

bojanala

broadening horizons

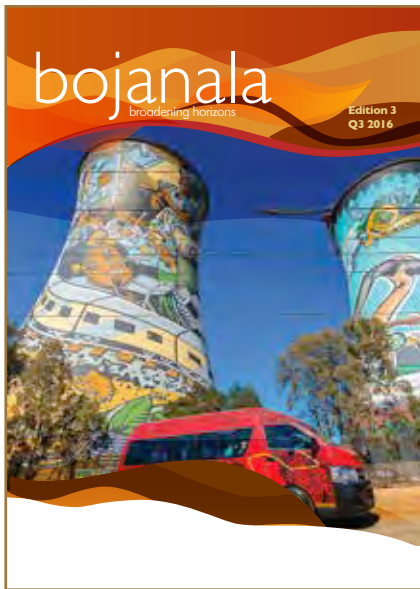
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The Orlando Power Station, now famously known as Soweto Twin Towers, is considered one of the most important tourist attractions in South Africa. The colourful towers are not only one of the most unique developments in Soweto, they are also the site of the world's first bungee jump between two cooling towers. When on top of the towers, you are able to look over South Africa's most famous township (Soweto); as you embark on an unparalleled experience that will get your adrenaline pumping and provide you with memories that will last a lifetime.

Image by: City Sightseeing Joburg



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Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, Mandarin trainee, Katlego Mphela and Executive Director, Chinese Culture International Exchange Educational Centre, Dr Lu pose for a picture at the ceremony

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LETTER FROM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Here is another exciting edition of Bojanala Stakeholder Magazine, a powerful platform where tourism stakeholders share best practices with one another. We continue to receive contributions from various players in the industry and this is perhaps indicative of how this platform has impacted the sector. We appreciate your efforts.

Building up from the previous one, this edition takes you through some of the achievements of the Department of Tourism as well as the positive offerings by various stakeholders in the industry. These amongst others include 20 Mandarin trainees heading to China for cultural learning experiences as well as the launch and handing over of Mpumalanga Visitor's Information Centre.

Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom recently had a send off for the first group of frontline tourism staff trained in Mandarin. The group have just completed the initial phase of their training in Johannesburg and are heading to China for cultural learning experiences.

The 20 trainees were selected for the specialised training from establishments frequented by the growing number of Chinese tourists visiting South Africa.

Modules for reading, writing and speaking, situational role playing sessions and the three-week visit to China will enable trainees to communicate in Mandarin, which is used by about 1000 million speakers, mainly in the People's Republic of China.

In November 2016, Deputy Minister of Tourism Tokozile Xasa handed over the Tourism Visitors Information Centre in Middelburg to the Middelburg Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MCCI) and the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality (STLM), which have been in a Public Private Partnership (PPP) since 1998. The aim of the PPP is to promote the development of the tourism sector in the region through the establishment of the Middelburg Tourist Information Centre (MTIC).

Contributing to the transformation in tourism, South African Tourism takes you through a suggested journey of transforming tourism. You will read more about having to not only talk the talk, but walk the walk too. That's why South African Tourism takes its inclusive growth objective very seriously: to contribute towards tourism growth, but in an inclusive manner that empowers new and emerging enterprises.

Also in this edition, Cape Town Tourism previews what the tourism sector can expect in 2017 as defined by circumstances within the industry during 2016. They say that the trends, lessons learnt and likely developments will aid all tourism professionals and organisations going forward, provided we have listened and learnt.

The issue further introduces the Nyathi Rest Camp, which opened at Addo Elephant National Park under the watchful eye of the South African National Parks. Here, you will learn more about this new, exclusive, self-catering addition to the accommodation offering at Addo Elephant National Park.

Meanwhile, the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) recently hosted local media on an adventure based tour as part of launching the Festive Season Campaign. This is aimed at

encouraging the domestic tourism market to visit Mpumalanga Province during the holiday period.

Furthermore, you will be informed about the Association of Southern African Travel Agents. They say that the days of walking into a travel agency and asking them to book a flight from point-to-point are almost long gone. Back in the day, that was the only way you could secure your spot on a flight to the British Isles. There was no question of not entrusting your booking to a travel agent. Read more about how they compare today's technological use with the days gone by.

Also, Open Africa, a social enterprise, in partnership with tour company Tour2.0 have launched nine new tours that will take travellers into the heart and soul of South Africa to experience exciting adventures that have never before been available to visitors. Added to this is the South African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI), which celebrates a very successful 2016 and look forward to 2017 as they celebrate 30 years of professionalising the business events industry in Southern Africa at their 31st congress.

As part of their participation at the National Tourism Career Expo this year, the South African Chefs Association, put its best foot forward by showcasing some of their talented chefs in the market. Read more about the association itself and how it contributes to society.

Lastly, the festive season is upon us, let us enjoy it to the fullest but responsibly and come back energised in 2017.



Trevor Bloem
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Walking the transformation walk on tourism

- by Sisa Ntshona



Mr Siza Ntshona, CEO, SA Tourism

It's not enough for those of us in tourism to talk non-stop about transforming our sector – if we're going to talk the talk, we need to walk the walk too. That's why South African Tourism takes its inclusive growth objective very seriously: to contribute towards tourism growth, but in an inclusive manner that empowers new and emerging enterprises.

This is undeniably challenging, since our job is not to fund tourism SMMEs and start-ups but rather to create an enabling environment in which a diverse, vibrant and multi-faceted tourism economy can take root and flourish. Yet I believe we have the clout and the will to make a fundamental difference at grassroots level.

But surely, you need to spend money to spark growth and job creation? In a sense, yes, and we are admittedly operating on a limited budget to market South Africa overseas and at home. But if we're smart with our money, and speak to like-minded organisations, government entities and corporates to forge strategic partnerships, we believe we can stretch each buck so much further.

Our transformation agenda at South African Tourism is multi-pronged, and pivots around two main axes: How do we get more black people to participate in the tourism sector, both through their businesses and by travelling around the country on holiday? It's not going to happen by itself – deliberate and targeted intervention is needed.

One of the priorities that will be high on our agenda is supporting, guiding and assisting new black entrants to become destination marketing companies in their own right, so they can develop new and emerging routes.

Township tourism is a vastly untapped area and we would like to see various "Vilakazi Streets" across different provinces taking flight, feeding the township economy. South African Tourism is also committed to bringing in new, emerging suppliers, with a focus on black entrepreneurs, young people, women and people with disabilities, to add vibrancy and diversity to our supply chain.

Charity begins at home, so they say. And by charity we don't mean handouts, but tools such as knowledge and skills to create sustainable jobs. So our first priority in our transformation journey must be igniting our domestic tourism economy – and that can only be done by empowering would-be travellers and would-be entrepreneurs in the value chain.

The sector's most dynamic SMMEs will present their businesses to leading trade players during a speed marketing session before the annual Tourism Indaba in Durban in May, with the pick of the bunch being selected to exhibit at the bustling trade show – a golden shop window for their offerings.

But we can do more to level the playing fields. We can, for example, talk to large hotel chains about extending their economies of scale to nearby B&Bs by buying linen on their behalf at cheaper rates. We can speak to cellular networks about offering discounted data and Wi-Fi packages to SMMEs. We can negotiate with banks to give SnapScans to small operators that don't have credit card facilities. We can do so much by simply talking and facilitating, not necessarily spending.

We also need to ignite a passion for travelling in our people, most of whom do not have an ingrained leisure travel culture. They must be shown that tourism is, indeed, for all – for all to experience and all to enjoy.

Our new I Am Tourism campaign, to be launched in 2017, aims to get ordinary South Africans to see the value of tourism, understand how it impacts on everyone's lives, acknowledge that we all have a role to play, and get behind tourism wholeheartedly. We hope the public will become brand ambassadors for South Africa by exploring our country more, encouraging each other to do so, buying local products and crafts, and being friendly to visitors.

In essence, we must build a business case for tourism because it has a ripple effect. Each direct permanent tourism job opportunity that is created can have multiple spin-offs for transport, agriculture and other sectors. If tourism wins, we all win.

So we must drive home the importance of tourism to everyone's life and livelihood – show our people how, by being a welcoming country of smiles and genuine hospitality, we can all play a part in our prosperity and thereby reduce the income and inequality gaps.

Transformation is not going to come from simply throwing money at the problem. In order to be meaningful, it has to be well thought-out and sustainable. And this means making a tourism-friendly South Africa a state of mind and a matter of national pride.



Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, Mandarin trainee, Katlego Mphela and Executive Director, Chinese Culture International Exchange Educational Centre, Dr Lu pose for a picture at the ceremony

Mandarin trainees head for China

- by Praveen Naidoo

The first group of frontline tourism staff to be trained in Mandarin have completed the initial phase of their training and are heading to China for cultural learning experiences.

The 20 trainees were selected for the specialised training from establishments frequented by the growing number of Chinese tourists visiting South Africa.

Modules for reading, writing and speaking, situational role playing sessions and the three-week visit to China will enable trainees to communicate in Mandarin, which is used by about 1000 million speakers, mainly in the People's Republic of China.

The trainees in this innovative course received certificates from Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom at a ceremony held in Johannesburg recently. "The language training will enhance the experience of our Mandarin-speaking visitors and make their stay in South Africa even more memorable," said Minister Hanekom.

"The frontline people will help Mandarin speakers with making arrangements for travel, accommodation and sites to visit. The tourist guides will be able to tell the fascinating stories behind our sites better; and the tourists will understand them better; and spread the word when they return home," said Minister Hanekom.

China is the world's largest outbound market for tourism. Over 128 million Chinese tourists visited other countries last year.

South Africa has enjoyed spectacular growth in arrivals from China this year. Arrivals between January and August this year were 64% better than the same period last year.

"The ability to communicate in the language of our visitors reduces their levels of anxiety when they arrive and try to find their way around a place they are not familiar with. It makes them more confident and they can relax and enjoy their stay," said Minister Hanekom.

"The first group of trainees are pioneers in this field. They have opened a new pathway for many others to follow.

"This programme shows how the public and private sector can work together to sustain the growth we are experiencing in tourism. We thank the Chinese Culture International Exchange Education Centre, Air China, the Yangzhou University and the Hilton Hotel group for their contributions to this programme.

"We invite other partners in the industry to become involved in the language training programme, so that we can take the concept to scale and extend it to other languages.

"The ultimate aim is to improve the experience of all our tourists at every step of their journey. This will grow tourism even further; and help us to support more jobs and economic opportunities in tourism and in many other sectors which tourism relies on," said Minister Hanekom.

The Department of Tourism is creating a database of the trainees, linked to SA Tourism's websites to make it accessible to establishments who need Mandarin speaking staff or guides.

Tourism Visitors Information Centre for Middleburg Community

- by Annah Mashile

The Middelburg Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MCCI) and the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality (STLM) have been in a Public Private Partnership (PPP) since 1998. The aim of the PPP is to promote the development of the tourism sector in the region through the establishment of the Middelburg Tourist Information Centre (MTIC).

On 18 November 2016, Deputy Minister of Tourism Tokozile Xasa handed over the Tourism Visitors Information Center in Middleburg. During the handover ceremony, she said, "This Visitors' Information Centre will connect Middelburg to all Visitors' Information Centres in the country, as a way of attracting visitors to Mpumalanga in general, and Middelburg in particular." Xasa further emphasised that the youth of Middelburg should visit the information centre more often to be able to market themselves and also get to know which tourism establishments have vacancies.

The aim of the centre is primarily to ensure that the tourists always receive value for money by serving as a positive tourism awareness in the local community.

The project fits into the Department's Social Responsibility Implementation programme (Expanded Public Works Programme) objectives, having created temporary job opportunities and skills development through labor-intensive methods. The job creation

element of the project included upgrading of the Tourism Information Centre, and as a result, the renovations of the information centre created 49 jobs for the surrounding communities.

Deputy Minister and other local government leadership interacted with members of the Mhluzi community at the Themba Senamela stadium, as part of the National Imbizo Focus Week.

"The Imbizo gives us an opportunity not only to create awareness on government programmes, but also to ensure that our people have access to all essential services offered to them. We are happy to have interacted with the community of Mhluzi, where the various issues such as unemployment and poverty were raised. We are confident that as government, we will address these issues as a way of improving the lives of our people," said the Deputy Minister.

Addressing the masses gathered at the stadium, the President of the Middelburg Chamber of Commerce, Advocate Mthokozisi Xulu, praised the launch of the centre as an opportunity to kick-start a vibrant tourism industry for previously disadvantaged areas as well as Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises.

"The visitors' centre will help unlock the value chain of the tourism industry beyond just accommodation. It is strategically located as part of the South Africa/Maputo N4 Corridor and this will go a long way in demystifying tourism as a sector that our people cannot access," concluded Advocate Xulu.



Community of Mhluzi in Middleburg interact with Deputy Minister of Tourism.



Acting Mayor and MMC for Infrastructure Development of the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, Councillor Jonas Matshiane, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa and CEO of Middleburg Chambers of Commerce and Industry Anna Marth Otto unveiling the new Tourism Information Centre in Middleburg.

A view to the future

- by Enver Duminy, CEO, Cape Town Tourism



What the tourism sector can expect in 2017 has been defined by the circumstances within the industry during 2016. The trends, lessons learned and likely developments will aid all tourism professionals and organizations going forward, provided we have listened and learned.

Ultimately, it is the visitors who define what we do and how we do it. There's no point in marketing into a void, our visitors tell us how they plan trips and prefer to travel, what they expect out of experiences, and whether they are satisfied. The good news is that we're on a strong footing going into 2017, with accolades such as the Lonely Planet Best in Travel for 2017 putting Cape Town as the second-best city in the world to travel to. Pre-season bookings, according to data analysts Forward Keys, indicate an increase of 12% year-on-year, also for the Mother City. Let it be remembered, though, that when Cape Town has a good season, the economic impact spreads nationally.

At a recent multi-stakeholder workshop aimed at addressing seasonality, Cape 365, all the stakeholders from the private and public sectors agreed that collaboration is key among all agencies seeking to promote tourism, and that aligned messaging is essential in order to do this.

The tourism sector is an unusual one in the South African professional landscape in that various organizations, agencies, bodies and individuals are open to meeting together to discuss ways forward for the industry. There aren't always clearly defined solutions to challenges, but this remains an effective means of cooperation for mutual benefit.

For example, the Air Access initiative which seeks to create more international direct flights to the city has, in only one year, managed to add an additional 408 400 airline seats. That's a demonstrable positive impact based on the efforts of those involved.

Tourism remains highly competitive, even with collaboration, not just within South Africa's borders, but beyond. Business travel, conferencing and events in particular is a potentially lucrative area for growth, but regionally and across the continent there are others doing this well – our challenge is to be the best at conferencing and events, from logistics to price points – and this, again, requires cooperation.



Enver Duminy, CEO, Cape Town Tourism

The stakeholders involved range from tour operators to government agencies tasked with approving visas and the events themselves, and time is a factor we must address. We should ask ourselves, are there ways we can cut down on the time it takes to get through red tape, and how can we improve on our visa processing and handling of visitors at our international arrivals desks?

We have one of the most attractive propositions for travel across South Africa, and it's up to everyone associated with the industry and peripherally to acknowledge that the more we work together, the more sustainable this sector will become for the benefit of all.



Nyathi Rest Camp Opens at Addo Elephant National Park

- by Gabrielle Venter



Some of the units at the camp

Imagine sipping on a refreshing drink as the elephants and buffaloes of Addo Elephant National Park (AENP) peacefully drink from a waterhole metres below you while the sun sets behind one of the country's majestic mountain ranges. This is a possibility at the new Nyathi Rest Camp.

Situated at the foot of the majestic Zuurberg Mountain range and surrounded by hills, Nyathi Rest Camp is the new, exclusive, self-catering addition to the accommodation offering at Addo Elephant National Park. The name of the camp means buffalo, which is something you are sure to see.



Main entrance to the camp

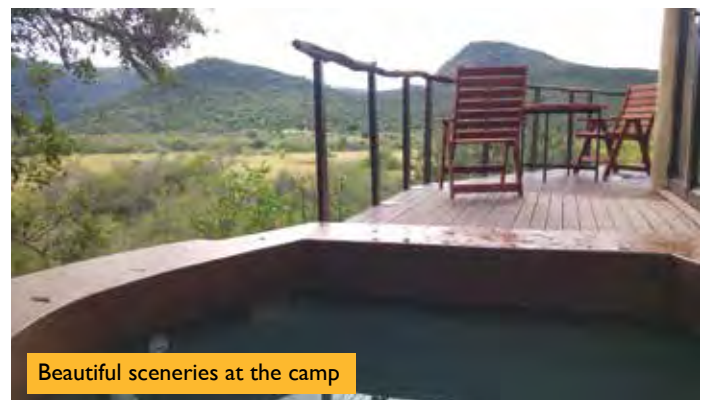


A herd of Elephants do their walkabout at the camp

A slow and steady drive through the Big Five Nyathi section of Addo will have you hoping for a glimpse of the king of the jungle or that elusive lazy leopard. Only 12km from main camp, Nyathi offers guests the seclusion and isolation that only nature can bring. Set on the banks of a floodplain, each unit has been built on stilts and provides a spectacular view from the bedrooms, lounges and even some bathrooms thanks to wide open glass panels. The seasonal river flowing just beneath the camp brings relief to many animals that are found in this section. Be on the lookout for baboons, kudu, warthog and the main star, elephants.

Nyathi Rest Camp was officially opened by the Minister of Environmental Affairs, Dr Edna Molewa on 11 September 2016. The rest camp consists of eleven units: eight two-sleeper units, one four-sleeper unit and two family units which can house six people each. A total of eight new permanent staff members have been employed to service the camp daily.

Each unit is inspired by the African culture with the architecture reflecting the dome styled and thatch homes of old. The décor inside the units takes its cue from the round leaves of the spekboom – which is abundant throughout the park. The Copper pipes and taps also give the units a more authentic feel and make you feel right at home.



Beautiful sceneries at the camp

For a more relaxed viewing experience, guests can visit a waterhole which is accessible on foot inside the small camp. A variety of game and birds frequent this area. If you want to enjoy all that Addo has to offer; from a more secluded section of the park, Nyathi Rest Camp is ideal for you.

To book call Central Reservations on +27 12 428 9111 or visit <https://www.sanparks.org/>

Prices for Nyathi Rest Camp Addo Elephant National Park

	Shoulder season	High season	
Family cottage (sleeps up to 6). First 4 people (base)	R3 500	R3 800	2 units
Guest cottage (sleeps up to 4)	R3 650	R4 000	1 unit
Cottage (sleeps up to 2)	R1 650	R1 800	7 units

Additional adult: R480

Additional child: R240

Technology makes travel easy

- by Otto de Vries, CEO Association of Southern African Travel Agents



Otto de Vries, CEO ASATA

The days of walking into a travel agency and asking them to book a flight from point-to-point are almost long gone. Back in the day, that was the only way you could secure your spot on a flight to the British Isles. There was no question of not entrusting your booking in the hands of a travel agent.

Things today are much different. Technological innovation in the areas of direct airline bookings and online booking portals have shifted the role of the travel agent from the actual 'booking' event – a simple transaction easily performed by a machine – to an end-to-end consultative role – hence the emergence of the term Travel Consultant, as opposed to Travel Agent.

In the leisure space, the travel consultant helps their customers from the inspiration phase of their holiday, right through to when they have returned safe and sound. From a corporate perspective, the travel consultant not only assists their corporate client with implementing and strategically informing their corporate travel policy, but also pre-empts any possible problems along the entire journey so that the business traveller's trip is both painless and pleasant.

That's clearly not something a machine can do.

60 years of credibility

Travel agencies that bear the stamp of credibility through their membership of the Association of Southern African Travel Agents (ASATA), which celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, make further promises to the business and leisure customer – those of providing professional service, ethical conduct and trustworthy behaviour.

Travellers who entrust their travel journey in the hands of an accredited-ASATA members can be assured that they are dealing with a market leader, which has signed the ASATA Charter committing to these promises, and that these companies comply with a strict code of conduct and constitution.

ASATA represents over 85% of South Africa's travel sector, including most of the leading retail travel brands in the country. These brands power the credibility of ASATA and their commitment to conducting themselves according to the association's constitution, the ASATA Charter and code of conduct ensure that in turn bearing the ASATA stamp of credibility further powers their respective brands.

So why has the role of the travel agent re-emerged in the 21st century as vital for travellers who want to travel with peace of mind?

Travel with Peace of Mind

Cyberspace is filled with stories of scammed travellers left stranded, travel plans going awry and travel fraud. ASATA-accredited travel agents deal with reliable travel suppliers and, as experts in travel, are well positioned to pre-empt any potential pitfalls while travelling so their journey is seamless, painless and pleasant.

We've got the inside track

The world of travel is complicated and very dynamic. ASATA-accredited travel consultants are equipped with industry knowledge and news to ensure that travel is seamless and uncomplicated. Travel agents can help their customers sift through the daunting world of travel to find a travel solution that suits their budget and needs, as well as demystify some of the more complicated areas of travel.

Saving time and money

ASATA-accredited travel agencies have strong working relationships with suppliers and access to cutting-edge technology that enables them to access extensive travel product and information and the best value fares and rates. Travel agents work for the corporate, business and leisure travellers, not for the travel supplier, sourcing all aspects of their travel, including air tickets, accommodation, car rental and much, much more.

We care

Risk management is one of the primary strategic objectives of most corporate travel programmes and ASATA-accredited Travel Agents help their customers find a way to aggregate booking data from disparate sources to continue to meet their duty of care objectives. ASATA-accredited travel consultants are committed to knowing the personal travel needs of their customers and striving for a travel experience that is painless and pleasant, and the full delivery on what was promised.

Go beyond the transaction and travel with an ASATA-accredited member so that in addition to all the benefits above, you can 'Travel with Peace of Mind'...

Batlokoa people to formally own the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge

- by Johannes Mokou

Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge, situated in Phuthaditjhaba (Free State) became yet another project to be handed over to the community by the Department of Tourism.

The lodge was officially handed over to King Montwedi Mota, who will administer it on behalf of the Batlokoa people; during an imbizo held on 19 November 2016, at the lodge.

The imbizo was an extension of the Imbizo Focus Week, which took place between 07 and 13 November, where Members of the Executive across the spheres of government mobilise strategic partners and communities to actively participate in fast-tracking the implementation of the Nine Point Plan.

In his acceptance speech, the King said, "It is an honor for me to accept this gift on behalf of Batlokoa. The project has grown in lips and bounce and it is pleasing to see it been finally handed over. When it started long time ago by my late father, King Lekunutu Mota, we never thought that this day would come."

The lodge is owned by the local Batlokoa community, which is commercially managed by Transfrontier Parks Destinations. Well-known for their friendly manners, the Batlokoa people are very welcoming to visitors from all over the globe. It is anticipated that the lodge will reach greater heights under the Batlokoa's watch as they continue to surprise with their towering involvement and contribution towards tourism. Amongst many things, the local traders in the local village of Tsheseng, the closest town to Phuthaditjhaba have a variety of both modern commerce and traditional craft and art to show to both international and local visitors.

During the handover, Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom urged the Batlokoa people to nurture the beautiful landscapes of the lodge, saying, "Every beautiful flower should be nourished so that it grows." He added that taking care of the lodge will result in community members remaining in employment, with an opportunity to employ more.

One of the local residents, Paul Tsotetsi, said that the lodge could not have come at a more perfect time as he has just graduated in Tourism. "I am sure, as the son of the soil, I would get an opportunity to showcase the skills I have acquired throughout my four years training at varsity. It is indeed an opportune time for some of us, even better, it is just at my doorstep.



Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom shakes hands with the king of Batlokoa tribe, King Montwedi Mota, during the walkabouts at the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge

Mpumalanga festive season campaign



- by Kholofelo Nkambule

Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) hosted local media on an adventure based tour as part of launching the Festive Season Campaign aimed at encouraging the domestic tourism market to visit Mpumalanga Province during the holiday period.

The campaign targets domestic tourists through the use of various e-marketing and media platforms and started from 24 October 2016 to 14 January 2017. The MTPA will utilise platforms like email banners, website banner with linkages to the festive and other seasonal packages on offer, social media platforms like Facebook, twitter, Instagram as well as radio and print media to encourage the domestic market to visit Mpumalanga during this season.

The MTPA hosted local media on a day's tour to explore some of the adventure activities one can do in the province during the hot Mpumalanga summer season. The media ventured into quad biking and ziplining giving them a bit of adrenalin rush at Induna Adventures. The tour further afforded MTPA an opportunity to share with the media planned tourism initiatives to be implemented during the year aimed at attracting domestic tourists.

Added to this was the MTPA partnership with Rise FM and Jaguar Nelspruit which showcase tourism beyond wildlife.

The tour included radio personalities from Rise FM who constantly kept their listeners up to date with the activities that took place enroute. The four day tour took place between 18 – 21 October and included Quad biking into 14 streams at Barberton, mine tour into City of Grahamstown – Gold Prospecting, guided Geotrail tour, horse riding and interaction at Kaapsehoop and a bit of pampering.



Media on a tour during Mpumalanga MTPA festive season campaign



Picture by Open Africa and Tour 2.0

New tourism offering exposes travellers to real, local experiences



- by Claire Allison, Marketing Manager for Open Africa

Open Africa, a social enterprise, in partnership with tour company Tour2.0 have launched nine new tours that will take travellers into the heart and soul of South Africa to experience exciting adventures that have never before been available to visitors. The first packaged experiences available to visitors are in Limpopo and the Northern Cape, with more regions to follow early in 2017.

The partnership brings together key travel trends, innovation, influencer marketing and technology to create a range of unforgettable tours designed to immerse travellers in one-of-a-kind experiences that are in such high demand now as travellers demand to get off the bus for more real and local travel experiences. A percentage of each booking will go towards helping Open Africa empower and develop rural entrepreneurs.

To introduce the new travel portal and experiences to the world, Open Africa partnered with Destinate on an Influencer campaign in mid-November that saw six of South Africa's top

online influencers embarking on a roadtrip through Limpopo to experience the region from a completely different perspective. The campaign was a success and beautiful imagery, memories and stories came out to promote the beauty and culture of this largely unexplored province.

The sights and sounds of Mbhokota tour shows visitors just how Mbhokota, like the rest of Limpopo, is a unique place that marches to its own drum beat. Lucky Ntimani, teacher, drummer and sculptor, welcomes his guests to the Tinyiko Art Centre where his students make music from uniquely carved drums, marimbas, mbiras and a novel instrument made out of upside-down tin plates on the springs of an old chair. Guests will get the opportunity to play the instruments and jam along with the group.

Foodies will love the Mystique of Limpopo tour, where the Mbhombhela dance troupe warmly welcomes guests to Shawela Village. This is followed by a traditional lunch of majenje, pap,



Get crafty in Mbokota

chakalaka, chicken and spinach. More dancing follows lunch to work off the calories and guests are invited to join in, with songs that range from praises to chronicles of daily life.

In the Northern Cape, adventure seekers can enjoy a day drive through the barren Richtersveld National Park to the small community of Kuboes. Here they will meet the local Nama people who will perform cultural dances, regale visitors with cultural stories, proudly show them round their community and share a meal with them.

Francois Viljoen, Managing Director of Open Africa, said, "The alignment between Tour2.0 and Open Africa was obvious. Not only do we share the same vision to expose travellers to real local experiences, but we are also passionate about making a positive difference to ordinary people's lives through tourism."

CEO and Founder of Tour2.0, Daniel Adidwa, said, "What excites us about this partnership is that it is a great opportunity to expose travellers to a variety of authentic cultural and community tourism experiences that showcase South Africa's cultural diversity. In addition to this, our approach ensures that both the traveller and the community benefit from the experience. It is not just the right kind of travel, it is fun and life-enriching."

Follow upcoming influencer adventures using the campaign hashtag #WeOpenAfrica or visit the new Open Africa travel site, www.openafricatravel.com to book your own Open Africa experience. The tours can also be booked via Tour2.0 directly.



Sights and sounds of Mbokota

Picture by Open Africa and Tour 2.0

South African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI) celebrates 2016



- by saaci

At SAACI we're celebrating a very successful 2016 and we are excited about what 2017 will bring - another big year for the association as we'll be celebrating 30 years of professionalising the business events industry in Southern Africa and our 31st congress.

We've had so many highlights during 2016. From 5 to 7 June, our 30th Congress took place within the wonderful surrounds of Mangaung /Bloemfontein. With our theme "With Knowledge, it's Possible" running like a golden thread through proceedings, delegates enjoyed great keynote addresses, out of the ordinary-sessions, innovate @saaci, master classes, a re-connect evening at the beautiful Oliewenhuis Art Museum and a Venetian Ball at the equally breath-taking Ramblers Club.

Our first ever Business Events Future Focus Conference was held during September at Spier Wine Farm. The programme, which consisted of various topics that would prepare our young members to be job ready, was widely supported by SAACI members who sponsored their services and time to come and share their expertise. The conference was a massive success with over a 100 participants, as noted by our CEO, Adriaan Liebetrau: "If this is what the future of the Business Events Industry looks like, then we are in good hands."

Another big highlight is the continuing growth of the SAACI Academy. SAACI was launched just over a year ago on 23 October 2015 at a press conference in Johannesburg. It currently boasts 618 registered online learners, has 53 online courses in progress while over 300 companies have registered with the institution.

2016 saw five new SAACI branches launched: North West, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, Limpopo and the Free State. They join our established branches, namely the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, which includes Johannesburg and Tshwane. We are very proud of the successful launch of our new branches and look forward to the critical role they will play in the strengthening of Southern Africa's business events industry.

During our AGM members were asked to vote to change our financial year to be aligned with the South African Tax year, which stretches from 1 March - 28 February. We are happy to share that the motion was carried by all members who cast their vote, with no objections. This change has an overwhelmingly positive effect across the whole SAACI spectrum: it will allow us to better utilise our resources in the office, while our members' administrative processes will be better streamlined.

As part of our 30th anniversary celebrations next year, the board informed members that we will not increase membership fees for the 1 March 2017 – 28 February 2018 financial year. In line with this positive news, we introduced a Snap Scan payment option to members, which joins the EFT, debit order and credit card payment options already available.



Adriaan Liebetrau, CEO, SAACI

SAACI would like to extend gratitude towards our collaboration partners: Avis, British Airways, Greenpop, ICAS, Price Forbes and South African Airways. Partnerships such as these provide enormous benefit to our members, and to the industry as a whole, mainly because it plays a role in the positive growth of our industry and encourages initiative, ingenuity and creativity through collaboration.

SAACI CEO Adriaan Liebetrau will leave the organisation at the end of January 2017 to take up a new role as Sales and Marketing Manager Sandton for Tsogo Sun. We wish to thank Adriaan for his passion, drive and commitment to the business events industry and for his leadership in the association, Adriaan has been a member of the SAACI board since 2010 and will remain on the board until the next election run in 2018.

SAACI wishes to thank all our members for their support during 2016. We look forward to a great 2017 and the continued strengthening of our industry. We wish everyone a happy, peaceful and joyous holiday season – see you all next year!

Backpacking South Africa - The History



- by Noelline Claassen Van Loggenberg, BSA Chairperson SAYTC

Backpacking South Africa (BSA) was originally formed in 1998 to represent backpacking establishments in South Africa. In the early years the association was used mainly for networking between backpacker establishments and for marketing within South and Southern Africa.

Over the years other businesses with a youth travel market such as tour and adventure activity operators wanted to benefit from the networking platform offered by BSA and so in 2007 SAYTC was formed with BSA becoming a sector under this umbrella body, which represented and promoted the accommodation establishments. It was also at this time that the association started to put more emphasis on international marketing.

BSA has member representation in many parts of South Africa as well as Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia and Zambia. BSA maintains standards by requiring their full members to be accredited by either AA, Eastern Cape Tourism, Fairtrade in Tourism, Kwazulu Natal Tourism, to be star graded in the category especially designated

for backpacker hostels by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA), or a member of SATSA. BSA has three tiers of membership: Incubator which is for small new backpackers that are just entering the industry; Associate members who are not accredited by one of the bodies (mentioned above); and Full members who are accredited.

BSA is still a strong sector with around 100 members. Apart from the great opportunities of networking with fellow BSA members and other businesses that service the youth travel industry (such as volunteering companies, etc), advertising, marketing at international travel shows, discounted rates for consumables (such as linen, TV licences, insurance cover, etc) are other benefits BSA members can enjoy.

Furthermore, BSA is active in assisting the TGCSA with criteria for the backpacker/hostel star grading and assist members should they have zoning problems or problems with adhering to rules and regulations of local authorities.

The South African Chefs Association puts its best foot forward at the National Tourism Careers Expo 2016

- by Katlego Tshabangu

The South African Chefs Association (SA Chefs) is a non-profit industry organisation that has been representing chefs, cooks and caterers at all levels for over 40 years. Our core purpose is to set and maintain the highest level of culinary excellence, food standards and professionalism throughout South Africa. We accomplish these goals through the transfer of skills and the upliftment of individuals.

Free State MEC for Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Sam Mashinini pose with the chefs



Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, is interviewed while doing the cook-off

Learner gets first hand experience in cooking



One of our pillars is the **National Youth Chefs Training Programme** which keeps on soaring; changing the lives of young unemployed people and providing our hospitality industry with a skilled workforce. One of our many objectives is to have a significant impact on the careers of the chefs in South Africa.

The South African Chefs Association together with talented chefs from our National Youth Chefs Training Programme put on quite a show at this year's NTCE event, held at San du Plessis theater in Bloemfontein. We were allocated a Chefs demonstration Corner that accommodated 40 learners per session. The programme ran as follows:

Chef addresses the learners



Day 1 (29th September 2016) - SA Chefs Association stand facilitated 6 sessions before 16:30 which included the 2 MEC's cook-off session with Free State media capturing the moment.

Day 2 (30th September 2016) –The stand came alive from very early in the morning when the SABC 2 morning live shoot and a cooking session with Deputy Minister of Tourism **Ms Tokozile Xasa** started.

We had 8 sessions which also included a cook-off between the Deputy Minister of Tourism (**Ms Tokozile Xasa**) and the HR Director for Hilton Global (**Peter Thomas**).

Local Media such as OFM and Khanyisa TV covered the event, as well as National radio stations such as Lesedi FM were also part of the event.

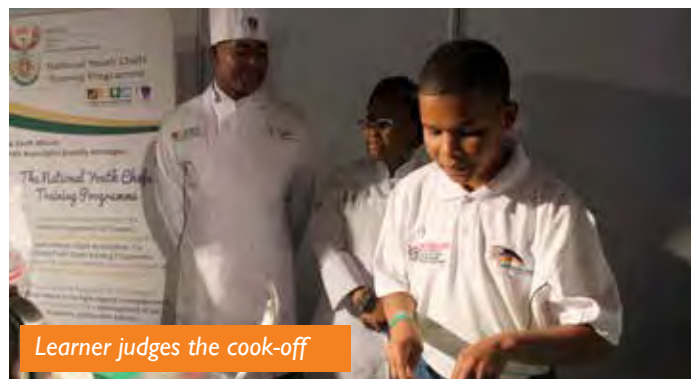
The Deputy Minister of Tourism and Deputy Director General outlined all the Skills programmes, including the South African Chefs Association as a driver of the National Youth Chefs Training Programme.



Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, during the cook-off

Day 3 (1st October 2016) – The day started well with the National Youth Chefs Training Programme – Project Manager, Hudson Masondo presenting to all learners in the main theatre. We were overwhelmed to see the SA Chefs Association stand full to capacity all day long with learners captured by the food demonstrations on our stand.

Overall, we are grateful for the opportunity awarded to us to be part of such a life changing event. We're already looking forward to next year's event.



Learner judges the cook-off



First hand experience by a learner



Russian Language Trainees with the Deputy Minister of Tourism and Project Managers, during the ceremony

Learning Russian Language to grow SA economy

- by Annah Mashile

Eight tourist guides from Western Cape and Kwa Zulu-Natal respectively, formed part of the Russian Training Programme which began on 12 September 2016. The programme was a collaboration between the Department of Tourism and Russian Embassy with the aim of equipping the guides with proficiency in the Russian language.

The training programme was intense as participants had to go through 200 hours of language training lessons, which consisted of five hours of training per day, for 40 days. The programme was designed to enable learners to read, write and speak basic Russian.



At the award ceremony that took place on 4 November 2016 at Tourism House, the guide's tutor Doctor Zinaida Dementyev explained that the eight week period to learn Russian was not enough. Dementyev said that the Russian language with its complicated grammar, coupled with long separation from their families reduced students' performance; however, they were eager to learn. She said, "I can confidently say that our students can read, write, speak basic Russian and even know a bit of Russian culture."

One of the students, Ms Bongekile Thabede, said that as a group they have discovered their weaknesses and strengths through the training and that they will apply the lessons learnt in their own lives. The training was the ultimate test for determination and fortunately accommodation facilities played a big role as the students were able to rest and study freely.

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms Tokozile Xasa, said, "Students should take an interest in what is happening in the Russian Embassy as Russia is an important country. This will enable them to invest in our country as they would have seen that we take serious interest in understanding their language and their culture. Being able to talk and greet a person visiting South Africa in a language that they understand makes them feel at home." Xasa, appreciated the students' commitment and their energy to make a change.

"Tourism should continue to grow, ensure tourists feel safe and welcomed in order to be able to improve our organisation and to give our tourists value for money," she said.

Ten tips for easy (and successful) exhibiting



- by EXSA



EXSA member, Justin Hawes, the Managing Director, Scan Display

In a busy marketplace, a face-to-face meeting with a potential client can be priceless. Exhibitions give marketers the opportunity to showcase their brands in a highly personalised, innovative and interactive way. And if executed well they can provide a great return on investment and help take your business to the next level. But, how do you make sure your exhibiting experience is both easy and successful?

1. Choose the right show

It's easy to just pick a show and say "let's do it", but it's much harder to make sure it's the right show for your business. Take a look at what the show's objectives are: who is visiting the show, who else will be exhibiting, and are the dates right for you?

"There's little point in booking an exhibition stand during your peak business period in the year," advises Hawes. "Make certain you will have the capacity and the resources to dedicate to the chosen exhibition before booking your space."

Hawes stresses the importance of looking at an exhibition's statistics from the previous year to get a feel of how busy the show will be, and if possible, a breakdown of the visitor profile.

2. Determine your objectives

After selecting your exhibition, Hawes recommends that you narrow down your objectives for your time at the exhibition. "If you don't have focus, you could end up wasting precious time (and

money) or concentrating on the wrong things," says Hawes.

Decide what it is you want to get out of the exhibition and narrow it down even further to create clear objectives. Do you want to attract new clients, build brand awareness, launch a new product, enhance your image as a company, drive sales or find new suppliers and recruits?

3. Start early

By getting a head start on booking and building your exhibition stand, you're not only more likely to benefit from better rates, but also have a clearer idea of what needs to be done beforehand. Leaving everything to the last minute will probably result in you not being able to secure what you need for your stand to look and function at its best.

4. Select the right exhibition contractor

When looking for the perfect contractor to build your exhibition stand, Hawes advises three points: Don't contact too many; choose local; don't select somebody who subcontracts.

"By getting too many quotes from contractors, you'll end up confusing yourself and trying to compare quotes that may not be comparable. Stick to three contractors for quotes and choose from that small pool," says Hawes.

By choosing a local contractor, your business not only supports local economy, but it means that somebody will be nearby should something go wrong. "You don't want to be stuck for hours trying to sort out an audiovisual problem while losing business on your stand, as you wait for a technician to come on site."

Similarly, choosing a contractor that doesn't subcontract will ensure your supplier is able to help out with any issues a lot faster than waiting for another contractor to arrive on site.

If you wish to decrease costs in the long term, it's advisable to work with a contractor who can suggest reusable elements for future shows.

5. Staffing is critical

It's absolutely essential that your staff members on the stand are the right fit. Each member of the team on your exhibition stand must be aware of and understand the objectives you have set out for the exhibition. A staff roster detailing shifts and breaks is important to make sure there is always somebody in attendance.

"It's imperative that each member of staff on your stand has been trained to deal with any likely queries that may be directed to them, so they feel equipped to answer confidently," says Hawes.

A team leader or even a top member of management should also be present at all times during very important shows. Clients like to know they're dealing with the correct people at an exhibition.

6. Make your stand interesting

If you want to stand out from the crowd, you'll need to make sure your stand is different both on how it looks and how it engages exhibition visitors, advises Hawes.



Tsogo Sun stand - at Tourism Indaba built by SSQ Exhibitions

"If your stand has the ability to draw people, allowing your staff to connect with them in a fun way, then that's half the battle won."

Include social media elements, or something fun such as a photo booth, coffee or ice cream bar, or a competition that involves collecting contact details. This will make it easier for your staff to connect with people who visit the stand and make your business a talking point for visitors.

7. Take a walk

During the quieter moments on a show, make sure to get off the stand and take a walk around your selected exhibition. This will give you the chance to evaluate what your competitors are doing on their own stands, as well as get ideas for future exhibitions. You may also find some new suppliers along the way!

8. Follow up fast

After you've packed up your stand and headed back to the office, it's important to follow up with all the leads that were generated at the event, advises Hawes. "Make sure to keep a lead generation book at the stand to capture requirements and contact details from the visitors. This makes following up after the event easier, allowing you to target each lead in a proactive manner."

9. Analyse the exhibition

After an exhibition, you need to establish whether it was worthwhile for your business. Go back and take a look at your initial objectives for the exhibition and, as a starting point, examine whether those were achieved.

Once you've determined whether your objectives were met, it's important to also evaluate what went right, or wrong, at the exhibition. A short analysis will help you make better decisions for your next exhibition, and will shorten the planning process too.

10. Time to experiment

Once you have a clear idea of what went right for you, and what could be improved upon, it's time to get creative. Look for ways to improve on what went wrong, and how to make good ideas even better in future.

"Take a look at changing the layout of your stand, or selecting a different area in an exhibition hall. Perhaps the show didn't attract the right audience for your objective. In this case re-think your objective for the next show, look at other shows or try your hand at something new like mall activations," concludes Hawes.



EXSA award winning stand built by Concept G for Africa Rail

For more information contact the EXSA office on 011 805 7272. Visit the EXSA website www.exsa.co.za for a calendar of potential exhibitions and use an EXSA member for all your exhibition needs.



Events Calendar

Event	Date	Venue
Meetings Africa	27 February 2017 - 3 March 2017	Sandton Convention Centre - Gauteng
International Tourist Guides' Day celebrations	March	TBC
Local Government Tourism Conference 2017	3-4 April 2017	Emperors Palace - Gauteng

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