



Directorate of Tourism,
Government of Meghalaya

Enlistment of Tourist Buddy Scheme, 2024



1 Introduction

Meghalaya, a jewel in north-eastern India, boasts a rich tapestry of culture, biodiversity, and adventure that draws a huge footfall annually. Meghalaya, often referred to as the Abode of Clouds, possesses unique attributes that make it an ideal destination for discerning travelers. The Tourism Department has taken up various initiatives to develop the sector which can contribute substantially to the economy of the state. With the increase in tourist footfalls to the tourist destinations, the Tourism Department has realized for a need to provide maximum information to tourists visiting the state and also assist in all possible ways to make their trip memorable. The Department has developed the MTIME Tourism App with listing of hotels, guides, etc and also designed a fresh website which carries up-to-date information on the tourist sites of Meghalaya. The Tourism Department has also introduced the helpline for assistance of tourists planning to visit the state.

With the increase in footfall annually, the Tourism Department has also realized the need for deploying Tourist Assistants in prominent tourist locations to further help and guide the tourists with information on the destination, assistance in case of emergencies and also bringing a sense of safety & security for the tourists.

The **Meghalaya Tourism Policy 2023** among other thrust areas also focuses on the importance of **Tourist Safety & Security**. Meghalaya is generally considered as a safe destination for all segments of tourists including females, elderly and solo travelers. The communities too have been welcoming and helpful to the tourists visiting their areas.

Meghalaya Tourism, therefore, proposes to introduce the Tourist Buddy scheme in prominent and important tourist destinations with substantial tourist footfalls on a pilot project. The tourist buddies will be selected from the respective destination considering that they have good knowledge of the area and its tourism offerings. The tourist buddies will be properly trained by the department on tourist handling skills with proper uniform and IDs so as to appear professional at all levels.

The Department of Tourism will authorize the District Tourism Promotion Society (DTPS) of each district to invite applications for the deployment of **Tourist Buddy** on a contractual basis for a period of 1 (one) year initially, which will be extended for another year as per the discretion of the Department.

2 Objectives of the scheme

- i. The scheme seeks to actively involve communities of Meghalaya in the monitoring and reporting process of the tourist locations in the State. The scheme will enable the members of the community to interact with tourists, promote the tourist location, monitor the existing tourist activities and services and provide feedback to the Directorate of Tourism on the requirement of infrastructure and services at the tourist location.
- ii. The tourist locations in Meghalaya are spread out throughout the State. With the Volunteers being deployed at their respective tourist locations, the Government shall be provided with immense visibility on the condition of the tourist locations and information exclusive to that tourist location, thereby enabling the Government to take informed decisions and offer solutions unique to each tourist location. Hence, strengthening the partnership between the Government and the people.
- iii. As the Volunteers are local to their respective areas of operation, they will have better background knowledge of the area which will enhance their ability to provide accurate information to tourists, have visibility of the activities and services that are currently being operated and the infrastructure requirement at the tourist location.
- iv. Through capacity-building initiatives, the scheme aims to empower the Volunteers with skills and knowledge to carry out their roles effectively. By investing in their training and development, the scheme fosters a cadre of capable volunteers who shall work towards improving the tourism potential at the tourist locations in Meghalaya.

3 About the Scheme

3.1 Roles and Responsibilities of the Tourist Buddy:

Under this scheme, the Tourist Buddy shall be assigned a particular tourist location in their area wherein they shall be responsible for:

A. Tourist Facilitation and Site Promotion:

- i. Act as a one-stop center for resolving tourist queries.
- ii. Ensure promotion on social media to attract tourists to the respective tourist locations.
- iii. Generate content for the promotion of the tourist location on social media platforms.
- iv. Encourage tourists to create and post user generated content on social media about the tourist location.
- v. Engage with tourists on arrival and departure to and from the tourist location.
- vi. Welcome the tourists and coordinate their travel activities at the tourist location.
- vii. Inform the tourists about the items and activities which are permitted and prohibited at the tourist location and the repercussions of non-adherence to the same.
- viii. Provide information related to the tourist location which may include stories, significance of the tourist location, the local culture, heritage and practices followed, etc.
- ix. Guide the tourists to the local souvenir shops and provide information on the significance of the souvenirs.
- x. Provide recommendations for accommodation facilities in the areas to the tourists.
- xi. Coordinate with tour operators for inclusion of the tourist location in itineraries planned for tourists.
- xii. Encourage tourists to provide their feedback on online platforms such as Google reviews or other platforms as approved by the Directorate of Tourism.

B. Site Assessment (Infrastructure and Services):

- i. Undertake site assessment of the tourist location and prepare a report to be submitted on a quarterly basis. The report shall provide insights to the Directorate of Tourism on the condition of the Infrastructure and Services. The following details shall be included in the quarterly report:
 - a. Tourist location Connectivity – The Quality of approach road and the general condition of the roads at the tourist location.
 - b. Availability of Parking area.
 - c. Availability and functioning of Tourist Information Center (TIC).
 - d. Availability, adequacy and maintenance of Public Convenience such as Toilets and Urinals.
 - e. Availability and adequacy of shops for Souvenirs and memorabilia.
 - f. Availability and adequacy of Restaurants, Cafeterias, Tea Stalls and other food beverage options for tourists.
 - g. Availability and adequacy of Seating Area and Viewpoints.
 - h. Availability and adequacy of signages, branding and information boards.
 - i. Availability and adequacy of safety features and communication of pre-cautionary warnings.
 - j. Availability and adequacy of dustbins and the overall waste management system of the tourist location.
 - k. Availability and adequacy of Illumination.

- l. Availability and adequacy of First Aid facilities.
- m. Availability and adequacy of Security for tourists.
- n. Availability and adequacy of Drinking water.
- o. Availability of power supply.
- p. Availability of network and connectivity.
- q. Assessment of maintenance and quality of equipment utilized for tourism activities such as boats, lifejackets, rafts, etc.)

C. Site Operations and Maintenance:

- i. Ensure efficient operations and maintenance are carried out by the respective parties at tourist location.
- ii. Ensure cleanliness of the tourist location is maintained on a day-to-day basis.
- iii. Ensure cleanliness and upkeep of public facilities (toilets & urinals) is maintained on a day-to-day basis.
- iv. Ensure that efficient waste management practices are being followed at the tourist location.
- v. Ensure adequate usage of parking facilities and avoidance of traffic congestion due to improper parking.
- vi. Ensure adequate Illumination with minimal blind spots.
- vii. Ensure that the Tourist Information Center, if applicable, is disseminating information to the tourists.
- viii. Keep a monthly record of the number of visitors and all activities carried out at the tourist location.
- ix. Redressal of the grievances filed by tourists.

D. Implementing Safety and Security Measures:

- i. Ensure that safety and security practices including – first aid facilities and rescue operations are available (as applicable to the tourist location).
- ii. Ensure visibility of notices and signage's highlighting permitted and prohibited items and activities.
- iii. Ensure availability of Life Jackets where water bodies and water related activities are involved.
- iv. Ensure availability of life guards where water bodies and water related activities are involved.
- v. Ensure that guides / personnel mandatorily accompany the tourists while accessing areas prone to accidents.
- vi. Ensure upkeep of fire-extinguishers, as applicable.
- vii. Ensure the maintenance of safety grills and retaining walls.

E. In case of any requirement, emergency or query the arises while undertaking the aforementioned activities, the Volunteers shall contact the nodal officer from the District Tourism Promotion Society (DTPS) in order to resolve the same at the earliest.

3.2 Training

- i. Under the scheme, the Directorate of Tourism shall undertake capacity building activities for the Volunteers by providing workshops and training sessions on guide services, paramedic skills, rescue operations, story-telling, social media management and overall tourist engagement.

3.3 Service Tenure

- i. The Tourist Buddy shall be assigned to a tourist location for a duration determined by the Directorate of Tourism. The tenure may be extended from time to time based on the performance of the Tourist Buddy and as deemed necessary by the Directorate of Tourism.

3.4 Renumeration:

- i) A monthly wage/remuneration under highly skilled wages/rates as per Government notification is proposed for the Tourist Buddy.
- ii) Further, various non-monetary incentives shall be offered to the Tourist Buddy as follows:
 - Uniforms
 - ID cards

4 Selection Process

4.1 Pre-Selection Process

- i. Pre-consultations with the Village Traditional Heads / Management Committee shall be organized by the respective District Tourism Promotion Society (DTPS) to enable quick mobilization of eligible candidates.
- ii. The list of tourist locations shall be populated by the Directorate of Tourism and communicated to the Village Traditional Heads / Management committee overseeing the tourist location.
- iii. The Village Traditional Heads / Management committee overseeing the tourist location shall advertise the Tourist Buddy position in the respective villages, outlining the minimum eligibility criteria and the roles and responsibilities of the position. Interested candidates from the villages will be encouraged to apply for the position.

4.2 Minimum Eligibility Criteria:

The Applicant must meet the minimum eligibility criteria as follows:

- a. Domicile: The Applicant needs to be from one of the villages wherein the tourist location is located.
 - This ensures that the Applicant has a strong understanding of the local context and cultural dynamics, enabling them to be effective in their role.
 - **Proof of domicile must be provided.**
- b. Educational Qualification: The minimum educational qualification for the Applicant will be set at Class 12th pass.
 - This requirement ensures that Tourist Buddy possess a basic level of education and functional literacy to communicate effectively.
 - However, the selection criteria may be relaxed for remote areas or on case to case basis.
 - **Proof of educational qualification must be provided.**
- c. Age group: The person should be between 18 - 30 years old as on the date of application.
 - **Identity proof must be provided.**
- d. **Details of the Applicant as specified in Annexure – 1 must be provided.**
- e. **Skills Required:**
 - Good Communication in both written and verbal.

- Proficiency in using mobile applications, digital tools and usage of devices like smart phones.
- Candidates who possess a basic level of education and knowledge of their area/ village with skills in guiding tourists would be preferable.

f. Preferable Requirement for Tourist Buddy's:

- Deep knowledge of the local areas (history, culture, geography) of respective area
- Connection and collaboration with the local community.
- Physical stamina ability to handle outdoor conditions.
- Basic knowledge in first aid training in case of emergencies would be preferable.
- Flexibility and adaptability to adjust plans based on weather or unexpected events.
- Familiarity with travel apps, booking platforms and tour guide system like MTIME app of Meghalaya Tourism.
- Basic hospitality and accommodation management.
- **Tourist Buddy** are expected to quickly carry out the tasks assigned without compromising on quality.
- **Tourist Buddy** shall work with the Village Dorbar Committee.
- Any other activities required by the Government of Meghalaya, Tourism Department

4.3 Submission of the Applications

- a. The applicants are required to submit their proposal in accordance with the guidelines set forth in this scheme document in order to enable consistency among Proposals and to facilitate smooth evaluation by the **Tourism Department**. The format in which the applicant will provide information/data comprising proposal is available in online form in the Tourism website. Selection Process
- i. The Directorate of Tourism shall undertake the screening of these applications and ensure that the applicant meets the minimum eligibility criteria.
- ii. The Directorate of Tourism shall conduct the final selection of the applicants through an interview process post verification of the documents.
- iii. The shortlisted applicants shall be invited for an interview and shall be assessed on the following criteria:
 - a. The applicants' ability to communicate in English, Hindi and local language.
 - b. Their Interpersonal skills.
 - c. Behavioral aspects for engaging with tourists.
 - d. Their interest on the tourism sector.
 - e. Experience in the tourism sector; and
 - f. Knowledge of tourist location in general.
- iv. Out of the total applicants, 5 or up to 10 Tourist Buddy, shall be selected for each tourist location based on the tourist traffic and quantum of tourist activities at the tourist location.
- v. The names of the applicants who clear the interview process shall be uploaded on the Meghalaya Tourism website.

4.4 General Information:

- i. It will be desirable and an added advantage if the applicants applying for Tourists Buddy have a two wheeler for easy and quick commute in their area of operation.
- ii. An audit on the performance of the Tourist Buddy will be taken up periodically to gauge their services, tourist handling, number of assistance provided, etc., so as to enable the Tourism Department/ District Tourism Promotion Society (DTPS) to study the effectiveness of the service

for further roll out to other destinations.

- iii. The selected Tourist Buddy will be initially engaged for a period of one (1) year which will be subsequently extended for another period of one year based on performance/feedback. The Tourist Buddy selected, will therefore, be engaged for a maximum period of 2 years. Post the two-year period of engagement of Tourist Buddy at the tourist destination, a fresh advertisement will be floated by the Directorate of Tourism for further engagement.
- iv. It may be noted that a Tourist Buddy selected and engaged for a period of one year may not necessarily qualify for extension for another year and his/her contract may end after a period of one year. The Directorate of Tourism, may, in this case call for fresh advertisement for engagement of tourist buddies at the respective site/destination.
- v. The Tourism Department will initially select the potential tourist destinations on a pilot project, for the engagement of tourist assistants, based on the footfalls of tourists, importance of the site/destination, etc. The engagement of the Tourist Assistants will be extended to other sites/destinations of the state gradually, based on the need and proper assessment by the Tourism Department & District Tourism Promotion Society (DTPS).

Annexure 1 - Application Form-Individual

S.N.	Questions	Answers
1	Name	
2	Mobile Number	
3	Email Id	
4	Age	
5	Gender	
6	Address along with Proof of domicile must be provided.	PIN:
7	Current occupation (Please	_____
8	Languages spoken	<input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Hindi <input type="checkbox"/> Khasi <input type="checkbox"/> Garo <input type="checkbox"/> Pnar <input type="checkbox"/> Any other (Please mention) _____
9	Have you been involved in tourism sector in Meghalaya in any way?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
10	Educational Qualification, Proof of educational qualification must be provided.	_____
11	If yes, please select the number of years	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3- 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> > 5 years

S.N.	Questions	Answers
12	<p>Any of the following officially valid documents. Copy of Identity proof must be provided.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Voter ID 2) Aadhar 3) Passport 	

