

The new Seven Wonders of the World

Last month's announcement of the new Seven Wonders of the World has been criticised by supporters of eco-tourism.

1 Match each man-made wonder to its country. Which one do you think was not one of the winners in the recent poll?

Christ the Redeemer statue	the Great Wall	Machu Picchu	the Acropolis	China	Brazil	India	Peru
Chichén Itzá pyramid	the Taj Mahal	the Colosseum	ruins of Petra	Mexico	Jordan	Italy	Greece

2 Scan paragraph two of the article to check your answer to exercise 1.

Global poll criticised A campaign to name the new seven wonders of the world, launched in 1999, has just reached its climax. Originally, there were nearly 200 nominations; these were shortlisted and finally, in the largest ever poll of its kind, 100 million people voted across the world for the final seven. Voting was done through the internet, as well as by phone and text. The project is the brainchild of Swiss businessman, Bernard Weber, and run by a private foundation. The initiative intends to raise money through sponsorship and marketing schemes; it aims to fund conservationist projects and future awards.

Last month, in a ceremony in Lisbon, the seven winners were announced: Christ the Redeemer statue overlooking Rio; the Great Wall of China; India's Taj Mahal and the Colosseum in Rome; the ancient Inca ruins of Machu Picchu in Peru and the Chichén Itzá pyramid in Mexico; and finally, the ruins of the pink city of Petra in Jordan. Of course, not everyone agreed with the result; the Greeks for instance were disappointed that the Acropolis was not a winner.

However, the scheme has attracted much criticism. The cost of running the campaign was well over £6 million. The foundation may only just break even, with little or no profit to invest in restoring monuments. There are fears that the seven winners will now see a huge rise in tourist numbers. The Inca ruins are already damaged by tourism, and similar concerns have been expressed about the Great Wall of China. UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), which lists World Heritage sites and is committed to conservation, has severely criticised the contest as a profit-making event which does nothing to protect and preserve the attractions.

What next? A new poll has been announced, and thousands of proposals for the 'seven natural wonders' have already been submitted. The global poll is due to start in around three years' time. The government of Vietnam is keen to nominate the tourist area of Ha Long Bay and sees this competition as vital to boosting tourism in the country. However, supporters of eco-tourism completely disagree with this viewpoint.

3 Read the whole article. Do you agree or disagree with running these two contests?

4 Find words or expressions in the article from the definitions.

- (a) an organization that provides money for things such as medical research (paragraph 1)
- (b) an important action that is intended to solve a problem (paragraph 1)
- (c) money given to an organization to help pay for something (paragraph 1)
- (d) reach a point where you neither make a profit nor lose money (paragraph 3)
- (e) to help something to increase, improve, or become more successful (paragraph 4)

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5 Discuss the following questions in small groups.

- (a) Which areas in the world would you nominate for the 'seven natural wonders of the world'?
- (b) Describe the importance of the tourism industry in your country. What benefits does it bring and what problems does it cause?