

Tourism Route Development Marketing Plan

Presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Tourism
Parliament of the Republic of South Africa
18 March 2025



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

Purpose

- To inform the Portfolio Committee of the work done towards the Tourism Route Development Marketing Plan.
- To inform Members of Parliament about the Cabinet decision of 4 December 2024 and the work done since the approval of the Tourism Route Development Marketing Plan.



Strategic Focus

- Tourism route development marketing plays a vital role in supporting air service development for tourism growth.
- This requires collaboration amongst the various stakeholders within government and also the private sector.
- The initiative is in line with Government of National Unity's focus on actions that will drive inclusive growth and job creation.

Tourism Route Development Marketing

1. Introduction

- The Tourism Route Development Marketing aims to maximize South Africa's domestic and international route development/maintenance through marketing initiatives that increase market volumes to ensure sustained connectivity.

2. Policy & Strategy Context

- Key policy documents guiding this programme include:
- **National Development Plan (NDP):** Emphasizes increasing tourist numbers and expenditure.
- **Economic Reconstruction & Recovery Plan:** Tourism is a key area for Recovery of the economy.
- **National Tourism Sector Strategy and Tourism White Paper:** Highlight the need for reliable access and promoting competitiveness.
- **Tourism Master Plan:** Focuses on rebuilding the tourism sector and increasing air connectivity.



Rationale for Tourism Route Development Marketing

- Despite being a long-haul destination, South Africa did not have a nationally coordinated route development mechanism for tourism until 4 December 2024 when Cabinet approved the Tourism Route Development Marketing Plan
- This plan is set to improve the destination's competitiveness and create a national route development structure.

The Tourism Route Development Marketing Plan has key deliverables:

- To develop World-class business cases that show carriers how they can be profitable connecting to, and within, South Africa
- Provide Marketing incentives and packages designed to attract and retain airline partners.
- Coordinating stakeholders at the national level, including Airports Company South Africa (ACSA), the Department of Transport, the Department of Tourism, aviation authorities, and private sector partners on route development marketing efforts.
- Coordinate alignment of provincial air access programmes like Gauteng Air Access Network, Durban Direct and Cape Town Air Access with national objectives.
- Foster Public Private Partnerships to ensure sustainable air services through route development marketing.



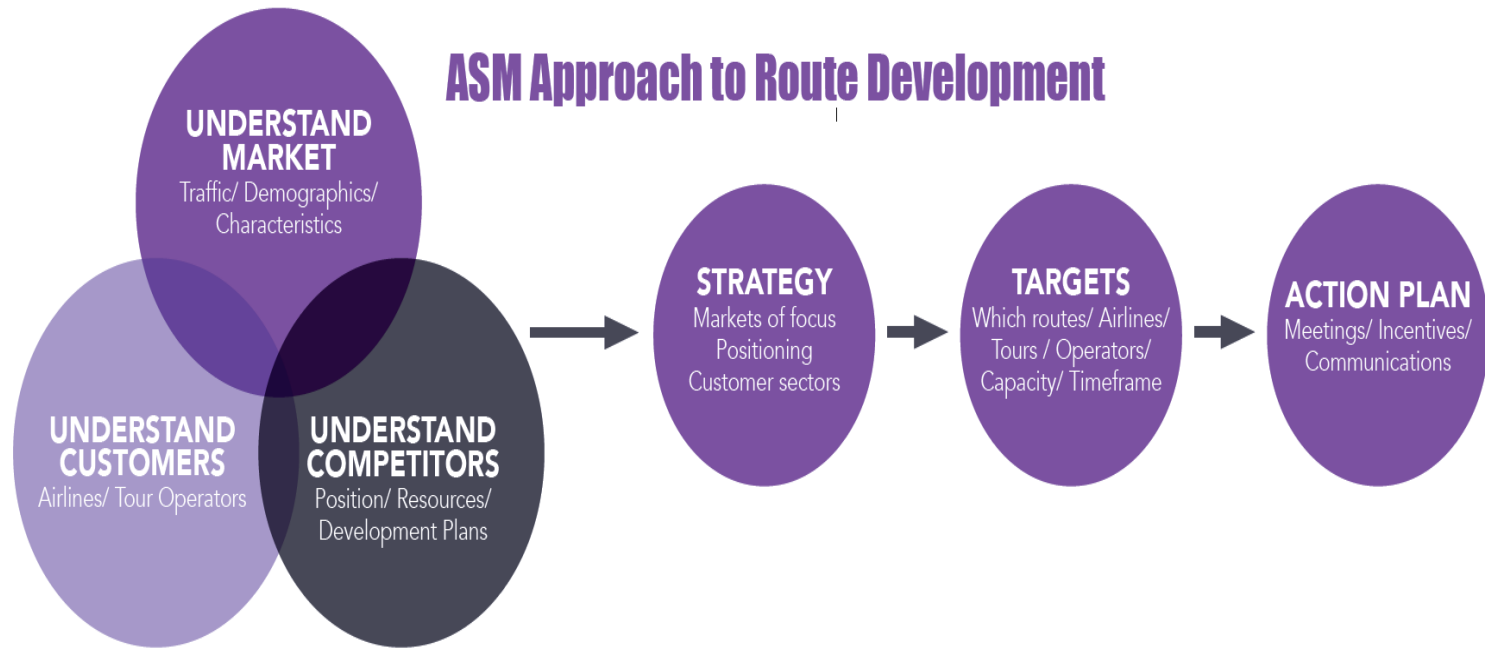
Benchmarking

- A benchmarking exercise was undertaken on various route development initiatives adopted by destinations;
- The approaches differ with some route development initiatives driven by tourism, airport authorities and some by civil aviation structures;
- In all these approaches, tourism plays a vital role;
- Saudi Arabia Route Development is chaired by the Minister of Tourism;
- For Brazil, Fly2Brazil is Chaired by the civil aviation authority but supported by the tourism marketing organisation;
- Canary Islands Route Development is driven by the Minister of Tourism, Industry and Trade;
- Malaysia route development is driven by Airports partnering with tourism authority
- Scotland route development was established by the government and supported by Visit Scotland.
- In South Africa, the mandate given by the Cabinet on 4 December 2024 is for the Minister of Tourism through SA Tourism to implement the Tourism Route Development Marketing.




Approach to route development

- There is no universally accepted approach to route development, however the literature provides some guidance.
- ASM Global, one of the reputable consultancy on route development provides a schematic approach to assist destinations.










South Africa's competitors

- South Africa competes against Australia; India; Thailand; United Arab Emirates (UAE); Kenya and Brazil amongst others for arrivals
- The graph below illustrates South Africa's standing against the aforementioned countries

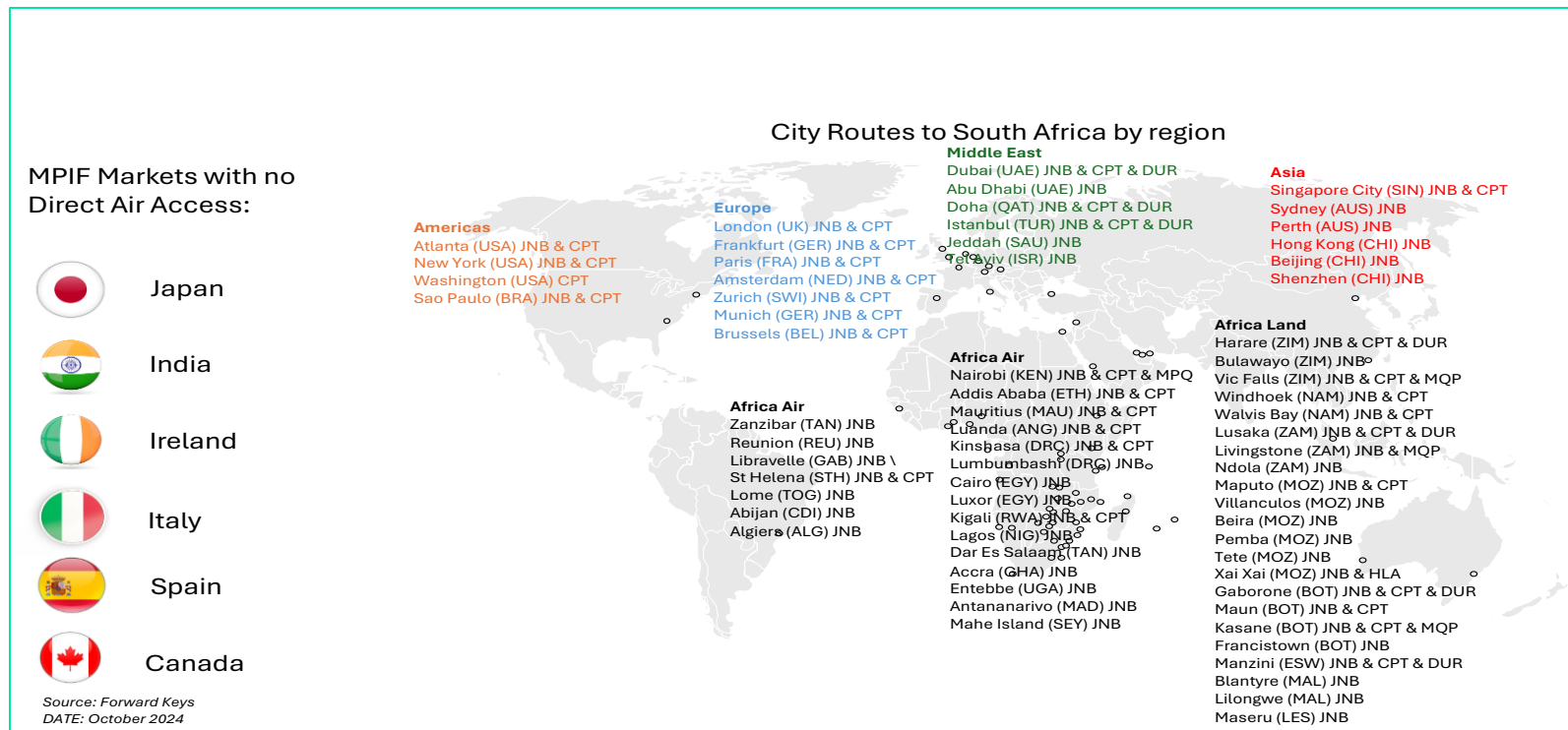


WHERE THE COMPETITORS STAND – KEY

Key KPIs	International Arrivals, CAGR (2021 vs. Jun'24)	International Arrivals Growth (Jun'23 vs. Jun'24)	Recovery (2019 vs. Jun'24)	Average Stay Duration (Days)	Average Spend/Day (USD)	Brand Strength Score (2023)	Brand Awareness (2023)	Longterm Consideration (2023)
South Africa 	25%	8%	43%	11	97	45.6	68%	27%
Australia 	115%	30%	84%	9	114	51.8	82%	41%
India 	-12%	9%	27%	✓ 23	45	40.5	57%	14%
Thailand 	227%	35%	44%	10	167	57.4	80%	34%
UAE 	21%	24%	94%	19	252	38.2	72%	28%
Kenya 	8%	21%	53%	13	122	41.4	51%	13%
Brazil 	71%	10%	63%	11	80	47.0	66%	21%

City routes to South Africa by region

- An analysis of city routes to South Africa by region and SA Tourism markets show that 6 major markets lack direct access to South Africa. India, Japan, Spain, Italy, Ireland, and Canada.
- Additional strategic markets without direct connections include Russia, Malaysia, Thailand, and countries in Eastern Europe.
- Below is a schematic representation of city routes to South Africa



Aviation Insights and Performance

- South Africa has 103 active international routes to 64 cities across the world on 49 airlines.
- In 2025, a total of 8.5 million seats are scheduled, with 4.2 million seats on short-haul routes and 4.3 seats on long-haul flights over six hours.
- This is a growth of 9.4% from 2024 and 92% of the 2019 seat supply levels.
- In 2026, total South Africa air traffic is expected to surpass 2019 - according to the IBA Analysis presented at the Board of Airline Representatives of South Africa (BARSA) Aviation Summit 2025.
- Domestic Flights within South Africa in 2024 were at 86% of 2019 levels.
- In 2025 Domestic flights are expected to grow by +1.5% and seat capacity to grow by 7.3% year on year.

Benchmarking on role of tourism in route development

Several global best practices, including from Australia, Saudi Arabia, and the USA, emphasize coordinated efforts between tourism and aviation authorities to support increased airlift capacity, with the tourism sector playing a critical role in market development and growth to stimulate and sustain the routes.



Competition Issues

Market stimulation incentives must avoid unfair competition. For example, in destinations such as in Kansas and California in the USA, incumbent airlines retaliated against new competitors benefiting from revenue guarantees.

Thus already existing routes, new routes development and market stimulation incentives should be treated within the provisions of the Competition Act No. 89 of 1998.

South Africa's route development Initiatives

Key existing initiatives include

- **Gauteng Air Access:** Reinstating lost routes and focusing on new route development.
- **Durban Direct:** Promotes international air services to King Shaka Airport.
- **Cape Town Air Access:** Focuses on expanding and retaining routes.



Implementation Plan

SA Tourism is leading the implementation for the first 18 months after the Cabinet approval. The programme:

- Aligns with national tourism goals.
- Develops collaborative public-private partnerships.
- Focus on key markets such as China, India, and Africa's continental connectivity, including domestic.
- Uses market data-driven decision-making for route prioritisation.

SA Tourism will integrate Tourism Route Development Marketing, with a commitment of R6.5 million in the current 2024/25 financial year, to support the route development marketing plan.

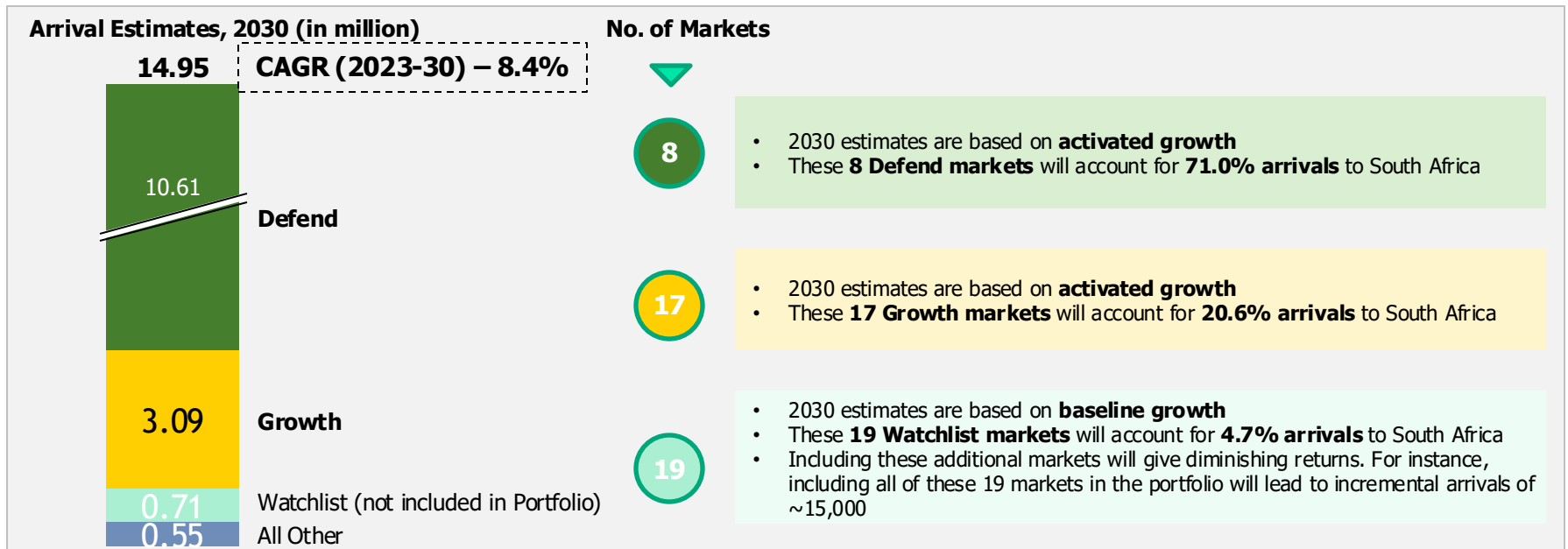
The activation of the plan includes route launch marketing aimed at achieving affordability and joint marketing efforts with participating airlines to stimulate and sustain the South African and international markets.

To ensure success, SA Tourism will work closely with tourism value chain stakeholders and provincial structures, engaging in joint marketing efforts to attract travellers in a unified approach.



Implementation Plan (cont.)

Implementation will seek to drive the achievement of the National tourism minimum arrival target of 15 million arrivals by 2030 with the support of routes from the 25 prioritised markets



Collaboration with provincial air access structures

- Proposed National Tourism Route Development structure has participation and representation from each provincial air access committee.
- Cape Town Air Access; Durban Direct and Gauteng Air Access are the three provincial air access committees.
- Provincial air access committees continue to focus on routes of provincial interest with the support of national air access.
- Support national air access structure on routes of national interest.
- Participate in domestic connectivity discussions, with the view to promote intra-provincial and regional connectivity.



Approach to route development capability

- A reputable company is being sourced to provide a schematic route development approach to assist destinations.
- A market assessment of suitable companies was conducted early 2025 with 5 proposals received which confirms limited entities in SA who are able to fully deliver on this project.
- The appointment of a reputable company to lead the marketing for South Africa route development will be finalised by 29 March 2025.



THANK YOU



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