



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES:

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY:

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Ms Z V Ncitha (Eastern Cape: ANC) to ask the Minister of Tourism:

Whether his department has any plans to utilise tourism as part of the economic growth and development for rural areas; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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REPLY:

Yes, the department is currently and will continue to use tourism as a tool to stimulate and support the development of rural economies. The department developed the National Rural as well as the Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategies for development of rural tourism products and opportunities in South Africa. The approach is also meant to prioritise spatial nodes that have the potential to stimulate growth of the rural tourism sector in the country.

The department is implementing the above-mentioned strategies through various programmes including the development of tourism infrastructure in rural areas. The department is funding the implementation of the Social Responsibility Initiative under the auspices of the Expanded Public Work Programme (EPWP) to develop the tourism

infrastructure projects with a strong bias to rural areas to contribute to eradication of poverty, transformation and to stimulate economic growth. For illustration purposes, the department supported the enhancement and sustainability of the Zithabiseni Resort in Mpumalanga through the renovation of 80 chalets, a kitchen and a dining hall; construction of new office building, new ablution facilities and the entrance gate. The paving bricks were manufactured on site and training of pavers was done on site by the locals. A number of young people were sent for formal technical training.

The department is currently conducting tourism capacity building workshops targeted mainly at rural areas such as Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, Vhembe, uMkhanyakude and Dr RS Mompoti District Municipalities and Maloti Drakensberg Route. This programme is intended to empower rural communities to participate in the tourism economy in their local areas. The target group for the workshops is drawn from the tribal authorities, councillors, local government officials, and tourism businesses including SMMEs.

The department entered into a partnership with the Tourism Enterprise Partnership for the 2015/16 period to support 100 rural enterprises on mentorship, skills development, quality assurance, access to finance and market access, thereby actively supporting the creation of new and maintenance of existing jobs. In this way the department intends to strengthen tourism economic growth and development in rural areas. The department's strategic interventions will continue to prioritise the implementation of empowerment and capacity building programmes aimed communities, SMMEs and Local Government as part of the economic growth and development for rural areas.