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## FACTS ABOUT THE COVER:

Route 62 is a tourist route with majestic landscapes and magnificent towering cliffs, streams and an abundance of flora. The route stretches from the Western Cape to the Eastern Cape and meanders between Cape Town and Oudtshoorn, the Langkloof and Port Elizabeth. The shorter alternative drive along the N2 highway provides scenic views which are a traveller's dream for photographic stops.

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# Editorial



As this year draws to a close we reflect on the great gains that the tourism sector has achieved. It has been a year of recovery, growth and revival. While there might still be some residual effects, we lay the pandemic era to rest.

Lessons were learnt, best practice was developed and a way forward was implemented. The Tourism industry continues to show its resilience and its determination to thrive.

The conversion of the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan into the Tourism Sector Masterplan was successfully implemented. The successful implementation and resourcing of the Masterplan is dependent on the

commitment of all stakeholders to adopt an integrated approach in implementing the identified strategic interventions and actions. This requires sound and effective governance structures and processes that manage and support tourism which the Masterplan has outlined.

This year has highlighted the importance of partnerships with the Department of Tourism has convened the Tourism Safety Forum and the Tourism Marketing Workshop. These fora emphasise the significance of collaboration and working towards a common goal. Together we will give expression to our mandate and realise our goals as a sector.

We end the year with enthusiasm to drive our goals into the new year. Tourism is a people-orientated sector driven by a passion to position South Africa as a destination of choice. Let us continue to be driven by what we do – the best is yet to come!

We thank you for your contribution in making 2023 a successful year. Enjoy the rest, take time to rejuvenate and be safe this holiday season.

- Seapei Lebele





## South Africa Showcases Tourism Prowess at World Travel Market London 2023

In an assertive and strategic effort to further boost the tourism sector, South Africa sent a formidable delegation to the World Travel Market (WTM) which took place from 6th to 8th November 2023 in London.

Led by the Minister of Tourism, Honourable Patricia De Lille, the South African contingent to the global trade show comprised of 27 South African exhibitors, showcasing a mix of the country's diverse tourism products and experiences. The delegation, including provincial tourism authorities, destination management companies, tour operators, airlines and accommodation groups and establishments aims to leverage the event to further bolster the country's tourism recovery.

South Africa also promoted our hidden gems and little towns and dorpias and the work that the South African Township and Village Tourism Association (SATIVITO) is doing in South Africa. Representatives from the Mier and Khomani San villages in the Northern Cape also took part in a panel discussion at WTM London.

"WTM is pivotal for re-establishing connections, gleaned valuable market insights, and promoting our remarkable destination. As a highly competitive destination, we as South Africa, must

show our partners that we know that travellers' needs have evolved and that in fact we do have what they are looking for. Together as a greater tourism industry, we approach WTM with a singular goal: to connect with our various partners who are key in helping us achieve our goal of growing arrivals to our country. Our trade partners are key in putting together packages that attract visitors to our country while policy makers also play an important role in how South Africa is perceived by travellers. We are serious about growing arrivals to our country for our sector to have a positive impact on the South African economy and we are unambiguous in the stance that achieving this will take partnerships between the public and private sector," said Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille.

Minister de Lille participated at the annual WTM Ministerial Summit where she joined 40 tourism ministers from around the world at this event hosted in association with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). This year the ministers placed the spotlight on the importance of education in the tourism sector.

Minister de Lille's remarks at the summit were lauded as the Minister shared the

need for the private sector to project the future needs of tourism, the skills and training that will be needed to support the growth and changes in the tourism sector so that young people are directed into the requisite fields of study in tourism.

At the Minister's Summit at WTM, Minister de Lille said: "There is a misalignment between the skills currently being taught and what is needed in the sector. The skills gap for the future of tourism can only be filled with a partnership between the public and private sector".

Minister de Lille also shared information on the Department of Tourism's skills and training opportunities provided to young people from across South Africa. These programmes targeting unemployed youth represent multi-million investments into empowering young people to enter the tourism sector. Following the hosting of the BRICS Tourism Ministers meeting in Cape Town in October, Minister de Lille will also be signing an Action Plan with Brazil's Minister of Tourism, Celso Sabino on joint marketing and collaborative efforts geared towards growing tourism between South Africa and Brazil, especially in light of the relaunch of SAA's direct flights from Cape Town and Johannesburg which took off in the past few days.

Team South Africa attended WTM buoyed by the remarkable tourism arrivals statistics of recent months. Between January and September this year, South Africa saw a significant influx of tourists, with over 6,1 million visitors arriving in the country, more than 58.4% when compared to the 3.8 million arrivals to South Africa in the same period in 2022. During this period, visitors from Africa represented 4.6 million of the total arrivals to South Africa, a 60% increase in Africa land arrivals and a 35% increase in Africa air arrivals. South Africa welcomed more than 862 000 arrivals from Europe between January and September this year, a 50,9% increase on the more than 571 000 arrivals in 2022. From Asia, we welcomed more than 148 000 visitors in the first 9 months of 2023, an increase of 82,6% from the 81 000 arrivals in the same period in 2022. Notably, China's arrivals to South Africa increased by 247% in 2023 when compared to 2022.

All markets saw an increase in arrivals to South Africa of between 48 and

99%. During the first two quarters of 2023, total tourist foreign direct spend amounted to R48 billion. South Africa's appeal to travellers from around the world is undeniable. The South African Tourism UK and Ireland Hub was recently honoured as the 'Luxury Tourist Board of the Year' at the Aspire Awards 2023, held in Manchester on 18 October. Aspire, a premier luxury trade magazine, presented this award.

Furthermore, in July, South Africa received recognition as the "Best Country in the World", while Cape Town was awarded the title of the "Best City" at the Telegraph Travel Awards as voted by The Telegraph readers. Minister de Lille engaged the Telegraph Travel editor, Ben Ross and received the awards at the South Africa exhibition stand at WTM in London on Monday 6 November. Minister de Lille also engaged various trade partners and high profile media representatives including CNN, Wanderlust magazine and LonelyPlanet. The LonelyPlanet

team also handed over an award to Minister de Lille voting South Africa as a "Top Sustainable Destination" in the Best in Travel 2024 awards.

"Despite these wonderful recognitions and accolades, in a highly competitive global tourism landscape, we must continue to escalate our efforts to reassure travellers from all over the world that South Africa is the destination they must visit and explore. At WTM, we will also update our partners on our latest safety initiatives and reinforce our message that South Africa is an affordable destination where visitors can enjoy a range of diverse experiences and that these are all complemented by the warmth and welcoming posture of South Africa's people. "As the summer season has begun in South Africa, we are also going to use that opportunity to invite the world to come to South Africa for summer," De Lille concluded.

- By Ministry





## WTTTC Global Summit Makes History in Rwanda, Paves the Way for Visa-Free Travel within Africa

In a historic move, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC) Global Summit convened in Africa for the first time, with Rwanda playing host to an array of global leaders, policymakers, and industry experts. The summit, which took place from November 2th to 4th, 2023, addressed critical issues facing the travel and tourism sector, with a major focus on visa policies within the African continent.

President Paul Kagame of Rwanda took center stage to make a groundbreaking announcement: all African countries will no longer require visas to visit Rwanda. This bold step is set to significantly bolster tourism across the continent, fostering greater unity and connectivity among African nations.

Minister of Tourism of South Africa, Patricia Delille, echoed this sentiment and highlighted the progress that has already been made in easing visa restrictions. Delille praised the successful collaborations with Kenya and Ghana,

where travelers can now visit these countries without the need for a visa. She emphasized that the issue of visas remains a central point of discussion and affirmed her commitment to working closely with the Minister of Home Affairs of South Africa to further streamline visa processes.

One of the prominent challenges discussed during the summit was the issue of air connectivity, which remains a critical hurdle for the travel and tourism industry in Africa. Industry leaders stressed the urgent need for improved air transport infrastructure and increased connectivity to unlock the full potential of the continent's tourism sector.

As the summit concluded, the collective resolve to address these pressing issues was palpable. The commitment to visa-free travel within Africa and the acknowledgment of the need for enhanced air connectivity signal a new era for the continent's travel and tourism industry.

The WTTTC Global Summit in Rwanda stands as a testament to Africa's growing prominence on the global stage and the determination of its leaders to create a more accessible and connected continent for travelers worldwide. The decisions and discussions held at this summit are poised to shape the future of tourism in Africa, unlocking its full potential for economic growth and cultural exchange.

With the momentum gained from this historic event, the African continent is poised to become an even more attractive destination for travelers from around the world, fostering greater unity and collaboration among nations.

The legacy of the WTTTC Global Summit in Rwanda will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact on the future of travel and tourism in Africa.

- By Itumeleng Magongoa



## Minister De Lille hosts BRICS Tourism Ministers Meeting

"Our collective recovery of tourism must be measured beyond economic impacts. A fairer development model is called for, that involves stakeholders at different levels in planning and implementation that provides decent work conditions and opportunities for all, including women, youth, people with disabilities and indigenous communities," said Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille during her opening address at Table Bay Hotel in Cape Town where she was hosting Tourism Ministers from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS).

The BRICS Tourism Ministers Meeting took place from 24 to 25 October 2023 under the theme: "Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism Recovery". The meeting followed after South Africa's hosting of the BRICS Summit in August this year, during which Heads of State committed to working closely on tourism industry recovery and to increasing mutual tourist flows.

In her opening address, Minister De Lille quoted President Cyril Ramaphosa, the chair of the BRICS Summit that took place in August 2023, saying, "BRICS is an inclusive formation of developing and emerging economies that are working together to benefit from our rich histories, cultures and systems to advance common prosperity. Over the past decades, the bloc has been a major driver of global growth, trade and investment. BRICS stands for solidarity and progress. BRICS stands for inclusivity and equitable world order. BRICS stands for sustainable development."

She said that the meeting encouraged a "paradigm shift" away from using tourist arrivals to measure success towards a focus on community impact.

Vice Minister of Tourism in Brazil, Ms Ana Carla Lopes said, "Tourism is made of many great hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and airlines, but at the end of the day, we are talking about millions of people, and those people must be positively impacted."

China's Vice Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mr Yingchuan Lu said that, each country had unique approaches to developing the sector, adding that he believed the meeting allows member countries to share professional knowledge and exchange practical experience." While focusing on sustainable, equitable and green tourism, representatives also indicated a keenness to share information on other issues.

Minister De Lille said she was interested in how the other members of the BRICS pact were using technology to manage the flows of tourists into and out of their countries, while India's Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Mr Rakesh Kumar Verma, said there was a need to "share and learn" on issues including crisis management and the use of technology.

Russia, meanwhile, was looking to get acquainted with members' national tourism strategies and identify areas of further cooperation.

The Ministers exchanged information and experiences within the tourism sectors and tried to reach a consensus on key policy priorities for a more just and sustainable tourism recovery. This is because poverty, unemployment and inequality are the biggest problems the world faces.

With the goal of mapping the way forward on clear actions, Minister De Lille

held bilateral meetings with each BRICS country Minister. After the meetings, she enticed them with the African experience of having dinner at the Table Mountain Ariel Cable Way, a world-class cableway experience when accessing Table Mountain. The next day, the delegation took a Sho't Left to Iziko Museums of South Africa and Groot Constantia Wine Museum, which is situated in a part of the historic wine cellar, which houses and exhibits storage and drinking vessels for wines.

"My goal is clear, we need to work harder to grow tourism through new and innovative travel packages, implement joint marketing strategies and address obstacles that stand in the way of this growth. We need to work together as BRICS nations to increase air access and ease visa regimes to ensure seamless travel between our countries," Minister De Lille said.

"As the South African Department of Tourism, we are committed to significantly growing tourism between ourselves and the BRICS nations. We will work as partners to enhance communication and cooperation and continue marketing and promotion efforts in BRICS countries to showcase the diverse and unique attractions of South Africa, such as its conferencing and event-hosting capabilities, wildlife, culture, scenery and adventure activities."

"This also involves creating more tailored and customised products and services that cater to the preferences and needs of different segments of travellers, such as families, couples, seniors, millennials and business travellers," concluded Minister De Lille.

- By Annah Mashile



## SAA Spreads Wings to São Paulo, Brazil from Cape Town and Johannesburg

October represented a watershed month for South African Airways. Not only was the airline launching its first intercontinental flight to Sao Paulo in Brazil since it took to the skies again two years ago, but it also took delivery of another two leased A320s to boost its domestic fleet.

With air travel playing a crucial role in connecting the country locally, regionally, and intercontinentally, the launch of new routes and the bolstering of the national airline's fleet are critical to building relationships and providing access to intercontinental trade.

The Brazil route will facilitate numerous export and import opportunities and augment existing trade relations between the two countries. SAA will operate a wide-body fleet with sufficient space to load palletised cargo and provide faster movement of goods, whether it is general cargo, pharmaceuticals, or high value cargo, boosting the movement of time-sensitive goods.

Reflecting on how far the airline has come over the past two years in its mission to re-entrench itself as the country's proud national carrier and flag bearer, SAA interim CEO, Prof John Lamola, says when SAA took to the skies again in 2021, it had a solid strategy in place. "It has not been an easy journey, but the more than 9,000 commercial flights under our belts to date bear testimony to the success of our strategy."

"The choice of Brazil as our first intercontinental route was informed not only by rigorous economic and market analysis, but also by considerations of the strategic linkages of South Africa in the context of the country's membership of BRICS."

When the airline commenced operations in 2021, it started off with a mere three routes. Now, it flies to 10 international destinations, 3 domestic and 1 intercontinental route. SAA has built its fleet to incorporate eight aircraft. By March 2024, it expects to fly more

destinations with a fleet of 13 aircraft.

This is good news for the country's travel and tourism sector, which is expected to grow at an average rate of 7.6% annually, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council's Economic Impact Report. The inaugural flight to São Paulo took off on Tuesday, 31 October at 12:55pm from Cape Town while the first flight from Johannesburg will take place on Monday, 6 November.

Cape Town operates on Tuesdays and Saturdays, with Johannesburg flights operate on Mondays and Thursdays. Lamola says South Africa's transport infrastructure has a significant impact on the growth of the economy and the efficiency of the country's business transactions. "A fully functional and efficient national airline is critical for bolstering South Africa's trade relations and opening up future growth prospects."

- By South African Tourism



## Minister De Lille Welcomes the Opening of e-Visa System to South Africans by Saudi Arabia

Following a recent official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to strengthen tourism relations, Minister Patricia de Lille welcomed the opening of the Saudi Arabian e-Visa system to South Africans.

A few weeks ago, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced that it was expanding its visitor e-Visa programme to travellers from eight more countries, taking the total up to 57. Tourists from South Africa can now easily apply for an e-Visa for their travels to Saudi Arabia.

"I am extremely pleased with this development as South Africa also became the first African country to be added to the list. This will certainly bring immense benefits for leisure and Umrah travellers, for our efforts to grow tourism between South Africa and Saudi Arabia," Minister De Lille said.

The multi-entry e-Visa is valid for one year and allows travellers to visit the Kingdom for up to 90 days at a time. It costs 535 Saudi Riyals, which also includes medical insurance. In terms of the South African visa system, travellers from Saudi Arabia are part of the visa-

exempted countries and do not require a visa to travel to South Africa for a period of up to 90 days.

Saudi Arabia is fast becoming an attractive tourist destination and is a key partner in South Africa's efforts to grow tourism with the rest of the world. The Department of Tourism also has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Tourism Department, which outlines the joint objectives to grow tourism between the two countries.

Minister De Lille recently undertook an official visit to Saudi Arabia to attend the International World Tourism Day Conference, where various engagements took place to strengthen tourism relations and cooperation with Saudi Arabian stakeholders. Minister De Lille met with a range of Saudi Arabian stakeholders, including the Air Connectivity Programme team within the Ministry of Tourism as well as the Saudi Tourism Authority. Discussions covered actions needed to improve air connectivity between Saudi Arabia and South Africa and a joint marketing

strategy to promote both destinations to travellers in both countries.

Saudia Arabian Airlines (Saudia) has also announced the recommencement of a direct flight between Jeddah and Johannesburg starting on 1 December 2023. During the engagements, the South African delegation shared research with the Saudi Air Connectivity Team to motivate for a direct flight between Jeddah and Cape Town.

"The e-Visa development is significant for South Africa as many Muslim citizens travel for religious purposes. Along with the direct flights, this will ease travel for many tourists but especially for religious tourism and pilgrimages," Minister De Lille said.

Through the fast and easy-to-use online portal, South Africans can apply for an e-Visa and discover the warm hospitality of Saudi people, the rich heritage, vibrant culture, diverse and breathtaking landscapes, from the mountains of Abha to the beaches of the Red Sea to the shifting sands of the Empty Quarter.

- By Ministry

# Tourism Sector Masterplan Gazetted After Approval by Cabinet



The Minister of Tourism, Ms Patricia de Lille, has welcomed Cabinet's approval of the Tourism Sector Masterplan, which was gazetted on Friday, 13 October 2023.

"Implementing the Masterplan will create opportunities for inclusive participation of all sectors of society, including women, youth and people with disabilities. This Plan also gives impetus to the recovery and sustained growth of the sector," said Minister De Lille.

Due to its multiplier effect, labour intensity and value chain that creates significant employment opportunities, tourism is recognised as a priority sector of the South African economy. The sector's interlinkages with other economic sectors provide business opportunities for Small, Micro, to Medium Enterprises (SMMEs), which is why it was identified as one of seven key sectors in South Africa's Re-Imagining Industrial Strategy, approved by Cabinet in 2019. This is the basis upon which the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan (TSRP) was converted into a comprehensive Tourism Sector Masterplan.

The conversion of the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan into the Tourism Sector Masterplan was one of the key priorities given to Minister De Lille by President Cyril Ramaphosa as part of the Minister's Performance Agreement. This priority has now been achieved. "The Masterplan aims to galvanise industry, labour and government to collectively act on a shared vision, identify priorities and deliver economic activity and jobs for all South Africans," Minister De Lille said.

"As the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan has a lifespan of three years, from 2021/2022 to 2023/2024, the Department of Tourism embarked on a process to convert the TSRP into the Tourism Sector Masterplan. This entailed the integration of all TSRP interventions into the Tourism Sector Masterplan, with the extension of the timeframe for implementation up to the 2025/2026 financial year," said the Minister.

Additionally, the vision, mission, guiding principles and values of the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) 2016

– 2026 were adopted. Institutional and governance responsibilities for developing and implementing the Masterplan were added in accordance with the relevant guidelines to prepare, develop and implement the Masterplan.

The TSRP was a highly focussed intervention and product of collaboration with key stakeholders from the government, the private sector and other social partners aimed at mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism economy and charting a roadmap for recovery. It proposed various measures to Protect and Rejuvenate Supply, Reignite Demand and Strengthen Enabling Capability for tourism recovery.

Overall, the Plan proposed seven Strategic Interventions underpinned by specific actions aimed at helping the sector recover to pre-pandemic levels and positioning the sector for long-term sustainable growth. Noting the tourism sector's impact on the broader economy, the Plan is aligned to the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP), more so on the priorities in the areas of employment creation, infrastructure investment, green economy or sustainability interventions; inclusion of women and youth, as well as skills development.

"The pillars and strategic interventions of the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan have been adopted for the Masterplan, and therefore, the effective implementation of the Plan will be anchored on seven Strategic Interventions supported by catalytic programmes with specific actions, timeframes and an indication of those responsible for implementing each action," stated the Minister.

The Strategic Interventions are:

- Implement norms and standards for safe operations across the value chain to enable safe travel and rebuild traveller confidence;
- Stimulate domestic demand through targeted initiatives and campaigns;
- Strengthen the supply side through resource mobilisation and investment facilitation;

- Support for the protection of core tourism infrastructure and assets;
- Execute a global marketing programme to reignite international demand;
- Tourism regional integration and
- Create an enabling policy environment to provide enhanced support for sector growth and development.

Furthermore, successful implementation of the Masterplan will, in part, depend on a set of enablers for growth whose implementation is beyond the Department of Tourism and the tourism industry in general.

Enablers for growth are identified as follows:

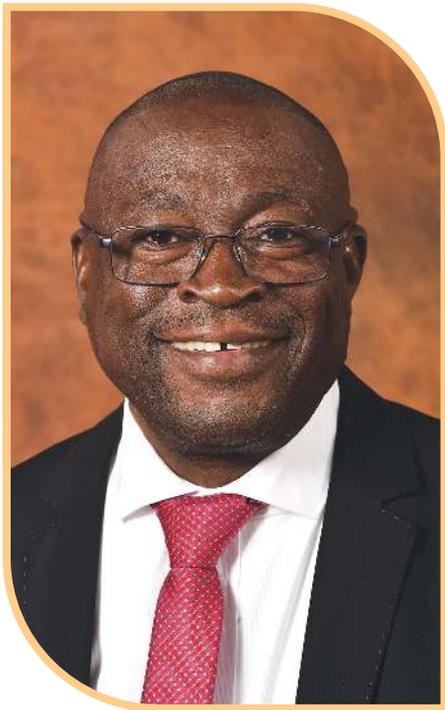
- Formation of targeted, strategic partnerships between government and industry;
- Partnership with relevant departments to ensure improved travel facilitation through the implementation of e-visas, tourist safety, airlift capacity, quicker turnaround times in the processing of tour operator licenses, and
- Stimulation of domestic demand through Government consumption expenditure.

The Department of Tourism will continue to collaborate with the responsible departments and stakeholders to ensure the implementation of activities linked to the above enablers.

"The successful implementation and resourcing of the Masterplan is dependent on the commitment of all stakeholders to adopt an integrated approach in implementing the identified strategic interventions and actions. This requires sound and effective governance structures and processes that manage and support tourism, which the Masterplan has outlined," concluded the Minister.

- By Ministry

# Deputy Minister Mahlalela conducts Tourism Imbizo in Kannaland



The Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr Fish Mahlalela, conducted a Community Outreach Imbizo on 14 September 2023 at Kannaland near Calitzdorp in the Western Cape Province. The Imbizo was themed, "Tourism invests in a green future."

The Imbizo was held with the aim of bringing together sector stakeholders and community members to discuss the importance of citizen participation in government-led initiatives for sustainable local tourism economies.

Calitzdorp, also known as the Port Capital of South Africa, is ideally situated at the heart of the Klein Karoo, just a few hours driving time from all the world-class tourist attractions of the region. It is a quaint village with architectural and culinary treasures, artists and activities.

There was a plea to the national government and Kannaland Local Municipality to maintain roads and erect street names which are in poor conditions for tourists to access and travel safely in the area. The community also called on the municipality to assist in resuscitating the abandoned town hall and other buildings in Calitzdorp, which have turned into white elephants. Also, there is a need for tourism signage for tourists to identify tourism attractions in the area.

The Auditor-General Report for 2021/2022 shows Kannaland Local Municipality underspend the allocated budget, and the remaining funds were returned to the National Treasury. Deputy Minister Mahlalela urged the community to utilise the allocated budget by identifying projects which need maintenance and inform their local municipality regarding that.

The community also raised issues of loadshedding, financial assistance for tourist attraction projects such as the development of farming markets, stalls and agricultural festivals in the area, as well as the development of donkey cart routes. They pointed out that they were facing challenges with regard to the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Calitzdorp and Garden Route District Municipality on funding tourism to develop tourism projects in the area.

The community also need skills development to uplift tourism in the area and tourism volunteers. Officials from the Garden Route District Municipality responded by saying that the District Municipality will look into the possibility of installing solar panels in the tourism establishments in the area.

Deputy Minister Mahlalela further stated that "the Department of Tourism has a Green Tourism Incentive Programme (GTIP) that is managed by Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) to provide small and micro enterprises with financial assistance to install energy and water efficiency solutions." He advised the tourism establishments owners in the area to visit the IDC's website to access more information and to application forms for the grant.

"Kannaland Local Municipality must work closely with Garden Route Municipality to resolve service delivery issues. In terms of skills development, the Department of Tourism also offers the Chefs Training Programme for youth from 18 to 35 years and Tourism Monitors Programme."

"As projects and initiatives move forward, it is crucial to keep the lines of communication open and maintain the spirit of cooperation established during this event. In conclusion, the Kannaland community's engagement indicates the potential for growth and prosperity in the region's tourism industry. With the support of Government and the commitment of local stakeholders, the future of sustainable tourism in Kannaland looks bright," concluded Deputy Minister Mahlalela.

- By Annah Mashile





## The National Tourism Career Expo 2023 Empowers Learners

The Department of Tourism, in collaboration with the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA), the Gauteng Department of Economic Development and the Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) hosted the 2023 National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) from 29 September to 1 October 2023.

This three-day expo took place at the Johannesburg Expo Centre in Nasrec where thousands of high school learners and educators flocked to the centre to gain more knowledge about the tourism sector. This year's theme was "Tourism Investments for People, Planet and Prosperity."

The Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr Fish Mahlalela, officially launched the expo and delivered the keynote address. He highlighted the strides taken by the tourism sector in showing resilience to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Deputy Minister expressed the need to build a sector that is inclusive and transformative whereby women and the youth can benefit from its success.

"As government, our approach to a skill revolution is to assist people to upskill and future-proof themselves in the light of this fast-changing work environment to mitigate the impact of triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality," said Mahlalela.

Ms Tasneem Motara, Gauteng Provincial Government Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Economic Development, Environment, Agriculture and Rural Development during her speech, indicated that the provincial

government had identified tourism as one of the 10 growth sectors for economic inclusion and expansion. The MEC acknowledged the tourism sector's contribution to the Gauteng Province's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and that of the country. She added that tourism is one of the sectors geared to benefit from the province's additional funding support, infrastructure support, as well as additional policy imperatives and guidance.

One of the highlights of the opening ceremony was the announcement of the Global Travel and Tourism Partnership South Africa (GTTP-SA) research winners for their papers in line with the theme, "Building a Resilient Workforce for a Sustainable Future." Tiisetso Mfene and Kelebogile Gare, together with their teacher, Ms Phindile Mabasa, from Meadowlands High School in Soweto, walked away with the first prize. As a result, they will represent South Africa in Dubai, where they will be presenting their research at the International Global Travel and Tourism Learner and Teacher Conference.

Johannesburg's Daliwonga Secondary School learners Michelle Mncube and Lebohang Kutumela, with the teacher, Ms Thembu, took second place.

In third place, it was Lindiwe Mkhizwe and Londeka Ngcobo with their teacher Ms Nosihle Mntungwa.

Following the opening ceremony, Deputy Minister Mahlalela went on a walkabout in the exhibition hall, where he interacted with the learners, educators and exhibitors. Some of the exhibitors included South African Airways (SAA), various Provincial Tourism Agencies, a virtual gaming area and various tourism entrepreneurs.

There were also designated areas for live engagements at the Chef's Corner, Mixology Corner, Hospitality Corner, Conservation Corner, a Virtual Classroom and Recruitment area, as well as Educators' Seminars. Other exciting activities included a Youth Podcast hosted by Solomzi "Sol" Phenduka and Mbali Sibeko, a gala dinner and awards ceremony as well as a baking competition.

The 2023 edition of the NTCE marked 15 years since its inception in 2008. Each year, the expo continues to draw thousands of learners and educators who are eager to learn and play a vital role in the country's tourism sector. This year's edition was no different, as the tourism buzz swept across the Nasrec skyline for the duration of the expo.

- By Sifiso Halama





## President Ramaphosa leads the District Development Model Presidential Imbizo in Potchefstroom

President Cyril Ramaphosa led the District Development Model (DDM) Presidential Imbizo in Potchefstroom in the JB Marks Local Municipality, falling under the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality in the North West Province on 20 October 2023. The objective of the Imbizo was to assess the progress in implementing Government's commitments since the inaugural Presidential Imbizo, which took place in early 2022.

A marquee was erected at the Ikageng Stadium, Potchefstroom, as community members came out in numbers to engage the President, the various Ministers in attendance and other Government officials. The Minister of Tourism, Ms Patricia de Lille, who was also in attendance, noted that the North West Province has a number of tourism attractions like Hartbeespoort Dam, Sun City and Pilanesberg Nature Reserve, to name a few.

The Imbizo kicked off with a cultural dance by a local Setswana dance group. The audience was captivated by the group's energy and stage presence,

which duly showcased the existing arts and culture talent in the area. Their performance set the inviting tone for the President's entrance, with the audience anticipating an engaging day on how the government aims to resolve some of the district's day-to-day challenges.

Community members were given an opportunity to raise their concerns and challenges to the President and the various Ministers in attendance. Mostly, community members indicated the need for increased job opportunities, and assistance with curbing the escalating levels of crime and drug abuse amongst the youth. Community members also expressed their need for improved provision of basic services such as water and electricity.

Ministers, Mr Thulas Nxesi (Employment and Labour), Mr Senzo Mchunu (Water and Sanitation) and General Bheki Cele (Police), responded to community members and provided input on government interventions to address the raised concerns.

In his address, President Ramaphosa highlighted key ongoing projects in the

North West in an effort to strengthen municipalities. These projects include Thuntsha Lerole, which aims to address service delivery challenges by mobilising communities and providing them with constant feedback on progress made. There are also other projects, such as the Green Tourism Incentive Programme, Youth Skills Development Programmes and Tourism Incentive Programme, which are aimed at alleviating the challenges faced in the province. These projects will work toward fulfilling the government's promises made during the previous Presidential Imbizo, ensuring a better future for the province's residents," said President Ramaphosa.

Over and above the engagements with the President and Ministers in attendance, various government departments erected exhibition stands to assist community members with their enquiries. The Department of Tourism officials were also in attendance and provided information on the various Departmental programmes in which community members can participate in.

- By Sifiso Halama



## Deputy Minister Mahlalela hosts Tourism Imbizo at Ehlazeni District Municipality

On 16 November 2023, the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr Fish Mahlalela hosted a tourism imbizo and stakeholder engagement session in the Ehlazeni District Municipality, Mpumalanga at Mdladla Community Hall, in Vlakbult – Nkomazi Local Municipality.

As the crowd was filling up the hall, the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr Fish Mahlalela, briefed the various partner stakeholders on the reason and importance of the imbizo. He provided an overview of Nkomazi local municipality's tourism potential and emphasised the importance of investing in tourism as a measure of curbing rising unemployment rates and stimulating economic growth in the Mpumalanga province. "In terms of tourism, this is a strategic part of the Mpumalanga province as it shares the border posts of two countries, Eswatini and Mozambique," said the Deputy Minister. "Mpumalanga has mines and coal but only tourism has a greater potential to create many jobs and alleviate poverty in province as tourists visit with the prospect of visiting more than one country," added the Deputy Minister.

The official programme of the day was opened by Mr Mduduzi Vilakazi, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, who also performed the role of programme director with hundreds of community members in attendance. Councillor Phindile Magagula, Executive Mayor of Nkomazi Local Municipality,

provided the welcome remarks where she affirmed the municipality's dedication to tourism. The mayor highlighted the tourism opportunities that exist in Mbuzini, a village that is situated near the borders of Mozambique and Eswatini. Significantly, Mbuzini is where former Mozambican President, Samora Machel, and several other passengers lost their lives in an airplane crash in 1986. A monument of Samora Machel was erected and many tourists visit the area to pay their last respects to the former Mozambican President. Cllr Magagula also encouraged a fruitful engagement in stimulating tourism growth in Mananga through the development of hiking trails. She also expressed the need for increased bird-watching recreational activities in Masibekela.

Representatives from various entities and organisations were provided with an opportunity to present their programmes to community members. Ehlazeni District Municipality representative presented on the economic profile of the district with emphasis on Tourism and Agriculture. During the presentation, it was indicated that community members can take advantage of the district's Guest House Support Programme which assists with the upgrading standards of guest houses to ensure they meet an appropriate grading level. A representative from the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) presented about the recently launched Tourism Equity Fund and encouraged community members to apply for the fund. The South African

Tourism (SAT) representative wrapped the presentations and expressed the need for tourism business owners in the district to use platforms like the Tourism Tuesday weekly newsletter and the Sho't Left campaign to market their businesses.

During the engagement, community members raised various questions which mostly related to land development and assistance with the renovation of structures that can be used for tourism services. Community members also expressed the need to attract international tourists to Nkomazi, so they do not just visit the Kruger National Park (KNP) and leave without experiencing tourism offerings in KNP's surrounding areas. Senior Government officials responded to community members and provided input on how their respective departments and municipalities can assist community members. Department of Tourism Deputy Director General (DDG) for Destination Development, Dr Shamilla Chettiar, expressed the need for increased domestic tourism offers to attract locals and South Africans in other provinces to visit the district and explore its diverse tourism attractions.

The Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr Fish Mahlalela, delivered the closing remarks and challenged community members to come up with innovative solutions to stimulate tourism growth in the district. He also expressed the need for increased women and youth participation in tourism to tackle the high levels of unemployment. "While women continue to carry the brunt of exclusion from mainstream economic activities and local economic empowerment in this democratic administration. We, therefore, chose to prioritise both women and youth, because we believe that the tourism sector remains a key driver of our country's national economy and immensely contributes to economic growth and job creation," said the Deputy Minister.

The Deputy Minister concluded his remarks by assuring community members that government will continue to seek interventions within government and through private partnerships to address some of the issues raised during the Imbizo. He urged community members to continue participating in making the country work and strive to leave no one behind.

- By Sifiso Halama



## Deputy Minister of Tourism Visits uPhongolo

“Tourism is Government led, private sector driven, and community based, we need to work together to put packages that can attract tourists to stay longer. We as government need to make provision for a clean environment, sanitation, water, electricity and maintain roads. While the private sector invests and build accommodations facilities. If we market the place investors will come and build lodges and hotels this will make them form partnership with the communities and create jobs, making the community to benefit through employment and have a sustainable livelihood.” said Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalale.

He visited the uPhongolo Local Municipality on 30 November 2023 at Ncotshane Community Hall, where he

held a community skills development Imbizo. According to the Kwa Zulu Natal (KZN) Local Municipality uPhongolo contained 154 rural shops, 124 schools, 27 hotels, resorts or conference facilities, 15 clinics, 12 recreational facilities, 6 community halls, 4 post offices, 2 police stations, and 2 law courts. The municipality is largely composed of traditional areas, with tribal land patterns and high-density rural settlements. 82% of the population lives in rural areas.

The programme was led by Sibonelo Nzimande, Chief Director Tourism Development - Economic Development and Environmental Affairs KZN. Sibonelo mentioned that as Government, “We try to meet the needs of communities by providing skills in the tourism sector.” He encouraged the community to participate

in this skills development opportunity programmes that are offered to them.

Mr Khumala, Tourism manager of Zululand gave a clear presentation on tourism and Agro tourism, emphasizing that 17 000 people lost jobs around uPhongolo due to mines that closed in the area, he further said that, “We hope that tourism related opportunities that are available will provide people with decent jobs.”

He mentioned that 41% are unemployed in the district but the tourism sector can change the situation by creating jobs, “We have museums, royal places, dams and heritage sites all we need is a strategy to package what we have and make it attractive to tourists for them to stay longer in Zululand.”

- By Annah Mashile





## The Tourism Equity Fund (TEF)

The Tourism Equity Fund (TEF) is a fund established by the Department of Tourism (DT) in collaboration with private sector banking institutions in line with the existing B-BBEE legislation to be implemented by SEFA on behalf of DT.

The TEF offers blended finance support in the form of a loan from SEFA and any other strategic financiers; and a grant funding from DT.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To promote growth and transformation in line with the Tourism BBBEE sector codes
- To address the funding challenges faced by enterprises in the tourism sector
- To stimulate job creation in the sector

### APPLICATION PROCESS:

#### STAGE 1: APPLICATION

- Applicants must complete and submit an application online through the SEFA website [www.sefa.org.za](http://www.sefa.org.za) for the grant and /or loan component (SEFA loan limited to R15m); and may also apply for a loan component to any other financier of choice.

- Please note that applicants must meet the application requirements of the respective financiers chosen.

#### STAGE 2: PRE-SCREENING

- Applicants will be screened against the qualifying criteria and eligibility. Applicants who meet pre-screening will proceed to a full due diligence. At this stage, the feasibility of the application will be evaluated.

#### STAGE 3: DUE DILIGENCE:

- At the due diligence stage, all applications will be assessed for financial viability, growth, and sustainability. Processes, systems, and capabilities will be tested against the supporting documentation. After this stage subject to a successful due diligence process, applications will be considered for approval. Application approvals will be limited to the availability of the funds.

#### FUNDING FOCUS AREAS:

1. **Accommodation:** This encompasses establishments like hotels; resort properties, bed and breakfast (B&B), guesthouses, game lodges, resorts, and backpacker facilities.

2. **Hospitality and Related Services:**

This category includes conference and convention venues that are significantly tied to accommodation facilities, restaurants and professional catering. Privately owned attractions within well-established tourism hubs are also eligible for consideration.

3. **Travel and related Services:**

These comprise of tour wholesalers, tour operators, travel agents, tourist guides and car rental companies, and coach operators.

4. **Other Tourism related Initiatives:**

The Tourism Equity Fund is open to enterprises within the Tourism Sector and all parts of the value chain as prescribed in the Tourism B-BBEE Sector Code.

All applicants (including previous applicants) are encouraged to submit new applications to align with the new qualifying criteria of the TEF

For more information including qualifying criteria visit [www.sefa.org.za](http://www.sefa.org.za)

For fund inquiries contact SEFA:

Tel: **012 748 9600** or E-mail: [tourismequityfund@sefa.org.za](mailto:tourismequityfund@sefa.org.za)

# Rural Tourism Investment Opportunities on the Rise on KZN South Coast



The drive to develop rural tourism assets is a global move, as inclusive tourism economies are beneficial for both tourists and hosts. Through rural tourism, outlying communities are included in mainstream economies, tourists are afforded more authentic, nature-based experiences, and conservation becomes a central tenet. On the KZN South Coast, this welcome trend has unearthed unique tourism assets for potential investors.

Globally, the majority of the 1.8 billion live in rural areas of low and middle-income countries with these youth three times more likely to be unemployed than adults – as outlined by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). The result is forced migration to the cities, with local towns and villages dying out, while custom and heritage is lost.

“Rural tourism is a necessary solution to our growing youth unemployment, a way to retain local culture and traditions, and an important impetus for local conservation,” Phelisa Mangcu, CEO of South Coast Tourism & Investment Enterprise (SCTIE). “On the KZN South Coast, we are committed to developing rural tourism assets to enhance our tourism offering for global tourists, while supporting local communities.”

## KwaXolo Caves Adventures

One of the prime examples of rural tourism offerings is KwaXolo Caves Adventures on the KZN South Coast. This is a unique adventure heritage tour that takes visitors into a series of caves which are adorned with San artwork dating back centuries. These are accessed using a via Ferrata system with a guided tour of the caves, and impressive views of the gorge and waterfall.

The success of this rural tourism experience has prompted its development, with Phase 3 of the project currently in the final stages. The construction of an extended 1.06km zipline and landing deck will significantly enhance the experience for those looking for adrenaline tourism. This presents significant investment potential for businesses to establish an on-site lodge for overnight stays, extended ziplining opportunities, transportation to and from the site, as well as recreational activities such as quad biking, paintball, and more.

## Umzumbe River Trails

Hiking trails are an incredibly popular rural tourism attraction, and an area that was identified for development on the KZN South Coast. This prompted the establishment of the 71km Umzumbe River Trails, a guided hiking or biking

trail through the hinterland offering participants a nature-based adventure alongside authentic Zulu experiences in homestays along the way. One notable investment opportunity is the establishment of a lodge alongside the dam which has been supported by a feasibility report issued by Umzumbe Town Planning. Potential also exists to develop recreational activities around the dam that extend the lodge offerings.

“As SCTIE, we will continue to engage with local communities, and traditional leaders to develop our rural tourism assets and uncover areas of further potential going forward,” concluded Mangcu.

- By South Coast Tourism and Investment Enterprise



# Uncover Hidden Gems along the KZN South Coast Shoreline with the new Beach-To-Beach Adventure Hike



Uncover the rich heritage, natural beauty, abundant marine life and iconic birdlife of the KZN South Coast with the new 38km Beach-to-Beach Adventure Hike extending from Port Edward to St Michael's beaches. Launched on Friday by South Coast Tourism & Investment Enterprise (SCTIE), the Beach-to-Beach Adventure Hike also coincides with the annual Sardine Run and humpback whale migration.

"We're continuing to find ways for visitors to uncover the incredible natural assets found along the Paradise of the Zulu Kingdom, and the launch of the Beach-to-Beach Adventure Hike is one such example," commented Phelisa Mangcu, CEO of SCTIE.

"It's a wonderful culmination of our outdoor adventure, Blue Flag beaches, nature and historical sites that make the KZN South Coast such an attractive tourism offering. This is a great opportunity for visitors to enjoy sightings of the incredible marine life that accompanies the annual Sardine Run, from the birds diving overhead to the leaping spinner sharks and devil rays, breaching humpback whales, and frolicking dolphins – the ocean comes alive! We look forward to welcoming many adventurers on this new outdoor experience."

Media representatives and stakeholders were invited to experience part of the Beach-to-Beach Adventure Hike as part of the official launch on Friday, 23 June,

with a stop at Blue Lagoon Restaurant which is found along the route and boasts exquisite views.

For those wanting to experience the Beach-to-Beach Adventure Hike, the 38km journey starts at Port Edward Beach with the Sao Joao Portuguese Monument that commemorates those who died in the Sao Joao Shipwreck back in 1552. The hike continues to Glenmore Beach where remains of the Nightingale Shipwreck can be viewed. This ship ran aground on the rocks off Glenmore Beach in 1933.

The journey alongside the Indian Ocean crosses endless golden beaches, lagoons, estuaries, lush subtropical coastal forests and waving grasslands, with sightings of animals and seabirds such as albatrosses, seagulls, oystercatchers, waders, gannets and more. Mpenjati and Palm Beaches are also part of the hike, before crossing Trafalgar, one of the region's many Blue Flag Beaches. This forms part of the Trafalgar Marine Protected Area (MPA), one of three MPAs along the KZN South Coast. Here hikers can view rock fossils that are exposed in the intertidal zone, and rock pools home to great marine life.

Then it's on to another Blue Flag Beach, Marina Beach, renowned for great swimming and sunbathing, before stopping in at Southbroom Beach. This boasts a variety of birdlife, including Barn Swallows, Harrier Hawk, Crowned Eagles and Purple Crested Loeries. Visitors can also look out for Blue Duiker, bushbuck,

bushpig, porcupine, water monitors, and mongoose. Finally, it's the last Blue Flag Beach on the route – Ramsgate Beach – which is a great fishing spot and bird lovers delight.

- By South Coast Tourism and Investment Enterprise





## KwaZulu-Natal's Seven Wildlife Wonders

**G**ame viewing shouldn't be confined to open vehicles – although input from a local guide, some refreshments and safety are important during a Big Five experience!

KwaZulu-Natal, with its extremely diverse wildlife offering, lets you explore the unconventional and get far more up-close-and-personal with the province's treasure trove of interesting creatures and beautiful landscapes.

For those hunting more unusual encounters (especially keen photographers looking for some National Geographic exposure), we have at least seven never-to-be-forgotten eco excursions:

1. **Sundowners at Isimangaliso Wetland Park:** Under the steadfast gaze of the iconic fish eagle, a cruise along the estuary at the heart of this World Heritage Site lets you drink in the peace of nature surrounded by pelicans and flamingos, stealthy crocodiles and grunting hippos that bob up beside the boat.
2. **Bath with elephants:** Enjoy early morning or sunset water safaris on the massive Lake Jozini which is the focal point of the Pongola Game Reserve. Few African reserves offer boat safaris which enable guests to watch herds of antelope and even elephants stopping by for a drink or fun filled swim from the water.
3. **Go underground:** Game reserves across KZN offer amazing game viewing hides. But Zimanga Private Game Reserve near Mkuze prides itself on the more unusual with

nine hides, including two bird bath or reflection hides, a lagoon hide for water birds and crocodiles and the Umgodi overnight hide. Here, guests sleep over beside a waterhole with a large window opening just a few centimetres above water level. A variety of animals – including big cats – slake their thirsts just four metres away.

4. **Soar with the Vultures:** The Barry Porter Memorial Vulture Viewing Hide, near Port Shepstone on the South Coast, overlooks a "vulture restaurant" where visitors can book a 2-hour viewing experience at the cliff's edge. Alternatively, the Drakensberg is home to at least two vulture hides. The Giant's Castle Lammergeier hide has produced some of the best images of these birds anywhere in the world whilst the Golden Gate vulture hide lets you meet up with Cape and highly endangered Bearded Vultures.
5. **Go deep:** The KZN East Coast is dotted with marine protected areas. From the unspoiled and world renowned Sodwana Bay in the north to Aliwal Shoal to the South, visitors can don their fins and explore. Aliwal Shoal is famous for its deep reefs and pinnacles with ancient corals growing on fossilised sand and offers spectacular shark diving opportunities with ragged tooth sharks, tiger sharks and blacktip sharks attracting international tourists and film crews each year. Protea Banks, near Shelly Beach, is a shark sanctuary that is home to hammerheads and comes with

spectacular deep reefs, canyons and caves as well as diverse sponges and soft corals.

6. **Become a beach bum:** In KZN, beaches are not just for tanning. Unique beach experiences include a walk in the Petrified Forest near Port Edward where one can explore a series of marine fossil beds, a careful stroll at the mouth of the St Lucia estuary where massive crocs bake in the sun or even a turtle tour between November and February when Leather Back and Loggerhead Turtles arrive at the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Beach to lay their eggs. Towards the end of the season, you can watch the hatchlings bravely making their way into the waves.
7. **Run with the sardines:** A spectacle that would rival East Africa's great wildebeest migration, takes place during the warm winter months. Watch as this legendary marine migration spawns a feeding frenzy amongst chasing game fish, gulls, pods of dolphins and humpback whales.

- By Tourism Kwa-Zulu Natal



# Happy Holidays



## #ResponsibleTraveller Tips



### LOCATION:

- » Update the GPS App on your mobile device to accurately navigate through our country



### CLIMATE: South Africa's climate can get extremely hot and dry.

- » Wear sunscreen and a hat
- » Wear the appropriate clothing and footwear for outdoor activities
- » Carry enough water to stay hydrated
- » Avoid drinking water from rivers and streams



### BE WATER WISE: Most of our beaches carry a Blue Flag Status

- » Only swim in designated areas
- » Lifeguards are on call to ensure your safety

- » Read and follow the signs to ensure an enjoyable experience at the Beach
- » Take care when swimming as rip currents can pull you out to sea



### PERSONAL SAFETY: We care about your safety

- » Ensure your personal possessions are with you at all times
- » Keep passports and important documents in a safe at your hotel, and carry a copy whilst out and about
- » Do not share your banking details or pin code with anyone
- » Alert your hotel before going for a walk alone or an excursion

**Useful contacts: Should you require support or find yourself in distress, contact the authorities for assistance:**

**Police (SAPS):** (T) 10111 | **Ambulance/Fire:** (T) 10177 | **Covid-19 emergency no:** 0800 029 99

**Tourism Complaints:** (T) 012 444 6000 or 0860686747, E-mail: [complaints@tourism.gov.za](mailto:complaints@tourism.gov.za)



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## Dune Boarding and Stargazing Await at Witsand Nature Reserve

Roll down towering golden dunes in a 4x4, kicking up plumes of sand as the kids squeal with delight. Fly down the giant "Roaring Sands" on a sandboard for thrills the whole family will love. Snap pics of colorful birds against vivid blue skies as you explore this Northern Cape desert wonderland.

Witsand Nature Reserve offers outdoor adventures and lasting memories for all ages. Spot elusive wildlife like aardvarks and meerkats on guided drives. Overnight under the stars in luxury chalets, cozy tents, or your own

recreational vehicle. Gather around a campfire at night to swap stories and stargaze into the glittering Milky Way.

Enjoy hiking, biking, 4 wheel drive tours, dune surfing, swimming, and more. Learn about unique desert plants on the 3km botanical walking trail. Marvel at the famous "roaring sands," which produce thundering sounds when conditions are just right. With 145 endemic bird species, it's a birdwatcher's paradise.

Accommodations range from luxurious chalets with private pools to affordable

bungalows and campsites. Well-appointed facilities ensure a comfortable visit. Experience the magic of Witsand Nature Reserve, where visitors return year after year for outdoor adventures, family bonding, and memories that last long after summer ends.

Contact Witsand Nature Reserve on **083 656 2117** for bookings. Discover why this natural playground is regarded as the finest stargazing area in Africa.

- By Northern Cape Tourism Authority



## Toast to a Great Wine Capital

### Great Wine Capitals

The Great Wine Capitals is a network of major global cities in both the northern and southern hemispheres, which share a key economic and cultural asset: their internationally renowned wine regions.

Founded in 1999, the network has developed and introduced several projects, initiatives and programs with the objective of achieving excellence in tourism, business services and education within the global alliance of its renowned wine regions. Its aim is to encourage travel, education and business exchanges between the prestigious wine regions of Adelaide (South Australia), Bilbao (Rioja: Spain), Bordeaux (France), Cape Town (Cape Winelands: South Africa), Hawke's Bay (New Zealand), Lausanne (Switzerland), Mainz (Rheinhessen: Germany), Mendoza (Argentina), Porto (Portugal), San Francisco (Napa Valley: USA), Valparaiso (Casablanca Valley: Chile) and Verona (Italy).

Celebrating innovation and excellence in wine tourism throughout the most significant wine regions in the world, Wesgro extended a call for applications across the Western Cape for wine producers, wine experiences and wineries to enter into the prestigious Great Wine Capitals Best Of Wine Tourism Awards (BOWTA) 2024.

This annual international competition is designed to reward the wineries in each of the Great Wine Capitals Global Networks' member cities for their excellence and innovation in seven different categories, including:

- Accommodation
- Wine Tourism Restaurants
- Sustainable Wine Tourism Practices
- Architecture & Landscape
- Art & Culture
- Innovative Wine Tourism Experiences
- Wine Tourism Services

About the Wine Tourism Ambassador Awards 2024

South Africa's unique history demands that there should be additional awards for our region. The Wine Tourism Ambassador Awards 2024 celebrate ongoing transformation in the wine tourism industry, with the Conservation Pioneer Award proudly celebrating leaders making innovative efforts to ensure sustainability and conservation in the field, and highlights the critical role of eco- and social sustainability in wine tourism.

The Ambassador Award Categories Are:

- The Wine Tourism Diversity Award
- The Authentic South African Experience Award
- Conservation Pioneer Award

### Happy Birthday SA Wine

South Africa is the only country in the world that can accurately pinpoint the



exact date of origin of its wine industry, due to a diary entry from 02 February 1659.

Celebrating South Africa’s Wine Birthday month in February 2024, through shared content and encouraging locals to get out into the regions and explore our wine tourism offerings, and inspire potential visitors across the globe, to come and experience the breadth and depth of world-class wine tourism experiences on offer in Cape Town and the Western Cape.

As part of the celebration, there are a series of assets including videos, maps, wine tourism calendars and a white label wine tourism logo which you can share on your platforms using the hashtags #HappyBirthdaySAWine, #ToUs #SAWineSince1659 and #DiscoverCTWC.

These assets are available on our toolkit page here.

### Cape Cycle Routes

A cycle through the Cape is a ride like no other. It’s a chance to experience the Western Cape in a new and exciting way. It’s a journey through the senses marked by the unforgettable scent of fynbos and the soothing sensation of an ocean breeze. Experience the heart of the Western Cape with awe-inspiring views from vast open semi-desert plateaus where it feels like you can touch the stars. The sounds of nature and wildlife surround you. The cosmopolitan flavour of Cape cuisine is a taste sensation.

Cape Cycle Routes, an initiative of the Western Cape Government, aims to put the Western Cape on the map as not just a premier tourism destination but as the

best cycling destination in Africa.

There are plenty of adventures on offer for cyclists and explorers alike – the possibilities are endless as you explore what the Western Cape has to offer.

Five cycling routes developed in the Western Cape:

- Cross Cape
- Cederberg Circuit

- Cycle Tour 364
- Overberg Meander
- Karoo Crossing

To note: there are digital assets in the form of videos and images for all the above-mentioned initiatives.

- By WESGRO





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