

## ***NATIONAL HERITAGE AND CULTURAL TOURISM STRATEGY LAUNCHED BY TOURISM MINISTER.***

Unlocking the economic potential of heritage and cultural tourism to stimulate and grow tourism in South Africa is crucial to job creation and the economic development of the tourism sector. Speaking at the launch of the National Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy today at the historic Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia (Johannesburg), Tourism Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk said: “the strategy marks a significant milestone achieved in producing a guiding framework and the first blueprint for heritage and cultural tourism development in South Africa.”

Informed by the White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa (1996) and the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) (2011) the strategic framework sets the following goals and aims:

- To provide strategic guidance to support the integration and coordination of heritage and cultural resources into mainstream tourism for product development and sustainable tourism
- To utilise heritage and cultural tourism products, through strategic partnerships and the participation of local communities, to stimulate sustainable livelihoods at community grass-roots levels
- To provide an opportunity to raise awareness, increase education and profile the conservation needs of heritage and cultural resources for sustainable tourism which is in line with value of respect for culture and heritage as stated in the NTSS
- To provide an opportunity for the diversification of tourism products and the formalisation of the segment or niche of heritage and cultural tourism, towards contributing to the growth of tourism as outlined in the objectives of the NTSS.

Currently South Africa is promoted largely around its “safari-type” experiences. The Strategy moves from a point of view that heritage and cultural tourism products are the fastest emerging competitive niche products within domestic and international markets.

The UNWTO estimates that heritage and cultural tourism accounts for 40% of international tourism.

“The combination of culture, heritage and tourism is therefore an extremely potent economic engine,” Minister said.

Cultural heritage tourism has provided opportunities for a wide range of SMMEs in the arts and craft industries, cultural landscapes and heritage sites and cultural festivals.

Minister van Schalkwyk concluded by saying that: "We as a country are proud to be amongst the leading countries in Africa with eight World Heritage Sites, namely Robben Island, Cradle of Humankind, Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape, Isimangaliso Wetland Park, uKhahlamba / Drakensberg Mountain Range, the Cape Floral Kingdom, Richtersveld Cultural landscape and the Vredeford Dome. Let us continue to hone, develop and promote our unique South African treasures. Heritage and cultural tourism products create authenticity and distinctiveness in the global tourism market and therefore heritage and culture are important drivers in making a destination attractive and competitive as it enhances the image and social cohesion of a destination. Our country's heritage and cultural diversity are capable of being packaged into quality, innovative and authentic products that meet the market's needs and provide value for money”

The National Department of Tourism engaged with a range of stakeholders in the heritage and cultural fields, as well as the tourism sector, private sector and local communities in developing the National Heritage and Cultural Strategy.

The Strategy recommends the prioritisation of certain programmes and flagship projects, for tourism development in partnership with relevant stakeholders such as the Department of Arts and Culture, Department of Environmental Affairs and the relevant provinces. The Departments will invest R6 million over three years for further development and active promotion of the eight World Heritage Sites in South Africa which were declared by UNESCO as sites of outstanding universal value for tourist attractions. It will further invest R80 million over a three year period on projects known

for their 'global significance', which are: the Dinosaur Interpretative Centre in Golden Gates Highlands National Parks (R50 million over three years), the National Heritage Monument (R20 million over three years) and the First Indigenous Peoples Projects (KhoiSan) in Graaff-Reinet (R10 million over three years).

To access the strategy, please visit [www.tourism.gov.za](http://www.tourism.gov.za)

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