



**MINISTER
TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR ORAL REPLY:

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★351. Ms L E Ligaraba (ANC) to ask the Minister of Tourism:

What (a) socio-economic impacts has her department's tourism infrastructure projects had on local communities in rural areas such as the Vhembe District Municipality in Limpopo and (b) tools and/or mechanisms have been used by her department to measure such impacts?

NO2297E

REPLY

- (a) The Department's tourism infrastructure projects in rural areas such as the Vhembe District Municipality have generated significant socio-economic benefits for local communities, particularly during the construction phase. Although several of the projects have reached practical or works completion and are not yet fully operational, communities have already experienced direct economic gains through employment opportunities and procurement of services from local SMMEs.

Across the six projects implemented in Vhembe:

Nandoni Dam Community Lodge

- The project created 34 jobs and injected over R36 million into the local economy through construction expenditure.

- Enabled local workers to gain experience in construction, hospitality-related infrastructure, and site maintenance.
- The development includes a restaurant, chalets, a swimming pool, internal roads, and an administration block — all of which will support:

Mtititi Game Farm / Mtititi Lodge and Leisure Centre

- The project created 42 jobs, and over **R23.7 million** was spent in the local economy through construction expenditure.
- Local SMMEs benefited directly by providing services such as mobile toilet services, bricklaying, construction, water supply, TLB rental, and security services. These contracts ensured that project spending circulated within the Mtititi community.
- The lodge includes chalets, a swimming pool, staff quarters, and a laundry room.
- Once operational, it will create permanent hospitality jobs, support local tourism guides and cultural tourism and provide a platform for community-owned tourism enterprises.

Tshathogwe Community Lodge

- The project created 51 jobs, and over **R20.5 million** was spent.
- Local SMMEs delivered roofing, aluminium work, security, and electrical services.
- This diversified procurement supported multiple small businesses in the Tshathogwe area.
- The lodge includes chalets, a restaurant, swimming pools, staff quarters, and boreholes.
- The expected benefits from this investment are permanent employment in hospitality and maintenance.
- The lodge will also increase tourism activity in a rural area with limited economic opportunities, while the project improves community infrastructure, such as water, electricity, and access roads.

Mapate Recreational Social Tourism Facility

- The project created 46 jobs, and over **R23 million** was spent.
- Significant SMME participation from the community was provided, including mechanical services, plumbing, security, bricklaying, accommodation services and electrical work. This demonstrates broad-based local economic participation.

- The facility includes a restaurant, swimming pools, camping sites, vendor stalls, a kids' play area, and a viewing deck.
- The investment has created a safe recreational space for families, opportunities for local vendors and artisans, youth employment in tourism and recreation and a platform for community events and cultural activities.

Phiphidi Waterfall Project

- The project created 41 jobs, and R20 million was invested through the infrastructure projects.
- Upgraded facilities such as chalets, conference hall, restaurant, admin block, and internal roads.
- Improved ablution facilities and braai areas enhance visitor safety and dignity.
- The site is already operational, meaning benefits are already accruing:
 - Jobs in cleaning, guiding, security, and administration.
 - Increased tourism revenue for the Ramunangi community.
 - Strengthened cultural preservation, as Phiphidi is a sacred site.
 - Enhanced capacity for hosting meetings and events through the upgraded conference hall.

Matsila Lodge Project

- The project created 54 jobs, the highest among all six projects and R38 million was injected into the local economy through the construction spend.
- Construction of tented chalets, a restaurant, internal roads, and a bridge improved local mobility and access.
- The Matsila Royal Village is known for community-driven development; the lodge will:
 - Support eco-tourism and cultural tourism.
 - Create permanent jobs in hospitality, guiding, and maintenance.
 - Strengthen the Matsila community's existing agricultural and tourism initiatives.
 - Provide a sustainable revenue stream for community development programmes.

These employment opportunities provided income to households in remote rural villages, contributing to improved livelihoods and local economic activity. These procurement activities

ensured that project spending circulated within the local economy, supporting small businesses and strengthening community participation in the tourism value chain.

- (b) The infrastructure developed through these projects lays the foundation for long-term socio-economic benefits once operations commence. These benefits are expected to include permanent employment, enterprise development opportunities, increased tourism activity, and enhanced community-owned tourism assets.

The Department measures the socio-economic impact of these projects primarily by the number of jobs created during construction, and contracting SMMEs as a key indicator of immediate community benefit. Each project tracks employment figures as part of its monitoring and reporting processes.

As the projects transition to full operation, additional indicators—such as operational jobs, visitor numbers, revenue generation, and community ownership outcomes—will be incorporated into the Department’s impact measurement framework.

END