

Budget Speech 2016 / 2017

Implications for the Tourism Authority

The Budget Speech 2016-2017 read by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Honourable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, on 29 July 2016, has charted out the economic vision for the coming year.

This budget announces several measures that establish a new framework for the way business will be carried out in Mauritius. Much emphasis has been laid on business facilitation and how to ease the regulation process for businesses, particularly, small and medium enterprises. This has always been a major complaint of private sector representatives.

The new measures announced for the Tourism Sector aim to drastically reduce the cost, time and effort required to obtain a licence for tourist related activities. The licensing system for the activities carried out in the tourism sector is being rationalized and consolidated for further facilitation.

Those measures are listed below.

1. One Stop Shop Concept

“In line with the one-stop-shop concept, liquor licences in respect of tourism activities (hotels, guest houses, tourist residence, restaurants etc.) will be issued by the Tourism Authority instead of the MRA.”

Henceforth liquor licences will be integrated in one single licence/certificate and issued by the Tourism Authority for the following:

- Tourist Accommodation Certificate: Hotel and guest house
- Tourist Enterprise Licence: Nightclub, Private Club

For restaurant, pub and table d’hôte, the Tourism Authority will seek police clearance prior to issue of the licence. Applicants will no longer need to seek authorization from various agencies.

There will be less bureaucracy and waiting time with less duplication of permits and licences. Access to information will also be easier and quicker.

2. Rationalization and consolidation for facilitation

“The validity of the Pleasure Craft Licence is being extended from one to three years.”

Presently applicants/licencees are burdened with submission of several documents for renewal/application of their licences. The Tourism Authority will act as a one stop shop and a facilitator for applicants who wish to operate boat houses or engage in pleasure craft activities. An omnibus permit for sea related activities is being introduced for the following activities:

- a. Pleasure craft;
- b. Boat house;
- c. Surfing.

The implementation of the omnibus permit will be a simplified process that will reduce time, paperwork and will ease the process for the issue of permit/licence and hence upgrade the level of service offered by the Authority.

In addition, applicants will have the possibility to opt for payment of their licence fee either for one year or three years. The licence will, however, be valid for a period of three consecutive years.

“The 3 categories of licences, namely, Pleasure Craft Licence, Boathouse Licence, and Surfing licence will also allow an operator to conduct other sea related activities, as may be approved by the Tourism Authority”.

Under the existing system, an applicant wishing to have a licence to operate a boat house needs to apply for a Tourist Enterprise Licence in order to run the boat house and for a Pleasure Craft Licence attached to the activity/ies.

This procedure involves the processing of two licenses for the same operation which becomes tedious for the applicant.

With the incoming measures in the budget, these two applications will be dealt with as a single application and will ease procedure for licensing.

In a drive to promote safe boating activities in Mauritian waters, the Tourism Authority will also revamp the skippers' training in line with internationally recognized standards. In the same vein, the Tourism Authority has worked on new measures for licensing pleasure craft based on ISO standards for boat construction, operation and crew management coupled with requirements for equipment to be available on board.

3. Consolidated licence for activities of the same nature

“One single licence, consolidating activities of similar nature will be introduced thereby eliminating the requirement to apply for several separate licences to operate one single activity. The list will be determined by the Tourism Authority”.

The Tourism Authority will issue a single licence to integrate activities of same nature related to a major activity. The activities will include golf and quad, among others. For example, for eco-tourism activities (nature-based or adventure related), a rental agency for quad or any other activities on a Domaine will be integrated and licensed under the Tourism Accommodation Certificate for Domaine.

The rationale behind this measure is to ease the administrative burden and bureaucracy thus increasing the efficiency and effectiveness in processing these types of licences. This will also reduce the cost and time when applying for these licences.

Moreover, operating golf course will be licensed under the Tourism Accommodation Certificate and the new Clubhouse licence.

4. Abolition of some licences due to duplication

“The list of licences issued by the Tourism Authority is being reviewed to remove few activities which no more require an authorization from the Tourism Authority. The Tourism Authority Act will be amended accordingly”.

In order to simplify the regulatory framework, some licences issued by the Tourism Authority are being reviewed to avoid duplication of procedures with other agencies such as the National Transport Authority. Hence, the Tourism Authority will no longer issue the following licences which are already being regulated under the National Transport Authority:

1. Operating rental agency for bus, including minibus;
2. Operating rental agency for motorcycle (including scooters).

“In line with the new tourism policy focusing on maximising earnings per tourist and promoting new tourist attractions, hotels will be allowed to organise regulated betting games. This measure will be restricted to non-residents and foreigners only”.

In line with the Tourism sector's vision to increase revenue from tourism activities, Government is now focusing on diversifying its economy by shifting from a leisure to an attraction based destination.

New activities are being proposed to provide tourist attraction and this will include regulated betting games organized by the hotels, but will be restricted to non-resident & foreigners only.