

# GUIDELINES FOR THE LAUNCHING AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Award

This document describes how ASTA should be organized, different competition phases and actions that should be taken in each step is defined.

## I. Guidelines for ASTA Competition Organizers

This guide provides an understanding of how ASTA competitions should be designed, built, run, managed and maintained.

Each phase is explored in detail to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexity, requirements and expertise needed to implement each ASTA competition. By reading this document, the ASTA coordination unit in each ASEAN country will have a wealth of information and solid ideas on how the ASTA competition should be run from the start-up phase to the post-competition phase.

## II. Phases of the ASTA Competition

The first two phases of the ASTA competition, namely the planning phase and the construction and definition phase, during which exact definitions were made and the ASTA competition was formed, were undertaken during the period of the Lao chairmanship of ASEAN (2016).

The ASTA competition has three important phases as defined: The first is the launch phase, in which publicity begins, the second is the management and implementation phase, in which the competition is organised and applications are collected, and the third is the post-competition phase, which begins after the competition is over.

### II.1. Launching Phase

Prior to the launch of the competition, the ASTA coordination unit should develop and communicate to each ASEAN country the theme of the competition, for example by preparing visuals, national and ASEAN websites and also by launching the necessary publicity campaigns.

#### 1. Prepare Visual and Communication Materials

Before the ASTA coordination unit in each ASEAN country can launch the ASTA competition, the development of web pages, call-for-submissions documents and similar other communication materials is needed<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The visual appeal of the competition is highly important to provide trust to the participants. Thus an expert graphics designer who has brand identity and coordinated image experience is advised to be contracted.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- A dedicated webpage on each National Tourism Ministry and ASEAN websites
  - Promoting the ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Award
  - Inviting public and private stakeholders to compete
  - Providing the competition rules and regulations
  - Providing the application set for download
- A brochure presenting the ASTA (to be distributed in all local and regional tourism offices)
- A national web / TV/ press campaign advertising the ASTA
- An active social media presence with dedicated page/account

### 2. Build or choose the communication channel

Each ASTA coordination unit shall make sure that their communication channels are active and work as intended, and that the competition is open to submissions. Each coordination unit must make sure that its communication channels do not impose limits and restrictions that might lead to frustration and lack of participation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- A dedicated webpage on each National Tourism Ministry and ASEAN websites providing
  - The competition rules and regulations
  - The application set for download
  - The guidelines for submitting a proposal
  - The contact details of the coordination manager

### 3. Define Management & Staff

In this step, each ASTA coordination unit should define a management and assign staff for the ASTA competition. Each coordination unit shall try to answer the following questions:

- ✓ Who is going to answer the questions of the participants?
- ✓ Who will deal with the participants' issues?
- ✓ Who will help participants to download forms and application sets?
- ✓ Who will be contacting magazines, media and press for the visibility of the competition? Etc.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The coordination unit should comprise:
  - One coordination director supporting the coordination manager in its daily work and taking final decisions
  - One coordination manager dealing with the frequently asked questions (FAQ) from the interested applicants and facilitating the submission process when needed (external communication). In addition, each national coordination manager must transfer the questions to the ASTA coordination unit (internal communication)
  - One communication assistant supporting the coordination manager in updating any external communication device (website, social media, etc.) so that anybody with a computer can anywhere at anytime learn about ASTA, ask question and download the application set.

#### 4. Launch the Competition (Call for competition)

Kick-start the ASTA competition by aiming to reach the target audience. Each ASTA coordination unit should be using both its traditional channels and online channels to spread the word, for example through online advertising, press releases, public relation campaigns, asking local branches, announcing through social media channels, existing websites (ASEAN and national) and direct advertising at magazines and other media, newsletter marketing and others.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The ASTA should organise campaigns focusing on specific target audiences during the submission phase such as:
  - A campaign towards institutional target in the beginning of April
  - A campaign towards professionals by the end of April.
  - A large public campaign in the beginning of may

## II.2. Management Phase

In this phase, the ASTA competition has already been launched after the public announcements. Now, each coordination unit should be obeying the timeline that it has already announced.

#### 1. Registration or Application Period

During this period, candidate teams can register by applying to participate in the competition. The application file should be available physically (e.g. at local "Ministries of Tourism" offices) and/or online. The most important aspect of the application period is to ensure that participants can access the application file.

#### 2. Application Collection Period

This is the most important time period where the participants are able to make submissions to the competition. These applications should meet the previously defined submission requirements (eligibility criteria), and a system should be provided to let teams of applicants know that their application form has been received and processed.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- For online submission, an email shall be written to the legal representative of the team of applicants
- For paper submission, an email or a letter shall be written to the legal representative of the team of applicants
- For submission received in hand, a stamped receipt shall be delivered to the legal representative of the team of applicants (at the time of the submission)

### 3. Desk review Period

At the end of this period, following the desk review by the assessors, each coordination unit has the ability to provide feedback to teams of applicants through direct comments to preliminary judging, initial scoring, first screening and via other mechanisms. Team of applicants selected for a field visit will be informed in advance.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The coordination director shall send an email / a letter to all the applicants, with the score of the desk review and announce if they are eligible or not to the field visit.
- For the selected applications, the letter shall announce the name of the person (assessor) which will contact them to organise a visit.

### 4. Field visit - verification Period

The field visit should be made at the time defined in the evaluation methodology. It consists in (i) ensuring the compliance of its selected application form with the ASEAN Tourism Standards and (ii) ensuring the veracity of information presented by the applicants. The final judging is made only after the visit of all the pre-selected team of applicants is over.

### 5. Announcing Results

In order to avoid any frustration, competition results must be announced as stated in the initial communication, and furthermore non-winners should be provided feedback or status updates. Results are usually announced prior to the ASEAN Tourism Forum in order to allow winners to participate in the event and them by a press release and through online channels. Building special platforms, sharing photographs in social networks and others could significantly increase the reach and impact of results announcements.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The coordination director shall send an email / a letter to all visited applicants, with their total score and announce if they have won the award or not.
- For the winning applications, the letter shall introduce the following steps in order to organise the award ceremony in the upcoming ATF.

### 6. Rewarding Winners

Rewards promised to award winners should be delivered as stated in the initial competition announcement and call for competition.

### 7. Publicity Periods

The ASEAN Tourism Forum should especially be communicated and advertised extensively. Others such as the call for submissions announcement, results-announced announcement, and winners-rewarded announcements are also important.

## II.3. Post-Competition Maintenance Phase

At this phase, the competition is already over for the participants, but it is not indeed yet over for the organization. There are a few elements to be considered such as evaluation of results, further maintenance of the platform/websites and others.

### 1. Evaluating Results and Goals Achievement

An internal survey could be organized to measure how the organization of the ASTA competition affected positively the partakers and more broadly the quality of products and services proposed by the team of applicants. This can be done online on the ASEAN tourism website. Furthermore, media analysis could be run to assess the publicity impact of the competition organization as well. The evaluation is necessary in order to understand if it was worth organizing the competition in the first place.

### 2. Planning for the Next ASTA competition

Based on the evaluation of the results and the achievement status of the goals, a new version of the ASTA competition could be conceived, with improvements based on the feedback, testimonials and suggestions provided by the participants in order to provide a better, more positive experience for future entrants. Additionally, more sustainability indicators can be added if appropriate.

### 3. Keeping the Communication Active

After the competition is over, it is compulsory to keep the platform/web pages well maintained, as it would lead to further press appearances and publicity for the organizers and winners. Furthermore, the platform/web pages can be later revitalized in order to arrange a new version of the competition. It is good to keep past participants informed every once in a while.