



Concept Note

Tourism Start-Up Competition 2026

“AI-Driven Innovation for the Future of Tourism”

1. Background

World Tourism Day 2026 highlights the transformative role of tourism in embracing digital transformation and integrating artificial intelligence (AI). The theme underscores how AI can enhance visitor experiences, improve operational efficiency, and support sustainable tourism practices.

In alignment with this global theme, the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) proposes to organize a Tourism Start-Up Competition to identify, encourage, and promote innovative start-ups that are leveraging AI and digital technologies within the tourism sector.

2. Rationale

The tourism industry is undergoing rapid digital disruption, with AI emerging as a key enabler in areas such as personalization of travel experiences, smart destination management, predictive analytics, automated customer service, and sustainable resource management.

Sri Lanka’s tourism sector has significant potential to benefit from such innovations. However, there is a need to encourage local entrepreneurship, foster innovation ecosystems, and support start-ups that can offer scalable, technology-driven solutions tailored to the industry’s needs.

3. Objectives

The key objectives of the competition are to:

- Promote innovation in tourism through AI-enabled solutions
- Encourage start-ups to develop technology-driven tourism products and services
- Enhance digital transformation within Sri Lanka’s tourism industry
- Identify scalable solutions that improve visitor experience and operational efficiency
- Foster collaboration between tourism stakeholders, tech innovators, and investors
- Position Sri Lanka as an innovation-driven and future-ready tourism destination

4. Scope of the Competition

The competition invites applications from tourism-related start-ups that develop AI-powered solutions. Applications that do not incorporate Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a core component will not be considered.

Eligible solutions may include:

- AI-powered smart travel planning and personalized visitor experiences
- AI-driven customer service and virtual assistance solutions
- AI-enabled smart destination management systems
- AI-based predictive analytics for tourism demand forecasting and visitor behavior
- AI-powered sustainable tourism and environmental monitoring solutions
- AI-driven digital marketing and visitor experience enhancement platforms
- AI-enabled smart mobility and visitor flow management systems





5. Expected Outcomes

- Identification of high-potential tourism start-ups using AI
- Increased awareness of digital innovation opportunities in tourism
- Strengthened linkages between tourism and technology sectors
- Development of scalable solutions that can be integrated into the national tourism ecosystem
- Encouragement of youth and entrepreneurial participation in tourism innovation

6. Implementation Approach

The competition will be implemented through a structured process including:

- National call for applications
- Screening and shortlisting of start-ups
- Pitch presentations before a panel of experts
- Evaluation based on innovation, feasibility, scalability, and impact
- Awarding of winners and recognition at the World Tourism Day 2026 celebrations

7. Target Participants

- Tourism start-ups operating in Sri Lanka
- Early-stage technology companies with tourism applications
- University-based innovation teams and incubators
- Entrepreneurs developing AI-enabled travel solutions
- School level innovation teams and incubators

8. Conclusion

The SLTDA Tourism Start-Up Competition 2026 aims to harness the power of artificial intelligence and digital innovation to transform Sri Lanka's tourism sector. By encouraging start-ups to develop forward-thinking solutions, the initiative will contribute to building a more resilient, efficient, and sustainable tourism industry aligned with global technological advancements and future visitor expectations.

Please forward your applications to **kusala@srilanka.travel** on or before

5th September 2026

For more details please contact on **011 2426800 – 394/ 151/155**
070 6936641





Application Form

Tourism Start-Up Competition 2026 “AI-Driven Innovation for the Future of Tourism”

1. Applicant Information

Start-Up Name: _____

Registration Status (if any): _____

Year Established: _____

Business Address: _____

Website / Digital Platform (if any): _____

Contact Person: _____

Designation: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

2. Start-Up Profile

Brief Description of the Start-Up (100–200 words):

Vision of the Start-Up:

Mission of the Start-Up:

3. AI & Technology Integration

Describe the AI/Technology component used in your solution (200–300 words):

Type of Technology Used (tick where applicable): Artificial Intelligence / Machine Learning

- Data Analytics / Predictive Modelling
- Chatbots / Virtual Assistants
- Smart Mobility Solutions
- IoT / Smart Systems
- Other: _____





4. Tourism Relevance

How does your solution contribute to the tourism sector? (200–300 words):

Key Problem Addressed:

Target Users / Beneficiaries:

5. Innovation & Impact

What makes your solution innovative?

Expected Impact on Tourism (tick all that apply):

- Enhances visitor experience
- Improves operational efficiency
- Supports sustainability
- Promotes digital transformation
- Generates employment opportunities
- Other: _____

6. Business Model

Revenue Model:

Scalability Potential (Local / Regional / Global):

7. Supporting Materials

Please attach the following (if available):

- Pitch Deck / Presentation
- Product Demo / Prototype link
- Business Registration Certificate
- Supporting documents or media links

8. Declaration

I hereby declare that the information provided above is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and that I agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the SLTDA Tourism Start-Up Competition 2026.

Name : _____

Signature: _____

Date : _____

