

Report
Virtual Meeting of the Senior Officials from Tourism Ministries/Departments of D-8 member states to discuss the Selection Criteria of the “D-8 Tourism City of the Year”, on 20 March 2024

The Meeting of the Senior Officials from Tourism Ministries/Departments of D-8 member states took place virtually on March 20, 2024 to discuss selection criteria for "D-8 Tourism City of the Year Award, Initiative.

Ambassador Isiaka Abdulqadir Imam, Secretary-General, D-8 Secretariat, chaired the meeting, which was attended by Senior officials from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Türkiye. Please find the list of participants attached as **Annex I**.

Agenda Item I - Statement by the D-8 Secretary General

Ambassador Isiaka Abdulqadir Imam, the Secretary General of the D-8 delivered his opening remarks. He provided a historical perspective on the initiative of the D-8 Tourism City of the Year Award. The statement is attached as **Annex II**.

Agenda Item 3 - Discussion on the proposed Draft Selection Criteria on “D-8 City of the Year Award”

The Secretariat presented the draft selection criteria for discussion among the Senior Officials. The following was agreed, after discussions:

Timeline update:

- The meeting discussed and revised the timeline proposed in the Concept Note (updated concept note is attached as Annex III)

Criteria Indicators and Scoring Mechanism:

- To ensure transparency and consistency in the evaluation process, clear indicators need to be developed for each criterion. These indicators, along with a scoring mechanism, will be established by the Secretariat and shared with all member states. The indicators will serve as guidelines for assessing proposals against each criterion, facilitating fair and objective evaluation.

Inclusion of External Representatives:

- In order to enhance transparency and broaden perspectives in the selection process, the Award Jury or Evaluation Body will be established and will ideally include representatives from outside the D-8 countries such as UN Tourism and World Travel & Tourism Council. These external representatives will bring diverse viewpoints and expertise, contributing to a more comprehensive and impartial assessment of proposals.
- Each member state will nominate a single city for the award.
- The Secretariat will distribute the revised matrix for member states to provide comments and views within one week.

Closing:

The participants expressed their gratitude to the Secretariat for organizing the meeting and commended their excellent work. On behalf of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ahmar Ismail, Director I at the Secretariat, extended his thanks to the participants for their valuable and substantive contributions to the meeting.

Tourism
Senior Officials meeting
To discuss 'Tourism City of the Year' award
20 March 2024, held virtually

Bangladesh	Abu Tahir Muhammad Zaber, Chief Executive Officer, Bangladesh Tourism Board,	zaber1967@gmail.com
Bangladesh	Mohibul Islam Deputy Director (Marketing and Branding) Bangladesh Tourism Board	
Bangladesh	Sanjeeda Sharmin Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Bangladesh	sanjeedasharmin24@gmail.com
Indonesia	Dlah Martini Paham Deputy of Resources and Interinstitutional Relation, Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia	paham@indonesia.travel
Iran	Ms. Farah Nejad, Expert of Regional Organization, Ministry of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Iran	Sobhansina8188@gmail.com
Malaysia	Fakhirah Matahab & Lionel Daraup International Affairs Branch Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture, Malaysia	multidpl@motac.gov.my
Nigeria	Abdulrahman Mulikat Tourism Officer, Federal Ministry of Tourism Nigeria	olaoluwabolanle@yahoo.com
Nigeria	Temitope Oyedele. Asst. Chief Tourism Officer. Federal Ministry of Tourism. Nigeria.	temioshinowo@gmail.com
Pakistan	Aftab ur Rehman Rana Managing Director, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation	md@tourism.gov.pk

**STATEMENT BY THE D-8 SECRETARY-GENERAL, AMBASSADOR
ISIAKA ABDULQADIR IMAM, ON THE OCCASION OF THE SENIOR
OFFICIALS MEETING OF THE D-8 TOURISM MINISTRIES /
DEPARTMENTS TO DISCUSS THE SELECTION CRITERIA OF THE D-
8 TOURISM CITY OF THE YEAR AWARD, 20 MARCH 2024,
ISTANBUL**

**Esteemed Senior Officials,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I extend a warm welcome to each of you to this pivotal gathering, convened to deliberate upon the proposed selection criteria for the initiative of D-8 Tourism City of the Year Award. This initiative was initially broached at the Third D-8 Ministerial Meeting on Tourism, convened in Bhurban, Muree, Pakistan, on August 4-5, 2023.

In accordance with the directives and counsel of our esteemed Ministers, the Secretariat diligently formulated a draft concept note outlining the proposal for the D-8 Tourism City of the Year Award. This draft was subsequently shared with member states for their valuable feedback and review. Furthermore, recognizing the significance of collaborative input, the Secretariat organized an expert meeting of the tourism ministries/departments of member states on March 7, 2024, to deliberate upon the proposed concept note.

During this expert meeting, representatives from member states, including Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Türkiye, actively engaged and provided constructive suggestions and recommendations. These inputs were thoughtfully integrated into the text of the proposed concept note by the D-8 Secretariat.

It was also unanimously agreed upon during the meeting that the Secretariat would circulate the selection criteria matrix for member states' feedback, and a senior official meeting, scheduled for March 20, 2024, would be convened to finalize the draft selection criteria. Once finalized, member states will be

invited to submit their nominations for the inaugural "D-8 Tourism City of the Year Award."

I urge this esteemed gathering to engage in comprehensive discussions to refine and finalize the proposed criteria, thereby facilitating the implementation of this significant initiative. It is our firm belief that this endeavor will not only bolster tourism, cultural exchange, and trade activities but also foster harmony among member states.

In conclusion, let us collectively endeavor to pave the way for the successful implementation of the D-8 Tourism City of the Year Award, a beacon of excellence and cooperation within our esteemed organization.

Thank you for your attention.

Concept Note for the D-8 Tourism City of the Year Award

Introduction:

The Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D8) has recognized the vital role that tourism sector plays in fostering economic development and cultural exchange among member countries. In line with this commitment, the Third D-8 Ministerial Meeting on Tourism, convened in Murree, Bhurban, Pakistan from 4 to 5 August 2023, adopted a Declaration outlining the establishment of the "D-8 Tourism City of the Year". This aims to recognize and promote outstanding achievements and innovations in the tourism sector within D-8 member cities.

Objectives:

The primary objectives of selection of the D-8 Tourism City of the Year are as follows:

- **Promotion of Tourism Excellence:** To acknowledge and promote cities within the D-8 member countries that have demonstrated excellence, innovation, and sustainable practices in the tourism sector.
- **Cultural Exchange and Cooperation:** To encourage cultural exchange and cooperation among D-8 member countries by highlighting cities that have successfully enhanced cross-cultural understanding and collaboration through tourism.
- **Economic Development:** To recognize cities that have effectively utilized tourism as a catalyst for economic development, job creation, and poverty alleviation.

Criteria for Selection:

The selection of the D-8 Tourism City of the Year will be based on a comprehensive set of criteria reflecting the diverse aspects of a city's tourism performance. The Secretariat wishes to suggest that the criteria for selection could include the following seven criteria:

- i. **Tourism Infrastructure:** Assessment of the city's tourism-related infrastructure, including transportation, accommodation, and other essential facilities.
- ii. **Sustainability:** Evaluation of sustainable practices in tourism, such as eco-friendly initiatives, conservation efforts, and community involvement.
- iii. **Cultural Heritage Preservation:** Recognition of cities that have effectively preserved and promoted their cultural heritage through tourism activities.
- iv. **Innovation and Technology:** Consideration of cities that have embraced innovative technologies and practices to enhance the tourist experience and promote tourism development.
- v. **Tourist Safety and Security:** Evaluation of measures taken to ensure the safety and security of tourists, including the implementation of effective emergency response systems.
- vi. **Tourism Promotion and Marketing:** Recognition of cities that have demonstrated excellence in promoting their tourism offerings through effective marketing strategies.

- vii. **Cross-Cultural Engagement:** Assessment of efforts to foster cross-cultural understanding and engagement, including initiatives that promote cultural exchange and cooperation among D-8 member states.
- viii. **Planned Events and Activities:** Prepare list of Tourism events such as exhibition, tourism fairs, and film festivals in the nominated D-8 Tourism City of the year (proposed by Pakistan).
- ix. **Social, Cultural, Civil Impacts:** Recognition of mid-long terms social, cultural and civil impacts, if the city in question would be titled as D-8 Tourism City of the year award (proposed by Pakistan).

Selection Process:

The selection process for the D-8 Tourism City of the Year will involve a rigorous evaluation by senior official's/expert panel composed of representatives from the Tourism Ministries of each D-8 Member State **and experts appointed from the private sector/tourism industry of each D-8 Member State** (highlighted text proposed by Malaysia). The panel will consider detailed submissions from candidate cities, which may include video presentations as well as a comprehensive dossier specified by selection criteria.

The selected city will be officially acknowledged and launched as the "D-8 Tourism City of the Year" during the next Ministerial Meeting on Tourism.

In view of the foregoing, the Secretariat wishes to suggest that the senior official's/expert panel composed of representatives from the Tourism Ministries of each D-8 Member State should convene as soon as possible for the following:

- i. Discuss and agree on the criteria for the D-8 Tourism City of the Year for 2025, which will be launched by the Senior Officials Meeting.
- ii. Discuss and agree on the selection process of D-8 Tourism City of the Year for 2025.
- iii. Discuss and agree on the expected roles / responsibilities of the D-8 Tourism City of the Year.
- iv. Propose a date for the selection of the D8 City of the Year for 2025.

Timeline:

The Secretariat wishes to suggest the following timeline for the establishment of the D-8 Tourism City of the Year Award.

- **March 11, 2024:** The Secretariat to share the proposed selection criteria.
- **March 20, 2024:** Senior Official Meeting will be held virtually to discuss and finalize the selection criteria.
- **March 30, 2024:** Circulation of selection criteria by the Secretariat (based on the input received by member states)
- **April 3, 2024:** Receipt of comments from member states (if any)

30 June, 2024: Receipt of dossiers (including video presentations as well as introduction of the nominated cities based on the selection criteria) through Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the member state.

01 July- 31 July, 2024: Meeting(s) of the Senior Officials' group to finally select the D-8 tourism city of the year. UN Tourism and World Travel and Tourism Council to be invited during the selection meeting.

- **Third/Fourth quarter of 2024:** Meeting of the Senior Officials of Tourism of the D8 member states will discuss and finalize the suggested nomination. This nomination will be adopted and announced by the subsequent Ministerial Meeting.

The D-8 Tourism City of the Year award is anticipated to inspire healthy competition among member cities, driving continuous improvement in the tourism sector and fostering stronger ties among D-8 countries.