

## Environmental Guideline on Nautical Centre



## Department of Environment

This environmental guideline provides guidance to ensure that all environmental issues are duly taken into consideration by the prospective developers.



## 1.0 Background

A nautical centre is a place where any approved nautical activities are provided.

The Tourism Authority is the licensing body for the following nautical activities, namely karting, scuba diving, non-motorised water sports, kite surfing, jet skiing, paragliding, wind surfing, dolphin and whale watching and for operation of pleasure crafts and boathouses.

Boathouse activities are limited to non-motorised activities (*such as canoeing and kayaking, pedaloes, laser boats, snorkelling, wind surfing*), glass bottom and waterski. A boathouse is not allowed to carry out the following activities: towing (excluding water-skiing), parasailing, kite surfing, dolphin and whale watching, dolphin and whale watching with swimming, big game fishing, undersea walk, personal water craft, jet craft and any type of excursion other than glass bottom.

In line with the policy of the Tourism Authority, all hotels having more than 50 rooms should contract out the operation of their boathouses to third parties who are neither shareholders nor employees of the respective hotels. The boathouse activities are offered solely to guests of hotel on a complementary basis, free of charge.

The activities proposed by a nautical centre are associated with environmental issues which relate to:-

- Site selection
- Disturbance to marine life
- Beach erosion and turbidity
- Antifouling paints
- Solid wastes
- Wastewater ( As applicable)

## 2.0 Objectives of the guideline

This guideline is meant to ensure that prospective developers:

- adopt appropriate mitigating measures.
- comply with provisions of relevant laws/ regulations/standards.
- adopt eco-friendly practices to optimize use of resources.

## 3.0 Location and siting

- (i) The activity should not be set up in the vicinity of fish landing stations.
- (ii) No water-based tourism activities should be carried out at recognized fishing grounds.
- (iii) Critically eroded sites should be avoided for nautical centres and boathouses.
- (iv) Permanent mooring buoys should be provided at dive sites and mooring sites. Clearances for the location of same shall be sought from Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping.
- (v) Water ski activities should be located well beyond swimming zones and at a depth of at least 2 m above coral colonies.
- (vi) Existing sand dunes on or in the vicinity of the site should not be tampered with.
- (vii) Buildings and structures shall be located at least 30 m from High Water Mark (HWM).

## 4.0 Applicable Legislation

Nautical centres do not warrant a Preliminary Environmental Report (PER) Approval or an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Licence. Activities to be carried out by nautical centres have to be in accordance with the provisions under the Tourism Authority Act 2006 and policy/ guidelines of the Tourism Authority.

**Note:**

- 1) According to Part B of the Fifth Schedule of the EPA, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is warranted for "Construction of breakwaters, groins, jetties, revêtements and seawalls.

- 2) *As per the Tourism Authority Act 2006, the prospective developer shall ensure compliance with all provisions thereunder such as:*
- *licensing of tourist enterprise activities as specified in Part B of the First Schedule;*
  - *registration and licensing regarding skippers and use of pleasure crafts; and*
  - *provision of appropriate safety equipment as specified under Section 114(1) amongst others.*
- 3) *The prospective developer shall also ensure compliance with the Beach Authority Act 2002, which inter alia, states:*
- *No vessel<sup>1</sup> shall be operating in a swimming or buffer zone.*
  - *No vessel shall be moored on any part of the public beach unless specifically designated for that purpose or upon announcement of cyclone warnings.*
- 4) *The prospective developer shall also comply with the provisions of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007 such as boat registration used for big game fishing and specified mooring areas amongst others.*

## 5.0 Mitigation of Environmental Impacts

### 5.1 Disturbance to marine life

Nautical and boating activities may affect the marine ecosystem if necessary measures are not taken.

Mitigating measures include:-

- Operators should sensitize and provide clear instructions to their customers on necessary precautions to be taken to minimize disturbance to marine life.
- No coral should be removed or broken or translocated or introduced.
- No marine organism should be removed from the site.
- No marine organism, dead or alive, should be imported to site.
- Fish feeding should not be allowed.
- No waste of any type should be dumped at sea.

### 5.2 Beach erosion and turbidity

The wave velocity produced by pleasure crafts is directly related to the shear stress induced on the shoreline; the greater the velocity, the greater the shear stress and therefore the greater the erosion potential. Turbidity is caused amongst others by the mechanical disturbance (propeller action) of sediments by pleasure crafts and water sports and ski activities, amongst others. Appropriate preventive measures must be taken to address such environmental disturbances.

Mitigating measures include:

- Nautical and boating activities should not be allowed in shallow lagoons.
- The speed limit of pleasure crafts shall be as prescribed under the Tourism Authority Act 2006.

### 5.3 Anti-fouling paints

An anti-fouling paint refers to a coating/paint/surface treatment that is used on a boat to control or prevent attachment of unwanted organisms such as algae and molluscs. Biocide agents present in antifouling paints may be toxic to the environment.

Mitigating measures include:

- Boat operators should use eco-friendly antifouling paint.
- Maintenance of boat such as antifouling spraying should be carried out off-site and in a well-ventilated area.
- Hull cleaning should not be carried out at sea.
- Hull cleaning operations should be undertaken with the adoption of best cleaning practices.

<sup>1</sup> According to Section 2 of the Beach Authority Act 2002, vessel means “any boat or other watercraft and includes any non-displacement craft and seaplane used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water”.

#### 5.4 Solid waste management

Domestic solid wastes (food wastes, disposable containers/cutlery, PET bottles and packaging wastes, amongst others) are generated by customers during nautical and boating activities.

Necessary precautionary measures should be taken to avoid any littering or dumping at sea.

Mitigating measures include:

- Domestic solid wastes from boats shall be collected in bins and disposed of on land as per the recommendations and satisfaction of the Local Authority.
- No waste of any type should be dumped at sea.

#### 5.5 Wastewater

Nautical centres should make provision of an inland toilet facility. Some pleasure crafts also provide on-board toilet facilities.

Mitigating measures:-

- No wastewater should be disposed into the sea.
- Wastewater shall be disposed as per the recommendations of the Wastewater Management Authority.
- The wastewater on-board must be disposed of in accordance with MARPOL Convention, always outside the lagoon and not less than 3 nautical miles from shorelines. Such waste if not disposed outside lagoon, shall be pumped and carted away for disposal as per recommendations and to the satisfaction of the Wastewater Management Authority.

#### 5.6 Other mitigating measures

- Necessary precautions should be taken to avoid any disturbance to marine life and surrounding neighbourhood.
- Provision for adequate parking for customers.
- Waste oil shall be collected and disposed of in accordance with the Environment Protection (Collection, Storage, Treatment, Use and Disposal of Waste oil) Regulations 2006.
- Fuels tanks shall be filled onshore or on a fuel deck and necessary precautionary measures taken to avoid any risk of spill.
- Implementation of good practices from boat users such as maintenance of engines.
- Use of proper absorbents or a separation bilge pump absorbent for bilge water cleaning.

#### 5.7 Eco-friendly Measures and Sustainability

Recreational boaters/nautical operators should be environmentally conscious and adopt eco-friendly measures and technologies such as rain water harvesting for the cleaning of boats and other facilities.

**Note:-** Ministries and authorities responsible for tourism and fisheries need to be consulted prior to embarking on the project.

Copy of this guideline is available at the Department of Environment and on the website of the Ministry at <http://environment.govmu.org> and the government's portal at <http://www.govmu.org>.