



Skål International is inviting companies from the public and private sector as well as NGOs to submit entries for the 6th Ecotourism Awards Programme.

The 2007 Awards, sponsored by Evian Waters and Iznik Foundation, will be presented in Antalya, Turkey on 5 November 2007 during the Opening Ceremony of the 68th Skål World Congress by the President of Skål International, Litsa Papathanassi.

In line with the 2007 presidential theme “Sustainable Development in Tourism” chosen by President Litsa Papathanassi, Skål International will continue its efforts to further create awareness of the importance of sustainability in tourism.

Skål, founded as an international association in 1934 is the largest organisation of travel and tourism professionals in the world, embracing all sectors of the tourism industry from hoteliers to travel agents, to airlines, tourism media, tourism students and similar. Skål, with 22,000 members is active in 90 countries and in almost 500 locations worldwide.

Skål International is an Affiliate Member of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation whose mission is to promote the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. Skål International, in line with this vision, following the United Nations declaration of 2002 as the Year of Ecotourism and the Mountains, launched the Ecotourism Awards in the same year and the first awards were presented during the World Congress in Cairns in 2002.

Skål, as an international organisation of the industry leaders, is a powerful force in the travel and tourism industry to initiate change and encourage the conservation of the environment in order to promote tourism and travel. The awards presented on these grounds, while highlighting best practices in tourism around the world, also serve the purpose of acquainting the world with this new concept that puts emphasis on the importance of the interaction of the physical, cultural and social environment the traveller’s responsibility and the need for active community participation for Ecotourism.

Skål values sustainable development in Tourism as the key to the industry’s future success and considers Ecotourism but one area of the various components of sustainable development.

Awards are presented in six different categories;

1. Tour Operators – Travel Agents

2. Accommodation providers of any size and category in:
 - 2.1 Urban areas
 - 2.2 Rural areas
3. Transportation
4. General Countryside (Alpine Tourism, Underwater Projects, Beaches, Theme Parks, Scenic Mountains, Rivers, Lakes)
5. Cities–Villages (Community and Government Projects)
6. Educational Programmes – Media

The primary criteria for the evaluation is based on points like, contribution to the conservation of nature and cultural heritage, community involvement, educational features, business viability and innovation.

The evaluation of the entries is made by three independent judges from important Institutions/Organisations dealing with Eco and Sustainable tourism. The names of previous years' judges can be found on the Skål website. The names of the judges for each year are only announced during the Awards ceremony which take place at the Skål International Annual World Congresses attended by members from all around the world and dignitaries from the host country. In 2007 the Award presentation ceremony will take place in Antalya, Turkey on 5 November 2007 during the 68th Skål World Congress.

Iznik Foundation (www.iznik.com.tr) for the third year will continue to be the sponsor of the quartz trophies they have specially designed for SKÅL INTERNATIONAL. Combining ecology with the unique art of Iznik (Ancient Nicea); the awards are a sign of preservation of natural resources and traditions and with their special characteristics are specially chosen to emphasise the value of our global riches.

Vice-President, PR & Communication Hulya Aslantas, states that Evian's (www.evian.com) decision to continue to be one of the sponsors of Skål International Ecotourism Awards is completely coherent with their environmental commitment. DANONE Group identifies as one of their first responsibilities to be to protect the area and the springs it manages. In addition to in-depth geological studies of each site, environmental studies identify risk factors and contribute to the preservation of the natural and rural environment. Danone Group owns two hotel properties in Evian and supports environmental friendly tourism.

The deadline for receipt of entries is 30 June 2007

More information and an entry form can be found at www.skal.org (go to ecotourism) or <http://www.skal.org/html/ecotourism/eco.asp?idioma=1>