**EKKULA AWARDS 2022.**

Greetings from Africa Tourism & Environment Initiatives, (ATEI) a youth and female-led organization that works towards addressing Quality, Sustainable, and Eco-Tourism initiatives, Environmental Protection, Climate Change, Poverty, and Unemployment.  We would like to share with you one of its flagship projects, **Ekkula Pearl of Africa Quality Assurance Tourism Initiative and Awards,** slated for 01st December 2022 at Sheraton Hotel Kampala. This will have pre-events of quality assurance training workshops that will start before and continue during, and after this year’s awards night gala.

Hon Minister and members of the press, our call for Quality Assurance is because it  **enhances the work structure of the sector**. It adds more value to any travel-related organization. It facilitates with ISO certification which covers almost everything including technology, food safety, increased tourism, and improved healthcare.

What are the benefits of service quality in tourism?

Improving service quality can increase revenues through (1) **retaining a higher percentage of existing customers, (2) attracting more customers through positive word of mouth, and (3) increasing the usage rates of existing customers**.

Honorable Minister and Members of the press, We have previously, had engagement with the girl child empowerment workshops in areas of sustainable tourism and green jobs in the Albertine region, Rwezoris and Kasese to be precise. One of the success stories we have heard is the a young law student from KIU , who later joined the miss tourism Rwenzori contest and merged winner. If we may grant her the chance, the beautiful Sarah Kenyana is here to give her story.

Sarah gives an update.

As if that is not enough we went ahead to empower a few PWDs, a youthful student from Kyambogo university, currently reigning as Mr Ability central region, Mr Ngabo Saad, who is affiliated to a tour and travel compony advocating for accessible and inclusive tourism.

It is from such success stories that our motivation has been fueled to Mobilize over 50 youths, females, and PWDs inclusive from each of the four regions of Uganda, ranging from Site guides, upcoming Tour Operators, upcoming Safari Guides, street food vendors, waiters/waitresses, hospitality officials, and small business owners in the tourism value chain.

The Ekkula **inclusive tourism training** **boot camps** shall kick off from the Eastern Region scheduled for; the 14th -15th of October, Northern 21st -22nd of October, Western 28th -29th, and Central Uganda 4th -5th of November. The thematic areas to deliver include; Compliance with Stipulated **regulations** by Uganda Tourism Board, **Branding**, **Digital Marketing, Quality Assurance knowledge,** and **Sustainable Tourism practices** for small and medium enterprises. This is in line with this year’s theme ***‘Rethinking Tourism and Promotion of Green Initiatives.’’***

In order to keep track, we are establishing a database of all participants and forming a call center that handles calls, WhatsApp’s, monthly data analytics, database management, sales calls, and digital marketing.

We have a 360 media coverage of the whole process which will culminate into short and long reports and documentaries.

We have put a system to measure success and impact of this much needed initiative that will focus on the following thematic areas;

**TOURISM QUALITY ASSURANCE BOOTCAMPS IN AREAS OF;**

1. **5 A's** of Tourism Elements **Accessibility, Accommodation, Attractions, Activities, and Amenities**.
2. Social Media Branding and Marketing.
3. Nature based solutions and Sustainable Tourism.
4. Financial Literacy and Book Keeping.
5. Culture and Inclusive Tourism.

**Hon minister and members of the press,that aside, the fifth edition of Ekkula Tourism Awards,**  Motivates , Researches, Nominates, Exhibits, Recognises and Awards those that selflessly put Uganda’s tourism to admirable heights. These will include both Ugandans and non-Ugandans.

This is the fifth edition of Ekkula Tourism Awards, the only prestigious tourism awards which will happen for the first time since the industry was hit by covid19.

These are the proposed Categories.

1. Tourism Media Personality 2022
2. Travel Photographer Of 2022
3. Tourism Supportive Media House.
4. Cultural Tourism Award 2022
5. Pearl Of Africa Event Of The Year.
6. Airline Of The Year.
7. Exceptional Restaurant 2022.
8. Best Eco Safari Lodge.
9. Exceptional New Hotel Of The Year.
10. Best Luxury And Business Hotel.
11. Young Tourism Personality.
12. User Friendly Transport Of The Year.
13. Adventure Destination Of The Year.
14. Outstanding Tour Guide
15. Sustainable Tour Operator.
16. Innovative Tourism Award 2022
17. Accessible And Inclusive Tourism Award.
18. Outstanding Tourism Entrepreneur.
19. Tourism Honorary Award.
20. Lifetime Tourism Achiever.

**Proposed Criteria of Awarding,**

* Nominations will be open to the public as they nominate with clear reasons as to why their suggested nominees deserves to be recognized in a particular category.
* Our Scouting team will carry out a ground work survey both online and on social media together with reviews and advice from the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities and its relevant Agencies.
* Then a report of proposed nominees will be handed over to the Panel of reputable Judges who will come up with top nominees per category. These will be shared to the public as online voting begins.
* Voting will be through our online website which will account for 50% of the votes and the remaining 50% will be upon the reputable Judges.

**Judges base their verdict on the following;**

* If the nominee/facility/Stakeholder promotes Uganda as a top tourist destination alongside his/her/its private facility or services.
* The Stakeholder’s/Facility’s level of eco friendliness.
* The Stakeholder’s/Facility’s level of service to Tourists.
* How the facility/stakeholder gives back to the community.
* How the facility/stakeholder impacts the community positively.
* Does the stakeholder/facility promote domestic tourism as much as international tourism?
* Ethics and professionalism exhibited by the facility/Stakeholder.
* Feedback and reviews from visitors from notable travel websites like trip advisor among others.
* Conservation and Culture preservation.

**RE: EKKULA TOURISM 2022 PROGRAM LINEUP.**

**LAUNCH /NOMINATIONS (www.ekkulatourismawards.org) 11th October 2022**

**ANNOUNCE SUCCESSFUL NOMINEES 7th November 2022**

**VOTING STARTS 8th November 2022**

**VOTING ENDS/NOMINEES NIGHT 28th November 2022**

**AWARDS NIGHT 1st December 2022 @ Sheraton Hotel.**

Amumpaire Bismac Moses.

**Team Leader, ATEI, EKKULA AWARDS.**