

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 guideline serves to have an understanding of how ASTA competition should be designed, constructed, launched, managed and maintained.

Each phase is explored in great detail to provide a complete understanding of the complexity, requirements and the required know-how for the implementation of each ASTA competition. Upon reading this document, the ASTA coordination unit in each ASEAN country will have a significant amount of information and solid ideas about how the ASTA competition should be executed from the launching phase to post-competition.

II. Phases of the ASTA Competition

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

The ASTA competition has three important phases as defined: First is the launching phase where advertising and publicity begins, second is the management and execution phase during which the competition is run and application sets are collected, and finally we have a post-competition phase which starts after the competition is over.

II.1. Launching Phase

Before the competition could be launched, the ASTA coordination unit should realize and communicate to each ASEAN Country the theme of the competition, for instance by preparing visuals, the national and ASEAN websites and also by launching the required advertisement campaigns.

1. Prepare Visual and Communication Materials

Before the ASTA coordination unit in each ASEAN country can launch the ASTA competition, the development of webpages, call-for-submissions documents and similar other communication materials is needed¹.

¹ 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
 - A campaign towards professionals
 - A large public campaign

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

In this time period, team of applicants are able to register themselves by applying to take part in the competition. The application set must be available physically (e.g. in local branches of “Ministries of Tourism”) and/or online. While registration, the most important aspect is to make sure that the participants can have access to the application set.

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 team 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 feedbacks 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 feedbacks or status updates. Results are usually announced prior to the ASEAN Tourism Forum in order to allow winners to participate to 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

Especially the ASEAN Tourism Forum should 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 to organize 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 feedbacks, 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/webpages well maintained, as it would lead further press appearances and publicity for the organizers and winners. Furthermore, the platform/webpages can be later re-vitalized in order to arrange a new version of the competition. It is good to keep past participants informed every once in a while.