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2026 ICRT Responsible Tourism Awards worldwide winners announced

The restoration of more than 200 hectares of mangrove forest in the Dominican Republic, large-scale rewilding and species reintroduction in Saudi Arabia, and innovative cultural experiences in Japan are among the initiatives recognised in the 2026 ICRT Responsible Tourism Awards worldwide.

The awards celebrate organisations using tourism to create positive change for people, places and the environment, with winners demonstrating how tourism can support local economies, protect and restore nature, strengthen cultural identity and help communities adapt to climate change.

Chair of the judges, Professor Harold Goodwin, founder of ICRT global said: “The scale and innovation of this year's entries has impressed the judges. We have seen tourism being used in very different ways to address some of the challenges facing destinations and communities, from restoring ecosystems and protecting wildlife to creating local economic opportunities and keeping cultural traditions alive. These are not simply aspirations; they are examples of people taking responsibility for the impacts of tourism and demonstrating what can be achieved.”

The winners of the 2026 Responsible Tourism Awards worldwide are:

Adapting to climate change Responsible Tourism Award

Gold - [Vegan Hospitality & Tourism Worldwide](#), USA

Vegan Hospitality & Tourism Worldwide is setting formal benchmarks for the vegan guest experience and certifying properties that meet them, helping to make hospitality more inclusive while improving food resilience. The judges recognised this contribution to resilience and adaptation as climate change increasingly affects food and beverage supply chains.

Championing cultural diversity Responsible Tourism Award

Gold – [Kurihara Tourism Network](#) Japan

Kurihara Tourism Network brings together local communities, farmers, artisans and tourism businesses to keep Kurihara's living culture alive through more than 100 experiences. The judges were impressed by the way tourism enables local people to share their culture in their own words while visitors participate respectfully, creating local pride and opportunities for cultural transmission.

Gold – [Ramen Cooking Tokyo](#) Japan

Ramen Cooking Tokyo enables visitors to cook authentic Japanese food alongside local hosts rather than professional chefs. The judges praised its peer-to-peer approach, which removes the traditional power difference between host and visitor and creates opportunities for genuine conversation and cultural connection. More than 2,000 guests from 48 countries have participated since 2024.

Silver – [Eco-Museum](#) Belize

Eco-Museum Belize celebrates Maya, Baymen and Mestizo cultures through a “museum without walls”, with local residents acting as curators. The judges were impressed by the way communities decide which elements of their shared heritage are important, recognising an approach that places living culture, intangible heritage and community ownership at the heart of tourism.

Local economic benefit Responsible Tourism Award

Gold – [Kyoto By the Sea](#), Japan

Kyoto by the Sea works with more than 50 small businesses and local enterprises to bring authentic Japanese crafts, food and experiences to market. Travel trade sales increased from ¥12 million in 2023 to ¥79.6 million in 2025. The judges praised its ability to generate economic growth while supporting small communities and endangered cultures and managing visitor numbers.

Gold – [Beyond the Valley](#), Pakistan

Beyond the Valley has embedded Responsible Tourism across its small-group adventure operations in Pakistan, covering local employment, fair wages, local purchasing, environmental protection, cultural integrity and community development. The judges were impressed by the breadth of its approach and its commitment to sharing its sustainability practices with partners and others.

Silver – [Jinshan Exploring](#), Taiwan

Jinshan Exploring turns local food, skills, stories and spaces into bookable tourism experiences through its “King Mountain Roaming” brand. The judges praised the way local knowledge and products are placed at the centre of tourism, ensuring local people participate in and benefit from tourism and creating wider economic benefits for the destination.

Nature positive Responsible Tourism Awards

Gold – Royal Commission for AlUla, Saudi Arabia

Royal Commission for AlUla has adopted a nature-first approach, with more than half of its 25,000 km² area designated as nature reserves. More than 500,000 trees have been planted and over 1,500 animals released in 2025. The judges praised its collaboration with scientists and conservation organisations and its commitment to putting nature and wildlife at the centre of large-scale tourism development.

Gold – [Exodus Adventure Travels](#), Worldwide

Exodus Adventure Travel]is reducing its impacts on nature while supporting restoration through rewilding, ocean habitat protection and Citizen Science Departures. It has also achieved an 85% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions since 2019. The judges praised its recognition that climate action alone is not enough and its efforts to engage travellers in protecting and restoring the places they visit.

Silver – [Red Sea Global](#), Saudi Arabia

Red Sea Global has developed SIIG, a science-based methodology for measuring net conservation gains through identifying risks, implementing conservation action and measuring results. The judges recognised the clarity and practicality of the approach and its potential to provide a replicable way of measuring conservation outcomes within large-scale tourism development.

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Silver – [Six Senses Fiji](#), Fiji

Six Senses Fiji resort helping conserve the Fijian crested iguana through habitat restoration, invasive species removal and predator management. After finding just 17 iguanas in the resort area, it established an additional population by translocating 15 animals to neighbouring Qalito Island. The judges applauded its decision to move beyond protecting the species on resort land to supporting its wider conservation.

Silver – [TIDE Tours](#), Belize

TIDE Tours uses tourism revenue to support conservation, while training local guides and creating livelihoods. Despite receiving fewer visitors, it increased gross income by 6.1%, accommodation revenue by 25.2% and net profit by 5.3% between 2023 and 2024. The

judges praised its shift towards higher-value, longer-duration experiences and its ability to combine conservation with commercial resilience.

Regenerative Responsible Tourism Award

Gold – [TUI Forest](#) Dominican Republic

TUI Forest Dominican Republic is restoring more than 200 hectares of mangrove forest while protecting an area of over 92,000 hectares. More than 3.2 million trees have been planted and 72 jobs created or maintained. The judges recognised it as a highly replicable example of regenerative tourism, demonstrating how tourism can support ecological renewal while creating employment and benefiting local communities.

Silver – [Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort](#), Aruba

Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort is regenerating its natural environment through reforestation, native planting and sustainable landscape management, while involving guests in conservation activities. With 97% year-round occupancy and a 63% repeat guest rate, the judges recognised its commercial success and praised its whole-system approach linking conservation, climate action, local sourcing, employee wellbeing and community partnerships.

One to Watch – [Tropicalia](#), Dominican Republic

Tropicalia is a tourism development scheduled to open in 2027, but its social and environmental programmes began almost 20 years earlier. Fundación Tropicalia works with almost 2,000 community members each year and has planted more than 300,000 trees, shrubs and ground coverings. The judges considered it an outstanding and potentially unique example of putting social and environmental responsibility in place before tourism begins.

One to Watch – [Untamed Escapes](#), Australia

Untamed Escapes develops small-group journeys around nature, wildlife, local food and living culture, working closely with Aboriginal tourism businesses and Traditional Custodians. It also supports ecological restoration and conservation. The judges were impressed by the scale of its ambition and commitment to long-term relationships, recognising its potential to deliver significant regenerative impacts as the business develops.

The judges award citations can be read in full [here](#)

The judges of the Responsible Tourism Awards 2026 worldwide were chaired by Emeritus Professor Harold Goodwin, managing director of the Responsible Tourism Partnership and founder ICRT global. The judging panel included Jane Ashton, board director, ICRT global Eleanor Cox, sustainability executive, DERTOUR, Ruth Crichton, ICRT Southern Africa Chair and The Long Run, Yashin Dujon, executive director at the Belize Audubon Society, Karen Edwards, Author and Writer, Tiomóid Foley, climate action manager business development, VisitScotland, Carol Hay, ICRT global special advisor and McKenzie Gayle,

Debbie Hindle chair ICRT global, and Jane McFadzean, senior director global sustainability, Trip.com.

The worldwide regional awards will be fifth Responsible Tourism Awards to be announced this year and gold winners will automatically then compete for a Global Responsible Tourism Award sponsored by the [Belize Tourism Board](#). Gold winners from the worldwide awards will compete against contenders from gold winners in Latin America, Africa, Europe, the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia. The winners of the Global Responsible Tourism Awards will be announced on [Monday 2 November](#).

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For further information contacts and images

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