

# GuideStar India's Platinum Seal Certification (Champion Level) – Criteria & Steps



GuideStar India (GSI) is India's most exhaustive source of NGO information with the largest and most reliable NGO information repository serving as the backbone for India's philanthropy ecosystem.

Through [www.guidestarindia.org](http://www.guidestarindia.org), we make available, civil society information that advances transparency, enables better decision-making and encourages charitable giving. GuideStar India enhances the discovery, visibility and credibility of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) by making information on 10,000+ NGOs accessible in the public domain.

We have carried out over 3000 certifications of NGOs after thorough due diligence on transparency, public accountability and legal & financial compliance. Foundations, philanthropists, crowdfunding portals, CSR portals, giving Apps, government agencies and individual donors trust GuideStar India's certification

GuideStar India's trustees are leaders who have championed transparency & public accountability in India: Mr. Mathew Cherian, Mr. B N Makhija and Mr. Anshu Gupta. Mr Buzz Schmidt, Founder of GuideStar in the US & UK is the Advisor to GuideStar.

**Platinum Seal- Champion Level:** Awarded to NGOs for comprehensive transparency, accountability and good governance practices. NGO makes exemplary level of public disclosure through



GuideStar India's website and Disclosure Template. Organisation shares in the public domain, its tax returns filed within due date, audited annual accounts and auditor's report submitted to tax authorities and Ministry of Home Affairs (if applicable), for two years. There are no material qualifications in its audited accounts. Third party reference checks are carried out. Only NGOs completing the process for Gold Seal within 1 month can apply for Platinum. Minimum contribution towards capacity building would, range from Rs 30,000 to 80,000 per year

Validity of Certification		
Application Period	FY Reviewed	Validity of Certification
Jul - Sep 2020 <sup>1</sup>	2019- 20	30-Sep-21
Oct - Dec 2020	2019- 20	31-Dec-21
Jan - Mar 2021	2019- 20	31-Mar-22
Apr - Jun 2021	2019- 20	30-Jun-22

Minimum Contribution towards Capacity Building		
Annual Utilisation in FY under review	From NGO or its Sponsor	
	New	Renewal <sup>2</sup>
Up to Rs 15 Lac	₹ 30,000	₹ 30,000
Rs 15 Lac to Rs 1 Cr	₹ 35,000	₹ 35,000
Rs 1 Cr to Rs 5 Cr	₹ 40,000	₹ 40,000
Rs 5 Cr to Rs 10 Cr	₹ 50,000	₹ 45,000
Rs 10 Cr to Rs 20 Cr	₹ 60,000	₹ 55,000
Rs 20 Cr to Rs 50 Cr	₹ 70,000	₹ 65,000
Above Rs 50 Cr	₹ 80,000	₹ 75,000

Notes:

- <sup>1</sup>Organisations applying in Jul-Sep 2020 with documents of FY 2018-19 may be taken up based on the urgency for the organisation/ its users.
- Fund utilisation will be as per Annual Expenditure/ Payments/ Utilisation whichever is highest, as per Audited Financial Statements of the year under review.**
- <sup>2</sup>Applicants should start renewal within six months before expiry of their current validity period and cannot be later than one month from date of the expiry of their validity period.
- Corporate or Foundation donors sponsoring an NGO would need to contribute a minimum of Rs 40,000, irrespective of the annual expenditure as the cost has been subsidised for NGOs.

### **A. Criteria for GuideStar India Platinum Seal for Transparency, Public Accountability & Good Governance**

1. The organisation demonstrates its commitment to transparency and accountability through public disclosures. Information and documents for certification would be made available on its public profile at [www.guidestarindia.org](http://www.guidestarindia.org). The details will be maintained throughout the period of validity of the certification. This information will enrich the organisation's public profile and enhance its visibility, as well as improve its discovery and make sufficient information available for various stakeholders to make philanthropic decisions. (Refer to sections C & D for details.)
2. Organisation is a not-for-profit and is registered in India as a Trust/ Society/ Non-profit Company. Registration does not expire during the period of validity of the proposed certification.
3. The organisation is in existence for a minimum of 1 year from date of its registration as a not-for-profit. Registration validity (where applicable) does not expire during the period of validity of the proposed certification.
4. Organisation states its aims & objectives, mode of management, rules and regulations in its MOA & AOA/ Trust Deed/ Constitution (including amendments).
5. Organisation's activities and programmes are in line with aims and objects stated in its constitution.
6. Organisation complies with applicable laws of the country, and with its own rules.
7. The organisation has a physical existence, is operational and shares its address for visits.
8. Organisation has a Permanent Account Number (PAN) from the Indian Income Tax Department, making it identifiable across government departments and agencies.
9. Organisation has a valid registration under Sec.12A/ 12AA of Income Tax Act, recognising the charitable nature of its activities and is a tax-exempt entity.
10. Organisation makes available, annual accounts duly audited for the latest two financial years (FY 2019-20 & FY 2018-19/ FY 2018-19 & FY 2017-18) and there are no material qualifications or material irregularities reported by its auditors.
11. Organisation has filed IT returns for the latest financial year (FY 2019-20/ FY 2018-19) on or before the due date (31<sup>st</sup> October, 2020 for FY 2019-20/ 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2019 for FY 2018-19).
12. Organisation files annual income tax returns by the due date at least for the latest financial year. Consistency in governance information is required, especially with respect to potential conflict of interest. Remuneration/ reimbursements and any payment transactions to board members are checked in audit report in form 10B vis-à-vis undertaking provided to GuideStar India and details self-reported by organisation on [www.guidestarindia.org](http://www.guidestarindia.org).
13. Registration under section 80G is not required to qualify for GuideStar India's certification. However, if organisation has 80G, it is required to share details.
14. FCRA registration is not required to qualify for GuideStar India's certification. However, if the organisation has FCRA registration, it is required to share its FCRA details and compliance is checked for filing of annual returns. If it has obtained prior permission to receive foreign funds, then the returns in the prescribed form are filed with FCRA Wing, Ministry of Home Affairs, irrespective of whether Foreign contribution has been received in that year or not.
15. Organisation has a governing body and details of its composition, dates of board meetings held, are shared publicly. These details are checked as provided in the Undertaking vis-à-vis the MoA/ AoA, Bye-laws and on [www.guidestarindia.org](http://www.guidestarindia.org).
16. Organisation has to submit 2 External References and/ or Proof of Membership/ Accreditation/ Support.
17. Organisation has to submit Public Disclosure in GuideStar India Template for

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Transparency & Accountability Disclosures

18. There is no adverse finding in list checks and reference checks carried out by GuideStar India.

### B. **Application for Certification:**

If your organisation is already registered on [www.guidestarindia.org](http://www.guidestarindia.org), click here to fill the short [GuideStar India Certification Application Form](#) and complete the steps given below.

### C. **Minimum Information to be Voluntarily shared by organisation on [www.guidestarindia.org](http://www.guidestarindia.org):**

Login at <http://guidestarindia.org/Login.aspx> to access your GuideStar India pages and update the below information.

<b>Update following details in the “Basic” page:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Correspondence Address</li><li>2. Organisation Description</li><li>3. Communication Details: Head of the organisation and Organisation contact person</li><li>4. Organisation Classification: Primary and Secondary Classification</li></ol>
<b>Update following details in the “Summary” page under “Full Report”:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Organisation Type</li><li>2. Beneficiary groups</li><li>3. Organisation Activities</li><li>4. Past Year Objectives (Past year targets with numbers)</li><li>5. Past &amp; Current Year Achievements (against Target with numbers)</li><li>6. Coming Year Objectives/ Goals (Targets with numbers)</li><li>7. Geographical focus of activity (Urban/ rural and States and Districts covered)</li><li>8. Area of Operations</li></ol>
<b>Update following details in the “Background” page under “Full Report”:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. History of organisation, Mission &amp; Vision</li><li>2. Income Tax Registrations such as 12A/ 12AA, 80G and FCRA registration details</li></ol>
<b>Update Board members in the “Governance” page under “Full Report”:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Details of all Members of the governing body. Details needed: Name, Gender, Age, Email id, Position on Board, Area of Competency, Occupation, and Relation with other Board Members.</li><li>2. Dates of last 3 Board meetings</li></ol>

### D. **List of Documents that need to be uploaded on organisation's public profile on the GuideStar India portal:**

<b>Sr. No</b>	<b>Documents</b>
1.	Registration Document/Certificate
2.	Trust Deed/ Memorandum of Association & Articles of Association/ Bye Laws with all amendments
3.	Income Tax PAN
4.	Address Proof Document
5.	12A/ 12AA Certificate
6.	80G Certificate
7.	FCRA registration certificate
8.	ITR V - Income Tax Return Acknowledgement – FY 2019- 20 i.e. AY 2020- 21/ FY 2018- 19 i.e. AY 2019- 20

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9.	Form 10B – Auditor's Report to the Income Tax Dept. - FY 2019-20 & FY 2018-19/ FY 2018- 19 & FY 2017-18 (online copy)
10.	Consolidated Audited Accounts (Financial statements covering domestic and foreign fund accounts, including all projects, with audit report, notes on accounts, significant accounting policies, Balance Sheet, Income & Expenditure Statement, Receipts & Payments Account or Fund Flow together with all schedules)- FY 2019-20 & FY 2018-19/ FY 2018- 19 & FY 2017-18
11.	Latest Annual FCRA Return – for FY 2019-20 / FY 2018-19
12.	<a href="#">GuideStar India Undertaking</a> (to be downloaded, filled and sent to GuideStar India)
13.	<p><b>External Reference:</b> Please provide any two of the following</p> <p>a) Donor references as per GuideStar India format:  <a href="http://www.guidestarindia.org/SiteImages/Certifications/GuideStarIndiaDonorReferenceForm.doc">http://www.guidestarindia.org/SiteImages/Certifications/GuideStarIndiaDonorReferenceForm.doc</a></p> <p>b) Visitors' testimonial - legible extract from Visitor's book or Letter from Visitor as per GuideStar India format:  <a href="http://www.guidestarindia.org/SiteImages/Certifications/GSIVisitorTestimonialTemplate.doc">http://www.guidestarindia.org/SiteImages/Certifications/GSIVisitorTestimonialTemplate.doc</a></p> <p>Proof of Membership/ Accreditation/ Support from any of Ashoka Fellowship, Charities Aid Foundation, Credibility Alliance, Dasra, EdelGive Foundation, GiveIndia, GlobalGiving, ATE Chandra Foundation</p>
14.	<p><b>GuideStar India Template for Transparency &amp; Accountability Disclosures:</b> Please click (<a href="http://www.guidestarindia.org/SiteImages/GSI%20template%20for%20Transparency%20and%20Accountability%20Disclosures.xls">http://www.guidestarindia.org/SiteImages/GSI template for Transparency and Accountability Disclosures.xls</a>) to download the format, fill both the pages and email the same to <a href="mailto:certification@guidestarindia.org">certification@guidestarindia.org</a> without signatures. After receiving a confirmation mail from GuideStar India appraising officer, you may then print the same on your organisation's letter head and obtain signatures.</p>

### Salient Features

- Free online repository of NGO's key information & documents.
- Information freely available to all online users without a sign-up or subscription so that different stakeholders are encouraged to use the information. Widespread use of information on [www.guidestarindia.org](http://www.guidestarindia.org) enhances public accountability, creates a pressure on organisations to report correctly. An average over 70,000 pages are viewed on our site every month.
- Renewal cycle is annual because GuideStar India verifies compliance with IT and FCRA both of which are annual and many of the criteria are verified based on financial statements that are made annually. While the renewal process is faster at the NGO's end, the effort at our end is the same or more (as organisations grow, legal requirements change, the complexity increases).
- Certification status is displayed on GuideStar India's portal on the NGO's profile and the featured in the list of Certified NGOs. View the list of certified NGOs on the following link: <http://guidestarindia.org/CertifiedNGOs.aspx>
- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) uses GuideStar India certified NGOs for its initiatives during DaanUtsav and others.
- Fundraising opportunities increase as Certification is recognised as an eligibility to associate with philanthropic intermediaries like Dasra, danamojo, DonateKart, GlobalGiving, ELBI, Samhita GoodCSR, and events like GivingTuesday India. Visit [www.givingtuesdayindia.org](http://www.givingtuesdayindia.org) to know more.
- Organisation can get a free BHIM UPI QR code and an online donation link at most competitive rates from Razor Pay. Organisation can post online donation needs and other in-kind support on its profile at [www.givingtuesdayindia.org](http://www.givingtuesdayindia.org).

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- International organisations and research institutions such as Stanford PACS, Alliance magazine, Bridgespan, WINGS, ICRIER, CAPS Hongkong, CSIP- Ashoka University use GuideStar India.
- Corporates actively seek list of certified NGOs from GuideStar India. NGOs have reported of instances where Foundations have reduced due diligence process on the basis of GuideStar India's Certification. In spite of the mandate for PSUs to partner with TISS CSR hub empaneled NGOs, PSUs ask GuideStar India for lists of certified NGOs.
- A symbol of trust: e-Seal for all levels of certification are provided to NGOs along with tips on how to use it effectively. Certificate hard copy is given to NGOs along with due diligence report for Platinum, Gold & Silver levels. View a sample due diligence report: [Platinum Seal Due Diligence Report](#), [Gold Seal Due Diligence Report](#)

### **How do we process:**

Introduce the NGO, check if the org is already registered on or certified by GuideStar India

- ✓ Stage 1 – Verify online application form
- ✓ Stage 2 – Receive donation towards capacity building
- ✓ Stage 3 – Send list of requirements
- ✓ Stage 4 – Complete 2 detailed reviews & send queries
- ✓ Stage 5 – Complete reference checks
- ✓ Stage 6 – Inform the Certification level awarded depending on compliance
- ✓ Stage 7 – Inform about eligibility for partner benefits
- ✓ Stage 8 – e-Seal sent along with certificate
- ✓ Stage 9 – Update list of certified NGOs & NGO profile
- ✓ Stage 10 – Send due diligence report to NGO and donor/ sponsor
- ✓ Stage 11 –Promote certified NGOs at various fora

Process takes 30 to 45 days. On Tatkal track, can be done in 7-10 days.

### **Ready to start the process? Get started and we are ready to help, every step of the way!**

[GuideStar India Certification Application Form](#)

Have more questions? Please write an email to [certification@guidestarindia.org](mailto:certification@guidestarindia.org) or call us on 91-9969741869

### **Additional Resources for NGOs:**

- [Help guide for GuideStar India Certification](#)
- To view a list of other GuideStar India Platinum certified NGOs and their profiles, please visit:<https://guidestarindia.org/SiteImages/Certifications/GuideStarIndiaCertifiedPlatinumList.pdf>
- We have prepared a simple Audit Checklist to help NGOs with their compliances. The same may be downloaded from the following link: [Audit Checklist](#)

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With effect from applications received from July 1, 2020. This document can be revised at any time by GuideStar India without any prior notice. All revisions will be uploaded on <https://guidestarindia.org/CertifiedNGOs.aspx>