



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES AND  
GUIDELINES FOR TRAVEL AGENTS SERVICES**

**QUALITY ASSURANCE DEPARTMENT-UTB**

## **PART I –PRELIMINARY**

---

The Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) is a Government agency under Section 3 of the Uganda Tourism Act No. 25 of 2008 mandated to promote and market Uganda as the preferred tourism destination domestically and internationally and to regulate the tourism sector in Uganda. This entails participating in the developing of regulations, standards and guidelines that are necessary to ensure an all-round quality service delivery in the tourism sector. The board is also tasked with the registration, inspection of all tourist services and facilities and issuing of tourist operating licences in order to ensure conformity with international standards. In this UTB works with other government agencies and the private business operators in the tourism sector.

Standards and guide lines developed ensure that the service provided by all the tourism establishments in the country is of quality and meets the minimum expectations of the tourist. It also forms the basis for quality control in the sector.

## **1. Scope**

This standard prescribes minimum requirements for all Travel Agencies in Uganda. The standard provides for statutory obligations, requirements for premises, operations and general services.

## **2. Definition of Terms**

**In Bound Tour** – means a tour for non-residents of Uganda who come into the country for tourism purposes.

**Out Bound Tour** - means a tour of residents from Uganda to another country for tourism purposes.

**Tourism** – means the activity of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.

**Tourist** – means a person who travels to and stays in a place outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.

**Tour operator**- means any entity which may either be single proprietorship, partnership or corporation engaged in business of extending to individuals or groups, such services pertaining to arrangements of booking for transport

and/or accommodation, handling and/or conduct inbound tours whether or not for a fee, commission or any other compensation.

**Travel Agency-** means an enterprise engaged in the business of providing services such as reservations/Bookings, documentation for travel papers, sales/issuance of tickets and selling of outbound tours for a fee, commission or any form of remuneration.

**Travel and Tour Agency-** means an enterprise engaged in both tour operations and travel agency services.

**Tour Guide** – means an individual, who leads a tour party, provides general information, interprets, indicates and informs on the items of interest along the way to or at tourist attraction.

**Tourism enterprises-** means a tourism related business venture that is involved in activities such as accommodation, entertainment, transport and other tour operator services.

**Service providers-** means an organizations or businesses that offer services in tourism and travel related activities such as accommodation and transport.

## **Part II Statutory Obligations**

---

- 3.** Statutory obligations are legal requirements that are relevant to the tourism sector services that guide the safety, security and environmental considerations that are instrumental for the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

### **3.1 Legal compliance**

Travel agency service providers in the business of issuing tickets shall comply with the following: -

- 3.1.1** Tourism enterprises and service providers shall comply with all relevant regulations governing operations in the tourism sector. The enterprises and service providers shall have evidence of compliance with but not limited to the following:

1. Registration of the business name by the registrar of companies (URSB)
2. Valid IATA certificate or a legal agreement with an accredited IATA agent for travel agents.
3. Valid URA TIN registration certificate and/or valid Tax Compliance Certificate
4. Valid work permits for expatriates
5. Valid Tourism Operating license in accordance with the Uganda Tourism Act of 2008.

**3.1.2** Tourism enterprises shall comply with all relevant labour laws and regulations in respect to statutory deductions, health and safety of the workplace, work injuries benefits, insurance, statutory leave days and written contracts of employment for staff.

### **Part III Premises Requirements**

---

**4.** The facility's design, structure and layout shall provide for efficient arrangement and placement of operation areas and allow easy flow of services. The following specifications should assist in compliance with the standards guidelines and should be interpreted in relation to the needs of each enterprise, including office space and type of operations.

#### **4.1 The Premises Location:**

##### **4.1.1** The premises shall be: -

1. Located in a safe and secure area that is easily accessible with visible signage or Office label.
2. Located in a commercial building, approved mixed use and not in a purely residential building.
3. Easily identifiable and used exclusively for the tours and travel operation business.

##### **4.1.2 Office Space Requirements**

The tour and/or travel agency shall comply with the following office requirements:

1. Have a title deed or contract of lease of the office space intended for the use of the agency
2. Have a minimum of 3 employees (1 professional and 2 other employees).
3. Adequately furnished and properly equipped office for the conduct of business with provision of the following:
  - a) Air conditioning units where need be
  - b) One table and chair per person
  - c) Sitting areas
  - d) At least one filing cabinet
  - e) Communication system
  - f) Computers/printers

4. Best practice to have a Customer service charter and claims payment policy

#### **4.1.3 Lighting and Ventilation.**

1. Effective natural lighting and ventilation should be a critical component of the office space consideration.

#### **4.1.4 Insurance Services**

1. An operator shall hold appropriate insurance policy that includes the following:
  - a) Public Liability Insurance – to protect clients and public against loss and damage of property and injury.
  - b) Employee Insurance – to cover personal accidents and employer’s liability.

### **Part IV Operational Requirements**

---

5. These requirements prescribe minimum levels of quality service delivery. They make specific provisions for professional business conduct, maintenance of consistency in quality service and customer care for purposes of accreditation by the Uganda Tourism Board.

#### **5.1 Enterprise Management and Administration**

##### **5.1.1 Professional conduct of the business**

- 5.1.2 The management shall ensure that;



1. Proper record of the business executive and operation staff, tour/driver guides and travel representatives, if any, is maintained indicating therein their nationality, home address and experience, including names of organizations/companies previously or currently affiliated with, position and length of service;
2. Proper books of accounts are maintained.
3. In the case of the tour/travel manager, proof of professional training, work experience of at least three (3) years in a managerial position in tour/travel operations or has earned a relevant bachelor's degree or has successfully completed a tour operator's course;
4. At least 2/3 of total staff have prior work experience in tour and travel operations;
5. Expatriate employees have a valid work permit from Immigration;
6. They enter into business contracts only with registered and licenced professional operators/practitioners in the tourism and hospitality sector.
7. Communication with prospective guests, whether verbal or written, is prompt, efficient, and professional to the satisfaction of the guest;
8. There trained personnel with relevant qualification at all times to oversee the day to day operations of the business;
9. Frontline staffs are knowledgeable about the services provided and associated prices;
10. Tours/Travel plans and itinerary are well articulated, documented and executed in a professional manner;

11. They offer realistically priced itinerary as agreeable with the client.
12. All websites offering online payment schemes are compliant with the Payment Card Data Security;
13. An annual performance report on the sales production; and a tariff sheet detailing services, rates, validity, terms and conditions are kept;
14. Operational shortfalls or deficiencies are identified and addressed within the stipulated timeframes as per the organization's standard operating procedures;
15. There is provision for conveying correct and full information of the company including key officials and contact details;
16. Adequate measures are put in place to safeguard the safety and security of tourists as well as provide appropriate facilities for persons with disabilities;
17. They advise clients to get emergency evacuation/rescue insurance and travel insurance cover so as to protect themselves against travel risks such as lost or stolen luggage, cancellation cover (should one not be able to travel due to unexpected medical reasons) and most important, unexpected medical cost overseas.
18. They maintain and inform the clients of availability of a 24hrs operation line to handle emergencies;

Travel agency service providers in the business of issuing tickets shall comply with the following: -

1. The premise has fast and reliable internet connection;
2. Ensure that the website and online booking procedures comply with relevant service standards as clearly stated on the promotional materials and booking conditions;
3. Have accessibility to at least one Global Distribution System (GDS) either Amadeus, Galileo or Sabre or any other approved provider;
4. Make sure that the travel arrangements sold to their clients are compatible to their individual requirements;
5. Ensure that proper documentation and satisfactory booking procedures are in accordance with international best practices;
6. Ensure that relevant and effective data protection policy for protecting the privacy of clients are in place;
7. Ensure that clients are made aware of the terms and conditions of booking applicable to their travel arrangements before any contract is made and clients have access to such publication or booking conditions in written form;
8. Inform clients of health requirements that are compulsory for the journeys to be undertaken;
9. Inform clients of passport, visa and other entry and transit requirements for the journeys to be undertaken where it is reasonably practicable for the members to obtain the information;

10. Maintain and inform the clients of availability of a 24hrs operation line to handle emergencies;
11. Always advise clients of the availability of any advice issued by the foreign & commonwealth offices;
12. Ensure that clients are advised on the importance of obtaining appropriate travel insurance cover in relation to the nature of travel booked;
13. Advise clients without delay when advised by the airline of any alterations to travel arrangements and shall act as an intermediary between the airline and the client;
14. Maintain a contact list for all the airlines operating from Uganda and have a contact person;
15. Promptly respond substantively to the client's complaints;
16. In accordance with the Persons with Disability Act of 2006 make;
  - a. Reasonable provision for service delivery that meets the special needs of persons with disabilities;
  - b. Provision for persons with disabilities to access all services offered by the agency;
17. Provide in writing, at all times complete details about the cost, restrictions and other terms and conditions of the ticket sold including cancellation fee, change fee, no show charges, boarding time, connection terminals and baggage allowance shall be disclosed before payment is made;
18. Remit to clients any applicable refunds without delay.