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WTA defends awards ceremony

by [Joe Mortimer](#) on Monday, 23 July 2007



World Travel Awards Limited vice president Manon Han has played down suggestions that awards ceremonies are driven by financial incentives rather than a fair voting system.

"I would feel that this might prove to be an impertinent suggestion for those professionals who did vote this year, and who vote year after year," Han said.

He was speaking following industry speculation that the number of awards given to leading hotels and tourism boards in the UAE at the recent World Travel Awards Middle East and Africa was based on how much sponsorship they had provided, rather than genuine votes made.

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"The winners are decided by the travel agents and professionals within the travel and tourism industry worldwide. We have around 167,000 people in over 163 countries on our database who are invited to cast their votes," Han said.

"Over the last 14 years we are pleased to have established a following of dedicated professionals who voice their choices as well as concerns by means of voting as well as writing to us on a regular basis."

The number of votes for the Middle East and Africa region increased by 18% in 2007 over 2006.

Results of the votes we revealed at an award ceremony on May 30 at Abu Dhabi's Emirates Palace, marking the first time the WTA has held a regional installment of the ceremony.

"It was a tremendous success in all aspects," said Han. "The turn out of winners in the Middle East and Africa region was fantastic and [of a] very high level.

"We strive to honour those excellent products that are within the travel industry and the tourism growth within the GCC region is both strong and in an exceedingly high quality."

It was no surprise that Abu Dhabi and Dubai scooped several awards each, including Middle East's Leading New Destination and Middle East's Leading Business Destination respectively.

"The evening was full of surprises, Abu Dhabi has done brilliantly and some African properties and

destinations have made some wonderful advances," Han added.

The venue for the next World Travel Awards 2008 is yet to be decided.

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