

Update on IATO Activities

(Monday, 7th December to Sunday, 13th December 2020)

Dear Members

Greetings

Please find appended relevant activities of our association for the period (Monday, 7th December to Sunday, 13th December 2020)

Segments covered are

1. **Communication / Letters that addressed key issues**
2. **Webinars/ Panel Discussions/Circulars/Meetings/Chapter news**
3. **Media Coverage**

Request your feedback to further the content of our weekly report.

1. Communication / Letters that addressed key issues

Segment 1 update sequence by date:7,8,10, December

Monday, 7th December

- **IATO Inputs/Suggestions for the forthcoming New Foreign Trade Policy (2021-26)**

IATO wrote to Mr. Amit Yadav, Director General Foreign Trade, Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce that since we did not get a chance to speak or make any presentation during the meeting held on 2nd December 2020 due to paucity of time, IATO was asked to submit its suggestions in writing. IATO hi-lighted tour operator's pressing points during the meeting held today i.e. 7th December. It outlined its request as follows:

1. **Service Export from India Scheme for the Tour Operators**
 - A) To continue SEIS for the Inbound tour operators
 - B) Pending SEIS for Financial Year 2019-20 to be announced
 - C) Increase of SEIS percentage in Foreign Trade Policy – 2021-26 to 15% during off season and 10% during season
2. **Under EPCG Scheme requirement of incremental Foreign Exchange Earnings to be removed for import of Vehicles.**
3. **Value based tourist inflow incentives for MICE Tourists**
4. **Tax Refund for Tourists (TRT) Scheme on shopping**

A copy of the letter was marked to **A.** Additional Director General Foreign Trade. **B.** Dy. Director General Foreign Trade, Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce

Later on 7th December, Board of Trade meeting was called by the Director General of Foreign Trade and President attended the same and raised our concerns as above.

Tuesday, 8th December

- **Revised Guidelines for the scheme of Market Development Assistance (MDA) for promotion of domestic Tourism received from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India were circulated to the members**

Highlights

Under the MDA Scheme, financial support will be provided to tourism service providers approved by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India for the promotion of domestic tourism

The tourism service providers would include travel agents. tour operators. tourist transport operators. hoteliers. bed & breakfast units. homestays. motels. guest houses. tented accommodation units. standalone restaurants. convention centres. online aggregators.

EXTENT OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT PERMISSIBLE

For Participation in Travel Fairs / Exhibitions

- 90% of economy class air fare / IInd AC train fare.
- 90% of cost of built up/ furnished stall and participation fee.

Upper Ceiling: Rs. 1.35.000 /- per trip including GST/Taxes and subject to actual (including air/train fare - Rs 35000/-, cost of stall/ participation fee- Rs 100000/)

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS PERMISSIBLE

- A maximum of **three tours** in one financial year. with **only one tour** to a particular State
- **One additional tour** (above the three tours) will be permissible for visiting any State in the North East region. J&K and Ladakh.
- Service providers from States in the North - Eastern region. J&K and Ladakh will be eligible for a total of **four tours** in one financial year.

Note

A. The tour to a single city / state or a group of cities / states shall be for a minimum of three nights stay at the destination(s). excluding journey period and the assistance shall be permissible to only one person for each tour undertaken.

B. Prior approval of the Ministry of Tourism. Government of India to be taken before undertaking the tourism promotional activity.

C. Application for re-reimbursement claim in the prescribed format to be submitted to the Ministry of Tourism. Government of India immediately on completion of the activity with all documents and positively within a period of one month of completion of the activity.

Thursday, 10th December

• **Letter to Hon'ble Finance Minister - Request to release SEIS scrips of last financial year 2019-20 to the Tourism Industry**

IATO drew the attention of Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman, Hon'ble Minister for Finance to its letter dated 17th September 2020 regarding the request to announce and release SEIS scrips for the Inbound Tour Operators for the financial year 2019-20 and requested that SEIS Scrips for 2019-20 may kindly be announced and released immediately for the survival and revival of inbound tourism in India.

IATO pleaded that it has been requesting the Government to help the tourism industry with financial relief to survive but to its dismay, no such support or help has been extended to the tourism Industry,

With Vaccinations at our door step there is a ray of hope but tour operators are struggling for financial liquidation and if SEIS is not announced now, tour operators will not be able to start their global marketing and promotions due to shortage of funds, this will result in loss of business, thus losing valuable foreign exchange for the country and loss of jobs. To regain business from the International Market SEIS is very important for revival.

A copy of the letter was marked to **A.** Minister of State (Finance and Corporate Affairs) and **B.** Revenue Secretary & Ex-Officio Secretary to the GST Council Ministry of Finance, Government of India

On the above subject President IATO spoke to Mr. Abhay Sinha, Dy. Director General, Service Export Promotion Council, forwarding a copy of the letter written to Hon'ble Minister of Finance regarding release of SEIS Scrips for the financial year 2019-20 to the tourism industry and requested if he could kindly take up with the Finance Minister and help in the matter. Chairman Service Export Promotion Council was copied on this request.

A similar request as above was made to Shri Amitabh Kant, Chief Executive Officer Niti Aayog and Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, Hon'ble Minister of State for Tourism (IC) to kindly intervene in the matter in getting the SEIS released by the Ministry of Finance/Ministry of Commerce at the earliest. With the latter a copy was marked to **A.** Secretary, **B.** DG, **C.** ADG and **D.** JS Tourism

2. Webinars/ Panel Discussions/ Circulars/ Meetings

Segment 2 update sequence by date: 7, 8, 9, 12, December

Monday, 7th December

- ITM Task Force meeting held on 7th December, 2020 at 1600 hours.

Tuesday, 8th December

- **The Second Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Tour Operators was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 08-09 December 2020(virtually).**

Mr. Pronab Sarkar, President, Mr. Raj Singh, Director, Exotic Journeys Pvt. Ltd and Mr Deepu C.S. Director, Lotus Destinations Pvt. Ltd. Joined the meeting and gave their valuable inputs/suggestions to promote tourism packages including River Cruise /Sea Cruise between the BIMSTEC countries.

Wednesday, 9th December

- **IATO participated at the 3rd Qtr. Sub Committee meet of “Industry Engagement and Apprenticeship” of THSC which was held on 9th December from 1615 hrs to 1730 hrs.**
- **Speech on behalf of IATO Gujarat by Chapter Chair Gujarat at Gujarat Travel & Tourism Excellence Awards 2020**
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- **[Tweet from Ministry of Tourism](https://twitter.com/tourismgoi/status/1336631354839076864?s=20)**

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Ministry of Tourism thanks Ms. Vasuki K. Sundaram, Chairperson, IATO Maharashtra Chapter for such a wonderful feedback! As the video

mentions about spiritual Shirdi, Maharashtra, one can see that the idea of [#DekhoApnaDesh](#) is being executed thorough

Saturday, 12th December

- **Dekho Apna Desh Webinar series: Episode 67 Birding in India was held on the 12th December 2020 on the topic “Birding in India”**
- **Active Members were invited at the ITM Jaipur December 12-13, 2020.**

3. Media Coverage

Segment 3 update sequence by date:7,9 December

Monday, 7th December

- **Taking baby steps towards Tourism Revival**
<http://bwhotelier.businessworld.in/article/Taking-baby-steps-towards-Tourism-Revival/07-12-2020-350785/>
- **Tourism ministry urges Covid-19 insurance cover for foreign tourists**
Link of the story carried in Business Standard-this is around IATO's request for declaring some dates around allowing tourist visas for foreign tourists.
https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/tourism-ministry-urges-covid-19-insurance-cover-for-foreign-tourists-120120600646_1.html

Govt moots Covid cover for foreign tourists

ANEESH PHADNIS
Mumbai, 7 December

Foreign tourists visiting India may be offered attractively priced Covid-19 insurance cover as part of the tourism ministry's plans to revive the sector. Over 10.9 million foreign tourists visited India in 2019. Inbound tourism, however, came to a standstill in March when the government suspended tourist visas as part of its measures to contain the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

While visa restrictions are expected to continue for some time, the tourism ministry is working on measures which will give foreign tourists an

assurance of safety and generate confidence about India when it opens its doors again.

The ministry's Additional Director General, Rupinder Bhat, on Saturday said the department was studying insurance policies introduced by Singapore and other countries. Addressing an industry webinar, she said discussions are on with insurance companies and the finance ministry on modalities of providing Covid-19 insurance cover.

Also on cards is a promotional campaign which will highlight infrastructure progress alongside various places of interest within the country.

To be sure, insurance com-



panies are already offering policies to cover Covid-19-related hospitalisation and travel disruption. Indian and global airlines such as SpiceJet, Emirates, Virgin Atlantic among others, too, are marketing Covid-19 insurance products to attract passengers.

In October, the central gov-

ernment removed curbs on business visas and travel bodies are now pitching for relaxation for tourist visas too.

The Indian Association of Tour Operators has asked the government to at least declare a date when leisure tourists will be able to visit India. Such an announcement would enable

overseas tour operators to include India in their marketing plans for the next year, it said.

Subhash Goyal, Secretary General of the Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality, said the government should start by offering e-visas to citizens of countries with which India has an air bubble agreement.

The government, however, is in favour of calibrated steps regarding inbound travel and the current focus is on boosting domestic tourism. The tourism ministry also plans to release traveller videos which highlight safety measures undertaken by airlines and airports to generate more confidence.

Wednesday, 9th December

- **Ministry eyes ad blitz with focus on safety to woo foreign tourists**

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/tourism-ministry-to-launch-campaign-aimed-at-foreign-tourists-11607426293019.html>