

TPO Best Awards 2025

Celebrating Innovation and Impact in Urban Tourism

1. Executive Summary

The **TPO Best Awards** aim to recognize and celebrate outstanding achievements in tourism policy, innovation, and sustainable development among TPO member cities and tourism related organizations. Launched in 2013, this Awards Program has historically served as a platform to showcase exemplary tourism initiatives and share best practices across the network.

The 2025 edition introduces a refreshed structure, reflecting global tourism trends emphasizing digital transformation, ESG principles, inclusive development, governance, and intercity cooperation while streamlining award categories for clarity and impact.

All award recipients will be honored at the TPO Best Awards Ceremony during the 12th TPO General Assembly in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Winning entries will be showcased to all delegates, providing high visibility and networking opportunities.

2. Objectives

The key objectives of the TPO Best Awards are:

- **Best Practice Exchange:** To identify and promote exemplary tourism policies and initiatives developed by TPO member cities and institutions.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** To facilitate knowledge-sharing and mutual learning among members through real-world success stories and best practices in urban tourism development.
- **Encourage Innovation & Leadership:** To encourage innovation in digital transformation, sustainability, and inclusive tourism at the city level, and to recognize visionary leadership in tourism development.
- **Strengthen TPO Network:** To reinforce the role of TPO as a collaborative platform for collaboration, visibility, and excellence, thereby increasing engagement in TPO activities and events.

3. Award Categories

a. Tourism Marketing Award

Awarded to cities demonstrating excellence in tourism branding, visual identity, storytelling, and integrated marketing campaigns that enhanced their city image.

Illustrative Examples

- Launch of a new city tourism brand or logo with a clear activation strategy
- Multi – platform campaigns increasing visibility or reputation
- Creative messaging that redefined the city’s image
- Community-engaged branding efforts that involved local stakeholders

b. Tourism Innovation Award

Awarded to cities implementing digital or technological innovations in tourism services, governance, or infrastructure that significantly improved tourism competitiveness.

Illustrative examples

- Use of AI-based tourist guides or chatbots for visitor assistance
- Introduction of smart signage, interactive kiosks, digital twin platforms, tourism big data dashboards, and other technologies for city attractions
- Innovative tourism apps or integrated mobility (transportation) services for tourists
- Creative use of AR/VR (augmented or virtual reality) or content to provide immersive experiences

c. Sustainable Tourism Award

Recognizing outstanding practices in sustainability (environmental, social, governance – ESG) and inclusive tourism that benefits local communities.

Illustrative examples:

- Implementation of green tourism initiatives such as eco-certification programs or zero-waste events/festivals
- Community-based tourism projects that engage local residents or indigenous groups as stakeholders and beneficiaries
- Programs promoting inclusive tourism (e.g. gender equality, youth and education in tourism, disability access improvements, or poverty alleviation through tourism)
- Policies or infrastructure projects that reduce carbon footprint (renewable energy use, circular economy practices in tourism facilities, etc.)

d. Tourism Leadership Award

This award is divided into three sub-awards to recognize exceptional leadership in both the public and private sectors that has significantly advanced tourism development, innovation, and sustainability at the city level.

1) City Leader

Awarded to a Mayor, Vice Mayor, or senior executive who has demonstrated visionary leadership in integrating tourism into urban policy and long-term development strategies.

Illustrative Examples:

- Setting a strategic vision for tourism in the city's development agenda
- Leading the formulation of a city-wide tourism master plan
- Establishing inter-departmental or inter-agency governance structures for tourism
- Building international partnerships to enhance the city's tourism profile
- Advocating for tourism investment, accessibility, and cross-sectoral integration

2) Tourism Officer

Awarded to a senior tourism officer who has successfully designed and implemented impactful tourism programs or policies, showing operational leadership in public sector tourism management.

Illustrative Examples:

- Developing and managing tourism programs, festivals, or pilot initiatives
- Improving inter-departmental coordination for tourism development
- Creating and overseeing new public-private collaboration models
- Managing destination marketing campaigns or visitor experience enhancements

3) Industry Leader

Awarded to a business leader or private-sector innovator who has contributed significantly to city-level tourism growth through entrepreneurship, investment, or innovation.

Illustrative Examples:

- Leading destination marketing initiatives
- Building successful tourism business models
- Promoting public-private partnerships or local community engagement
- Driving innovation in tourism products, services, or distribution

e. Tourism Media Award

Awarded to a media outlet, journalist, or photographer for outstanding coverage of TPO events, initiatives, or member city tourism stories.

This award recognizes media professionals or outlets that have actively contributed to the visibility and impact of TPO's mission through high-quality coverage. Eligible works include print or online articles, broadcast segments, photojournalism, or multimedia content that highlight TPO activities.

The coverage should be accurate, engaging, and have reached a broad audience, thereby amplifying the impact of TPO's work.

Illustrative Examples:

- Feature article or series covering the TPO events
- A photo essay or video documentary showcasing TPO activities and TPO-member city attractions, which gained wide public attention.
- Broadcast media segments introducing TPO and members
- Continuous media partnership or outstanding storytelling on TPO's values

※ Note: This category is open to self-nominations or nominations by a TPO member city.

4. Submission Requirements

All applicants must complete the official TPO Best Awards 2025 Application Form, which includes the following sections. The completed form and any supporting materials should be submitted via email to: sjkim@aptpo.org.

- **Project Report (Max. 15 pages | PDF or Word format | English or other languages with English translation)**
 - Project Title: The name of the initiative or nomination
 - Executive Summary: A brief overview of the project or achievement (up to 300 words) highlighting its objectives and results

- Detailed Description: A comprehensive description (up to 1,500 words) covering the background and motivation for the initiative, key activities undertaken, stakeholders involved, and the outcomes/achievements. Include any evidence of success such as statistics, testimonials, or milestones
- **Supporting Materials**
 - Photographs (up to 5 images) showcasing the project, event, or individual in action
 - Links to videos or digital content (e.g. promotional videos, media coverage) if applicable.
 - Copies of marketing materials, brochures, or posters created as part of the initiative
 - Any press clippings, awards, or external recognition that the project or individual has received

5. Timeline & Submission

- Call for Entries: July 23, 2025 (email to sjkim@aptpo.org)
- Submission Deadline: August 15, 2025
- Winner Notification: August 25, 2025
- Award Ceremony: During 12th GA

6. Benefits for awardees

- **Official Recognition:** A trophy/plaque and certificate presented during the General Assembly, officiated by TPO leadership.
- **Media Exposure:** Feature coverage in TPO communications channels – including the TPO newsletter, official website, and press releases – announcing the winners and their accomplishments to a global audience.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Increased visibility among the TPO network of cities and partners. Awardees may be invited to share their case studies in future TPO workshops, webinars, or forums, providing an opportunity to present their success story and network with peers.
- **Promotional Rights:** The right to use the title “TPO Best Award 2025 Winner” and the official award logo/badge in their own marketing and branding materials, lending prestige and credibility to their tourism initiatives.

7. General Rules

- **Eligibility**

TPO members and non-members are welcome to submit entries.
- **Project Period**

All entries must feature initiatives, campaigns, or projects that were implemented, revised, or actively operated during the 2024 calendar year. New projects launched in early 2025 are also eligible if at least 3 months of implementation can be demonstrated.
- **Multiple Entries**

Each eligible member may submit multiple entries across different categories. However, a separate and complete application package must be submitted for each entry.
- **Language Requirement**

All submissions must be prepared in English. If materials are originally produced in other languages, a full English translation must be provided.

- **Judging Transparency**

All entries will be evaluated by a panel of tourism professionals. Entries will be assessed equally regardless of city size or budget scale, based on merit and innovation.

- **Award Type**

Each Category may recognize multiple winners based on merit. The judging panel may grant the following distinctions per category:

- Award of Excellence (highest-scoring entry or entries)
- Special Recognition (entries with outstanding strength in a specific area)

There is no fixed number of winners per category; awards will be based on absolute evaluation, not competition between entries.

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