Description of Implementation Mechanism of ACS in the Kyrgyz Republic

1.   During the analysis of the current situation around the existing scheme of accommodation classification system along with the history of developed standards and their implementation, it was clear that the newly proposed system must be transparent and clear to all stakeholders. The new ACS should unite all stakeholders on one hand side and appoint a clear role to each of them on the other hand.

2.   Series of consultations with state organizations working in the sectors of tourism and standardizations, business associations, and the private sector, it was clear that everyone wants to have a transparent system that gives the opportunity to improve the quality of services in the accommodation facilities of a country.

3.   Meanwhile, almost all stakeholders highlighted the importance of "voluntary" and less participation of the state body in decision-making. This could allow for choosing and avoiding corruption possibilities in the future. The business is willing to improve the service with certain guidance in terms of precise criteria for each type of accommodation. It is afraid of possible excessive regulations that might lead to unnecessary burdens to businesses that are struggling from COVID-19 pandemic effects and economic crises with all other problems.

4.   Having developed three various schemes options as a result of stakeholder consultations, a team selected the best option by inserting the most feasible steps for effective implementation of the proposed National ACS in the Kyrgyz Republic.

1. The Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic endorses the National Accommodation Classification System (NACS), identifying the Department of Tourism (DoT) as an owner and holder of NACS:
    a. Furthermore, DoT will have a right to make changes and amendments to NACS upon necessity after discussions and decisions with representatives of tourism businesses;
    b. Within the Endorsement of NACS, a Special Provision will be accepted with a description of meanings and interpretations of the terminology in the NACS.

2. DoT organizes "Call for Proposals" (contests) in open sources, based on precisely developed Terms and Reference (ToR) among interested consulting companies and tourism business associations, to outsource administrative work on assessment and certification of accommodation facilities (Hotels, Guest Houses, Yurts, and Resorts):
    a. DoT, based on its internal procedures, has to establish a selecting committee that will choose the "Secretariat";
    b. Selected Secretariat will be responsible for:
        i.   Together with DoT, developing and maintaining an online platform www.GetStar.kg (belonging to DoT) and Mobile App which will be incorporated with the main online platform. *Mobile App must be available to download from both Google PlayMarket and Apple Store*;
        ii. promoting NACS in the Kyrgyz tourism industry, using all possible tools and instruments for effective attraction of the tourism sector's attention to www.GetStar.kg and Mobile App;
        iii. ensuring constant work on SEO of the website, protection of data from possible cyber-attacks;

       iv.   identifying feasible pricelist for the service of consultations to businesses and assessment with certification processes, doing constant research of the market and consulting with DoT;

       v.   forming the pool of auditors via merit-based selection from the market;

       vi.   constantly building the capacity of auditors;

       vii.   ensuring the most effective communication between DoT, auditors, and Accommodation market (clients);

       viii.   monitoring and analyzing compiled results of applicants, assessments/audits, and certification processes.

3. The Secretariat selects the most possible candidates for the pool of auditors;
   a. Via merit-based selection from the market, advertising in open sources. The best candidate must have/be:
      i. Bachelor's degree in the field of tourism, hospitality, economics, social sciences, or any of them. Master's degree is preferable;
      ii. work experience in the tourism and/or hospitality sector for more than 5 years;
      iii. knowledge of national and/or international standards for accommodation systems is preferable;
      iv. experience in using online platforms and/or mobile apps at work;
      v. quick learner, driven to results with a passion to achieve more transparency and respect others' opinions.
   b. Sends them to either 1) Center for Training for Professional Development within the Kyrgyz Standardization and Metrology and/or 2) Universities, which will be identified later on by DoT.

4. Selected auditors go to one of the institutions of 3.b. for training and accreditation (having a certificate of training with a certain number of hours and successful passing examination is ok);

5. Selected auditors receive certificate(s) that prove their knowledge and expertise;

6. Selected auditors have to present "certificates" from 3.b. to the Secretariat, after which the Secretariat signs the contract with auditors and registers them in the online platform www.GetStar.kg as auditors of NACS. The Online System will give 100 scores to each Auditor.

7. Secretariat promotes NACS in the Kyrgyz tourism industry using and via:
   a. Tourism and Travel exhibitions and fairs in Kyrgyzstan;
   b. Presentation of NACS and the whole mechanism/process with its benefits to the business and the whole tourism sector of a country;
   c. Broadcasting in TV and Radio;
   d. Specialized articles and storytelling in newspapers, magazines, and various Internet platforms;
   e. Information flyers, brochures, and banners (online and offline);
   f. Sending out information via emails, subscription, etc.;
   g. Establishing and organizing well-constructed accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Telegram, TikTok, and others;
   h. Using various #challenges, both offline and online contests among the tourism industry, working with opinion makers and bloggers;
   i. Any other tools and instruments that would be effective for promoting NACS.

8. Accommodation facilities (Hotels, Guest Houses, Yurts, Resorts) may apply in an online platform or Mobile App via;
    a. Going to www.GetStar.kg and/or Mobile App downloading at Google PlayMarket and/or App Store;
    b. Signing up via a very simple registration process: 1) Type of Accommodation Facility (selecting one of the options as Hotel, Guest House, Yurt, or Resort), 2) Name of selected type of accommodation, 3) Name of representative, 4) Contacts – email and phone number, 5) Copy of Legal document (LLC, IE registration certificate from the Ministry of Justice of KR), 6) Generation of Password. *Registration approval should be done via the link sent to the email shown during the registration. Login and Password should be securely saved and used for further work*;
    c. Selecting type of accommodation and a most desired rating out of (1-5 Stars, 1-4 Edelweisses, 1-4 Tunduks) after signed-in the platform at the homepage;
    d. Filling in / ticking boxes in a given application with criteria, answering each criterion;
    e. At the end of the filling / ticking boxes of the application, the online system calculates the number of scores automatically, identifying the compliance of selected level of rating out of possible categories;
    f. If the applicant is satisfied with automatically given scores and ready for further process of certification, submits ready application:
        i. For submission, the online system and/or Mob App will request to pay for the process of Individual auditors verification and presenting certification (if application scores and audit scores will match);
        ii. For payment, the applicant has to insert:
            1. Debit or Credit Card information or;
            2. Bank transaction copy;
            3. Bank receipt of payment.
    g. After successful completion of point "8.f." the system sends an email notification with a description of further activities;
    h. Results of the application with total scores and scores for main headings of NACS will be published in a special section of the online platform – "Applications";

9. The Secretariat has to confirm in the system www.GetStar.kg of receiving the application from the accommodation facility (maybe after a preliminary phone call and/or email correspondence with the applicant) that will:
    a. Automatically will send generated application(s) among auditors;
    b. Auditor(s) will get the order (who gets the order first, that auditor will go for inspection to verify the application scores);

10. Auditor goes to the Accommodation facility and inspects for verification of application:
    a. Auditor goes through the criteria of NACS of a selected type of accommodation and classification rating via www.GetStar.kg or Mob App;
    b. After completion of the inspection, the online system will give results automatically, comparing the results of the application and auditor;

11. Auditor has just to submit his/her results:
    a. The system will not allow to go through criteria again;
    b. If the Auditor will not submit, the system will shift down his/her rating by 10 out of 100 scores in the point "6.a.". Under 50 scores, Auditor will not get notifications for auditing anymore;

   c. After submission, the results of "Audit for Verification" automatically appears in the specialized section of online platform "Applications" with "green tick" – verified;

12. Secretariat has to talk to auditor within 1 day after audit and verify in the online system that automatically sends the email notification with the link to DoT for their verification;

13. DoT has to check an online system with special right only to verify, ticking the box – Agree and Accept (as signature).
   a. The online system will generate the certificate automatically and send the "Certificate" to accommodation facilities as below:
      i. to Hotels - Stars from possible 1, 2, 3, 4, 5;
      ii. to Guest Houses - Edelweiss from possible 1, 2, 3, 4;
      iii. to Yurts (Yurt Camps) - Tunduk from possible 1, 2, 3, 4;
      iv. to Resorts - Stars from possible 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
      Note: DoT may also handle hard copies of Certificates with the Logo of the Kyrgyz Cabinet of Ministers, Tourism Industry, and NACS logo;
   b. The Certificate will be eligible for 3 years from the date of Certification submission via the online system;
   c. If there is at least 3 written complaints from customers in various time period regarding the specific Hotel, Guest House, Yurt, or Resort that accommodation facility does not comply with their Awarded Rating, DoT may form the commission out of Secretariat representatives, 2-3 auditors, business association representatives and do the joint assessment for its accountability. If the assessment results are negative and the Awarded Rating does not comply with the criteria, DoT has the right to withdraw the certificate.

14. Hotels, Guest Houses, Yurts, and Resorts will use certificates with ratings by any means except for the activity that is prohibited by the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic.

15. If the Hotel, Guest House, Yurt, or Resort does not agree with the results, a representative may apply online APPEAL to the system:
   a. Going to its registered page, clicking the button "Appeal" fill in the form, and answer a few questions like:
      i. Basic questions (name of auditor(s) inspected the site, date of inspection, etc.);
      ii. Please indicate the precise reason for your appeal.
   b. After all questions in the system are answered and fulfilled, the APPEAL application should be submitted.

16. The Secretariat, sending a copy of the APPEAL application to DoT, has to form a group of auditors (usually a maximum 3, without the auditor(s) who already checked the accommodation facility) and send it to the site for inspection once again.
   a. Selected auditors for this particular inspection have to work in a group but audit individually, giving scores in the Mob App and submitting the results;
   b. If the final/total result of auditors in the end will be the same as the previous inspection result, the Decision remains;
   c. If the auditors' final/total result varies from the previous inspection result, the Secretariat has to notify DoT to issue a new rate with new results.