

Blue Flag Programme

The Blue Flag Programme for beaches, marinas and tourism boats is run by the international, nongovernmental, non-profit organization FEE (the Foundation for Environmental Education). The Blue Flag Programme started in France in 1985. It has been implemented in Europe since 1987 and in areas outside of Europe since 2001 when South Africa joined. Today, Blue Flag has become a truly global Programme, with an ever-increasing number of countries participating in it. Blue Flag certification is a globally recognized eco-label accorded by "Foundation for Environment Education in Denmark" based on 33 stringent criteria.

The Blue Flag Programme is increasingly being conducted within a wider context, improving the environmental quality of beaches and marinas and the management of coastal areas in a holistic way. It is a system that does not curtail recreation and tourism in the coastal area but rather deals with it through a wide range of subjects, activities and users that have direct and indirect interactions with the coastal environment. The Blue Flag Programme serves to encourage authorities and managers to provide beaches and marinas with a certain level of environmental quality, cleanliness, and safety standards for local populations and tourist.

The Blue Flag Programme promotes sustainable development in freshwater and marine areas. It challenges local authorities and beach operators to achieve high standards in the four categories of water quality, environmental management, environmental education and safety. Over the years, the Blue Flag has become a highly respected and recognized award working to bring together the tourism and environmental sectors at local, regional and national levels.

Blue Flag Criteria Compliance Action Plan

Blue Flag Compliance Action plan outlines the steps and strategies that a beach intends to take in order to achieve and maintain proper compliance with the Blue Flag certification criterion. This plan is a proactive approach to address any gaps in meeting the required standards and to ensure that the beach maintain its Blue Flag status.

Table 6.1 : Criteria Compliance Action Plan

BF Criteria Compliance Action Plan (BF-CCAP)			
(A)	Environmental Information & Education- (Category-1)	Action to be taken by BMC	Documentary Evidence
1	Information about the Blue Flag programme and other FEE eco-label must be displayed. Information such as Tourist Season. This board should also be displayed at Access Points, Lifeguard Stations, Parking Areas, Tourist Information Office. The Board must be in at least 2 languages-English & local. Period when the lifesaving equipment and/or lifeguards, and first aid are available at the lifeguard station.	The Blue Flag Information Board (BFIB) needs to be maintained, data updated regularly. In case of expansion of the beach in future, additional display boards may be provided at tourist interface areas such as Parking, Bathing Zone, Lifeguard Station.	Photograph taken of the BFIB at the time of applying for Blue Flag certification in the next tourist season.
2	Environmental education activities must be offered and promoted to beach users. Increasing awareness of, and care for, the local environment by users & local residents.	BMC to ensure that 5 educational events are held in a tourist season strictly as per Calendar drawn & submitted with application during 1st application. The theme of the educational topic must be strictly picked up from the mention on BFIB only.	Format for EEE Reports to be as per standard report prepared & submitted during 1st application.
3	Information about bathing water quality must be displayed and updated regularly. This is in terms of table or figure with easily identifiable figures.	The results of last sampling cycle testing should be displayed in the section on bathomg water quality of BFIB. BMC may assign this responsibility to Beach Manager or any of the BMC member accountable for Bathing Water Quality Testing (BWQT) preferably a member from Pollution Control Committee (PCC).	BFIB to be updated every month for BWQT results display. Beach Operator (BM) may be assigned this responsibility.
4	Information relating to local eco-systems and environmental phenomena must be displayed. Information about coastal zone ecosystems, wetland areas, unique habitats or any sensitive areas.	The BFIB sufficiently covers the required information about beach ecosystem. BMC to ensure that display board is well maintained and damages on the exhibit, if any, may be repaired/replaced from	Photograph taken of the BFIB at the time of applying for Blue Flag certification in the next tourist season.

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(A)	Environmental Information & Education- (Category-1)	Action to be taken by BMC	Documentary Evidence
		time to time.	
5	A map of the beach indicating different facilities must be displayed. A pictogram suggesting where you are and indication of facilities at the beach.	Beach Layout Map (BLM) sufficiently covers the required information about beach surroundings. BMC to ensure that display board is well maintained and damages on the exhibit, if any, may be repaired/replaced from time to time.	Photograph taken of the BLM at the time of applying for Blue Flag certification in the next tourist season.
6	A code of conduct that reflects appropriate laws governing the use of the beach and surrounding areas must be displayed. It should include presence of domestic animals, zoning, fishing, litter management, use of vehicles, camping, fires etc.	The BFIB sufficiently covers the required information about code of conduct. BMC to ensure that display board is well maintained and damages on the exhibit, if any, may be repaired/replaced from time to time.	Photograph taken of the BFIB at the time of applying for Blue Flag certification in the next tourist season.
(B)	Water Quality - (Category-2)	Action to be taken by BMC	Documentary Evidence
7	The beach must fully comply with the water quality sampling and frequency requirements. At least 1 sampling site where concentration of bathers is highest must be identified. In addition to this another location where pollution risk is very high (near estuaries)	BMC to ensure that BWQT testing frequency calendar is prepared and maintained for the specified frequency. One of the BMC member preferably member from PCC may be assigned this responsibility to monitor and comply with the calendar dates. Alternatively, BM may be assigned this responsibility.	Copy of Blue Flag BWQT Calendar should be submitted for the season along with application.
8	The beach must fully comply with the standards and requirements for water quality analysis. Trained staff must take the water samples and the testing Laboratories must	BMC to ensure that testing is done either from NCSCM Chennai or any other Laboratory duly accredited by NABL. BMC	NABL certificate along with updated BWP & cycle wise spreadsheet on

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(A)	Environmental Information & Education- (Category-1)	Action to be taken by BMC	Documentary Evidence
	be accredited Nationally/Internationally.	to also ensure that "Bathing Water Profile" (BWP) is updated every season and covers water quality analysis along with cycle wise spreadsheet is prepared and submitted.	test results analysis are submitted along with application for certification.
9	No industrial, waste-water or sewage-related discharges should affect the beach area. In case there are discharges, it must be informed to tourists. A description of physical, geographical, hydrological characteristics of the bathing water should be made available a bathing water profile.	BMC to advise PCC to regularly visit the beach and apprise Chairman on any discharges polluting the sea. BMC to ensure that such occasional incidents are reported to tourists by way of notice /display board. BMC to also ensure that BWP is updated accordingly every season.	An updated BWP to be submitted along with application for certification.
10	The beach must comply with the Blue Flag requirements for the microbiological parameter Escherichia coli (faecal coli bacteria) and intestinal enterococci (streptococci). This must be as per the national standards of bathing water.	BMC to ensure that microbiological results of the sample/s tested are verified through 95th percentile and only those results to be considered that comply to the 95th percentile as given in FEE-MACRO.	Verified results in the FEE-MACRO to be submitted along with application for certification.
11	The beach must comply with the Blue Flag requirements for the following physical parameters: Oil, Floatables. There should no oil film visible on the surface of water, no odour detected. No floatables such as tarry residues, wood, plastic articles, bottles, containers, glass or any other debris.	BMC to ensure that PCC member regularly visit the beach and update on such incidences, if any. BWP must be updated accordingly. BM can be assigned this responsibility to provide timely information on any chemical contamination such as tarry residues, spilled oil etc.	An updated BWP to be submitted along with application for certification.
(C)	Environmental Management - (Category-3)	Action to be taken by BMC	Documentary Evidence

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(A)	Environmental Information & Education- (Category-1)	Action to be taken by BMC	Documentary Evidence
12	The local authority/beach operator should establish a beach management committee comprising of local stakeholders who shall conduct environmental audits of the beach and its facilities.	BMC constituted at the time of pilot phase may be continued if all assigned members are discharging their duties. Chairman-BMC may call for a revision in the BMC and add or delete a member depending upon the requirements. BMC should cover all departments & relevant stakeholders for the beach operations. BMC to call for at least once a month review meetings and environmental / compliance audits.	Copy of BMC list & Photographic evidences of audits conducted at the beach to be submitted along with application for certification.
13	The local authority / beach operator must comply with all regulations affecting the location and operation of the beach. Regulations relating to coastal zone planning, environment management, waste water legislation, environmental legislation (CRZ) and others must be met to maintain BF status.	BMC to ensure that CRZ regulations are not in violation of beach operations. For any development, augmentation of beach facilities, matter may be referred to DoE-TN.	CZMP map of the beach area to be submitted along with application for certification.
14	Sensitive area management. The BF beach may be very sensitive and require special management and therefore the local authority /beach operator must consult a conservation organization for expert advise on how to manage these beaches.	BMC may refer such matters to DoE-TN or any other organization dealing with conservation of nature, if the beach is surrounded within a proximity of 500 meters of sensitive areas.	Mention of Sensitive Area be made on Blue Flag application at the time of certification.
15	The beach and its surrounding areas including access paths, parking areas, must be clean and maintained at all the times. It must follow the national guidelines on solid waste management, must be cleaned mechanically for deep sand. For storm, the outlets in the surrounding areas must be kept	BMC may like to engage an experienced outsourced service provider for pollution abatement & management and to maintain the beach surroundings for its Beach Litter Measuring System (BLMS), implement Solid	An updated version of WMP to be submitted along with application for certification.

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	clean. For marine protected areas, it must be done in accordance with laws & advice from local authority.	Waste Management principles as per national SWM Rules as was considered. The Waste Management Plan (WMP) for the beach area may be updated accordingly.	
16	Algae vegetation or natural debris should be left on the beach. Algal vegetation/Seaweeds must be considered as living and natural environments and therefore must be kept tidy. If this vegetation becomes a hazard, then it must be recycled through composting for fertilizer use.	BMC to ensure the requirements with the help of BM and his team. The Solid Waste Management (SWM) Plant installed at the beach must be maintained properly for its functionality. A brief on this should be covered in WMP.	An updated version of WMP to be submitted along with application for certification.
17	Waste disposal bins/containers must be available at the beach in adequate numbers and they must be regularly maintained. The bins must be made of environment friendly products. The bins must be well secured and spaced appropriately. Environment friendly garbage bags must be used for collection and disposal of solid waste.	BMC to ensure that SS disposal bins pair to be maintained properly and regularly. Only environment friendly (compostable) garbage to be used in BF beach. BM may be asked to ensure this criterion compliance.	Images of SS disposal bins to be inserted in WMP.
18	Facilities for the separation of recyclable waste materials should be available at the beach. The recycling facilities must have collection, segregation and disposal of solid waste.	BMC to ensure that the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Plant installed at the beach is maintained properly for its functionality. The bio degradable must be composted and manure (compost) produced to be utilized in sand dune vegetation. The disposal of remaining non-biodegradable should be either in authorized landfills or recycled into essential commodities, if possible. A brief on this should be covered in WMP.	An updated version of WMP to be submitted along with application for certification.

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(A)	Environmental Information & Education- (Category-1)	Action to be taken by BMC	Documentary Evidence
19	An adequate number of toilet or restroom facilities must be provided. Proper signage for locating these facilities must be in place. The presence of showers, changing rooms, and nappy changing facilities are encouraged in BF. The toilets should be disabled friendly. The toilet should be preferably of bio toilet type so that sewage is controlled in beach area.	BMC to ensure that bio-toilet blocks are maintained for its functionality. The facilities may be augmented with the increase in footfall preferably with similar design to maintain integrity. Facilities such as cloak room & nappy changing table may be provided for the convenience of tourists. The Grey Water Treatment Plant should be maintained properly for its functionality. The showers must be serviceable and water leakages should be avoided as far as possible. Any augmentation in the facilities should be strictly in line with CRZ regulations.	A Criterion-Wise-Compliance report (CWC) with photographic evidence to be submitted along with application for certification.
20	The toilet or restroom facilities must be kept clean at all the times by disinfecting regularly as per its use & traffic flow. It should have soap, cleaning materials, and hand towels or hand dryers facility.	BMC may like to engage an experienced outsourced service provider for proper maintenance of toilet facilities as specified in scope of services with adequate provisions of toiletries & cleaning agent. The toilets must be disinfected at least every 2 hours during high footfall.	A Criterion-Wise-Compliance report (CWC) with photographic evidence to be submitted along with application for certification.
21	The toilet or restroom facilities must have controlled sewage disposal.	BMC to ensure that bio digester attached with the toilet facilities are duly maintained with infusion of bacteria culture from time to time and as & when required to ensure that discharge is controlled uninterruptedly. Mention in the Environment	An updated version of EMP & WMP to be submitted along with application for certification.

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(A)	Environmental Information & Education- (Category-1)	Action to be taken by BMC	Documentary Evidence
		Management Plan (EMP) & WMP to be updated.	
22	On the beach there will be no unauthorized camping or driving and no dumping. These are all prohibited. Only emergency vehicles such as lifeguard equipment or mechanical cleaning of beach should be permitted.	BMC to ensure that Orders issued (Public Notices) issued for No-Plastic, No-Driving, No-Dumping & No-Camping are revalidated and enforced at the beach with some punitive measures, if required.	Copy of valid "Public Notices" to be submitted along with application for certification. Mention in CWC report to be ensured.
23	Access to the beach by dogs and other domestic animals must be strictly controlled. If permitted by local authorities then beach must have a Dog-Free Zone where no animals are permitted. However, this excludes the guide dogs for visually impaired tourists.	BMC to ensure implementation of adequate measures at the beach to prevent ingress of stray animals. This must be done in consultation with local community. If the decision is to permit controlled /guided dogs, then an area be demarcated as "Dog-Free" zone duly cordoned off from other areas. Mention in EMP should also be made and updated.	An updated version of EMP to be submitted along with application for certification.
24	All buildings and beach equipment must be properly maintained to meet environmental & aesthetic requirements. All beach facilities and infrastructure must be integrated to natural environment. They must be kept clean & tidy at all the times.	The beach infrastructure facilities must be maintained with cleaning and polishing of exterior surfaces (bamboo) after every monsoon.	A Criterion-Wise-Compliance report (CWC) with photographic evidence to be submitted along with application for certification.
25	Marine and freshwater sensitive habitats (such as Coral reefs or sea grass beds) located within 500 meters from any part of BF beach must be monitored. An expert authority or organization must be consulted.	BMC to ensure that "Reef-Check" Monitoring Plan (RCMP) is strictly maintained with the help of expert organization and updated every year for certification. The agency to strictly follow	An updated version of RCMP to be submitted along with application for certification.

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(A)	Environmental Information & Education- (Category-1)	Action to be taken by BMC	Documentary Evidence
		the BF protocols on this.	
26	A sustainable means of transportation should be promoted in the beach area. Cycling, pedestrian etc must be encouraged in beach. Public transport must be promoted instead of private vehicles by the local authority.	BMC to ensure that Traffic Management Plan (TMP) devised at the time of pilot phase is strictly followed. BMC to regularly inspect the traffic conditions during festivals/peak seasons (weekends) and parking facilities to be augmented if required. Proper signage & public information display boards to be ensured. TMP to be revised accordingly & updated before certification.	An updated version of TMP to be submitted along with application for certification.
(D)	Safety & Services - (Category-4)	Action to be taken by BMC	Documentary Evidence
27	Appropriate public safety control measures must be implemented. A safety risk assessment must be carried out for the beach in consultation with appropriate national authorities or international organization. Lifeguards must be recognizable. Safety flags as per ISO 20712 should be promoted in beach. Public rescue equipment must be made available & clearly positioned.	BMC to ensure that after every monsoon and just before the commencement of a new tourist season, Safety Risk Assessment (SRA) is undertaken for the bathing zone through authorized agencies such as NCSCM, RLSS(I), NIOT etc. Adequate no. of Lifeguards (1 for every 100 meters patrolling) for 8 duty hours is minimum. Lifeguard with Binoculars should also be stationed on watch tower for close monitoring. All water rescue equipment preferably with a rescue boat must be deployed. Safety Drill must be ensured at least once a month. Responsibility must be fixed for the BMC member to monitor these.	A Criterion-Wise-Compliance report (CWC) with photographic evidence to be submitted along with application for certification.

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(A)	Environmental Information & Education- (Category-1)	Action to be taken by BMC	Documentary Evidence
28	First aid equipment must be available on the beach. For busy beaches there should be First Aid Station with qualified Attendant in place. The location should be clearly sign posted.	BMC to ensure that such provisions of First Aid is well maintained at the beach with First Aid Attendant with proper signage either directly or through outsourced agency.	A Criterion-Wise-Compliance report (CWC) with photographic evidence to be submitted along with application for certification.
29	Emergency plans to cope with pollution risks such as oil, hazardous /toxic waste spills must be in place.	BMC to ensure that a "Disaster Management Plan" (DMP) for local area is in place with adequate provisions for oil spill in sea and measures for cleaning. The DMP must be updated, if required at the time of certification.	An updated version of DMP to be submitted along with application for certification.
30	There must be management of different users and uses of the beach so as to prevent conflicts and accidents. Zoning for swimming and aquatic sports must be clearly identified.	BMC must ensure that "Safe Bathing Zone" is legally designated by way of public notice after every monsoon season and after undertaking SRA. The "Safe Bathing Zone" to be demarcated with the help of bright colored ropes & buoys duly anchored in the sea. Any other activity permitted such as Aqua Sports, Surfing etc should be separated from this zone.	Copy of valid "Public Notice" for designated safe bathing zone and SRA report to be submitted along with application for certification. Mention in CWC report to be ensured.
31	There must be safety measures in place to protect users of the beach. The access should preferably be free although a nominal fee can be charged for maintenance of beach. The parking area must be in good and should support disabled person also.	BMC may charge a nominal entrance fee to meet the maintenance expenses. The parking area must kept clean, tidy and access friendly especially for disabled. Parking facility may be augmented for increased	A Criterion-Wise-Compliance report (CWC) with photographic evidence to be submitted along with application

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(A)	Environmental Information & Education- (Category-1)	Action to be taken by BMC	Documentary Evidence
		tourist footfall.	for certification.
32	A supply of drinking water should be available at the beach at free of cost for all the tourists. A purified drinking water facility should be encouraged in beaches.	BMC to ensure that installed purified "Water Vending Kiosk" is well maintained for its functionality and purifying processes. The output water quality to be tested at least once a quarter for quality assurance.	A Criterion-Wise-Compliance report (CWC) with photographic evidence to be submitted along with application for certification.
33	At least one Blue Flag beach in each municipality must have access and facilities provided for the physically disabled. This should include amphibious wheel chair, parking for disabled, ramp for accessing toilets etc.	BMC to ensure that installed bio-toilet for the disabled is duly maintained, access pathway for wheel chair is seamlessly connected to various beach facilities, amphibious wheel chair is in good working condition.	A Criterion-Wise-Compliance report (CWC) with photographic evidence to be submitted along with application for certification.