



Presents

AEN International Ecotourism Awards (AEN-IEA 2023)

Call for Nominations

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

❖ About AEN-IEA 2023

The first ever annual **Asian Ecotourism Network - International Ecotourism Awards (AEN-IEA 2023)** is launched to recognize accommodations and lodging in nature-based destinations internationally reflecting a unique combination of nature-culture balance in its infrastructural design, innovation and management, while addressing today's sustainable development challenge. The awards also aim to recognize the tangible examples of ecotourism good practices that can be replicated and adapted across the region.

❖ For whom

Awards and recognition will be given to accommodations, destinations including communities and NGOs in their sustainability journey, in compliance with the GSTC recognized AEN Ecotourism Standards for Accommodations and Destinations.

❖ How to apply

Ecotourism lodging and accommodations may apply for one or more categories; however, a separate and complete entry should be submitted for each category application. Applications are per property, and encouraged to submit in multiple categories.

The applying nature-based accommodations can segment their good practices into ten categories for the AEN-IEA that have been decided for this year (2022-23). These categories reflect the overall development, organization, management and impact of the nature-based accommodations towards maintaining the ecotourism pillars. That primarily include benefit to environment, benefit to communities and interpretations. The categories enable responsible accommodations primarily in nature-based destinations to showcase their leadership in embedding sustainability into their decision-making processes.

Applicants may submit their Good Practices per Category (see below).

Nominated accommodations will be reviewed, and the award recipients selected, by an expert judging panel ([Reference – Judges handbook and Scoring](#)) comprised of the following:

Applicants will be reviewed by the international Ecotourism experts panel of judges.

AEN Executive Board 2022

- ❖ **Masaru Takayama**, *Founder and chairperson*, Asian Ecotourism Network (AEN)
- ❖ **Mihee Kang**, GSTC Global Assurance Program Director, *Vice-Chair* AEN
- ❖ **Ary Suhandi**, Executive Director, INDECON, *Vice-Chair* AEN
- ❖ **Susan de Cardenas**, President & CEO Society for Sustainable Tourism, *Vice Chair* AEN
- ❖ **Gana Damba Gantemur**, President, Mongolian Tourism Association (Federation), *Vice Chair*-AEN
- ❖ **Supaporn Prachumpai**, Managing director, Royal Silk Holidays, *Secretary*-AEN

GEN board of Directors 2022

- ❖ **Glenn Jampol**, Chair, Global Ecotourism Network (GEN)

AEN International Board 2022

- ❖ Based on Award Category expertise

We are sincerely grateful for the support and efforts of such an honorable and knowledgeable group of experts in ensuring the credibility and importance of these Awards.

Awards evaluation and awards ceremony schedule

Application Submission due date: 21st October 2022

Finalists' announcement: First week of November 2022

- Number of Finalists → triple the number (proposed)
- Winner → 1 per category
- More evidence by finalists → the applicant may be asked for further evidence/data

Awarding Ceremony to the finalists: as a side event at GSTC December 2022 Annual Conference at Spain

Awarding Ceremony to the winner: International Ecotourism Travel Mart (IETM) 2023, 1st April tentative (date to be finalized)

Application Entry Fee Details

- For Existing AEN members → No fee or discount
- For Non-Members → either pay USD \$100 (single award category) to apply or become a member (Join AEN link; *USD \$100 will be deducted as the membership fee*)
- Multiple Categories application fee → USD \$200
- Payment Mode → PayPal and International Bank transfer to Thailand

Kindly Note → Once we receive the application Form, AEN will acknowledge receipt for your completed application form and then we will send a bill to the applicant which needs to be paid by the due date (to be mentioned)

AWARD CATEGORIES

Entries should be completed in accordance with the criteria, which are provided to support you in identifying those factors that will help the Judging Panel in making their decisions. The criteria are designed to provide ideas for inclusion, but are neither definitive nor exhaustive.

Category 1 - Destination Governance

Description - Involvement of stakeholders in decision making process

Awardee - Destinations (Public sector only)

Criteria Reference – GSTC D A1 Destination management responsibility; Governance between Public and Private Sector

- The destination has an effective organization, department, group, or committee responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism, with involvement by the private sector, public sector and civil society. This group has defined responsibilities, oversight, and implementation capability for the management of socio- economic, cultural and environmental issues. The group is adequately funded, works with a range of bodies in delivering destination management, has access to sufficient staffing (including personnel with experience in sustainability) and follows principles

of sustainability and transparency in its operations and transactions.

Category 2 – Sustainable Building

Description - Sustainable and local materials used. Also involving local and sustainable practices

Awardee – **Accommodations**

Criteria Reference - AESA VI.5 (Design, siting, construction, and operation, Demolition); Use of local materials, local practices (e.g. carpenter), eco-certified material, energy efficient building (LEED, Green Building, ISO50001 etc.) and landscape conservation

- Is the land use in compliance with local zoning systems and protected or heritage area laws and regulations?
- Is design, siting, construction, renovation, operation, and demolition in compliance with local zoning systems, laws, and regulations related to protected or sensitive areas including heritage considerations?
- Does your facility planning, siting, design, and renovation take account of the capacity and integrity of the natural and cultural heritage surroundings?
- Is your facility construction, renovation, and demolition based on locally appropriate and green building principles?
- Does your facility provide access, and relevant access information for persons with special needs?
- Does your facility value and incorporate authentic elements of traditional and contemporary local art, architecture, or cultural heritage in its operations, design, decoration, food, or shops?
- Does your facility respect the intellectual property rights of local communities?

Category 3 – Community Benefit

Description – Capacity building-training/education; other types of contributions to community

Awardee – **Destinations** (Public Sector only)

Criteria Reference - GSTC D B4(Support for community); Training, ecotourism business building support, connecting with industry for product sales or employment, etc.

The destination has a system to enable and encourage enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute to community and sustainability initiatives in a responsible manner.

Awardee – **Accommodations**

Criteria Reference – AESA VI.3(Local community engagement, Training, Local Employment, Local purchasing, Monetary donation

- Do you offer equal employment opportunities and advancement for local residents?
- Do you return some benefits to the local community or for the environmental initiatives?
- Is a locally agreed code of conduct or guidelines in place for management and promotion of activities in the local or indigenous communities?
- Do you involve community in sustainable practices?
- Do you ensure local residents' access to their livelihoods (in spite of your activities) including land and aquatic resource use, rights of-way, transport and housing?

Category 4 – Climate Action

Description – Low carbon, Carbon-zero, Maximizing renewable energy use, Ecofriendly transport

Awardee – Destinations (including communities)

Criteria Reference - GSTC D A10 (Climate change adaptation), D10 (GHG emissions and climate change mitigation), D5 (Energy conservation), D6 (Water stewardship), D11 Low-impact transportation; Renewable energy production; Supporting communities' renewable energy facilities installment; Green public transport network; Walking path expansion

A10 Climate change adaptation - The destination identifies risks and opportunities associated with climate change. Climate change adaptation strategies are pursued for the siting, design, development and management of tourism facilities. Information on predicted climate change, associated risks and future conditions is provided for residents, businesses and visitors.

D5 Energy conservation - The destination has targets to reduce energy consumption, improve efficiency in its use, as well as increase the use of renewable energy. The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report their contribution to these targets.

D6 Water stewardship The destination encourages enterprises to measure, monitor, publicly report and manage water usage. Water risk in the destination is assessed and documented. In cases of high water risk, water stewardship goals are identified and actively pursued with enterprises, to ensure that tourism use does not conflict with the needs of local communities and ecosystems.

D10 GHG emissions and climate change mitigation - The destination has targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and implements and reports on mitigation policies and actions. Enterprises are encouraged to measure, monitor, reduce or minimize, publicly report and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects of their operation (including from suppliers and service providers). Offsetting of any remaining emissions is encouraged.

D11 Low-impact transportation - The destination has targets to reduce transport emissions from travel to and within the destination. An increase in the use of sustainable, low-emissions vehicles and public transport and active travel (e.g., walking and cycling) is sought in order to reduce the contribution of tourism to air pollution, congestion and climate change.

Awardee – Accommodations

Criteria Reference – AESA IV (Energy and water), AESA IV (4.5-1 and 4.5.3) (transport); Measurement of CO2 emission; Target setting of energy and water consumption; Reducing strategies and tangible reduction; Renewable energy introduction; Green vehicle for its own operation; Preferential contract with suppliers using green vehicles

- Do you generate heated water and/or power by utilizing natural energy and alternative sources such as solar, wind, hydro, and geothermal energy?
- Are your sources and types of energy indicated and steps are taken to minimize overall consumption?
- Do you take preventative measures to minimize negative effects of the provision of basic energy services to neighboring communities?

- Do you try to improve building insulation?
- Do you regulate room temperature in office and back of house by controlling heating, ventilating and air-conditioning with your national guidelines?
- Does each guestroom have a control for air conditioning/heating?
- Have you changed from incandescent light bulbs to CFLs(Compact Fluorescent Lamp) or LEDs?
- Do you have override control device to reduce energy consumption of guestroom(s) not in use?
- Do you have dark sensor, occupancy sensor, and/or auto timer fitted in public area?
- Do you periodically maintain equipment to maximize energy savings?
- Do you measure, calculate and reduce where possible the amount of significant greenhouse gas emissions of your facility from energy consumption using a comparison of the year you set?
- Do you implement procedures to control and offset greenhouse gas emission as a way to achieve climate neutrality?
- Do you seek to reduce transportation requirements and actively encourage the use of cleaner and more resource efficient alternatives by customers, employees, suppliers and in its own operations?
- Do you have water pressure regulator, water saving showerhead, sensor faucet etc. fitted to save overall consumption of water?
- Do you reuse purified wastewater or gray water?
- Do you collect and use rainwater where permitted?
- Do you measure water consumption from all sources?
- Are your sources of water indicated?
- Do you not jeopardize the provision of basic water services to neighboring communities?

Category 5 – Biodiversity Conservation

Description – Aquatic biodiversity conservation

Awardee – Destinations including communities providing mainly marine ecotourism experience

Criteria Reference – GSTC D1 (Protection of sensitive environments) (d, e); Marine biodiversity conservation project/activities

D1 Protection of sensitive environments - The destination has a system to monitor, measure and respond to the impacts of tourism on the natural environment, conserve ecosystems, habitats and species, and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.

*Awardee – **Accommodations** located in marine tourism destination*

Criteria Reference – AESA VI (Care for environment) (6.5-1, 6.5-2); Marine biodiversity conservation project/activities/donation

- Is the land use in compliance with local zoning systems and protected or heritage area laws and regulations?
- Is design, siting, construction, renovation, operation, and demolition in compliance with local zoning systems, laws, and regulations related to protected or sensitive areas including heritage considerations?

Description – Terrestrial biodiversity conservation

Awardee – Destinations including communities providing mainly terrestrial ecotourism experience

Criteria Reference - GSTC D1; Terrestrial biodiversity conservation project/activities

*Awardee – **Accommodations** located in terrestrial ecotourism destination*

Criteria Reference – AESA VI (Care for environment) (6.5-1, 6.5-2); terrestrial biodiversity conservation

project/activities/donation

Category 6 – Waste Management

Description – Plastic, Food waste management (Zero waste management. More ambitious achievement required)

Awardee – Destinations including communities

Criteria Reference - GSTC D9 (Solid waste) – policy and practices; Solid waste mgt policy; Solid waste reduction/reusing/recycling project/activities/engagement and support of stakeholders; Achievement of waste reduction/reuse/recycle

D9 Solid waste - The destination measures and reports on its generation of waste and sets targets for its reduction. It ensures solid waste is properly treated and diverted from landfill, with provision of a multiple-stream collection and recycling system which effectively separates waste by type. The destination encourages enterprises to avoid, reduce, reuse, and recycle solid waste, including food waste. Action is taken to eliminate or reduce single-use items, especially plastics. Any residual solid waste that is not reused or recycled is disposed of safely and sustainably

Awardee – Accommodations

Criteria Reference - AESA 2.1 (Reduction and recycling of food waste); AESA III (Waste management and recycling); Solid waste policy: no one-time-use plastic policy, efficient purchasing, food waste reduction; Solid waste reduction/reusing/recycling-upcycling project/activities; Achievement of waste reduction/reuse/recycle; Engagement of suppliers/guests

- Do you practice effective procurement?
- Do you have a system in place managing leftovers and food waste?
- Do you drain water or dehydrate food waste to reduce volume?
- Do you effectively reuse or recycle cooking oil?
- Do you have a policy on reducing disposable material?
- Do you minimize your complimentary disposable amenity set?
- Do you minimize packaging?
- Do you encourage guests to bring their own toiletries?
- Do you use refillable dispenser/bottles avoiding disposable containers?
- Do you have a notice giving the guest choice of not to have bedding and towel changes for multi-day guests?
- Do you separate and recycle carried-in waste?
- Do you restore and refurbish guestroom furniture (bed, chair, table, etc.) for long-term use?
- Do you separate and recycle papers?
- Do you segregate recyclable materials?
- Do you use double-sided photocopying?
- Do you minimize wrapping at store(s) or gift shops within your facility?
- Do you avoid selling, trading, or displaying historical and archeological artifacts except as permitted by local and international law?
- Do you have a solid waste management plan and is it implemented?
- Is the provision of your basic sanitation system non-polluting?

Category 7 – Ecotourism Promotion

Description – Responsible materials, sustainable delivery mode, responsible promotional

video/brochure/website, stakeholder consultation in developing promotional contents

Awardee – Destinations including communities

Criteria Reference - GSTC D A7; Responsible promotion following green claim guidelines; Respecting communities and environment

A7 Promotion and information Promotion and visitor information material about the destination is accurate with regard to its products, services, and sustainability claims. Marketing messages and other communications reflect the destination's values and approach to sustainability and treat local communities and natural and cultural assets with respect.

Awardee – Accommodations

Criteria Reference - AESA 1.1-12; Responsible promotion following green claim guidelines; Respecting communities and environment

- Are your promotional materials and marketing communications accurate and transparent with regard to the operation and its products and services, including sustainability claims and do not promise more than can be delivered?

Category 8 – Environment Leadership

Description – Supporting conservation/restoration of ecotourism resources (focusing on natural resources)

Awardee – NGO's

Criteria Reference – D1(b), D10(c); Conservation activities/training on conservation through engaging with communities, visitors, and tourism industry

D1 Protection of sensitive environments The destination has a system to monitor, measure and respond to the impacts of tourism on the natural environment, conserve ecosystems, habitats and species, and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species. (Programmes to conserve biodiversity and natural heritage)

D10 GHG emissions and climate change mitigation The destination has targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and implements and reports on mitigation policies and actions. Enterprises are encouraged to measure, monitor, reduce or minimise, publicly report and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects of their operation (including from suppliers and service providers). Offsetting of any remaining emissions is encouraged. (Supported campaign or other engagement with tourism enterprises on reduction and mitigation of emissions.)

Category 9 – Innovative Ecotourism

Description – ecotourism practices reflecting innovation in design, facility, tour, interpretation, etc. (Wow factor)

Awardee – No specific target. **Open to all stakeholders**

Criteria Reference – GSTC D A4(c), B3(a); AESA VI(6.5-4, 6.5-5); Innovation keeping/enhancing sustainability in addition to authenticity; Responsible consumption

A4 Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards The destination regularly informs tourism-related enterprises about sustainability issues and encourages and supports them in making their operations more sustainable. The destination promotes the adoption of sustainability standards, promoting the application of GSTC-I Recognized standards and GSTC-I Accredited certification schemes for tourism enterprises, where available. The destination publicizes a list of sustainability certified enterprises. (Number and percentage of businesses certified against tourism sustainability standards (and whether GSTC recognised/accredited), with targets for wider outreach).

B3 Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade The destination encourages the retention of tourism

spending in the local economy through supporting local enterprises, supply chains and sustainable investment. It promotes the development and purchase of local sustainable products based on fair trade principles and that reflect the area's nature and culture. These may include food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc. (Advice, finance or other support – available in the destination for tourism-related SMEs.)

- Is your facility construction, renovation, and demolition based on locally appropriate and green building principles?
- Does your facility provide access, and relevant access information for persons with special needs?

Category 10 – Community Champion

Description – Community-led activities including business development/management, or community-led initiatives for environmental conservation (Recognizing collaborated community activities)

Awardee – Communities and destinations

Criteria Reference – GSTC D B2(c), B3(c); Strong community leadership at conservation, product development, and governance

B2 Decent work and career opportunities The destination encourages and supports career opportunities and training in tourism. The destination's tourism enterprises commit to providing equality of opportunity for local employment, training and advancement, a safe and secure working environment, and a living wage for all. (Training and employment opportunities promoted to and taken up by local people, including women, young people, minorities and people with disabilities.)

B3 Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade The destination encourages the retention of tourism spending in the local economy through supporting local enterprises, supply chains and sustainable investment. It promotes the development and purchase of local sustainable products based on fair trade principles and that reflect the area's nature and culture. These may include food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc. (Action to encourage and assist local tourism enterprises to purchase goods and services locally.)

COMPLETE APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Entry Guidelines

1. Eligibility - entrants must be able to effectively demonstrate the following:
 - The accommodation is located in a natural setting globally
 - If applying for the Innovation Ecotourism Awards, the project should have been completed and operating by time of entry submission
2. There is a one [common application form](#) to be filled by all applicants and [category specific questions are to be answered separately](#)
 - File Format: Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, or PDF (File Size should not exceed 10MB)
 - Font: No smaller than 12 point
 - Language: English
3. Submitting Entries - by email to: asianecotourismnetwork@gmail.com
4. **Closing Date** Entries must be submitted by midnight of **21st October 2022 (Midnight, Bangkok Time)**
5. Hard copy or promotional material should NOT be submitted.
6. Presentations of the awarded accommodations will be prepared based on the entry information provided and may be published on the AEN website publicizing the Award.
7. AEN will convene an assessment and award selection panel of AEN Executive members, International Board members or international experts /practitioners. These judges discuss and score entries to determine the award recipients. The decision of the Judging Panel is made in good faith and is final. If necessary, the Judging Panel may reach out to reference names, other industry contacts, or draw upon collective first-hand knowledge for due diligence of the information being submitted. When deciding, the Judges will consider:
 - Measurable achievement relative to the award base and category criteria
 - Demonstration of fulfillment of ecotourism objectives
 - Replicability (providing solutions for ecotourism best practices)
8. **Announcement of Results** - Entrants will be notified by **first week of November 2022**
9. **Awards, Announcement and Presentation**

The **AEN-IEA Finalists** will be announced at the **Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Conference** to be held in **December 2022** in **SEVILLE, Spain**. The **Winner will be awarded** at the **International Ecotourism Travel Mart 2023** to be held from **29th March to 2nd April 2023, Philippines**.
10. Questions, Feedback or Suggestions Any questions or comments regarding the entry requirements and procedures or suggestions about the AEN-IEA can be made by email to: asianecotourismnetwork@gmail.com