



**VIENTIANE - September 28:** Ecotourism Laos was declared the winner of Planeta.com’s annual Ecotourism Spotlight Award for the third consecutive year with 41.3% of the vote in an announcement to underscore best practices from government institutions during yesterday’s World Tourism Day.



In presenting the award, Planeta.com noted that the Lao National Tourism Administration (LNTA) continually revises [www.ecotourismlaos.com](http://www.ecotourismlaos.com), which shows how any good website must be regularly updated to maintain its effectiveness.

Ecotourism Laos recently overhauled its growing activities section, expanded the monthly “What’s New” page and added a “Virtual Tour of Laos”. A hotel booking engine along with greater use of Web 2.0 tools are in the pipeline.

Thavipheth Oula, Deputy Director of the LNTA’s Department of Planning and Cooperation, thanked Planeta.com for establishing the Ecotourism Spotlight Award and offered a special thanks to everyone that supported Ecotourism Laos and the other sites nominated this year.

Mr Thavipheth added: “We are very happy to have the honor of being awarded the 2009 Ecotourism Spotlight Award because of the recognition it brings to our efforts in promoting Lao PDR as a top ecotourism destination in Asia.”

The Ecotourism Spotlight Award was developed to create incentives for government’s working to support ecotourism and responsible travel, and is open to government websites that engage locals and visitors about ecotourism and responsible travel.

Planeta.com founder Ron Mader said: “Locals and visitors are seeking ways to interact via ecotourism experiences,” and added, “The 2009 Award nominees use the Web in highly creative and innovative ways that engage locals and visitors and inspire us all.”

He said that competition was particularly strong this year as many government sites have spent considerable time and resources improving their coverage of ecotourism. Steven Schipani, Senior Advisor to the LNTA notes that the LNTA has put a lot of resources into refining the site’s content in 2008-09, and a range of new information and services will be available in 2010.”

Other nominees included ExploreMekong.com’s Responsible Tourism Guide to the Mekong, the Quito Visitors Bureau and Failte Ireland.



Ecotourism Laos is an official site of the LNTA, and was created and is maintained with the support of the LNTA-Asian Development Bank's Greater Mekong Subregion Sustainable Tourism Development Project.

**For more information**

Visit: [www.ecotourism.com](http://www.ecotourism.com)

[www.planeta.com](http://www.planeta.com)