



Action on responsible use of wild habitats

Background

Travel Operators for Tigers (TOFT) and TOFT India Wildlife Association are International organisations established by practitioners in wildlife tourism. Its numerous corporate members advocate and support best practices in tourism and recognise that nature tourism must become a vital tool in wildlife conservation and habitat restoration within India.

TOFT members include International tour operators and agents, Indian destination management companies, tourism services, park lodges and resorts.

TOFT has drawn up a code of conduct for visitors and for accommodation providers and participating ecofriendly lodges are awarded 'PUG' (Practices under Guidelines) Certification ratings. Parameters that are taken into account include local employment, local purchasing, operational practices for building, energy use and water, nature conservation activities, interpretation & guide training, co-operative community support and local cultural activities.

To date TOFT operates in 6 well known Tiger reserves and the PUG certification benchmark has been awarded to a number of lodges and resorts after a combination of self assessment, on site audit and visitor feedback has been received. In 2010 the PUG certification will be available to all lodges and resorts in wildlife areas.

The TOFT Wildlife Tourism Awards will highlight and reward best practice in the field and extend our role in advocacy, supporting and marketing best practice by bringing TOFT's work, its members work and other extraordinary initiatives we can all learn from - to a wider audience, both in India and abroad.

TOFT Wildlife Tourism Awards

Award Categories 2010

- ♥ **Most Inspirational Eco Lodge**
- ♥ **Best park Guide/Naturalist**
(also carries INR 15000 prize)
- ♥ **Best Park for Wildlife Tourism**
(also carries a prize INR 50000 worth of kit or equipment to be used in tiger protection/conservation)
- ♥ **Most Inspirational Destination Management Company for Wildlife tourism**
- ♥ **Best Tourist Related Community Initiative**
(also carries a prize of INR25000)
- ♥ **Best Wildlife and Tourism Initiative**
(also carries a prize of INR25000 towards equipment/services for the benefit of the community)

Awards – Eligibility

Each Award has separate eligibility criteria as detailed below:-

- A) **Most Inspirational Eco lodge** - The Most inspirational eco lodge must be an area associated with tiger watching* (see note below) and must predominantly cater for tourists who intend to watch wildlife within an Indian park. The lodge need not be a member of TOFT or accredited to the PUG Certification scheme but nonetheless must meet minimum PUG standards of a PUG audit.
-
- B) **Best Park Guide or Naturalist** - Open to a Park Guide or Naturalist. Must be working in, or for, a park that is recognised as a tiger habitat and must have worked there for at least 2 years prior to the closing date for entries.
-
- C) **Best Park for wildlife Tourism** - This category is open to any park that has tigers within its boundaries and where sightings have been documented in the 6 months prior to the closing date for nominations. The park does not have to be currently covered by TOFT, but must be able to highlight its efforts to work with and use tourism more effectively for conservation and support.
-
- D) **Most Inspirational Destination Management Company** - This award is only open to Destination Management Companies with a registered office in India and the company must have been a full TOFT member for at least 3 months prior to the closing date for entries. Its entry must be supported by at least 2 independent referees - both must be International Tour Operators who are accredited members of TOFT. The nominated Company itself must also have paid any outstanding subscriptions due to TOFT in full and prior to the closing date for final information.
-
- E) **Best Tourism Related Community Initiative** - Nominations are open to any community related tourist initiative connected with tourism in parks where there are tigers. The definition of what constitutes a Community Initiative will be decided at the absolute discretion of the judges but for general guidance it would be expected that ownership of the initiative would reside within the local community (5km radius of the project) and not involve commercial operations such as a tiger lodge(s) having a commercial interest of greater than 49%. Nominations must be supported by at least one lodge catering for tiger watching tourists and the lodge does not need to be part of TOFT.
-
- F) **Best Wildlife and Tourism Initiative**- (Note: does not need to be tiger related but needs to be capable of being applied in tiger areas) This is a very wide category intended to encourage innovative thinking around wildlife tourism in India. The projects need not be related to Tigers and only open to entrants within India.
-

Applications

Must be made on the official TOFT Awards Application form (see attached) with all information required completed and sent by email to awards@toftigers.org by 12th February 2010.

Judging Criteria

The initial judging of applications will be undertaken by a small expert committee combining experts in tourism and conservation, and a shortlist will be drawn up for the next round, with a short further presentation and justification being requested. Some categories will require two independent referees to be given.

The final judging panel will determine the winners, after referees are contacted by a judging panel of International experts. The Chairman's decision is final.

Judging Panel

The International Judging Panel of experts, will be drawn from a range of experiences and backgrounds in Tourism, Government, Business and Conservation, both from India and Abroad, overseen by a well respected Chairman of the panel.

Timetable

- ▶ Completed Entry Forms must be received by **Friday 12th February 2010**
- ▶ Short listed applicants will be notified by **Friday 12th March 2010**
- ▶ Final information must be received by **Thursday 1st April 2010**
- ▶ The Judges will convene **from 8th April 2010**
- ▶ The Winners and Runners Up will be announced on the **16th April 2010** at an award ceremony in Delhi

Rules

- 1) By entering the Awards the applicants agree to be bound by the rules.
- 2) The judges' decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into in relation to any short listing or judging decision.
- 3) The judges, in their absolute discretion, may decide not to make an award if they believe no entrant is of sufficient quality to meet the requirements of the Awards.
- 4) Applications must be made on the official TOFT Wildlife Tourism Awards Application Form.
- 5) Applicants may be asked to submit further information as part of the judging process, failure to provide this information within the timescale stipulated at the time of the request may invalidate the application. No correspondence will be entered into in relation to such a decision to invalidate an invitation.
- 6) In certain categories the judges will require the applicant to supply independent references, where such references are requested these must be completed in the format requested and provided within the timescale stipulated.
- 7) Connections and associations (eg financial, family relationships, employment, etc) with the nominee will not invalidate an application but must be declared on the initial application. Failure to declare such interest will invalidate an application.
- 8) Whilst information contained within application forms and assessments will be treated as far as possible as confidential, the organisers accept no responsibility for loss or damage should any information become public knowledge at any time.
- 9) Applicants agree that if they are short-listed this decision will be made public, together with outline details of their project. In addition, in some categories, a short film report may be made of the nominees and their project. The applicants agree to cooperate in such filming and to be filmed and that such film may be used to promote the Awards as the Organisers may decide. Such uses may include web, broadcast television, dvd, or other medium and may also be shown at the Awards.
- 10) Applicants consent to their images, trade marks, logos etc being made public in promotional material related to the Awards and this may include press, web, radio or broadcast.
- 11) Awards may be withdrawn in the event that information subsequently becomes available to show that information provided at the time of judging was incorrect or unavailable and that such information had it been available would have made the award inappropriate.
- 12) Winners of cash prizes agree to be bound by the conditions stipulated in the individual Awards in regards to acceptable uses for such cash prizes.
- 13) Where appropriate the Organisers may arrange for the money due in cash prizes to be paid only when appropriate invoices, and or, receipts are available, and or, that the organisers are satisfied that the goods, services etc to be provided to the person community, organisation, or group have in fact been supplied.
- 14) In the case of cash prizes the Organisers decision that the conditions described in Clause 10 have been fulfilled will be at the Organisers' absolute discretion and no correspondence on its decisions in regard to these clauses will be entered into.
- 15) No responsibility is accepted by the organisers for any application submitted by email but not received by the organisers. Applicants concerned about whether an application has been received have to make their own enquiries to ensure their applications have been received.
- 16) The Organisers can terminate one or more of the Awards if they see fit or shorten or curtail the award ceremony should circumstances prevail that do not allow it to continue.

Useful Addresses:-

TOFT India

26, Community Centre (II Floor),
East of Kailash,
New Delhi- 110065,
India. Tel +91 9810028849
Email :- awards@toftigers.org

TOFT UK

Glyn House
Westhill, Wincanton
Somerset UK BA9 9BY
Tel + 44 (0) 1963 824514
Email julian.matthews@toftigers.org

TOFT Wildlife Tourism Awards 2010 Application Form

Please use one form for each category for each nomination.

CATEGORY OF AWARD APPLIED FOR :

Your Name _____

Your Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

(inc full International access code)

(inc full International access code)

Full Name of the Nominee _____

(Please state the organisation, lodge, person or project wishing to be nominate)

Local Contact (if not known please leave blank) _____

Brief summary of the lodge, project or nominee. (approx 100 words)

Please explain why you wish to nominate this organisation, lodge, person, or project.

(Up to 500 words)

Please explain why you think the nominee or project is both sustainable and responsible.
100 words only.

Please detail any connection (position in organisation, family, relationship, etc) you have with the nominee or project. (All connections must be declared)

If you are nominating yourself, or your own lodge or organisation, please give the name and contact details of two independent people who will support your nomination.
(Note-They will be contacted separately for more information.)

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Referees will be required for all those nominations in the shortlist.

Signed _____ Date _____

Please send this signed application to arrive on or before Friday 12th February 2010 to:

TOFT 2010 Awards

TOFT India

26, Community Centre (II Floor), East of Kailash, New Delhi- 110065,

India. Tel +91 9810028849 Email :- awards@toftigers.org