

System for Assessment, Awareness & Training for Hospitality Industry

SAATHI

An initiative towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat



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**Ministry of Tourism
Government of India**

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1. Introduction

1.1. The COVID-19 Disruption– Restarting Tourism

As tourism and hospitality sector gradually opens up, there is need to build confidence and trust of the visitors and tourists that it is safe for them to visit a place of hospitality such as hotel or restaurant. The Ministry of Tourism has issued operational guidelines for tourism industry in continuation of the SOPs issued by Ministry of Health for COVID-19 safety and hygiene.

1.2. Aatmanirbhar Bharat

As India rebuilds its economy post COVID-19 pandemic, the Prime Minister has given a call for “Aatmanirbhar Bharat” to be built on five pillars of economy, infrastructure, systems, demography and demand. It is a call for being vocal about local. It is supporting our industry and businesses to grow them from small to medium to global scales.

1.3. SAATHI – An initiative towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat

In order to build the capacity of hospitality industry and restart tourism, there is need to create awareness about COVID-19 safety measures, provide training and site assessment to adopt these measures. This will help in building confidence and trust of the consumer and recovery of the sector. As an initiative towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the Ministry in partnership with Quality Council of India, has developed a **System for Assessment, Awareness & Training for Hospitality Industry to be called SAATHI.**

2. Objectives

The Scheme is aimed at building the capacity of the hospitality industry particularly small and medium units to restart and grow their business post COVID-19. It is accordingly envisaged to achieve the following objectives.

2.1. Create Awareness

Create maximum awareness of the SOPs and Operational Guidelines for COVID-19 safety and hygiene issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Tourism and its dissemination for adoption by the Hospitality Industry

2.2. Self-Certification

Develop mechanism to encourage adoption of self-certification by hospitality industry.

2.3. Capacity Building

Capacity building of the Hospitality Industry, Industry Associations, State Tourism Departments and other stakeholders

2.4. Site Assessment

Encourage industry to undergo Site-assessment based on the guidelines in order to further minimize COVID risks

3. Implementation

SAATHI will have the following phases to fulfil the above objectives:

3.1. Phase 1: Development of online self-assessment by Industry units

Development of online self-assessment by industry units based on the SOPs and operational guidelines issued by the Government. The responsible officer of the Unit will declare that the Unit is following each aspect of the guidelines issued by the Government. This will help the Industry to carry out a quick self-assessment to identify the gaps, if any, and make improvements. This will further be certified as a pledge taken by the Unit to adhere to COVID-19 safety standards.

3.2. Phase 2: Development of online training & capacity building module

Development of the content for online training & capacity building and conducting free training webinars will be covered in Phase 2. This will help the Units to understand the SOPs/ guidelines and their relevance to COVID-19 risks. The webinars will also act as the mechanism of training various Units on the guidelines of COVID-19 safety measures. This will cover capacity building of various State Government Officials, Industry Association Representatives and other Stakeholders. The participants in the webinar will be provided e-certificate of participation in the training.

3.3. Phase 3: Development of module to conduct site-assessments

In phase 3, a mechanism/ module will be developed for site assessment of compliance of COVID-19 safety and hygiene guidelines. This would be done by developing a checklist based on the approved SOPs/ guidelines to conduct site-assessments. Self-assessment will be mandatory before site-assessment is done. The site assessment would have both the mechanism i.e. physical onsite assessment or through remote

video mechanism for smaller hotels as may be laid down in the detailed modalities to be finalized for the same.

4. Convergence of SAATHI and National Database of Accommodation Units

The Ministry of Tourism has launched a scheme for preparing a Comprehensive National Databased of Accommodation Units, which includes hotels, resorts, guest houses, Bed & Breakfast and other such accommodation units. The units are verified in the System by State Nodal Officer appointed by the State Tourism Department. The units seeking support under SAATHI will have to register with the National Database of Accommodation Units and will be provided access to various capacity building services under SAATHI.

5. Applicability and Scope

The applicability of the scheme will be government by the following:

- (i). The activities under this scheme will be applicable to Hotels, Restaurants, B&Bs/Homestays and other hospitality units.
- (ii). The decision of opening / continuing of operations of hotels/restaurants/B&BS/Homestays etc. will rest with the competent regulatory authorities of the State and Central Government and is independent of any certification (self or site assessment) under the SAATHI initiative.
- (iii). Any Certificate (self or site assessment) issued under SAATHI initiative will not substitute any other legal requirement for setting up or operating hospitality business.

6. Envisaged Outcomes

The key outcomes envisaged under the SAATHI initiative are:

- (i). Ensuring safety & health of employees/customers
- (ii). Identifying vulnerable areas within the organization which need to be plugged
- (iii). Compliance with COVID-19 related requirements from Government authorities
- (iv). Business continuity in operations to serve guests/customers and protect businesses
- (v). Increased confidence of all stakeholders including staff as well as guests/customers

7. Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

7.1. Ministry of Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism will be responsible for the following:

- (i). Provide the approved guidelines for hotels/restaurants/B&Bs and other hospitality units for the development of various frameworks as discussed above.
- (ii). Timely approval of the framework developed for Self-assessment, Webinars and Site/Video Assessment.
- (iii). Wide publicity to SAATHI initiative and ensure support of various Departments and State Governments and other Stakeholders for the initiative.

7.2. Quality Council of India

Ministry of Tourism has partnered with Quality Council of India (QCI), an autonomous institution under DPIIT (Ministry of Commerce & Industry) for the SAATHI initiative, where QCI will assist in:

- (i). Developing a mechanism of dissemination of these guidelines/SOPs in a manner that the Hotel/Restaurants/B&Bs understand them well and adopt them in letter and spirit.
- (ii). Developing a mechanism to assess the level of on-ground adoption of these guidelines within this sector.
- (iii). Creating an overall digital framework for SAATHI

7.3. State Governments

The State Governments will have a crucial role in the implementation of the Scheme and particularly the following:

- (i). Appoint a Nodal Officer for effective coordination with the Ministry/QCI
- (ii). Sensitize the all the key functionaries of the Department on SAATHI with the assistance of QCI
- (iii). Create maximum awareness of COVID-19 SOPs and Guidelines of MoT/MoHFW and urging the industry to benefit from the SAATHI initiative
- (iv). Assist the Ministry/QCI in capacity building of the Industry

- (v). Explore extending benefits to units, which undergo site-assessment and obtain a Certification under the SAATHI initiative (Phase 3)

7.4. Industry Associations

Industry Associations will be expected to extend the following assistance:

- (i). Create a SPOC for effective coordination with the Ministry/QCI
- (ii). Disseminate information amongst its members from the hospitality industry
- (iii). Create maximum awareness of COVID-19 SOPs and Guidelines of MoT/MoHFW and urging the hospitality industry to go for Certification
- (iv). Assist the Ministry/QCI in capacity building of the Industry

7.5. Industry Units

The hospitality industry units are the key beneficiaries of the Scheme and will have the following role and responsibilities:

- (i). Exhibit intent and commitment towards ensuring safety and hygiene at their respective workplaces by pursuing self-certification under the SAATHI initiative
- (ii). Undergo online training by QCI/stakeholders for a better understanding of the guidelines/SOPs issued from time to time
- (iii). Identify the risk exposure at their properties and initiate measures to mitigate them by identifying opportunities for improvement after the assessment process
- (iv). Identify some established 4star category (and above) hotels to champion the initiative for adoption by others.

7.6. Other Ministries and Departments including Financial Institutions

- (i). In order to encourage the widespread adoption of COVID-19 safety and hygiene SOPs and guidelines and to ensure protection against COVID-19, the Ministries and Departments including Financial Institutions to explore the possibilities of extending certain benefits and preferences to the Hospitality units, which undergo site-assessment and obtain Certification under the SAATHI initiative.
- (ii). Explore extending preference in bookings to Certified Hotels under the SAATHI initiative, while availing official stay and other facilities related to hotels.