

CONCEPT NOTE

**Seize the Moment: Re-Shaping Smart and Sustainable Tourism in the Mekong region
Blog Contest**

Overview

Under the “Sustainable and Smart Tourism Development in the Mekong Region” project, Mekong Institute (MI), with support from the Mekong-Republic of Korea Cooperation Fund, is working to (a) strengthen the quality of hospitality and tourism services, (b) deepen collaboration between the Republic of Korea and Mekong countries through historical and cultural town twinning, and (c) enhance tourism competitiveness via smart technologies.

In its first year of project implementation, MI is finalizing a series of tailored smart tourism activities to boost the industry’s efficient resource management, competitiveness, and resilience against a COVID-19 landscape. It is also preparing for the launch of the project’s website and social media channels to help (a) widen awareness of the value of sustainable and smart tourism, (b) provide new information on tourism practices, innovations, tools and technologies, and (c) deepen engagement among tourism stakeholders.

In this regard, MI is pleased to announce a blog contest. Under the theme “**Seize the Moment: Re-Shaping Smart and Sustainable Tourism in the Mekong region**” entrants are invited to highlight unique tourism attractions, practices, and potentials in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam across the categories of ecology, history, healing, food, and culture.

The blogs, which will be released in the project’s and MI’s official channels, will serve to spotlight how people in the Mekong region are supporting the industry’s economic recovery and regional interconnectedness for a more balanced, collaborative, and sustainable tourism development.

Contest Rules

To qualify in the contest, entrants must be

1. 18 years old and above
2. A citizen of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, or Vietnam

To pass the initial screening, the blogs must be

3. In English with no more than 300 words
4. An original work and developed solely by the entrant for this contest

Entrants are welcomed to submit multiple blogs across the categories of ecology, history, healing, food, and culture.

Category of Entries

Theme	Description*
Ecology	Environment, conservation, nature-based activities
History	UNESCO World Heritage Sites, ancient stories, local wisdom, religious institutions
Healing	Health and wellness, activities for relaxation, spa, massage, meditation
Food	Street food, locally sourced ingredients, local vegan, and vegetarian dishes
Culture	Traditional clothes, dances, customs, livelihood

**The descriptions identified per theme are indicative. Other blog topics outside the listed items will be accepted for so long as they are related to the context of the theme.*



Submission Requirements and Process

Entrants must submit his/her entries and the completed application form by **November 27, 2020** at 11:59 pm (Thailand, GMT+7) to contest@mekonginstitute.org.

He/She must label his/her email subject as "Category, Mekong country, and full name" (e.g., History_Myanmar_Than Tha Wint). The submitted blog must be in Word file and labelled as "title of work_full name (e.g., History for the Ages_Tha Tha Wint).

For those submitting blogs in several categories, each entry must be emailed separately according to the labeling specifications listed above.

Winning entries will be announced on **December 9, 2020** via email.

Selection Criteria

Leaders from the MI and ROK Project Teams will rank the blogs according to the following guidelines:

Criteria	Percentage
Theme and Relevance	30%
Originality	30%
Concise and Coherent Expression of Ideas	30%
Grammatical and Structural Soundness	10%

Prizes

Writers of the 15 best blogs will be awarded cash prizes, while the first 50 entrants will receive an e-certificate to commemorate their participation in the contest.

Tier	Blog	Prize
1	First Five Best Blogs	USD 300 each
2	Next Ten Best Blogs	USD 150 each

Copyright Use

All entrants must grant all rights and access to their materials upon submission.

They will be attributed as the author of the blogs in the project's and MI publications, website, social media channels, and other related platforms and materials. In addition, entrants must warrant that the submitted entries are of original work and do not infringe upon the copyright, trademark, privacy, or intellectual property rights or claims of any other person or entity.

Contact Information

For other queries regarding the contest, please contact contest@mekonginstitute.org. For a background on the project, please visit <https://cutt.ly/NgopVwy>.



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