

travel operators for
tigers

Action on responsible use of wild habitats



PUG AUDIT BOOKLET

RESPONSIBLE CERTIFICATION

Tourism certification provides a profitable logo to companies that exceed (or claim to exceed) a specific standard. These logos make businesses show their environmental and social contributions to a specific destination. This certification in the tourism industry have emerged as a tool to reduce the environmental, social and economical impacts and gain competitive advantages, and promote on the criteria of effective eco-savings.

‘PUG’ which is an acronym to Practices Under Guidelines, which represents a system of green labeling and a footprint of good practices, has been designed which examines certain certification criteria that the Indian tourism sector and stakeholders around them will benefit from. PUG focuses on enhancing tourism providers “triple bottom line” of economic profitability, respect for the environment and balanced social responsibility. The PUG approach benefits all: Visitors, Resort owners and managers, their staff, local communities and tourist providers including DMC’s, and local and International Tour Operators.

PRACTICES UNDER GUIDELINES (PUG) BENEFITS

ENHANCED QUALITY

PUG focuses on impact management, helping tourism providers to ensure the preservation of destinations and cultures for future generations. This equates to more attractive environments and better products.

PUG provides access to standards recognised as best practices within the travel industry, helping businesses to meet higher standards through continuous improvement.

IMPROVED PROFITABILITY

PUG is a systematic approach that lowers costs through resource productivity and waste reduction while positively contributing to environmental conservation and the well being of local people.

PUG assists tourism providers in adding value to local communities' economies, helping them to safeguard the livelihood of local and indigenous people. meet higher standards through continuous improvement.

BROADER MARKET APPEAL

Tourism providers licensed to use the PUG logos demonstrate their commitment and performance to PUG ecological, PUG socio-cultural & PUG economic factors, making them more attractive to responsible tourists.

PUG AUDIT PROCESS

The PUG Audit process is designed to assist tourism providers in measuring their environmental, economic, and social-cultural PUG Indicators while enhancing positive impacts and mitigating negative impacts.

PUG AUDIT PROCESS

STEP



PUG Audit Process:All TOFT Accommodation Provider members have to be PUG Certified and are required to conform to the PUG Requirements.

Self-Audit.. To provide applicants with an opportunity to improve upon their performance prior to pursuing an on-site audit. Practices Under Guideline requirements are detailed in question format within the Self-Audit questionnaire.

This educational-based tool encompasses a set of standards and related questions with weighted point values designed to help determine the extent to which a business meets the principles of sustainable development and responsible tourism. For more information see page 27.

A PUG User's Guide is also available on-line to assist tourism providers in improving their Self-Audit ratings. Interested companies will also be referred onto qualified consultants. The overall Self Audit process is conducted by:

1. Download / obtain information of the PUG Audit.
2. Conduct your own Self Audit.
3. Assess the need for improvements in the property.
4. Discuss it with the TOFT Team as requirements before the on-site visit.
5. Conduct necessary improvements
6. Get your Application (from the handbook or online) of the PUG Self-Audit.
7. Processing of PUG Audit to ensure the form is complete and evidence appropriate.
8. Invite an onsite TOFT auditor.

STEP



On-site Audit.. Tourism providers who complete STEP I must then notify TOFT. TOFT will appoint them to a PUG Auditor to undertake an on-site audit. On-site audits are compulsory for the PUG Requirements as they ensure the credibility of PUG and prevent green washing (false eco-labelling). Also, it is important for a person from an objective and credible source to experience the target services first hand.

A PUG Auditor undertakes on-site audits to verify applicant's performance and document and compare their findings with the information provided by the applicant in their self - assessment.

The length of time required to complete an audit varies according to the size and scope of the applicant's operations. However, applicants will be contacted at least fifteen days prior to their audit.

Visitors Feedback: This process based on a Visitor's feedback form, provides the final informal audit of what is actually being offered and conveyed to the visitor during their stay, providing us with a useful monitoring tool of their experiences and the provider's business practices undertaken during their stay. Resorts will not be informed when this visitor will be staying.

Please note:

The Visitors Feedback is not the final assessment for the PUG rating but is a part of the final rating system.

STEP

3

Evaluation: A separate, voluntary Evaluation Committee will then review the Auditor's report and determine whether to certify an applicant and at what level. The Evaluation Committee's decision is based on the auditor's report, the applicant's Self Assessment questionnaire, and the visitor client's feedbacks form.

Tourism providers who are successful will receive a 1st / 2nd / 3rd Stage Practices Under Guidelines (PUG) Rating (for further information see page 25) and the appropriate logo, detailing the extent to which their operations are contributing to responsible tourism.

FINAL STEP

PUG Rated: Tourism providers who qualify through the evaluation process and point system are given a PUG Rating for their operations.

1st Stage & 2nd Stage PUG Rating provides an opportunity for applicants to measure their impacts so that they can assess and improve upon their performance.

Tourism providers who submit successful applications receive a TOFT "PUG Certificate" and logo (For further details see PUG Logo terms and conditions).



APPLYING FOR THE PUG AUDIT

PUG Rating applications and corresponding requirements are currently only available for Accommodation Providers. The entire PUG process is normally completed within 90 - 120 days depending on the complexity of the application and the extent of the background information provided. Applications that are incomplete, fail to clearly define the product for which accreditation is sought, or are internally inconsistent will require further clarification by TOFT-GTP and will therefore take longer to process. If necessary, the applicant will be contacted for clarification.

Information supplied to TOFT will be treated as confidential in accordance with TOFT-GTP's Confidentiality Agreement. However, PUG Audit data and information demonstrating best practices may be disseminated to the travel industry as a means of education and raising standards in an aggregated or disguised form that does not betray confidential business information.

ELIGIBILITY FOR TOFT PUG RATING CERTIFICATION,

Based upon conformance with the PUG Steps of the TOFT handbook
& performance requirements summarized below

TOFT - PRACTICES UNDER GUIDELINES (PUG) Steps	Accommodation Providers' relevant criteria
PUG Step Performance	<p>All PUG Factors (Economic, Socio-Cultural and Ecological) should performance their objectives to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Mitigating the negative economic impacts associated within their operations and as appropriate, increase its positive economic impacts. 2) Regularly assessing and establishing achievable targets to lessen negative economic impacts.
Economic PUG Steps	<p>On-going commitment to Economic PUG Responsibility:</p> <p>Accommodation providers focus on:</p> <p>Direct and indirect economic benefits to host communities and conservation organizations; ethical business practices; employee and service provider training.</p>
Socio - Cultural PUG Steps	<p>On-going commitment to Social-Cultural PUG Responsibility:</p> <p>Accommodation providers focus on:</p> <p>Customer service; group management; cultural sensitivity and community benefits.</p>
Ecological PUG Steps	<p>On-going commitment to Ecological PUG Responsibility.</p> <p>Accommodation providers focus on:</p> <p>Facilities and program management; solid waste and wastewater management; parks, protected areas and unique ecosystem conservation; flora and fauna protection; water and non-renewable energy consumption.</p>

PUG RATING SYSTEM

As an operation moves from 1st stage to the 2nd stage, points are added together for the PUG rating criteria and when reaching the final stage up to 20 bonus points are awarded for best practices. Best practices refer to specific measurable indicators that demonstrate how the provider is achieving exemplary performance. Applicants must provide documentation, such as photographs and reports, in a separate attachment for any proposed best practices that they would like to submit.


One, two, or three points are assigned to each question in the Self-Audit questionnaire / Onsite audit along with the evidence provided.

One point is assigned to questions that focus on PUG Audit focusing low level practices on economical, socio-cultural and ecological responsibilities.

Two points are assigned to questions that focus on PUG Audit focusing medium level practices on economical, socio-cultural and ecological responsibilities.

Three points are assigned to questions that focus on PUG Audit focusing high level practices on economical, socio-cultural and ecological responsibilities.

As mentioned this audit process assigns a final rating to applicants based on a 5 (stages) rating system. Stages 1-5 are detailed below:

TOFT PUG RATING SYSTEM	
	<p>Member Logo</p> <p>All member accommodation providers are eligible to display the member logo (Plaque) only once they have gone through the self-assessment. The Logo would contain membership and year.</p>
	<p>PUG Rating Under Process</p> <p>At this stage the accommodation provider has gone through the onsite audit of their property await to be rated by TOFT evaluation committee.</p>
	<p>PUG Rating (Good Practice)</p> <p>In the 3rd Stage of PUG Rating, accommodation providers are somewhat low-impact, and may consider environmental and social issues in their operational decisions and programming. They also may make choices based on environmental and social responsibility, but due to monetary, time, or efficiency issues, may forego their commitment to best practice ecological sustainability.</p>
	<p>PUG Rating (Quality Practice)</p> <p>In the 2nd Stage of PUG Rating, accommodation providers are highly environmentally and socio-culturally responsible. They are continuously working to better their operations and enhance their sustainable travel practices. The management is knowledgeable about environmental/social issues related to their business, and they are working to become exemplary industry leaders</p>
	<p>PUG Rating (Outstanding Practice)</p> <p>In the 1st and prime stage of the PUG Rating, accommodation providers are exemplary industry leaders. They make sustainable development and environmental and socio-cultural issues their priority. They are striving to be environmentally innovative and socially responsible. They have a positive impact on the environment, local communities, and their clients. They invest both time and money to maintain sustainable travel practices. They lead with examples and become case studies for others to follow.</p>

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Please Note: Applicants may answer Not Applicable (N/A) for selected questions where N/A is an answer from which they may choose. Applicants who answer N/A for these selected questions will receive a final rating percentage score based only on the applicable items.

TOFT - PUG LOGO – Terms and Conditions

The following logos are the property of Global Tiger Patrol - Travel Operators for Tigers (TOFT) Campaign, but may be used by TOFT members in good standing and accordance with the terms and conditions set forth below. Use of one or more of the logos shall constitute consideration for, agreement to, and acceptance of the following terms and conditions of this license by the user:

1. The following logos are the sole and exclusive property of TOFT - GTP. These logos may be used only by TOFT members in good standing if and only if such use is made pursuant to the terms and conditions of this limited and] revocable license. Any failure by a user to comply with the terms and conditions contained herein may result in the] immediate revocation of this license, in addition to any other sanctions imposed by TOFT. The interpretation and enforcement (or lack thereof) of these terms and conditions, and compliance therewith, shall be made by TOFT in its sole discretion.
2. The logos may not be revised or altered in any way, and must be displayed in the same form and colour as produced by TOFT.
3. The logos may be used in a professional manner on the user's business cards, stationery, literature, websites, advertisements, store-front window, or in any other comparable manner to signify the user's membership with TOFT. The logo may never be used independent of the term "**MEMBER**". Notwithstanding the foregoing, the logos may not be used in any manner that, in the sole discretion of TOFT: discredits TOFT or tarnishes its reputation and goodwill; is false or misleading; violates the rights of others; violates any law, regulation or other public policy; or mischaracterizes the relationship between TOFT and the user, including but not limited to any use of the logos that might be reasonably construed as an endorsement, approval, sponsorship, or certification by TOFT of the user, the user's business or organization, or the user's products or services, or that might be reasonably construed as support or encouragement to purchase or utilize the user's products or services.
4. Use of the logos shall create no rights for users in or to the logos or their use beyond the terms and conditions of this limited and revocable license. The logos shall remain at all times the sole and exclusive intellectual property of TOFT. TOFT shall have the right, from time to time, to request samples of use of the logos from which it may determine compliance with these terms and conditions. Without further notice, TOFT reserves the right to prohibit use of the logos if it determines, in its sole discretion, that a user's logo usage, whether wilful or negligent, is not in strict accordance with the terms and conditions of this license, otherwise could discredit TOFT or tarnish its reputation and goodwill, or the user is not a TOFT member in good standing.
5. Any questions concerning use of the logos or the terms and conditions of this license should be directed to the TOFT – GTP: info@toftiger.org

