



**MINISTER
TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X 424, PRETORIA, 0001, Tourism House, 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside, PRETORIA, 0002, Switchboard: +27 (0)12 444 6000, Fax: +27 (0)12 444 7000, Website: www.tourism.gov.za

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY:

Question Number: 3973
Date of Publication: 26 June 2026
NA IQP Number: 24
Date of reply: 23 July 2026

3973. Ms H Ismail (DA) to ask the Minister of Tourism:

With reference to the 2026 African Tourism Indaba, (a) what was the total cost of hosting the Indaba at the Durban International Convention Centre, (b) what was the total number of buyers who attended, broken down by country of origin, (c) what was the total expenditure per hosted buyer for (i) travel and (ii) accommodation, (d) what was the total cost per square metre for exhibitors' stalls, (e) what was the method of allocating stall spots, (f) what total number of complaints were received from exhibitors regarding a lack of buyer participation, (g) how will the specified complaints be addressed and (h) what is the estimated return on investment?

NW4208E

REPLY:

I have received the following information from the South African Tourism Board. It is important to note that these figures are unaudited and remain subject to the completion of the final audit and financial reconciliation process.

- (a) Africa's Travel Indaba (ATI) 2026 was hosted across an integrated exhibition precinct comprising the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (ICC) and the Durban Exhibition Centre (DEC). Accordingly, expenditure was managed at project level rather than by individual venue. The total approved project budget amounted to R82,200,881.82. At the time of reporting, expenditure of R62,263,499.74 had been incurred.
- (b) A total of 919 buyers attended Africa's Travel Indaba 2026, comprising 275 hosted buyers and 644 non-hosted buyers, representing 43 countries across Africa, Europe, Asia, North America, South America and Oceania.

Buyer participation reflected a balanced mix of established and emerging tourism source markets. The strongest representation was from South Africa, followed by key international markets including the United Kingdom, the United States of America, China and India, together with strong participation from Botswana, Zimbabwe, France, Italy, Brazil and Canada.

The event also attracted buyers from several other African countries, including Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

European participation included buyers from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Asia-Pacific markets represented included China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. At the same time, buyers also attended from Brazil, Canada, Mexico, the United States of America, the United Arab Emirates and St Helena.

The broad geographic spread of buyers supported the objective of providing exhibitors with access to established, emerging and high-growth international tourism markets.

- (c)(i) The total expenditure on hosted buyer air travel amounted to R14,862,923.18. Travel costs varied by the buyers' countries and regions of origin.

Average return airfare ranged from approximately:

- Regional African markets: R3,745 – R3,764
- Rest of Africa: approximately R13,190
- Europe: approximately R38,606
- Asia: approximately R48,006
- Americas: approximately R72,879

The variation in cost reflects differences in travel distance, airline routing and the applicable market fares.

- (c)(ii) The total expenditure on hosted buyer accommodation amounted to R6,915,454.49. Hosted buyers were accommodated for four nights during the event. Based on the total hosted buyer programme, the average accommodation cost was approximately R25,147 per hosted buyer, although the actual cost varied depending on negotiated hotel rates and room allocations.

- (d) The approved exhibition floor space rates for Africa's Travel Indaba 2026, inclusive of VAT, were as follows:

Venue	Standard Rate	Corner Rate
Durban International Convention Centre (ICC)	R4,127.13 per m ²	R5,102.68 per m ²
Durban Exhibition Centre (DEC)	R3,357.87 per m ²	R4,127.13 per m ²
Outdoor Exhibition Area	R1,035.44 per m ²	R1,275.01 per m ²

- (e) Exhibition space was allocated in accordance with the approved exhibition floor plan and the operational requirements of the event.

The allocation process took into account:

- the exhibition package selected;
- the size of the stand required;
- destination and pavilion grouping;
- tourism category;
- venue infrastructure;
- visitor flow; and
- buyer accessibility.

Exhibitors offering similar tourism products and destination experiences were grouped to improve navigation and facilitate business engagement. Stand allocation was therefore based on operational requirements and event functionality rather than preferential placement.

- (f) No formal complaints were received from exhibitors regarding a lack of buyer participation at Africa's Travel Indaba 2026.

The feedback received during and immediately after the event mainly concerned operational matters, including exhibition floor placement, visitor movement between the ICC and the Durban Exhibition Centre (DEC), and the functionality of the online diary and appointment-scheduling system.

South African Tourism will, however, undertake its standard post-event evaluation process, which includes exhibitor surveys and stakeholder debrief sessions. This process will provide an opportunity to identify any significant issues that may not have been formally raised during the event and to ensure that appropriate improvements are incorporated into the planning of future editions.

- (g) Although no formal complaints were received regarding buyer participation, South African Tourism will use the outcomes of the post-event surveys, stakeholder debrief sessions and overall event evaluation to identify areas where improvements may be required and implement the necessary corrective measures.

The actions to be considered include:

- Reviewing the exhibition floor layout to improve exhibitor visibility and visitor flow across both venues;
- Strengthening connectivity and wayfinding between the ICC and the Durban Exhibition Centre (DEC);
- Enhancing the online diary and business matchmaking platform to improve functionality and the user experience;
- Providing additional guidance and support to exhibitors on the use of the diary system before the event;
- Continuing to attract quality hosted buyers from priority domestic, regional and international source markets; and engaging exhibitors earlier in the planning process to identify and address operational matters before the event takes place.

- (h) While the final Economic Impact Assessment remains under development and subject to verification and audit processes, ATI generated significant economic activity and demand across multiple sectors.

The event stimulated demand for accommodation, hospitality expenditure, transport services, tourism experiences, and business events activity. It also created opportunities for tourism businesses to generate revenue, establish partnerships and secure future business opportunities.

The final Economic Impact Assessment will provide a comprehensive analysis of the direct, indirect and induced economic benefits associated with ATI 2026 and will be reported separately upon completion.

END