

Terms and Conditions for the Malta Tourism Awards

1. Scope

The following are the Terms and Conditions for participation in the Malta Tourism Awards organised by the Malta Tourism Authority.

These Terms and Conditions are also available in the Maltese language. In the event of any discrepancy between the English and Maltese versions, the English version shall prevail.

2. Definitions

“MTA” means the Malta Tourism Authority.

“Awards” refers to the Malta Tourism Awards organised by the MTA and includes collectively each individual award, namely: the Responsible Tourism Development Award; the Tourism Worker of the Year Award; the Special Theme Recognition and; the Gozo Tourism Awards Recognition. The singular “Award” may refer to any of the above or to a specific one, as indicated by context.

“Awards Ceremony” means the ceremony organised by the MTA at which the results of the Malta Tourism Awards are announced.

“Eligible Business or Company” refers to an operation within the Maltese tourism industry which is actively and validly licensed (having fully paid all applicable fees) by MTA or by any other competent National Government entity, and/or carrying an active MTA Quality Assurance seal, at the time of submission of the Nomination Form.

An Eligible Business or Company may be an individual establishment or part of a consortium or group of companies.

“Applicant” means the individual representing an Eligible Business or Company, submitting a Nomination Form to nominate themselves or others for an Award, provided that the

eligibility requirements applicable to the relevant Award are satisfied.

“Entry and Closing Dates” refers to the Tourism Award dates published on the Malta Tourism Observatory website indicating the opening and closing dates for Nomination submissions.

“Malta Tourism Observatory” means the section of the MTA responsible for monitoring and steering the Maltese tourism industry to align with the MTA’s overarching Tourism strategy.

“Malta Tourism Awards” refers to the awards ceremony and respective process in the lead-up thereto, being organised and managed by the MTA in order to showcase and honour the best local tourism service providers as well as promote, encourage and reward tourism quality service in Malta.

“Micro-businesses” means businesses operated by one or a small number of individuals, with the applicable maximum number determined by the MTA on a case-by-case basis.

“Nomination” refers to the submission of the Nomination Form made by an Applicant that is to be completed using the Malta Tourism Observatory website.

“Nomination Form” means the online form to be completed and submitted via the Malta Tourism Observatory website as the entry submission for an Award.

“Nominee” refers to the business and/or the individual (as may be applicable, depending on the Award in question) who has been validly nominated for a selected Award.

“Project” means any initiative, measure, activity, programme, scheme, investment, development, improvement, innovation, intervention or other undertaking, whether tangible or intangible, in respect of which a Nominee has been nominated.

“Selection Committee” shall be a Committee specifically appointed by the MTA for the purpose of and to oversee the Malta Tourism Awards.

“Data-Supported Evaluation” means the component of the judging process that uses structured insights derived from publicly available feedback on Recognised Online Platforms, applied on a category basis and combined with the Selection Committee’s assessment.

“Recognised Online Platform” means a public, third-party service that follows an established, credible and standardised process for collecting and publishing guest feedback (e.g., star ratings and/or written reviews). Personal websites, private pages, and platforms without a credible review process are excluded from such definition.

“Official Profile” means the Nominee’s verified profile on a Recognised Online Platform that accurately represents the organisation being nominated.

“Data Evaluation Period” means online reviews/ratings dated 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026 (inclusive).

3. Submitting an Entry

The Applicant, and respective Eligible Business or Company on whose behalf they act, submitting an entry is agreeing to be bound by these Terms and Conditions set for the Malta Tourism Awards.

Only an Applicant acting on behalf of an Eligible Business or Company can submit a Nomination, and this by the relevant Closing Date as published on the Malta Tourism Observatory website.

4. Eligibility

Nominations for the Responsible Tourism Development Award must be related to a Project that has been completed during the year 2026 by an Eligible Business or Company focusing on incoming tourism. For this Award the Applicant must indicate whether the Nomination represents its own establishment, or whether this is on behalf of a consortium or group of companies. Any involved party needs to be an Eligible Business or Company. An Eligible Business or Company can only submit one Nomination.

An Eligible Business or Company that was previously the recipient of an Award, may not be nominated again for the same winning Project in consecutive years, unless the new submission relates to a substantially different Project.

Nominations for the Tourism Worker of the Year Award must be related to an employee's performance carried out during the year 2026 working in an Eligible Business or Company. Only an Eligible Business or Company can submit a nomination for this Award. Only one employee per Eligible Business or Company can be nominated. In the case of Micro-Businesses, Applicants are allowed to nominate themselves, at the discretion of the MTA. In the case of a travel and tourism operator, Applicants may nominate an employee from their own team but may also separately submit other Nominations to nominate one tourist guide and/or one domestic transport operator, with whom they work.

A two-year restriction will apply to winners of the Tourism Worker of the Year Award; therefore, the same individual may not be re-nominated during this period.

Nominations for the Special Theme Recognition must be related to initiatives carried out over the past three years (2024 – 2026) in promoting growth in Faith and Religious Tourism. Nominations can be submitted by:

- Licensed Tourism Operators,
- Registered NGOs,
- Public Entities,
- Other organisations and individual/s **not** involved in any commercial activity related to the theme.

The Selection Committee reserves the right in its sole discretion to disqualify any Nomination entry in relation to which the MTA has reason to believe that these Terms and Conditions have been breached, including but not limited to by a breach of any of the eligibility requirements or the engagement in any unlawful, fraudulent, misleading, deceptive, or other improper misconduct that may jeopardise the fair and proper conduct of the Malta Tourism Awards.

Prior to any disqualification, the Applicant shall be notified of the grounds and afforded a reasonable opportunity to make representations to the Selection Committee.

The Selection Committee accepts no responsibility for any Nominations lost in transit or not received by the Closing Date due to technical disruptions or any other reason beyond the control of the MTA.

Nominees, be they individuals or entity/company representatives, depending on the Award in question, will be extended an invitation to attend the Awards Ceremony.

The MTA reserves the right to decide on the precise number of invitations depending on logistical constraints.

5. Entry into the Awards

By submitting a Nomination Form for the Responsible Tourism Development Award or for the Special Theme Recognition, the Applicant confirms that it is duly authorised to submit the Nomination Form on behalf of all parties associated with the Project referenced in the submission.

By submitting a Nomination Form for the Tourism Worker of the Year Award, the Applicant confirms that it is duly authorised to submit the Nomination Form on behalf of all parties associated with the Nominee's employment and the employee.

The Applicant must have all the necessary rights and authorisations required by law or other obligations by which it may be bound, to submit the Nomination Form and shall be responsible for ensuring that all the information submitted is true, current and complete, up to the date of submission.

AI-generated content as well as any support offered through the Chatbot during the application process is to be utilised solely as a guidance tool and should not be relied upon as the sole source of factual information. Independent confirmation by the Applicant is expected and required.

All relevant details are to be submitted in the Nomination Form at application stage. Nomination Forms which are not duly filled in will not be considered.

Applicants have the facility to save their Nomination Forms as draft for further editing prior to submitting.

Any Nomination Forms still saved as draft versions following the closing date will not be considered as finalised by the MTA, unless formally submitted, and will not be included in the evaluation process.

If a Nomination Form is submitted more than once, only the latest submission received before the Closing Date will be evaluated.

Any claim included in the Nomination Form requires appropriate evidence and the uploading of supporting material is mandatory.

Information submitted as part of the Nomination needs to focus on initiatives and/or performance relating to the year 2026. All supporting material and evidence needs to be appropriately and correctly dated.

Additional data or information may be requested of the Applicant by and at the discretion of the Selection Committee during the selection process.

All information provided in the Nomination Form will be treated with the strictest confidence.

No information will be disclosed to third parties, other than those involved in the Awards-selection process, without the prior written consent of the Applicant.

By submitting a Nomination Form, the Applicant grants the MTA a perpetual, non-exclusive, royalty-free, non-transferable and non-sublicensable licence to reproduce, display and otherwise use the Nominee's respective company logo (if and where applicable), solely for the purpose of administering, publicising and promoting the Malta Tourism Awards, in any media and in the form provided. The Applicant represents and warrants that it owns, or has obtained all rights, permissions and authorisations necessary to grant this licence to the MTA, and that the MTA's use of the logo in accordance with this clause will not infringe any third-party rights.

The MTA may also use the Nominee's name and photo solely for the same purpose and period. The logo and photo shall be used in the exact form as provided by or on behalf of the Nominee.

Any use beyond this scope shall require the Nominee's prior written consent.

6. Entry and Closing Dates

The Selection Committee reserves the right to extend or vary the entry period if required.

The Entry and Closing Dates will be announced on the Awards page of the Malta Tourism Observatory website:

www.mtobservatory.org/awards

7. Selection

Applicants agree that with respect to the Awards selection, they shall be bound by and shall abide by the decisions of the Selection Committee which will be appointed by the MTA, will be composed of representatives of the local tourism industry and other public entities and members of which will sign a confidentiality agreement and will be expected to be as fair and transparent as possible in all choices made regarding the Awards.

For the Responsible Tourism Development Award, there will be one winner and one runner-up per eligible sector. Only one Project can be submitted per Eligible Business or Company for this entry. The Project must be implemented for the direct benefit of the establishment's tourism facility or service, and it must be grounded in actions, outcomes, or initiatives completed during the year 2026.

In cases where the Nominee forms part of an international or foreign parent company, the Nomination must clearly demonstrate the direct contribution of the local representative. Any Projects found to have been carried out solely by a foreign mother company, without meaningful involvement or contribution from the local establishment, shall not be considered valid for the purposes of these Awards. Applicants must provide evidence that

the Project reflects the actions, investment, or effort of the local entity itself and not driven by the foreign mother company or any foreign client.

The Awards assessment will incorporate evaluation by the Selection Committee as well as Data-Supported Evaluation of reviews. Nominees are ranked within their award category using category-appropriate metrics, then combined with the Selection Committee's assessment to determine final outcomes.

High-level Data-Supported Evaluation shall focus on:

- Official Presence – having a verified and accessible profile on Recognised Online Platforms;
- Volume and Consistency of Feedback – the number and regularity of reviews received;
- Star Rating – the overall average rating adjusted for review count;
- Responsiveness – how promptly and constructively guest reviews are addressed;
- Sentiment – the tone and detail in visitor feedback that captures the full guest experience.

Specific calculation settings and weightings for each sector are set in the methodology adopted by the MTA.

Use of Third-Party Data & Integrity:

Only reviews within the data evaluation period will count, using official profiles verified through a data integrity process.

Duplicate, unofficial, or manipulated profiles or reviews will be excluded from the Data-Supported Evaluation, and suspected review manipulation will result in score adjustments or

disqualification. The MTA is not liable for any third-party platform issues and defects, and data review edits or deletions made after the Closing Date will not be taken into consideration during the evaluation of the 2026 Awards.

For the Tourism Worker of the Year Award there will be one winner and one runner-up per eligible sector. Only one employee Nomination may be submitted by an Eligible Business or Company for this Award, and the Nominee must fall under one of the sectors permitted for this category. The Nomination must be based on the employee's performance, achievements, or contributions during the year under review, specifically the year 2026.

A Travel and Tourism operator, being an Eligible Business or Company, may nominate an employee from within their own team and can also submit other Nominations to nominate one **tourist guide and/or one domestic transport operator** with whom they work.

With respect to the latter type of Nominations, given that Destination Management Companies work with a pool of tourist guides and domestic transport operators, the name of the Applicant will remain strictly confidential and will not be disclosed at any stage of the process, including during the Awards Ceremony.

Whilst the winning employee for the Tourism Worker of the Year Award will receive a trophy, their immediate team will benefit from a team-building session, providing an opportunity for the team to celebrate their colleague's achievement, thereby fostering growth and collaboration.

*A maximum of 10 participants for each category winner can benefit from the team-building activity being offered.

In the case of Micro-Businesses, Applicants are allowed to nominate themselves for the Tourism Worker of the Year Award. Nominations must include supporting reviews and testimonials from clients and/or stakeholders to ensure fair recognition of their efforts and accomplishments. Winning employees from Micro-Businesses will be rewarded with a trophy and an industry-specific training opportunity to assist in their Continuous Professional Development.

The Selection Committee members, reserve the right to allocate no award in any or all categories or sectors if, in their opinion, all the Nominations submitted are of insufficient merit.

The Selection Committee's decisions are final, without prejudice to any rights of review or appeal available under applicable law.

There will be no private communication between the individual Selection Committee members and Applicants, Nominees or any of both their representatives regarding judging criteria, process, and/or decisions. The Selection Committee reserves the right to officially establish communication with Applicants should there be the necessity to hold interviews with shortlisted Nominees during the selection process or request to go on-site visits. The evaluation process is monitored by a notary.

The Selection Process will commence after the Closing Date.

8. Awards

The Malta Tourism Awards and their respective sectors consist of the following:

Category A:

Sectors

Responsible Tourism Development Award

Nominations can be submitted in one of the following categories:

- ~ Responsible Tourism Development: Best English Language Learning
 - ~Responsible Tourism Development: Best Diving Centre
 - ~Responsible Tourism Development: Best Domestic Transport (including Land and Sea)
 - ~ Responsible Tourism Development: Best Visitor Attraction *
 - ~ Responsible Tourism Development: Best Travel and Tourism (Incoming Travel Agencies, Destination Management Companies and Excursion Organisers)
 - ~ Responsible Tourism Development: Best Catering Establishment
 - ~ Responsible Tourism Development: Best Accommodation (<75 bedrooms)
 - ~Responsible Tourism Development: Best Accommodation (>75 bedrooms)
- * Applicants will need to tick the relevant field in the Nomination Form to indicate whether the **Visitor Attraction** is privately owned or publicly owned.

Criteria

Nominations must address:

- **Smart Tourism and Digitalisation; and/or**
- **Human Resources Training and Upskilling; and/or**
- **Sustainability and Decarbonisation; and/or**
- **Innovation and Future Readiness.**

It is important to note that a non-applicable response to any of the above criteria will be penalised with zero marks. Hence, Nominations that satisfy multiple criteria will obtain a higher overall score and ranking.

Whereas the above criteria will be evaluated by a Selection Committee, there is another evaluation criterion which will be assessed through an automated model focusing on **Digital Presence** of Eligible Businesses or Companies who are nominated under the category of the Responsible Tourism Development Award.

Category B:

Sectors

Tourism Worker of the Year Award

The following sectors are eligible for nomination:

~ Tourism Worker of the Year: English Language Learning (Schools / Host Families)

~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Diving Centre

~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Domestic Transport (including Land and Sea) #

~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Visitor Attraction*

~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Travel and Tourism Services (Incoming Travel Agencies,

Destination Management Companies and Excursion Organisers)

~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Tourist Guides#

~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Catering

~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Accommodation (<75 bedrooms)

~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Accommodation (>75 bedrooms)

* Applicants will need to tick the relevant field in the Nomination Form to indicate whether the **Visitor Attraction** is privately owned or publicly owned.

#Travel and Tourism Services operators can submit Nominations under the Domestic Transport Sector and the Tourist Guide Sector respectively apart from Nominations in their own category.

Criteria

Nominations that satisfy multiple criteria from the following list, will receive a higher ranking:

1. The worker has shown exemplary performance in daily operations in 2026;
2. The worker has exhibited exceptional customer service skills, going above and beyond to ensure positive experiences for tourists and visitors in 2026;
3. The worker has demonstrated leadership, creativity and teamwork in 2026;
4. The worker carried out commendable actions, going beyond the call of duty both within the workplace and through external contributions such as participation in Corporate Social Responsibility programmes, voluntary work with registered NGOs, or other notable initiatives in 2026.

9. Recognition

Category C:

Scope

Special Theme Recognition

This category recognises and celebrates newly emerging, rapidly expanding segments within the Maltese tourism offer, giving prominence to innovative, niche areas that contribute to the diversification and enrichment of Malta's tourism landscape.

Such segments may include new tourism products, specialised services, unique experiences or novel approaches to hospitality

and destination promotion. The scope of this category is to shine a spotlight on emerging niches within the tourism industry and not serve as a competition with an ultimate winner. Recognition will be given to all those who would have contributed to the particular niche.

The Special Theme for 2026 is 'Faith and Religious Tourism'.

Eligibility

To be eligible, Nominees must demonstrate sustained and measurable growth over a period of three consecutive years (2024-2026), supported by clear evidence of initiatives.

Nominations for this category can be received from entities directly involved in pushing forward the specific theme under review, particularly to tourists, namely:

- Licensed Tourism Operators
- Registered NGOs,
- Public Entities,
- Other organisations and individual/s **not** directly involved in any commercial activity related to the theme.

Criteria

In its evaluation, the Selection Committee will consider the originality and distinctiveness of the tourism segment, its contribution to the competitiveness of the Maltese tourism industry and the extent to which it addresses growing market demand while delivering a positive visitor experience.

All eligible Nominations in this category will be presented with a certificate and the nominated initiatives will be highlighted during the Awards Ceremony, which will serve as a platform to celebrate this Special Theme.

Category D:

This recognition is dedicated exclusively to the persons or entities formally announced as winners of the Gozo Tourism Awards by the Gozo Tourism Association. The winners will be presented with a Certificate of Recognition during the Awards Ceremony.

10. Awards Evaluation Criteria and Weightings

Category A: Responsible Tourism Development Award

Nominations for each of the following:

~ Responsible Tourism Development: Best English Language Learning

~Responsible Tourism Development: Best Diving Centre

~Responsible Tourism Development: Best Domestic Transport (including Land and Sea)

~ Responsible Tourism Development: Best Visitor Attraction

~ Responsible Tourism Development: Best Travel and Tourism (Incoming Travel Agencies, Destination Management Companies and Excursion Organisers)

~ Responsible Tourism Development: Best Catering Establishment

~ Responsible Tourism Development: Best Accommodation (<75 bedrooms)

~Responsible Tourism Development: Best Accommodation (>75 bedrooms)

Criteria Table

Criteria Information Evaluated from Nomination Form	Question - Maximum Score
Description of Business	Q1 - 5
Overall Quality of the Initiative	Q2 - 10
Effective Implementation	Q3 - 10
Impact on Smart Tourism & Digitalisation	Q4a - 5
Impact on Human Resources Training & Upskilling	Q4b - 5
Impact on Sustainability & Decarbonisation	Q4c - 5
Impact on Innovation and Future Readiness	Q4d - 5
Uploaded Files and Presentation	Q5 - 5
Digital Presence	Q6 - 5
Total Maximum Score – 55	

Specific examples of initiatives undertaken in 2026 need to be submitted.

Category B: Tourism Worker of the Year Award Nominations in the following sectors:

~ Tourism Worker of the Year: English Language Learning (Schools / Host Families)

- ~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Diving Centre
- ~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Domestic Transport (including Land and Sea)
- ~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Visitor Attraction
- ~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Travel and Tourism Services (Incoming Travel Agencies, Destination Management Companies and Excursion Organisers)
- ~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Tourist Guides
- ~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Catering
- ~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Accommodation (<75 bedrooms)
- ~ Tourism Worker of the Year: Accommodation (>75 bedrooms)

Criteria Table

Criteria Information Evaluated from Nomination Form	Question - Maximum Score
Exemplary performance in daily operations	Q1 - 15
Exceptional Customer Service skills	Q2 - 15
Leadership, creativity and teamwork	Q3 - 15
Commendable actions possibly including CSR programmes/voluntary work	Q4 - 10
Uploaded Files	Q5 - 5
Total Maximum Score – 60	

Specific examples of skills demonstrated in 2026 need to be submitted.

11. Governing Law and Dispute Resolution

These Terms and Conditions shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of Malta. Any dispute arising out of or in connection with these Terms and Conditions shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Malta, without prejudice to the right of any person to seek administrative review in accordance with applicable law.

12. Final Stage and Announcement of Winners

All eligible Nominees will be invited to the Awards Ceremony which will take place in May 2027. The Selection Committee will shortlist a number of Nominees from each Category as finalists. The winner and runner-up from each Category will be announced during the Awards Ceremony.

Applicants may be expected to collaborate by providing any required information that may be needed by the Selection Committee. They may also be required to attend an interview with the Selection Committee.

Nominees and Nominations that are considered as ineligible will be informed via email.