

ECOTOURISM LAOS WON THE ECOTOURISM SPOTLIGHT AWARD FOR THE 3RD TIME



A Laos' ecotourism web page was chosen from among four nominees as the winner of the Ecotourism Spotlight Award for the third time in row. The Award should draw attention to the best practices in online ecotourism promotion.

Ecotourism Laos has won the Planeta.com Ecotourism Spotlight Award for the third time in row. The award is designed for governmental web pages informing about ecotourism and responsible travel options. Nominees could be municipal, regional, national as well as international governmental websites.

The prestigious award should inspire other governmental webmasters how to promote responsible travel and ecotourism in their regions. The nominees are also encouraged to communicate extensively and to share their knowledge. They are even asked to review each other's websites. The managers of governmental websites are the only ones that can nominate their own sites. Voting is however open to the public.

This year's nominees were **Ecotourism Laos, Responsible Tourism Guide to the Mekong, Failte Ireland** and Mexico's **National Commission of Natural Protected Areas**, which was later withdrawn. Ecotourism Laos became the winner once again by receiving 41.3% of votes.

One of the essential criteria when selecting the winner are according to the organizers regular updates of the website. It should also link to other relevant websites and be accessible in English too. It should also contain information about public transport because of concerns about climate change. Web 2.0 channels, including e.g. YouTube, are also helpful.

About the nominees

Ecotourism Laos - the winning nominee has been expanding its web pages and regularly updating them. The website is notable for highlighting numerous locally managed ecotourism initiatives.

Failte Ireland - National Tourism Development Authority has published the country's first ecotourism handbook for 16,000 Irish tourism businesses.

Responsible Tourism Guide to the Mekong - is an international web page that uses various 2.0 web tools. Visitors may submit comments and the site also has a Google Maps plug-in as well as other features.

National Commission of Natural Protected Areas - this web page was pulled out of the competition because it ceased to work.

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