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Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Adventure Tourism Operator

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for On-site Assessment

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Purpose	1
3.0	Applicability	1
4.0	Operational Definitions	2
5.0	Personnel Qualifications	3
6.0	Duties and Responsibilities	4
7.0	Flow Chart and Work Procedures for On-Site Assessment (Before, During and After)	5
8.0	Bibliography	14
ΔPPF	ENDIX	
Code	of Ethics for Assessors	15

1.1 The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for On-site Assessment of the Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification (Adventure

Tourism Operator) has been systemically developed for appraising the required actions that need to be accomplished related to the on-site assessment processes of MaTEx (Adventure Tourism Operator).

- 1.2 This SOP takes into consideration the existing distinctions of MaTEx (Adventure Tourism Operator) as compared to other MaTEx categories, especially in terms of the unique procedures on how an assessment should be conducted and the nature of assessment involved. MaTEx (Adventure Tourism Operator) has been specifically designed to focus more on service delivery rather than assessing the condition of tangible products. In addition, assessment should also be conducted during actual trip/programme organised by the applicants.
- 1.3 This SOP is also devised in such a way that it can be universally adopted and implemented in a diverse range of adventure tourism activities.
- 1.4 The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for On-site Assessment of the Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification (Adventure Tourism Operator) is a 'living document' and is subject to periodic future reviews. It can be modified and improvised from time to time whenever necessary or required to do so.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) is to establish uniform sequential procedures pertaining to the obligatory actions that are required to be completed in MaTEX (Adventure Tourism Operator)'s On-site Assessment.
- 2.2 It also delineates the roles and responsibilities of all MaTEx Adventure Tourism Operators' assessors.
- 2.3 This SOP should be used as the main reference to conduct the MaTEX (Adventure Tourism Operator)'s On-site Assessment.

3.0 APPLICABILITY

3.1 Procedures included in this SOP are applicable to all personnel involved in the planning, coordination, preparation, conducting, and reporting of MaTEX (Adventure Tourism Operator)'s On-site Assessment, particularly the appointed assessors (encompassing both industry assessors and staff of related government agencies).

4.0 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

4.1 Adventure Tourism

A trip or travel with the intention to participate in a broad spectrum of physically challenging endeavours outside the participants' locality; involving an interaction with the natural or man-made environment via the use of specialized skills, equipment and leadership; containing elements of risk with specific safety interventions; and commercialized service in which the overall outcome is influenced by the participants, operators, locations, and management of the experience.

4.2 Malaysia Tourism Excellence Business Certification (MaTEx)

An industry level certification programme instigated by Malaysia Productivity Corporation and Tourism Productivity Nexus (Initiative T2 of the five initiatives at sectorial level for tourism industry as specified in the Malaysia Productivity Blueprint) that aims to enhance tourists' trust and confidence in Malaysia's tourism products and services by propagating tourism businesses to the next level, and hoisting the quality of tourism products and services.

4.3 MaTEx (Adventure Tourism Operator) Standard

An industrial level adventure tourism standard under the Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification intended to establish a level of professionalism for adventure tour operators and intensify the overall quality of service provision (human resources, service offerings, proper utilization of equipment, service providers' ethic, clients' safety etc) of the Malaysian adventure tourism industry.

4.4 MaTEx Adventure Tourism Operator's Assessor (industry assessor)

A technically competent person authorised by the Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification Working Committee, Tourism Productivity Nexus and Malaysia Productivity Corporation for the purposes of inspecting and verifying compliances with the requirements stipulated by the MaTEx (Adventure Tourism Operator) Standard.

5.0 PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS

- 5.1 Minimum qualifications of MaTEx Adventure Tourism Operator's Assessor (Industry Assessor)
 - 5.1.1 35 years of age.
 - 5.1.2 10 years of experience in related developmental segments of adventure tourism industry.
 - 5.1.3 Industry and/or academic qualification consisting of the relevant certificate, diploma or degree in any field related to tourism industry.
 - 5.1.4 Business owner/founder, company's employee or specific agency personnel related to adventure tourism industry.
- 5.2 Appointment to the role of assessor (industry assessor) for Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification (Adventure Tourism Operator) is by recommendation of the Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification Working Committee, approved and appointed by Tourism Productivity Nexus and supported by Malaysia Productivity Corporation.
- 5.3 With specific reference to assessor's appointment, the Working Committee of Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification possess the rights to recommend termination of an assessor subject to approval by Tourism Productivity Nexus and Malaysia Productivity Corporation where there is a breach in the Assessor's Code of Ethics (Appendix 1).

3

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for On-site Assessment

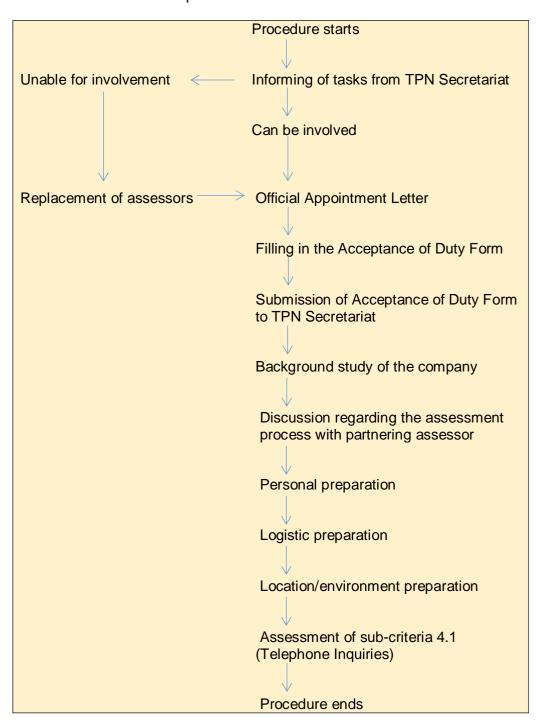
6.1 Duties and responsibilities of an Assessor for Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification (Adventure Tourism Operator)

- 6.1.1 Familiarise with the standards' criteria, sub-criteria, and indicators as well as assessment method to enable effective conduct of the on-site assessment.
- 6.1.2 Attend the assessor's training workshop conducted by Tourism Productivity Nexus.
- 6.1.3 Conduct assessments, inspections, and evaluations on applicants' companies and/or business activities/operations to determine compliance, implementation, and achievement of the requirements as stated in the relevant standards.
- 6.1.4 Ensure the evidences of applicants' compliance, implementation, and achievement of the requirements as stated in the standards are matched against the decisions made.
- 6.1.5 Consolidate assessment marks for each applicant upon completion of on-site assessment.
- 6.1.6 Ensure fairness, honesty, and transparency while conducting assessments.
- 6.1.7 Recommend applicants' final performance and achievement results to Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification Working Committee for ratification and endorsement.
- 6.1.8 Be answerable to the Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification Working Committee, Tourism Productivity Nexus and Malaysia Productivity Corporation.
- 6.1.9 Uphold the good name of Malaysia Productivity Corporation, Tourism Productivity Nexus, and MaTEx Business Certification in performing the role as assessor for the programme.
- 6.1.10 Perform role, duties and responsibilities in accordance with the Assessors' Code of Ethics.
- 6.1.11 Portray reputable image and reputation by adhering to existing safety and health related guidelines and SOP (such as COVID-19 SOPs issued by the National Safety Council).
- 6.2 Any assessor shall be discharged immediately by the Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification Working Committee upon any form of misconduct or violation of the Assessors' Code of Ethics during an on-site assessment process.

4

7.0 FLOW CHART AND WORK PROCEDURES FOR ON-SITE ASSESSMENT (BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER)

- 7.1 The following flow chart and subsequent table elucidate the work procedures that should be scrutinized and implemented prior to the on-site assessment of Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification (Adventure Tourism Operator).
 - 7.1.1 Flow chart of work procedures PRIOR to on-site assessment

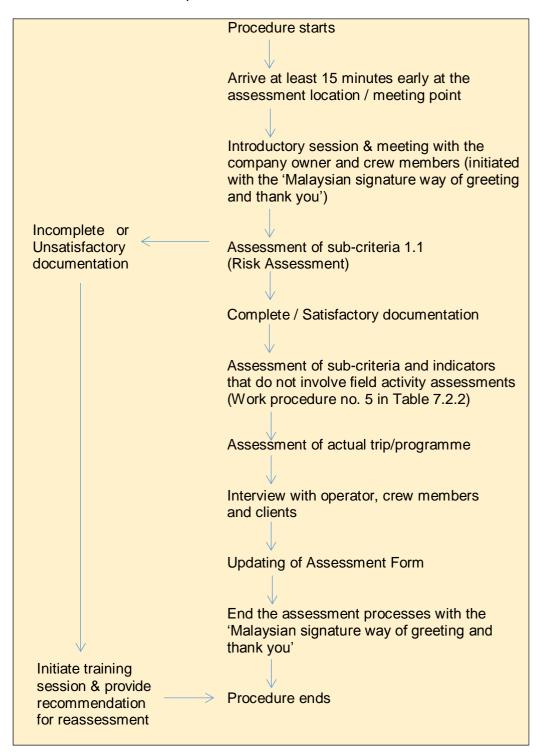


7.1.2 Description of work procedures PRIOR to on-site assessment

No	Activity	Action
1.	Obtain assessment information (company name, date of assessment, assessment location and specific activity to be assessed).	TPN Secretariat
2.	Identify two assessors and disseminate assessment information to both assessors.	TPN Secretariat
3.	Determine the feasibility of assessment according to the given date and apply for official leave from employers for assessment reasons.	Assessor
4.	Assessors who cannot undergo assessment on the given date must search for 'like for like' replacements with other assessors and inform the results of the replacement to TPN Secretariat.	Assessor
5.	Hand over the Official Appointment Letter (with TOR and Acceptance of Duty Form) to the assessors.	TPN Secretariat
6.	Fill in the Acceptance of Duty Form clearly.	Assessor
7.	Send the filled Acceptance of Duty Form to TPN Secretariat via e-mail.	Assessor
8.	Perform background study in relation to current operation, performance and recent developments of the to-be-assessed company.	Assessor
9.	Discuss with partnering assessor concerning assessment processes (especially in terms of sorting out the queue for enquiries).	Assessor
10.	 Undertake the required preparation with regards to personal needs. Optimal health and fitness for performing assessment duties (including free from any illness and COVID-19 symptoms). Valid personal insurance (or insurance provided by the department) for extreme sports / adventurous activities. Strengthening and enhancement of skills and competencies related to the activity that will be assessed (including first aid). 	Assessor

11.	 Undertake intensive preparation for logistics/tools to be used in assessment and associated adventure tourism activity. Assessment form, stationaries and clipboards (including waterproofing of the assessment form for water-based activities or bad weather conditions). Assessment uniform (official MPC shirt for industry assessor and official department shirt for staff of related government agencies) and specific attires, corresponding with the type of particular activity to be assessed. Personal necessities that are needed to perform the activity must be functional and in good working condition (including basic emergency tools such as whistle, knife, headlamp and personal survival kit). Personal first aid kit is fully equipped (including personal medication issued by medical experts). Communication tools such as hand phone and walkie-talkie are functional and in good working condition. Camera or hand phone for the purpose of recording assessment evidences is functional and in good working condition. Transportation to be used to the location of assessment is functional and in good working condition. Adequate supply of face masks and handsanitizer. 	Assessor
12.	 Make the necessary preparations with regards to assessment location and surrounding environment. Determination of assessment location and meeting point. Accessibility of assessment location (including travel period and route to be used). Local information regarding location of assessment. Emergency action plan according to the geographical factor of the assessment location. Accommodation and related issues if lodging is needed at the assessment location. 	Assessor
13.	Perform the assessment for sub-criteria 4.1 (Telephone Enquiries).	Assessor

- 7.2 The following flow chart and subsequent table elucidate the work procedures that should be scrutinized and implemented during the on-site assessment of Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification (Adventure Tourism Operator).
 - 7.2.1 Flow chart of work procedures DURING on-site assessment



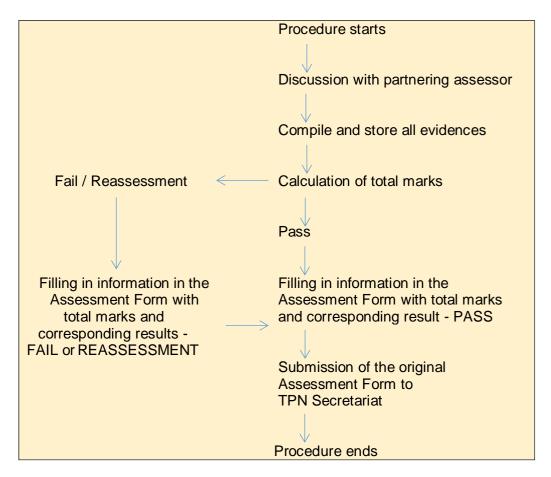
7.2.2 Description of work procedures DURING on-site assessment

No	Activity	Action
1.	Show up at the assessment location / meeting point 15 minutes early and prepare to begin the assessment.	Assessor
2.	Initiate the introductory session and meeting with the company's owner and crew members with the 'Malaysian signature way of greeting and thank you', as well as strict adherence to existing COVID-19 guidelines and SOP.	Assessor
3.	Execute the assessment process of sub-criteria 1.1 (Risk Assessment).	Assessor
4.	 Determine whether the assessment processes can be continued after examining all risk assessment documents, specifically Risk Analysis & Management System (RAMS), related company's SOP regarding proper handling of emergency situations and/or Emergency Response Plan. Continue the assessment processes if all risk assessment documents are found to be completed and satisfactory. Conclude the assessment processes if all risk assessment documents are deemed unsatisfactory or incomplete. Initiate a training session and recommend the company owner to apply for reassessment upon completion of the training session. 	Assessor
5.	 Complete the assessment on sub criteria and indicators that do not involve field activity assessments first. Sub-criteria 1.2 (Operational Procedure). Sub-criteria 1.3 (Equipment). Sub-criteria 2.5 (Maintenance & improvement of competence). Initial information related to sub-criteria 3.1 (Preactivity Requirement) – promotional material/s. Sub-criteria 3.3 (Post-activity Requirement). Sub-criteria 4.2 (Content of Promotional Materials – Online Marketing/Brochure/Website/Social Media). Sub-criteria 4.3 (Booking & Confirmation Procedure). Sub-criteria 4.4 (Company's Digital Platform Establishment). Specific indicator 5.1.2 (Consideration for allergies and dietary needs). Specific indicator 5.2.4 (Scheduled inspections are conducted to ensure vehicle safety). 	Assessor

	 Specific indicator 5.2.5 (Present evidence on valid transportation permit, insurance, road tax and scheduled inspections by PUSPAKOM). Specific indicator 5.2.6 (Driver must have clean records and valid driving license). Specific indicator 6.1 (Local communities are involved in any activities, programmes, events, etc related to the product and/or service). Specific indicator 6.2 (Food and beverages (if any) highlight local delicacies and food preparation by local communities). Specific indicator 6.9 (Subscription to any available and current standards and certification). Specific indicator 6.10 (Proof of recognition by any relevant authorities for quality service). 	
6.	Participate with the company owner, crew members and clients in adventure tourism activity in their entirety (from the beginning till the end / from icebreaking and briefing sessions to reflection), with strict adherence to existing COVID-19 guidelines and SOP.	Assessor
7.	Ensure the assessments performed through field observation do not interfere with the onsite activity that is being conducted by company owner and crew members.	Assessor
8.	 Ensure the assessments that are conducted towards the company owner and crew members in the form of interviews are performed ethically. Avoid applying unnecessary pressure towards company owner or crew members, or intentionally probing for weaknesses. Request permission if there is a need for examination of company documents or related equipment and possession owned by the company. Strict adherence to existing COVID-19 guidelines and SOP. 	Assessor
9.	 Ensure the assessments that are conducted towards the client in the form of interviews are performed ethically. Request permission from the company owner before performing interviews with their clients. Request permission from the clients themselves, either individually or in collective groups before performing interviews. Encourage clients to answer questions as sincerely as possible by informing them of the importance of the interview being conducted on them. 	Assessor

	 Avoid instilling any provocative reactions among clients towards the company owner and crew members. Strict adherence to existing COVID-19 guidelines and SOP. Commence and conclude the interview session with the 'Malaysian signature way of greeting and thank you' 	
10.	Update the assessment form by confirming that all assessment indicators are filled in with assessment marks before concluding the assessment.	Assessor
11.	Conclude the assessment processes with the 'Malaysian signature way of greeting and thank you'.	Assessor

- 7.3 The following flow chart and subsequent table elucidate the work procedures that should be scrutinized and implemented upon completion of the on-site assessment of Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification (Adventure Tourism Operator).
 - 7.3.1 Flow chart of work procedures UPON COMPLETION of on-site assessment



7.3.2 Description on the work procedures UPON COMPLETION of on-site assessment

No	Activity	Action
1.	Perform discussion with partnering assessor to check and decide on the validity of the marks given for each assessed criteria and indicators.	Assessor
2	Compile and store all evidences into a digital file / folder.	Assessor
3.	Calculate the marks for all assessed criteria and indicators and fill in the Sub-total, Evaluated Indicators for Criteria and Marks F/C + P/C sections.	Assessor
4.	Calculate the final marks and fill in the marking information required in the ASSESSMENT section of the Assessment Form.	Assessor
5.	Fill in the required information in the ASSESSMENT DETAILS section of the Assessment Form and show / write down clearly the total marks and the final result (either PASS or FAIL) or the need for REASSESSMENT.	Assessor
7.	Submit the completely-filled original / hard copies of the Assessment Form to TPN Secretariat either by hand or via post (within 7 days).	Assessor
8.	Submit the compiled evidences to TPN Secretariat via Google Drive (within 7 days).	Assessor

8.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Malaysia Productivity Corporation (2019). *Malaysia Tourism Excellence Business Certification (MaTEx) Adventure Tourism Operator*. Petaling Jaya: MPC.
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14

APPENDIX 1



Code of Ethics Assessors Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification Programme Tourism Productivity Nexus (TPN)

- **1.0.** This Code of Ethics holds the pledge of the appointed assessor to perform the stipulated role, responsibilities and duties according to the ethical and professional principles in conducting the on-site assessments for Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification Programme.
- **2.0.** This Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct will be referred to as the 'Code' in the remaining sections of this document. The Code sets out the values and principles that shape the decisions, behaviours, and actions of the appointed assessor.

3.0. Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

In undertaking the duties and responsibilities as an Assessor for Malaysia Tourism Excellence (MaTEx) Business Certification Programme, I will:

- **3.1. execute duties and responsibilities according to this Code**, and maintain my commitment to the Code;
- 3.2. act with integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness: be responsible for any advice, actions and truthful in my dealings; shall not misrepresent my skills, qualification, and experience in such a way as to cause risk/s to the reputation of the programme; shall not mislead any parties in aspects related to MaTEx Business Certification Programme and its related standards; uphold the reputation of the Working Committee, Tourism Productivity Nexus (TPN) Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC), as well as the industry in general; manage real or perceived conflicts of interests and ensure that conflicts are disclosed to Member/s of the Working Committee, in such cases, an assessor may excuse him/herself from any task if it deems to conflict with him/herself or his/her company; respect confidentiality obligations in matters related to duties and responsibilities as an assessor; demonstrate respect to others; and obey the laws of the Country and not engage in any improper, fraudulent, corrupt or criminal conduct.

- 3.3. perform duties and responsibilities competently: maintain professional skills and recognise the importance of ongoing personal development and education; act carefully and diligently; seek, accept and offer honest critiques of work; properly credit the contributions of others; act on the basis of adequate competency; practice within areas of competence; shall not misrepresent skills, qualifications and experience, and mislead any party, or bring the Working Committee, TPN and MPC reputation into disrepute; demonstrate leadership; and practice in accordance with legal and statutory requirements.
- 3.4. uphold the reputation of the Working Committee, TPN, and MPC: support and advocate the values of ethical practice; engage responsibly in public forums; maintain a personal and collective commitment to be open, honest and flexible in performing duties and responsibilities; promote conscientious behaviours to ensure duties are performed efficiently and effectively; and advance the integrity and prestige of the certification programme by performing duties and responsibilities in a dignified manner.
- **3.5. foster health, safety and wellbeing**: incorporate safety, health, social, environmental and economic considerations in decision making, and performing duties.
- 3.6. balance the needs of the present with the needs of the future: aim to perform duties and deliver outcomes that meet the principle of sustainability of MaTEx Business Certification Programme and its related standards and guidelines.

4. Breach of Code of Ethics

In the event of an alleged breach of the Code the matter shall be dealt with in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Assessor by the Working Committee, in consultation with TPN and MPC.