



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES:

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Lack of access to information

Ms B T Mathevula (Limpopo: EFF) to ask the Minister of Tourism:

What actions her department is taking to address the lack of access to information regarding tourism destinations in municipalities?

CW210E

REPLY:

The Department and its entity SA Tourism have various initiatives to promote destinations and to avail information.

1.) Destination Content and New Itinerary Development

SA Tourism through the collaborative structures with provincial tourism authorities i.e. Marketing Forum and Business Events Forum and internal functions have initiated the following projects with the aim to build destination content to address the geographic spread. SAT is in a process to undertake a new route development which is aimed at addressing geographic spread. This is also in response to market needs for new products/itineraries especially for the repeat market.

The content will be generated through the following:

- Consolidation of annual calendar of events.
- Documentation of destination stories.
- Development of new itineraries.

2.) National Association Project

SA Tourism in collaboration with provincial authorities and municipalities have embarked on a National Association Project, which aims to identify and select key areas in villages, townships and small towns per province to be part of bidding destination.

The main objectives of the project are:

1. Assisting National Associations to host their meetings and conferences in the identified areas across SA to spread the economic benefits.
2. Bidding capacity building through developing a bid support programme and system for National Association meetings and conferences.
3. Assist the identified areas to develop their meeting and conferencing infrastructure by bidding for National Association Meetings and Conferences.
4. Promote tourism experiences (pre and post tour packages for delegates and accompany persons programme) in the identified areas that can be marketed to delegates by local SMME's, contributing to domestic tourism.
5. Incentivise the procurement of conferencing goods and services from local service providers in the identified areas.

The process to be undertaken includes the following:

1. Conduct inventory audits of the pre-selected areas to establish what conferencing infrastructure and suppliers are available.
2. Develop a bidding system for National Associations including protocols and processes.
3. Identify SMME's in the pre-selected areas that can package and deliver pre and post tours for National Association conferences hosted in each area.

3.) National Tourism Information and Monitoring System (NTIMS)

The Department of Tourism, in line with Tourism Act (No 3 of 2014), is required to develop a National Tourism Information and Monitoring System (NTIMS) to collect, manage and analyse tourism information, and monitor trends in tourism. The NTIMS will provide tourism stakeholders with access to comprehensive data and information on the size, extent and variety of tourism businesses, products and services in South Africa, at a municipality level.

In the 2019/20 financial year, the Department developed the NTIMS IT system for storing, reporting and accessing information on tourism businesses, products and services. The department also conceptualised a programme for the collection of data for the NTIMS development, with 600 youth to be placed as data collectors in all municipalities across the country. The youth will collect comprehensive data and information from tourism businesses, services and products at municipality level, which will give an understanding of the tourism footprint at local destinations.

To date, a total of 207 youth were placed in the Free State, Northern Cape and Eastern Cape provinces, for which data collection commenced. The programme had to be halted due to corona virus outbreak. The Department is preparing for placement of the remaining 393 youth as data collectors post COVID-19 pandemic in the Western Cape, Kwazulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Gauteng and North West provinces.

In February 2020, the NTIMS Regulations were published in the government gazette to enforce the Tourism Act. The Department has put a plan in place to implement the NTIMS regulations in order to standardise, fast-track, and support the collection, recording, analysis, monitoring of trends and dissemination of information and data on tourism supply-side to inform planning, decision-making, policy and strategy developments.

4.) Visitor Information Centres (VICs)

The Department of Tourism is currently having a programme that is specifically supporting Visitors Information Centres (VICs) that are located in municipalities within provinces. The department has developed VICs Manual and Service Excellence guidelines to capacitate VICs staff and guide management on the development and management of a VIC.

A national VIC audit was conducted between 2017 and 2019 to get factual information on the operational needs of the current VICs. Information gathered was used to develop tailor-made initiatives to improve the management of information centres, to ensure that they are equipped to provide relevant and accurate information to visitors regarding tourism destinations in municipalities.

In addition, the department has also established VIC's focal persons who are responsible to monitor and support the functioning thereof in municipalities and provinces. An annual VICs Consultative Forum is also held in order to share information and experience.