

CONCEPT NOTE

Seize the Moment: Re-Shaping Smart and Sustainable Tourism in the Mekong region Photo 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 Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.

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 scheduled to launch the project’s website and social media channels to help (a) widen awareness of the value of smart tourism, (b) introduce new information on sustainable tourism practices, innovations, tools, and technologies, and (c) deepen engagement among tourism stakeholders.

In this regard, MI is pleased to announce a photo 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 photos, which will be released in the project’s and MI’s official channels, will serve to represent 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, professional and amateur photographers 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 photos must be

3. Taken in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, or Vietnam
4. Dated within two years from October 19, 2020
5. An original work that was not featured, published, or awarded by other organizations

Entrants are welcomed to submit no more than five photographs per category. However, an entrant can only be awarded one photo in each.



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 photos 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 “photo category, Mekong country, and full name” (e.g., History_Myanmar_Than Tha Wint). The photos must meet the following specifications:

1. Photo/s must be in JPEG format with at least 300 dpi and a maximum file size of 5 MB.
2. Photo/s must be in AdobeRGB and sRGB formats. Photo/s in CMYK, grayscale, or black and white are not allowed.
3. Entries must not contain date stamps, watermarks, or any text on the image/s.
4. Post processing of image/s is limited to cropping and color adjustments, including shadows and highlights only. Photo manipulation is not allowed.
5. Each photo must be labelled as “title of work_full name (e.g., History for the Ages_Tha Tha Wint).
6. Each photo must include a 30-word caption.

For those submitting photos 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 photos according to the following guidelines:

Criteria	Percentage
Composition and Technical Execution	30%
Creativity and Innovation	30%
Concise and Coherent Caption	30%
Appeal*	10%

* Shortlisted entries will be posted on MI's official Facebook page to determine the crowd/people's favorite based on the number of likes garnered by a photo.

Prizes

Entrants with the winning photos will be awarded cash prizes, while the first 50 photographers will receive an e-certificate to commemorate their participation in the contest.

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



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Copyright Use

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

They will be attributed as owners of the photos in the project's and MI's 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>.