



MINISTRY
TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM, MS MAGGIE SOTYU, AT THE GAUTENG BASIC QUALITY VERIFICATION PROGRAMME CERTIFICATE HANDOVER CEREMONY IN SOWETO ON 16 MARCH 2026.

Programme Director,
Representatives from the Department of Tourism,
Leadership from South African Tourism,
Representatives from municipalities and tourism associations,
Our BQV assessors,
Distinguished tourism business owners receiving certificates today,
Ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning,

It is a great pleasure to join you today as we celebrate the achievements of tourism businesses that have successfully completed the Basic Quality Verification Programme.

Today's ceremony is not just about certificates it is about recognition, progress, and the collective commitment to improving the quality of South Africa's tourism offering.

Tourism is also a key pillar of South Africa's broader economic development agenda. Through the Tourism Growth Partnership Plan (TGPP), government and industry are working together to unlock tourism's full potential as a driver of inclusive growth, job creation and enterprise development.

Central to the TGPP is the commitment to ensure that tourism growth benefits all South Africans, particularly emerging enterprises, community-based businesses, women entrepreneurs and young people entering the sector.

His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa has repeatedly emphasised that tourism must play a leading role in building an inclusive economy that promotes diversity, expands opportunity and creates pathways for participation in the mainstream tourism value chain.

Programmes such as the Basic Quality Verification Programme directly support this vision. By helping small and emerging tourism businesses improve their service standards and credibility, the programme enables more enterprises to participate meaningfully in the tourism economy.

Importantly, many of the businesses participating in initiatives like BQV are women-owned enterprises and community-led establishments, reflecting the growing role that women are playing in shaping South Africa's tourism landscape. Women continue to lead across accommodation, tour operations, cultural experiences, food tourism and hospitality services, bringing innovation, resilience and authenticity to the sector.

Supporting these businesses is not only about improving quality standards. It is about empowering entrepreneurs, promoting diversity in our tourism offering, and ensuring that tourism growth translates into real opportunities for communities across the country.

When we invest in emerging enterprises, women entrepreneurs and community-based tourism, we strengthen the very foundation of South Africa's tourism sector.

Tourism is one of the most powerful drivers of economic growth, job creation, and community development in our country.

But for South Africa to remain competitive as a global destination, quality must be at the centre of everything we offer.

Visitors today are looking for more than beautiful landscapes. They are looking for consistent service standards, professionalism, authenticity, and memorable experiences.

Quality assurance programmes like the **Basic Quality Verification programme** help ensure that every visitor who chooses South Africa experiences the warmth, professionalism and excellence that our tourism industry is capable of delivering.

The Basic Quality Verification Programme, implemented by the **Tourism Grading Council of South Africa**, plays a very important role in our tourism ecosystem.

It serves as an **entry-level quality assurance initiative**, designed specifically to support tourism establishments that may not yet meet the full requirements for formal grading.

Through this programme:

- Businesses receive guidance on improving service standards

- Operational practices are strengthened
- Tourism enterprises gain confidence and credibility
- And importantly, it creates a pathway toward full tourism grading

This programme demonstrates that quality improvement is a journey, and every business deserves the opportunity to grow along that journey.

We as the tourism sector remain committed to supporting emerging tourism enterprises, particularly SMMEs and community-based businesses.

Many of these businesses represent the true spirit of South African hospitality. They are often rooted in communities, preserving local culture, heritage and traditions while creating livelihoods.

Programmes like BQV help ensure that these businesses are not left behind, but instead are empowered to grow, compete and thrive within the broader tourism economy.

By strengthening small tourism enterprises, we strengthen the entire tourism value chain.

Today we celebrate **175 tourism establishments** that have successfully completed the programme.

This is an important milestone.

To the certificate recipients here today: Your commitment to improving your service standards is commendable. By participating in this programme, you have taken a deliberate step toward building stronger, more competitive tourism businesses.

We must also recognise the **BQV evaluators**, including the young graduates who have contributed their expertise and dedication to supporting this initiative.

Their work not only ensures programme credibility but also contributes to skills development and employment opportunities within the tourism sector.

While today is a moment of celebration, it is also a moment of encouragement.

We encourage more tourism establishments across the country to participate in quality assurance initiatives and to continue improving their service standards.

The more we invest in quality, the more we strengthen South Africa's reputation as a world-class tourism destination.

Quality experiences lead to:

- Repeat visitors
- Positive global reputation

- Increased tourism spend
- And sustainable growth for the industry.

In closing, to all the businesses receiving certificates today congratulations.

Your dedication contributes directly to building a stronger, more inclusive and competitive tourism sector for South Africa.

Let us continue working together to ensure that every visitor who arrives in our country experiences the very best of South African hospitality.

Thank you, and congratulations once again!

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