

OPERATOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2024 GUIDELINES



About the TECNZ Awards

Each year, the Tourism Export Council of New Zealand (TECNZ) presents its “Operator of the Year” awards to outstanding tourism businesses. These are prestigious and much sought after awards which recognises excellence in terms of quality, professional development for team, health and safety, sustainability, business systems and outstanding visitor experiences by peers within the industry. The “Operators of the Year” are presented with their awards at the annual Tourism Conference and therefore acknowledged by their industry peers.

Categories of awards

1. Large Inbound Tour Operator of the Year
2. Large Allied Operator of the Year
3. Small Inbound Operator of the Year
4. Small Allied Operator of the Year
5. Good Sort of the Year

Criteria and Eligibility

Inbound, Allied and Small Operator Awards

1. The nominating company and nominee company must be financial members of TECNZ.
2. If a company has been nominated for a TECNZ Award in the past, whether or not they received an award, new information must be presented for the TECNZ Board to consider this nomination. A list of past winners is available below.
3. An individual cannot nominate an operator with which he or she is directly associated for Inbound Tour Operator of the Year and Allied Operator of the Year.
4. Large Operator of the Year (Allied and Inbound) *greater* than 10 fulltime equivalent employees or contractors.
5. Small Operator of the Year (Allied and Inbound) *less* than 10 fulltime equivalent employees or contractors.

Good Sort of the Year

Those nominating in this category need to provide:

- A brief summary on why you consider this company/individual should be nominated
- Areas to consider could include experience in the industry, supported you personally and/or helped fellow members, introduced new activities or initiatives and provide the reasons why.

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Timeline

Monday 13 May 2024	Online nominations open (multiple nominations permitted)
Tuesday 21 May 2024	Online nominations close
Thursday 23 May 2024	Nominees advised & request for business profile
Tuesday 4 June 2024	Submission of nominee supporting information closes Shortlisting process commences to determine finalists. Judging commences
Monday 24 June 2024	Finalists announced & member online voting commences
Weds 3 July 2024	Online voting closes
Wed 7 August 2024	Winners announced at TECNZ Tourism Conference 2024

Selection Considerations

Small and Large Operator of the Year awards (Allied and Inbound)

The nominations will be considered using the following guidelines and any others considered relevant by the TECNZ Board. For ranking, the TECNZ Board will give consideration to the following:

CRITERIA	WHAT THE JUDGES WILL BE LOOKING FOR
Overview of Operation (max 200 words)	Background on your company (start date, no. staff, no. visitors hosted) What makes you stand out from other operators? What is your future vision for the business?
Innovation (Product & Marketing) (max 250 words)	An example/s of how innovation of your product, service or marketing function has provided a step change for your organisation and where you have achieved a competitive advantage.
Customer Service/Professional Development/Working with your partners (max 300 words)	Explain how you achieve and maintain quality customer service? Allied: Example of how you work with inbound tour operators. Inbound: Example of how you work with allied product suppliers. What professional development do you have in place for your staff? (full and part-time). Do you encourage your younger team members to join YoungTEC or other networking organisations?
Responsible, Safe and Sustainable Tourism (max 300 words)	What health and safety practices and monitoring systems do you have in place? What sustainable practices/approach do you have and how do you measure carbon emissions? Outline areas where your business has demonstrated having a positive impact on local communities, contributing to the restoration and protection of our natural environment, and rebuilding the economic sustainability of the sector.

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Process

To be considered for the annual TECNZ awards, a 'nomination' must be submitted **online** no later than **Tuesday 21 May 2024**. This nomination is to be submitted by an individual or organisation in the belief that the nominee has fulfilled the criteria and eligibility requirements outlined in the guidelines.

The nominees will be contacted to advise they have been nominated and will be requested to provide additional information to support their nomination (see selection considerations). With the exception of the Good Sort Award (as this information is provided at the time of nomination).

- The TECNZ Inbound Board members will review Allied nominations (for both Small and Large) and provide a shortlist of three nominees in each category using a point system.
- Allied Board members will review Inbound nominations (for both Small and Large) and provide a shortlist of three nominees in each category.
- All Board members will review nominations for the Good Sort of the Year Award.

The top three companies will become the finalists for each category (except Good Sort of the Year). Each nomination will be scored on the basis of information contained in the online nomination form and nominee provided supporting documentation. The decision of the TECNZ Board will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Members will then have an opportunity to vote on the top three finalists to determine an overall winner in each category.

1. Allied Members vote for Inbound Awards (Large and small)
2. Inbound Members vote for Allied Awards (Large and small)
3. All members can vote for Good Sort of the Year Award

The winners of each award category will be announced at the awards evening held at the annual TECNZ conference. Please note: No finalist videos will be produced and presented this year.

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When was the TECNZ Awards programme established?

The TECNZ awards programme was introduced in 1982 to acknowledge Inbound Tour Operators for the outstanding work they do. The structure of the awards programme was updated in 2016 to include the Small Operator of the Year Award. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, no awards were presented in 2020. In 2021 we held our 50th celebration and in 2022 five achievement awards were presented in place of operator awards. The traditional Award categories returned in 2023 and have been updated in 2024.

Who is eligible?

Nominees company must be financial members of TECNZ.

Who can make a nomination?

The nominating company must be financial members of TECNZ.

How do I make a nomination?

Submitting an online nomination form.

Can a previous winner be nominated again?

Yes. Each company will be judged only on achievements since the previous award was received. For those who have been nominated in the past (and have not won), previous nomination information can be updated and will be considered for the present nomination.

How many awards are given out each year*?

Five awards are given out each year:

1. Large Inbound Tour Operator of the Year
2. Large Allied Operator of the Year
3. Small Inbound Operator of the Year
4. Small Allied Operator of the Year
5. Good Sort of the Year

Do I have to fill out separate forms for each nominee?

No. When submitting online you will be asked if you wish to nominate another company.

Where can I find the names of previous recipients?

See below.

Are the nominations confidential?

Yes. Unless you indicate at the time of nomination that your information can be shared with the nominee, if requested.

When do nominations close?

Tuesday 21 May 2024.

*with the exception of 2022

Previous winners

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Year	Inbound Operator of the Year	Allied Operator of the Year	Small Business Operator of the Year	Good Sort Award
2023	Southern World	Sudima Hotels	Fiordland Jet	Martin Langford of Ngāi Tahu Tourism
2022*	Achievement awards			Ben Thornton of Bush and Beach
2021	50 th Celebrations took place			
2020	No awards held			
2019	Pan Pacific Travel	The Rees Hotel	OGO Rotorua	
2018	General Travel	Scenic Hotel Group	Ecozip	
2017	NZ Journeys	Rotorua Canopy Tours	Fiordland Trips and Tramps	
2016	Southern World	Scenic Hotel Group	Bush & Beach	
2015	Pan Pacific Travel	Real Journeys & Southern Discoveries	N/A	
2014	Pacific Destinations	Hobbiton Movie Set Tours	N/A	
2013	Pacific Destinations	Real Journeys	N/A	
2012	Pacific Destinations	Scenic Hotel Group	N/A	

*Alternative awards took place. The 2022 Achievement Award winners were as follows:

New Community/Charity Initiative - EcoZip Adventures, Waiheke Island

New Sustainability Initiative - Ziptrek Ecotours New Zealand

Innovation in Visitor Experience - Fiordland Trips & Tramps

Good Sort/Unsung Hero - Ben Thornton, Bush and Beach

Emerging Tourism Leader - Zac Watson, Maverick Digital Tourism Marketing