License /Renewal of License under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 -- Annexure D-3

8. CONDITIONS FOR OPERATION OF HOUSE BOATS

- i. The Vessel owner/operator shall comply with all safety measures provided in the IV Act and Rules, Order/Circular/Guidelines of DG (Shipping), Govt. of India and A&N Administration as issued from time to time.
- ii. For renewal of registration, periodical surveys of the vessels and other legal requirements will be followed by the owner/operator of the vessels as per concerned Act/Rules i.e. IV Act.

- iii. Area of Operation will be within IV limits, as per zone prescribed in the certificate of registry issued by Dy. Commissioner (South Andaman/North & Middle Andaman/Nicobar)/ IV Chief Surveyor for boats under I.V. Act. Routes for House Boat Operations are: -
 - 1. Junglighat-Chatham-North Bay-NSCB Dweep-Junglighat
 - 2. Junglighat-Dundas Point-Viper Island-Flat Bay-Junglighat
 - 3. Yeratta-Long Island-Yeratta
 - 4. Middle Strait-Kadamtala-Middle Strait
 - 5. Long Island-Kadamtala-Long Island
- iv. The House Boat Operator must comply with Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and GST (Goods & Service Tax) laws and proof of compliance/registration under EPF and GST should be submitted to the Director (Tourism) for initial registration of House Boats.
- v. The House Boat operator shall provide details of staff attached with the House Boats at the time of registration and shall have 60% of staff deployed on the house boats from amongst the local residents on the allotted route.
- vi. A committee under the chairmanship of Secretary (IP&T) with members i.e. DCF(WL), Chief Port Administrator (PMB), Director(Tourism), Director(Shipping Services) will identify new routes for house boat operation from time to time as well as the maximum number of house boats to be allowed to operate in an identified route.

9. PROCESS FOR APPROVAL:

- i. House boat will be operated on Public Private Partnership(PPP) model.
- ii. General Financial Rules and other relevant guidelines will be followed for the allotment of identified routes under the PPP mode.
- iii. A base price will be determined and fixed for all identified routes by the committee headed by Secretary (IP&T) with members i.e. Chief Port Administrator(PMB), Director(Tourism),Director(Shipping Services),representative of Dy. Commissioner of the respective district, Dy. Secretary(Finance).

- iv. The highest bidder(H1) will be allotted the respective route for operation of houseboats.
- v. After obtaining all the clearances/permits/NOCs from all the concerned departments/agencies, Director (Tourism), A & N Administration shall issue a final approval for operating the Houseboats to the H1 bidder and registration of the individual Houseboats with the Tourism Department will be done for the concession period.

10. MODES OF OPERATION OF HOUSE BOATS:

IN PPP MODE: Any private entity can build or procure, operate and maintain houseboats in the designated areas. A two bid system shall be adopted by A&N Administration for operation of House boats in PPP mode.

11. RESPONSIBLE STANDARDS, ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY PRACTICES:-

- 11.1.** Responsible tourism friendly policy should be opted for sustainable growth which also benefits the local community and does not adversely affect the marine life, coastal ecosystem and local environment. Use of eco-friendly practices and local products should be encouraged.
- 11.2.** There should be a provision of facility for segregation of garbage into biodegradable (kitchen waste etc), non-bio-degradable (thermocoal products, aluminum foil, cigarette butts etc) & recyclable (newspapers, bottles, cans etc). Solid waste and sewage disposal should be carried out in an orderly and eco-friendly manner. Each House boat should be provided with a system for the reception, storage and disposal of all refuse and waste water originating from the boat. All such materials should be handled in a manner so as not to create any offence, hazard to health, harborage for vermin nor permit possible fly/mosquito breeding.
- 11.3.** Two standard pattern garbage covered receptacles / bins for bio-degradable and non-degradable waste should be provided for each boat which should be cleaned at least twice a day.

11.4. The houseboat should follow an adequate and safe method of sewerage collection and disposal. The sewerage system should be installed in accordance with the requirements of the concerned authorities.

12. MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION:

- i. The Tariff of house Boat should be reasonable & linked with the facilities provided in the House Boat. The Tariff should be properly displayed. Tax as applicable should be paid to the concerned authority and proof of the same should be submitted at the time of registration and subsequently on an annual basis during the concession period.
- ii. For operation inside any Marine National Park/Wildlife Sanctuary, prior permission under Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 is required to be obtained. Any tourists/group of tourists staying in any houseboat should not be allowed to enter into any National Parks (including Marine National Park), Wildlife Sanctuary or Notified Forest Areas without the permission under the Act.
- iii. All the House boat owners/operators/ tour operators should mandatorily intimate the arrival & stay of foreign nationals in their house boat to Immigration Office within stipulated time of 24 hrs. As per the registration of Foreigners Rule 1992 “the keepers of the hotel shall, as soon as, but not more than 24 hours, after arrival of any foreigners, transmit a copy of form C duly completed of all particulars furnished by such foreigners to the registration officer. Foreigners should possess Restricted Area Permit if the boats will be venturing into areas restricted for foreigners.
- iv. If any tourist in the House Boat, intends fishing, the Owner of the House Boat will have to obtain a Fishing License from the Department of Fisheries as per A&N Marine Fishing Rules-2019.

13. SAFETY & SECURITY:

- i. Permission of houseboat operation for day/ night plying will be subject to operation limitations issued by Dy. Commissioner (South Andaman/North& Middle Andaman/Nicobar) / IV Chief Surveyor for boats under I.V. Act.

- ii. The House Boat may be inspected by any authorized officer(s) from the Directorate of Tourism or any other official authorized by Law.
- iii. The House Boat operation should ply in strict compliance with the A&N Inland vessel Rules 2016.
- iv. The House Boats operator should keep all documents i.e. IV Registration details, Certificates from Andaman and Nicobar Pollution Control Committee etc on board, the authorized officers of the Directorate of IP&T or any other person authorized by the Law may inspect and verify the documents as and when required basis.
- v. **Sea condition**–The House Boat Operator/Master/Serang should be in communication with Port Authorities and the operation of House Boats shall be in consent with Port Authorities. There should not be any operation of inclement weather condition/cyclone warning or under any other adverse conditions.
- vi. The house boat shall possess proper embarkation and disembarkation facilities.
- vii. Proper watch keeping shall be made available if tourists stay onboard.
- viii. CCTVs shall be installed at public spaces.
- ix. A properly equipped First Aid kit should be available onboard and adequate first aid training should be provided to the staff. A well defined mechanism should be available to handle any medical emergency.
- x. Crew should be well trained in Life Saving and Fire fighting.

14. PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITY:

All efforts should be made to encourage participation of the local community in the tourism related activities of the Houseboats. Training and sensitization of the members of the local communities should be undertaken for capacity building and for creating awareness about economic benefits of tourism to the local communities. Tourists availing houseboats should be sensitized about the socio-cultural traditions of the local communities through brochures and signages placed on board.

15. PROMOTION AND MARKETING BY GOVERNMENT:

UT Administration would undertake necessary marketing strategy to promote the concept of Houseboat Tourism and Houseboats would also be promoted through the official website of the UT Administration, media campaigns, publicity brochures, etc.

16. ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

16.1. An Advisory Committee will be constituted by the Tourism Department

Comprising of the following members:-

Secretary (IP & Tourism)	Chairman
Secretary(Shipping)	Member
Secretary(Science & Technology)	Member
Deputy Commissioner (South Andaman)/N&M Andaman	Member
Surveyor In-charge Marine Mercantile Department(MMD),Port Blair	Member
Surveyor In-charge IRS, Port Blair	Member
Chief Port Administrator(PMB)	Member
Superintendent of Police(South Andaman)	Member
Superintendent of Police(North & Middle Andaman)	Member
02 Members of Tour Operators' Associations nominated by the Chief Secretary A&N Administration	Member
Director(Tourism)	Member Secretary

16.2. FUNCTIONS OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

The Committee shall meet atleast once in three months. The Committee shall:-

- a) Identify areas of concern regarding operation of Houseboats.
- b) Point out measures to promote Houseboat Tourism for increasing the tourist influx.
- c) Review the measures taken for proper and scientific operation of the Houseboats including facilities, waste disposal, safety& security etc.
- d) Any other areas of concern.

17. MONITORING COMMITTEE:

17.1. A Monitoring Committee will be constituted by the Department of

Tourism comprising of the following members:-

Director(Tourism)	Chairman
Assistant Commissioner	Member
Deputy Director(Shipping)	Member
Deputy Director(Science & Technology)	Member
Deputy Superintendent of Police	Member
Harbor Master	Member
IV Surveyor	Member
Food Safety Officer	Member
Technical Consultant IP&T/Shipping	Member
Deputy Director(Tourism)	Member Secretary

17.2. FUNCTIONS OF MONITORING COMMITTEE:-

- i. Inspection of the Houseboats to ensure compliance with all laid down norms and standard procedures including inter-alia safety & security, fire safety guidelines, sewage and waste disposal, pollution etc.
- ii. Recommending the classification of House Boats into different categories as per the prescribed format and criteria prepared by the department for the respective category.
- iii. Making surprise inspections of Houseboats to check that the tourists are being provided proper facilities.
- iv. Redressal of any complaints received from any tourist against the Houseboat operator.
- v. Recommend penalties against the Houseboat operators in case of any malpractice or any violation of any relevant law.

18. COMPLIANCE

Houseboat owners must comply with all laws and regulations of the A & N Administration and all statutory authorities. Non-compliance will result in the cancellation of the permit. The Houseboat owners should at all cost ensure that their guests do not cause harm or injury to marine life and environment. Strict adherence to the laws and rules of the Central Government and the Union Territory Administration must be ensured. Violation of laws in force shall attract penalties under relevant Rules/Acts of Central or UT

Administration.

19. INSURANCE

Houseboat owners must have appropriate insurance coverage for their boats, crew & passengers. The insurance should cover third-party liability, theft, damage, and personal injury.

20. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed periodically by the A&N Administration to ensure that it remains relevant and effective. In case of any change required in the policy, consultation will be held with the line departments, houseboat operators and other stakeholders.

21. LEGAL FRAME WORK

Implementation of the House Boat Policy shall be in accordance with the provisions under Inland Vessels Act 2021 and Rules framed thereunder. (THE INLAND VESSELS ACT, 2021, placed at Annexure-F)
