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EDITION

01

# Bolanala



**tourism**

Department:  
Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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# LETTER FROM **THE** **EDITOR**

Over the past 30 years, South Africa's tourism sector has undergone a remarkable transformation, evolving from apartheid-era isolation to becoming one of Africa's leading tourist destinations. The country's tourism growth is highlighted by the increased international tourism arrivals into the country from less than a million visits in the late 1980s to 10.2 million in 2019.

Thirty years ago, the tourism sector was heavily restricted, with many international visitors boycotting South Africa due to apartheid laws. Domestic tourism was also limited, largely due to economic disparities and racial tension. 1994 marked the turning point as South Africa's newfound political stability and commitment to reconciliation opened doors to international travellers. The country's natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and diverse wildlife became major attractions and led to investment opportunities in infrastructure, such as airports, hotels and tourism attractions. Sporting events like the 2010 FIFA World Cup fast-tracked South Africa's infrastructure development and showcased the country's capability of hosting large-scale international events.

Strengthened by successive democratic administrations, South Africa has implemented progressive economic policies that have seen more people than before meaningfully participating in the economy to support their families. The Tourism Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Charter in 2005 aims to integrate previously disadvantaged people into the mainstream tourism economy. The National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS), endorsed in 2011, served as a blueprint for tourism growth, emphasising job creation, economic growth, marketing, and sector transformation.

The tourism sector has also faced numerous challenges, from natural disasters to health pandemics. Each crisis has tested the resilience of the sector, prompting innovation in recovery strategies. The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, highlighted the need for adaptability and reinforced the importance of health and safety protocols. To alleviate the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector, the government earmarked R200 million for the Tourism Relief Fund (TRF) that assisted 4 000 businesses ride out the pandemic. Spurred on by such interventions, the sector has managed to claw back the impressive international tourist arrivals witnessed prior to Covid-19 and will hopefully continue growing from strength to strength.

In reviving our economy, the Department of Tourism continues its efforts in promoting South Africa as an investment destination. To date, approximately R500 million has been injected by the private sector in and around the Kruger National Park projects such as the Eastgate Airport, Orpen Kruger Lodge and Skukuza Golf Club. These investments respond to the call by President Ramaphosa to mobilise approximately R2 trillion in new investments over the next five years. Initiatives such as the three-day National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) play an important role in showcasing tourism careers, skills training opportunities, and business ventures that exist in the sector. Annually this event attracts an average of 10 000 school learners, students from institutions of higher learning, educators, and unemployed youth to interact with tourism industry players and potential employers.

Looking into the future, the country's tourism sector is well poised to continue its positive contribution to the 7th Administration. I am looking forward to the upcoming Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) as we are well geared to building on the gains that have been made over the past 30 years. In this new administration, the tourism sector is well geared to stimulating inclusive economic growth, job creation, and building strategic partnerships that are essential to realising its full potential of being a leading destination on the global tourism map.

*Tasneem Carrim*



# #ResponsibleTraveller Road Safety Tips



- » Stay alert & avoid poorly lit areas, especially at night.
- » Alert your holiday residence of your route & arrival time.
- » Lock doors and close windows at traffic intersections.
- » Double check your car is locked to avoid remote jamming.
- » Keep belongings inside the vehicle and out of view.
- » Car Breakdown: Call car rental company for assistance or insurance company. Stay in the car.
- » Accidents: call 10111 (Police) & 10177 (ambulance).

## ROADBLOCK ETIQUETTE

- » Keep your passport & driver's license (local /international) readily available.
- » Pull over safely at Police or Metro police roadblocks.
- » Safety officers wear uniform, a name badge and drive marked cars.
- » Traffic fines are paid at police stations or Magistrate Courts
- » Do not stop for unmarked cars - proceed cautiously with your hazard lights on to the nearest police station or busy area.
- » Do not pay bribes to police or metro police officers.

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

**Police (SAPS):** (T) 10111 | **Ambulance/Fire:** (T) 10177 | **Tourist Emergency WhatsApp line:** +27 (0) 82 321 6018

**Tourism Complaints:** (T) 012 444 6000 or 0860 686 747 / E-mail: [complaints@tourism.gov.za](mailto:complaints@tourism.gov.za) (Monday to Friday from 08:00 - 16:00)



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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM



# AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA 2024

## – UNLIMITED AFRICA

Africa's Travel Indaba 2024, the continent's premier trade show, took place from 13 – 16 May 2024 at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Convention Centre, Durban. The 2024 edition saw more than 1 200 confirmed exhibitors and 1 100 buyers from 55 countries. This year's show attracted 26 African countries that exhibited their tourism offering, making this event a significant global showpiece of what Africa has to offer.

The theme "Unlimited Africa" speaks to the unlimited potential that the continent boasts due to its diverse cultures and its kaleidoscope of experiences. From the majestic savannahs of the Kruger and the Serengeti, the pristine beaches of Zanzibar, and the bustling markets of Addis Mercato... these unforgettable sights lure us to explore this magnificent continent. Africa's Travel Indaba presented the opportunity to celebrate Africa and connect, with the growth of the tourism sector firmly in mind.

Festivities kicked off with the Business Opportunity Networking Day (BONDay) on 13 May 2024. The event, a precursor to the main trade show, brought together tourism industry experts with the aim of deepening connections and alliances to

propel a thriving tourism economy. BONDay not only provides networking opportunities, but also represents an acknowledgement of the important role played by tourism in enhancing livelihoods and fostering economic empowerment.

*The theme "Unlimited Africa" speaks to the unlimited potential that the continent boasts due to its diverse cultures and its kaleidoscope of experiences.*

Renowned storyteller and poet, Dr Jerry Mofokeng, laid the perfect foundation of the day's proceedings through his enchanting storytelling performance. His tale about this magnificent continent took the audience on a magical journey across the Africa's landscapes, waterfalls, valleys and golden sunsets, truly befitting of an "unlimited Africa".

Tourism Deputy Minister, Mr Fish Mahlalela, delivered the keynote address where he emphasised the importance of collaborations to fast-track development in Africa. "Today, we gather not merely as representatives of businesses, but as catalysts of change and architects of a future defined by cooperation

and collective success. There is a no more opportune time to do that than at Africa's Travel Indaba, which significantly, is also held during Africa Month," the Deputy Minister said.

He called for trade show exhibitors to showcase Africa's beauty through their offerings. "It is up to us as Africans to open the world's eyes to what we have to offer as a continent and take charge of the narrative because only when we are proactive, will we control our destiny," he added.

BONDay also hosted more than 10 panel discussions with topics such as "Unlimited Potential: Africa's Value Proposition", "Harness the power of Artificial Intelligence to optimise the travellers' experiences" and "Airline Advancements in Africa", to name a few. Speaking as a panellist at the "Stimulating Local Economies Through The Tourism Value Chain" discussion, South African Tourism (SAT) Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Nombulelo Guliwe highlighted the important role that trade shows play in creating an enabling environment for tourism information sharing. The insightful day left delegates anticipating an exciting week, and feeling more than ready to do business.





The trade floor officially opened on 14 May 2024 with the customary ringing of the bell. The former KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Premier, Nomusa Dube-Ncube, welcomed delegates and tourism enthusiasts to the majestic province. In her welcome address, the former Premier highlighted the importance of tourism development, economic growth and KZN's role as an attractive destination for business and leisure travel. "As the tourism industry shows green shoots globally, one of the key sub-sectors that we want to focus on aggressively is Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE). As a province, we will be at the forefront of ensuring that KZN gets the lion share of this market," said Premier Dube-Ncube.

*The theme "Unlimited Africa" speaks to the unlimited potential that the continent boasts due to its kaleidoscope of experiences.*

The Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille, delivered the keynote address and expressed her enthusiasm on the business opportunities that exist at Africa's Travel Indaba. "Africa's Travel Indaba emphasises the importance of networking, collaboration and building bridges across borders. It is one of the powerful platforms that we must continue to use to drive and advance a positive and powerful African tourism story," said De Lille.

Market Access Support Programme (MASP). The programme assists small inbound tourism enterprises to access and engage with tourism buyers in new and existing markets by reducing the cost burden of qualifying enterprises to attend and participate in predetermined international and domestic tourism trade platforms.

Throughout the three days, 14 – 16 May 2024, delegates had opportunities to visit the vast array of exhibitors on the trade floor, the Department of Tourism's Hidden Gems exhibition being among the favourites. At this year's edition, the Department of Tourism supported 120 Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) as part of the

The 2024 Africa's Travel Indaba was undoubtedly a resounding success as it registered a 7% increase on registered delegates compared to 2023. According to the Deputy Head of Durban Tourism, Winile Mntungwa, this year's edition made a direct economic impact of R226 million with a spill-over effect of R333 million. There were more than 1 000 jobs created and there was also an added economic ripple effect beyond the city centre in areas such as Inanda, Umlazi and uMgababa. This success underscores tourism's critical role in stimulating economic growth, job creation and showcasing Africa to the world. The 2025 edition promises to be even bigger showpiece.

**By Sifiso Halama**





# GROWING A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM SECTOR THROUGH CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

The 2024 Africa Travel Indaba presented a platform for the Department of Tourism to host its first Tourism Investment Seminar since the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic. The seminar provided an update to stakeholders on the Department's tourism investment promotion and facilitation efforts, which contribute to the President's target of attracting R1,2 trillion in direct investment into the economy in five years (starting in 2018). This target was reached and surpassed in April 2023, with tourism contributing significantly to the target.

At the 5<sup>th</sup> South Africa Investment Conference in April 2023, President Cyril Ramaphosa said, "We are now setting a new target to mobilise approximately R2 trillion in new investments over another five-year period, between now and 2028."

The 2024 Tourism Investment Seminar sought to firstly promote South Africa as a preferred destination for tourism

investment by highlighting opportunity areas around major attractions; especially in underdeveloped areas with high tourism potential. Secondly, the seminar aimed to promote specific tourism investment projects, matching potential investors with suitable opportunities.

*We were equally pleased to see the local spheres of government coming on board to invest in underdeveloped areas with high tourism potential through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, improving major roads to link tourism attractions and promote cross-border opportunities*

The seminar highlighted how investments have enhanced South Africa's tourism product offerings, and benefited local economies in lesser visited small towns, dorpies and villages across the country that are in close proximity to major tourism attractions.

Addressing stakeholders at the seminar, Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela emphasised how the Department's R120 million investment to beautify and maintain South African National Parks (SANParks) through the Tourism Infrastructure Maintenance Programme contributed to unlocking private sector investment in the park.

"Approximately R500 million has been injected by the private sector in and around the Kruger National Park in projects, amongst others, such as the Eastgate Airport (in Hoedsbuit), Orpen Kruger Lodge, Skukuza Golf Club; the Kruger Shalati – the Train on the Bridge Hotel; the recently refurbished Hans Merensky Golf, Hotel & Resort; the

SleepOver Motel (a new budget hotel brand aimed at improving access), as well as a host of other investments including the Premier Hotel in Thohoyandou,” Deputy Minister Mahlalela explained.

“We were equally pleased to see the local spheres of government coming on board to invest in underdeveloped areas with high tourism potential through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, improving major roads to link tourism attractions and promote cross-border opportunities,” the Deputy Minister added.

Tourism Investments form part of the greater objectives of South Africa’s Tourism Sector Master Plan aimed at stimulating supply, whilst building and diversifying the country’s tourism offerings. The Department’s partnership agreement with the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) facilitated the implementation and management of various infrastructure projects across the country, which has yielded positive results and made some of the underdeveloped areas more attractive to tourism while integrating them into the tourism value-chain.

The Department’s investment initiatives extend beyond infrastructure projects prioritising programmes that support Small, Medium and Emerging Enterprises to diversify the country’s tourism offerings.

The Deputy Minister informed the gathering that private sector stakeholders indicated they would invest in tourism if some of the regulatory, financial and infrastructure barriers were addressed. These are issues such as long-term leases on State-owned land, which will unlock funding from the development finance institutions and commercial banks; and security of tenure, which is a non-negotiable in accommodation establishments, airports and other amenities that are capital-intensive in nature – with return on investment taking a minimum of at least eight years.

Energy and water challenges are a global phenomenon that have the ability to negatively impact the efficient running of tourism businesses. The introduction of the Green Tourism Incentive Programme (GTIP) by the Department offers tourism enterprises grant funding of between 50% and 90% (capped at a maximum of R1 million per applicant) to improve their energy and water efficiency. GTIP has assisted 173 tourism businesses across the country with electricity and water solutions to the total grant value of R104 285 673, reducing input costs, and increasing operational sustainability and competitiveness.

“The Department works closely with InvestSA including its provincial chapters to unlock barriers to investment in the tourism

sector. As Government, we implement interventions to address the fears that private sector has in investing in entities government owned tourism attractions,” Deputy Minister Mahlalela elaborated.

*By Sindi Zwane*



# AFRICA MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE ON TOURISM



“Honourable Premier Dube-Ncube, thank you for welcoming us to your beautiful province, home to the Valley of a Thousand Hills. I am sure our guests will experience the warmth of our people while attending Africa’s Travel Indaba 2024,” said Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille during her welcome address at the Ministerial Dialogue on 13 May at the Durban International Convention Centre (ICC).

The intention of the Tourism Dialogue was to provide a platform for African Tourism Ministers, policy makers, stakeholders and experts from the tourism sector to share ideas on the role of tourism on the African continent and to discuss issues impacting tourism.

Largely influenced by global trends and developments in the tourism sector, as well as efforts to respond to the challenges and pursued opportunities, the dialogue was held around the theme: “Sustainable Tourism Development”.

Tourism is a powerful engine for economic growth and development, contributing to job creation, infrastructure development and foreign exchange earnings. The economic power of tourism is evident not only in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and South Africa, but also throughout Africa. It has the potential to jumpstart our economies, alleviate poverty, and foster inclusive and sustainable growth across many sectors.

“Tourism should no longer be considered a niche part of the tourism sector,” the Minister emphasised. “Instead, its principles should guide everything the sector does. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.”

Discussion topics were centred around achieving sustainable tourism which is a continuous process as it requires constant monitoring of impacts, and introducing the necessary preventive or corrective measures whenever necessary. Topics included Crisis Management in the tourism sector, where questions were raised as to how successful tourism recovery plans are, and what their impact is, as well as the strategies that are in place to manage crises. Other topics under discussion were Climate Change including floods, and Redeveloping Domestic Tourism, in terms of the success of inclusive growth and job creation in rural communities.

Technology was not left behind as it is emerging, disrupting and affecting our lives in ways that indicate that we are at the beginning of a Fourth Industrial Revolution, a new era in which digitalisation builds and impacts societies in new and often unanticipated ways.

An essential part of local social and economic ecosystems is air travel. For many areas, the connectivity it offers has been essential because it fosters economic development, guarantees access to the internal market, and maintains social cohesion. It also gives inhabitants of peripheral, island, remote, and sparsely populated areas a necessary and frequently the only means of transportation. "We still face challenges in interconnecting our African countries. So, how do we make it possible? We face headwinds head-on. With the dialogues we are having today, tourism and aviation can make the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) and the Yamoussoukro Decision a reality," Minister de Lille continued.

"Most of you landed at King Shaka International Airport, which is a testament to how partnerships can tackle pressing issues such as investing in infrastructure, promoting air connectivity, and making it easier for travellers to reach their destinations. These are the exact stumbling blocks the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTTC) identifies in its recent report on Opportunities for Africa."

"Now is the time to: rethink development strategies in the tourism sector, encourage strategic public-private partnerships, promote investment in the tourism sector regionally, strengthen regional integration

*The intention of the Tourism Dialogue was to provide a platform for African Tourism Ministers, policy makers, stakeholders and experts from the tourism sector to share ideas on the role of tourism on the African continent and to discuss issues impacting tourism.*

and cooperation, and refocus efforts to implement impactful projects," the Minister urged the guests.

"Examining how Africa may grow technologically through the use of innovations such as biometric security systems, digital booking platforms, and sustainable aviation fuel is also crucial. The airline sector must also provide an explanation for the new patterns that are leading to a reduction in capacity and an increase in load factors. Positive results are being obtained from this, especially

in terms of increased yields, which is encouraging for the industry's financial stability," Minister de Lille noted.

"Tourism Ministers want to see more flights and more seats filled because that means tourism growth. So, let's write Africa's next success story through proactive partnerships that are alive to any market changes. Gather around and start a Pan-African dialogue on air access and sustainable tourism growth," concluded Minister de Lille.

**By Annah Mashile**



# INVESTING IN THE YOUTH FOR **A SKILLED AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM SECTOR**



The Department of Tourism held a networking session at Africa's Travel Indaba encouraging sector stakeholders and traders to invest in the empowerment of the youth by participating in the 2024 National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE).

The NTCE is a three-day youth expo that showcases the tourism careers, skills training opportunities and business ventures that exist in the sector. Annually these events attract an average of 10 000 school learners, students from institutions of higher learning, educators and unemployed youth to

interact with tourism industry players and potential employers.

Speaking at the NTCE networking session at Africa's Travel Indaba, Deputy Minister Fish Mahlalela highlighted the significance of human resource development programmes in providing insight and inspiring hope in the youth who are looking for opportunities that will empower them and their communities.

"The tourism sector is a lifeline that provides multiple employment and entrepreneurial opportunities that transform lives. It has the capacity to generate demand and

production across various sectors of the economy creating cross-cutting opportunities for our societies," he said.

"The NTCE is an important resource for the youth to discover new vocations, and explore the diverse opportunities that have the potential to open doors for them globally," the Deputy Minister continued.

"The 2024 NTCE will reassure young people that career and business opportunities in tourism are limitless, and the space exists for them to find their niche and grow the value chain," Deputy Minister Mahlalela believes.



The 2024 NTCE will be held from 20 to 22 September at the Peter Mokaba Stadium in Polokwane, Limpopo Province. The youth expo is a collaborative programme between the Department of Tourism, the Culture Arts, Tourism, Hospitality & Sport Education Training Authority (CATHSSETA), and the Limpopo Province as the host. The Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) has been awarded the opportunity to host the youth expo for a period of three years from 2024 to 2026.

The NTCE Networking session culminated on a high note with a graduation ceremony for 44 youth from the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province who successfully completed the Department's Food and Beverage Skills Programme. The programme forms part of a number of capacity initiatives that offer 30% theory and 70% practical skill to prepare youth for the tourism workforce.

"As the world's fastest growing employment sector, tourism has the ability to provide limitless opportunities for our youth and contribute to reducing unemployment in our economy."

"Growing the tourism sector requires a joint effort from Government and the private sector. I call on tourism stakeholders and trade to partner with us by supporting our human resource development programmes and initiatives that upskill the youth to create an adequately skilled workforce that will grow and sustain the sector," concluded Deputy Minister Mahlalela.

Sharing her experience of the Food and Beverage skills programme, an elated Rebecca Siphelile Hlatshwayo, who aspires to open her own restaurant, stated that when she could not attend university, she enrolled at an FET college to study Hospitality and this is where she realised her passion. "The programme

really showed me the true definition of diversity in the tourism industry. My culinary, food and beverage skills have improved a lot. I was actually surprised that I'm that good in the kitchen," Rebecca enthused.

Ayanda Royal Madulini, who joined the Food and Beverage Skills Programme while working part-time as a casual at St. Michaels Sands Hotel, felt that he has learned a great deal from the programme. "Understanding how broad the tourism industry is, I got to learn that not even the sky is the limit when it comes to the amount of opportunities available in this industry. This qualification has already done so much for me. From the start of the programme, I got to rotate within each sub-department of Food and Beverages as a whole. That on its own has given me so much knowledge and experience for future job opportunities," said Ayanda.

**By Sindi Zwane**



# WOMEN IN TOURISM CHAPTERS PROGRESS MEETING WITH MINISTER



Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille, met with the Provincial Chairpersons of the Women in Tourism Chapters on 14 May 2024, during the Africa Travel Indaba at the Durban International Convention Centre. The purpose of the meeting was to talk about the chapters' progress and to discuss any assistance that the Department might be able to provide.

The meeting also addressed the economic and inequality challenges faced by women, especially those in the tourism sector. Its agenda focuses on commanding respect, ascertaining recognition of women contribution, encouraging representation in economic activities and leadership; and producing results that will enhance the supply and demand for domestic tourism.

During the discussion, the Minister made it apparent that she was more interested in a progress report on the steps taken to carry out the previous agreements than in any proposals that were put forth. "This will also provide the leaders with a chance to express the kind of assistance that their members and women entrepreneurs in general need, in order to advance their business ventures," Minister de Lille added.

One of the main projects that were discussed was the Business Advisory Services and Incubation Programme that will be implemented in two phases, with the purpose of optimising the operations of the identified projects through product development and packaging, market penetration, established financial records/statements, skilled management staff and readiness for increased market exploitation. The focus is on moving these initiatives from informal to formal enterprises with business connections, local cooperatives, tourist routes and the larger tourism ecosystem of private sector operations like lodges and tour operators.

Speakers included Khosi Tyobeka, founder and CEO of Zimasa Travel based in

Rustenburg, North West, who focused on travel management and conferencing. Grace Sibara, Director of Hayani Guest house in Limpopo, Hayani Manor in Thohoyandou as well as Grace Lifestyle and Solutions also addressed the meeting, as did Makhosi Msimango, Founder and Managing Director of Ndzenza Tours and Safari in KwaZulu-Natal.

Seven sites were identified by the Department of Tourism, and the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET). The selected pilot projects are located in the Limpopo Province in the Vhembe and Mopani districts. All these projects are located within the Ribola Art Route and Rixile Kruger Route. The routes have a number of community tourism and arts and crafts projects that need support to ensure their sustainability and scaling up, in order to make them commercially viable while promoting Leadership and Skills Development; Supplier Development and Market Access.

One of the biggest challenges since the establishment of these chapters, is of the frequent infighting within some structures. This has derailed the noble mission of giving women entrepreneurs a united voice. The Department is often called upon to mediate conflicts between chapters. This is one of the biggest reasons why the chapters have failed to make headway in advocating for the inclusion of more women entrepreneurs in tourism opportunities.

The Minister advised women in tourism that they should walk the talk and stop having interest in policies on paper; that action should rather be taken. "This must work in favour for women who are striving to make it in the tourism sector. The Department should use the District Development Model to ensure that women are afforded enough opportunities to warrant women empowerment within the tourism sector," emphasised Minister de Lille.

*By Annah Mashile*





# SOUTH AFRICA'S TOURISM SECTOR CONTINUES A POSITIVE TRAJECTORY

The latest official release of international arrival figures by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) for January to March 2024 points to a robust and growing South African tourism sector. International tourist arrivals from January to March 2024 totalled 2,4 million, representing an impressive 15,4% increase when compared with the same period in 2023.

## Africa Leads the Way

South Africa welcomed 1,8 million tourists from the rest of the African continent between January and March 2024, amounting to 74,5% of all arrivals. Zimbabwe and Ghana stood out for their remarkable growth, with Zimbabwe experiencing a 21,8% increase in tourist arrivals to South Africa in the first three months of this year (613 675 tourists), compared to the first three months of 2023. Ghana recorded a 249,4% increase (7 904 arrivals) compared to the same period in 2023.

Minister de Lille expressed appreciation for the continued significant growth in arrival numbers from the African continent, especially Ghana. "Ghana's immense performance can be attributed to the fact South Africa and Ghana announced a visa-

waiver scheme on 1 November 2023. The visa waiver allows for travel for periods of up to 90 days within a calendar year, for purposes of business or tourism. This, coupled with targeted integrated marketing initiatives by South African Tourism to attract visitors from this market makes for a winning formula for the growth of our sector," she added.

Travellers from other parts of the world also continued to show their appreciation and love for South Africa.

## Strong Momentum from the Americas (North and South America)

Tourist arrivals from the Americas registered at 118 194 from January to March 2024, reflecting a 12,4% growth compared to the same period in 2023.

## Strength in European Markets

From January to March 2024, South Africa saw 420 727 tourist arrivals from Europe, an 8,6% increase compared to the first quarter in 2023. The United Kingdom remains the top European source market, with 125 420 tourists opting for South Africa, marking a 5,3% growth compared to 2023. Germany experienced a 9,9% increase in arrivals versus the same period in 2023, amounting

to 98 954 tourists. This was followed by the Netherlands, (with an increase of 9,9% (37 548 tourists) compared to 2023. Russia exhibited a dramatic growth of 9,6%, contributing 9 329 arrivals in 2024.

## Noteworthy Growth from the Asia Markets

Asian markets also showed remarkable growth with a total of 49 741 arrivals from the region, representing an astounding 25,4% compared the first quarter in 2023. We welcomed 16 209 tourists from India, which is 0,9% lower than the previous year. Notably, South Africa received 11 017 visitors from China, registering a massive 82% increase in the first three months of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023.

## Middle East arrivals

South Africa welcomed 2 387 arrivals from Saudi Arabia in 2024, an increase of 31,7%. The United Arab Emirates saw 321 arrivals in January - March 2024. "The tourism sector is a significant contributor to the economy and job creation. We are determined to continue with this momentum. South Africa remains attractive and accessible for all travellers to enjoy," Minister de Lille concluded.

By WESGRO

# WORLD TRAVEL MARKET AFRICA 2024



Africa Travel Week celebrated its 10th anniversary edition of World Travel Market (WTM) Africa from 10 to 12 April 2024 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC). The milestone event featured new partnerships, business-building opportunities, and interactive networking sessions. Attendees enjoyed a diverse line up of events, including workshops, awards ceremonies, and live performances, highlighting the industry's growth and collaboration.

WTM Africa 2024 saw a remarkable 53% increase in attendees compared to the previous year. This massive surge in participation, with unaudited numbers indicating representation from 88 countries worldwide, signals a bright future for the African tourism industry. The programme prioritised practical opportunities for building business connections, reflecting the event's commitment to making meaningful interactions among industry professionals.

Between 2014 and 2023, a total of 34 731 industry professionals attended WTM Africa. During that same time, buyer numbers

rose year-on-year to match the increase in exhibitors, with exhibitor numbers growing from 384 in 2022 to 577 in 2023.

Minister of Tourism Patricia De Lille, though unable to attend in person, officially opened the conference via video call. She welcomed attendees and highlighted the need for collective efforts to continue the momentum of tourism in Africa. "This year represents a year where we can take measures to break new ground and achieve exponential growth in our numbers," she said.

Minister De Lille emphasised the importance of safety, sustainability, and expanding tourism beyond well-known destinations to include the hidden gems of lesser-known towns and villages across the continent. "Tourism is one of the most significant contributors to our economy, but we can do much more. One of the areas in which the Department is investing, is in supporting economic sustainability through our various tourism incentive programmes," she continued.

Tourism Investment Forum Africa (TIFA), which seeks to promote tourism and related

sectors investment, finance solutions and opportunities between African countries and the rest of the world, held a conference during the WTM.

Speaking at the TIFA conference, Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlale stated that, according to the Tourism White Paper, tourism generates demand and production in other sectors of the South African economy. "This means when the tourism sector grows and we attract more tourists, we will need more cars, more linen, more vegetables, more fruits, more furniture, more wine, more eggs, and more of almost everything."

The Department of Tourism has accordingly invested in infrastructure such as Lookout Hill in Khayelitsha and Wolwekloof Nature Reserve within the City of Cape Town as part of our Tourism Infrastructure Maintenance Programme, also invested resources in the Table Mountain National Park, which is one of the major attractions in the country.

"This conference is a historic moment in our interaction with the private sector regarding the challenge of reconstruction, development and economic growth confronting the nation. It is only through linking our collective resources, and through maximising the synergy of our combined actions, that we will be able to effect the socio-economic changes our society requires. Inequality, unemployment and poverty will destroy the political gains we have made thus far unless they are addressed urgently," the Deputy Minister stated.

The conference day closed with the inaugural Media Awards, recognising excellence in African travel journalism. Winners included:

- Sustainability Feature Award: Alexander Okere – Illegal Animal Trade
- Visual Tourism Award: Kelly Hammond
- Destination Feature Award: Phoebe Smith
- Tourism News Award: Adele Mackenzie – Tourism Update.

*By Annah Mashile*

# RECORD-BREAKING 200 000

## INTERNATIONAL AIR ARRIVALS IN 2024



“Tourism in the Western Cape continues to grow and strengthen. I am thrilled to confirm that, according to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), total international air arrivals to Cape Town International Airport (CTIA) from January through February 2024 surpassed the 200 000 mark and exceeded the 2019 figure of 194 058 for the same period, breaking all previous records in the last five years. And at key attractions in regions across the province, visitor numbers are up 20% year on year. This is yet more excellent news for the sector because we know that more tourists translates to more jobs across the province,” Provincial Minister of Finance and Economic Opportunities, Mireille Wenger, enthusiastically announced.

This is according to the monthly tourism report for February 2024, compiled by the Western Cape Government’s (WCG) tourism, trade, and investment promotion agency, Wesgro.

Other highlights from the report include the following:

- Two-way passengers through CTIA’s international terminal saw a 14% year-on-year growth in February 2024, with 294 443 two-way passengers, maintaining a steady growth rate on the back of a 13% increase recorded in January 2024. (Source: Airports Company South Africa, known as ACSA)
- The CTIA domestic terminal recorded a 14% year-on-year growth in February 2024, with over 576 000 two-way passengers passing through the terminal. (Source: ACSA)
- George Airport recorded over 59 000

two-way passengers in February 2024, approaching full recovery when compared to pre-COVID-19 levels. (Source: ACSA)

- In February 2024, 92% of the international air arrivals to Cape Town were from overseas markets (other than Africa) and 8% were from the rest of Africa. (Source: ACSA)
- From January through February 2024, the UK led as the top overseas air market to Cape Town, with Germany a very close second, followed by the USA, Netherlands and France in the top 5 positions. (Source: ACSA)
- During January and February 2024, Namibia led as the top air market from the rest of Africa to Cape Town, with Zimbabwe following closely in second position. Mozambique, Angola and Kenya followed in the rest of the top 5 positions. Air arrivals from the rest of Africa to Cape Town during the period January to February 2024 reflected full recovery from seven out of the top 10 Africa source markets to Cape Town vs. Jan – Feb 2019. These markets included Zimbabwe (135%), Mozambique (18 100%), Kenya (202%), Nigeria (112%), Tanzania (176%), Ghana (304%) and Botswana (1 129%). (Source: ACSA)
- In all, 43 participating attractions across the six regions of the Western Cape recorded a total of 1 703 804 visitors from January through February 2024; a 20% growth in the number of visitors when compared to January – February 2023. (Source: Wesgro)
- The top five participating Western Cape attractions with the highest volume of visitors from January through February 2024 were recorded for: Table Mountain National Park (641 486), Table Mountain

Aerial Cableway (227 511), Table Mountain National Park: Cape of Good Hope (199 781), Table Mountain National Park: Boulders (171 754) and Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden (136 422). (Source: Wesgro)

- The top five highest year-on-year growth rates from January through February 2024 were recorded amongst the Western Cape’s nature/outdoor attractions: Stony Point Eco Venue (476%), Grootvadersbosch Eco Venues (386%), De Hoop Nature Reserve (188%), Gamkaberg Nature Reserve (135%) and Kogelberg Nature Reserve (130%). (Source: Wesgro)

“Data from SA Tourism shows that, for every 100 international visitors to the Western Cape, R2,1 million in direct tourist spend is generated, contributing R500 000 to the provincial Gross Domestic Product, and enabling the creation of two local jobs. Which is why the continued excellent performance is such great news for economic growth and job creation in the province and South Africa,” Minister Wenger Continued.

“This success has not happened by chance and would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of our local tourism industry, the curiosity and trust of our precious tourists, and the determination of this Government, entities and partners. I thank each and every person who continues to work hard to welcome our visitors and to ensure that they keep coming back, helping to grow our provincial economy, and creating many more jobs around the Western Cape,” concluded Minister Wenger.

By Ministry



# NEW RURAL TOURISM EXPERIENCE LAUNCHED ON THE KZN SOUTH COAST

The vast and exciting KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) South Coast hinterland is just waiting to be explored, and South Coast Tourism & Investment Enterprise (SCTIE) is making it more accessible with the establishment of a new rural tourism route. In May, the Emalangeni Experience was officially launched, extending the region's rural tourism footprint and unique experiences.

"Emalangeni is a scenic rural area near Pennington in Umdoni which is home to beautiful accommodation sites and exquisite views," Acting SCTIE CEO, Deborah Ludick explained. "By establishing this route, we're connecting the popular tourist town of Pennington with this rural setting, opening up Emalangeni to a new market. The route gives visitors a more authentic experience of the region through

cultural engagements, while supporting entrepreneurs and local job creation."

Attending the launch were local media representatives who were afforded a first-hand experience of the route. Starting with a tour of the historic Botha House in Pennington, guests then enjoyed a hike to Umdoni Park Nature Reserve. Putting skills were put to the test at Umdoni Park Golf Club where they savoured a hearty breakfast before viewing Forest Cottage, followed by a forest walk.

Heading into Emalangeni, the guests popped in to view the lovely Ohlwini Garden Lodge, followed by Phiri's Bed 'n Breakfast, before stopping for a delicious lunch at Buzy Corner Shisanyama. Other great tourist attractions on the route include Pennington Beach, Selborne Golf Club, Nkomba Nature Reserve, Basset Breweries

and accommodation offerings at Essential Lifestyle Country Lodge, to name a few.

✦ Head to the KZN South Coast where ocean sunrises and hinterland adventures await! Find out more by visiting the KZN South Coast [website](#); following South Coast Tourism on [Facebook](#); South Coast Tourism and Investment Enterprise on [YouTube](#); @infosouthcoast on [X](#) (ex-Twitter) or [Instagram](#); and South Coast Tourism & Investment Enterprise on [LinkedIn](#). And [click here](#) to check out previous SCTIE press releases. See why KZN South Coast is a top tourism destination [here](#).

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By Cara Smith

# TOURISM TRANSFORMATION FUND

## DRIVING INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN TOURISM



The Tourism Transformation Fund (TTF) is an important initiative borne out of the collaborative efforts of the Department of Tourism (DT) and the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) in fostering economic transformation and empowerment within the tourism sector.

Since its inception in 2017, the TTF has approved transactions to the value of R272,58 million. Six of the transactions are operational while a further six are under construction and 10 of the approved transactions are at various stages of development, with many scheduled to commence construction in due course. A total 1 047 jobs has been supported, and the 23 businesses boast in excess of 76% black women ownership while 27% of the businesses are owned and managed by youth.

“Our collaboration with the NEF in establishing the TTF has been a key indicator of our commitment to driving inclusive growth in the tourism sector. By providing targeted support to black-owned enterprises, we aim to create a more equitable and prosperous industry that benefits all South Africans,” Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr Fish Mahlalela, said.

NEF Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr Mziwabantu Dayimani says the TTF represents a significant step towards empowering black entrepreneurs in the tourism sector.

“Administered by the NEF on behalf of the DT, the TTF offers a comprehensive funding solution tailored to the diverse needs of black-owned enterprises across the tourism value chain. Through a combination of grant funding, debt financing and equity

contributions, the TTF facilitates capital investment in tourism projects, empowering entrepreneurs to start new businesses and to expand existing enterprises. In this way the TTF aims to catalyse the growth and emergence of a new generation of black-owned tourism enterprises,” he said.

The grant funding provided by the DT is capped at 50% of the total funding required, for up to a maximum of R5 million per successful applicant. The balance is made up of debt finance and equity contributions by the NEF or any other Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) as well as the owner’s contribution.

The TTF aims to contribute to the transformation of the South African economy through Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) as a fundamental policy alongside imperatives such as the National Development Plan (NDP), the country’s Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) as well as the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP). Economic transformation through B-BBEE as a priority in the tourism sector is reflected in the Tourism Act (Act No 3 of 2014), the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) and the Tourism B-BBEE Sector Code, amended in 2015.

While there has been some growth in the number of new black-owned small and micro enterprises entering the sector and also some progress made by existing large tourism players to transform, the overall pace and extent of transformation in the tourism sector has been slow. Transformation efforts are yet to sufficiently change the structure of the sector to facilitate equitable growth with sustained positive socio-economic impacts for the people of South Africa.

There was thus a need to strengthen the focus of the Department’s sector transformation programmes beyond policy interventions, and to consolidate State resources through partnerships, thereby creating targeted interventions to encourage more inclusive growth and economic transformation. The Department signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the NEF at the end of March 2017 to establish and administer the TTF and applications for the pilot phase opened on 17 May 2018.

Following a review process in 2021, the pilot phase of the TTF has undergone enhancements, including an increase in grant funding for successful applicants.

“The NEF continues to monitor the performance of the various TTF transactions approved for funding to date, and to provide mentorship support in the effort to improve business sustainability, growth and the preservation of jobs. To date, application patterns have demonstrated a significant demand among black entrepreneurs nationwide for tourism-related funding,” Mr Dayimani said.

Deputy Minister Mahlalela concluded that travel and tourism contribute significantly to South Africa’s economy and is a source of employment across the country.

“There are many untapped opportunities for funding and the sustained need for transformation in the tourism sector. The TTF will continue in its pursuit of the quest for economic recovery, inclusive growth, job creation, as well as women and youth empowerment,” he said.

*By Dikatsa Mothae and Susan de Bruin*

# DEPUTY MINISTER VISITS MANGAUNG COMMUNITY

Department of Tourism Deputy Minister, Fish Mahlalela, hosted a community engagement in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality on 18 April 2024, in Botshabelo. At this event, he shared information on Government's programmes and opportunities that serve to empower Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), and create robust and sustainable local economies in the Free State. The engagement was in collaboration with the Deputy Minister of Small Business Development Dipuo Peters and the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Rosemary Capa.

This afforded the community an opportunity to converse with all three spheres of government: national, provincial and local; to address the hurdles that are impeding progress and economic growth in various sectors of their communities.

Deputy Minister Peters of Small Businesses Development said, "Today we are offering machinery, equipment, the basic tools that will allow the SMMEs to be able to trade and do their businesses. Today we are donating over a million rands' worth of equipment to 91 beneficiaries. Those who are trading in bakery, laundry and sewing, asked for assistance, and we have helped them with what they need."

Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development's Deputy Minister Capa, added: "This community engagement requires a joint effort: empowering small businesses and growing tourism in the country needs agricultural input and healthy food for our tourists to enjoy. We therefore encourage the youth to get involved in gardening and grow big into business and create jobs."

"Initiating growth in the economy, travelling from point A to B that is tourism, if you eat in a restaurant that is tourism even if you visit relatives or friends that's tourism. There is a relationship between tourism and agriculture. The more tourists we attract, the more food should be manufactured and produced; hence we also need to grow small business to deliver," Deputy Minister Mahlalela explained.

He then directed his communication to the community of Mangaung: "When tourists come to visit they want to see things that are different. They want to experience our culture, our food ... the stories that made us who we are. We need to promote township tourism; tourists need to visit Botshabelo, easily access all the things they need such as food, WI-FI and a safe environment. We need to promote home stays and B&Bs ... upgrade your houses to accommodate tourists. Bloemfontein is at the very centre of South Africa it has rich

heritage, history and culture, and it's a vital link to Lesotho. We need to make tourists spend more time in Bloemfontein and have fun before they cross the borders."

South African Tourism (SAT), Small Enterprise Financial Agency (sefa), Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), National Empowerment Fund (NEF), Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality, and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA), National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and Western Cape Tourism, Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (Wesgro) gave brief presentations to the community on opportunities that they have to offer. The youth was encouraged to visit the Department of Tourism website to see the training and opportunities on offer, and to empower themselves.

Some of the issues raised by the community was that the tourism infrastructure needs to be upgraded, there is a need for water and sustainable electricity, to ensure that tourists don't complain. "There are lots of pot holes on the road and we need to work with the municipality and provincial government to address such matters," Deputy Minister Mahlalela concluded.

*By Annah Mashile*



# MINISTER DE LILLE ENGAGES MATRIC PUPILS



On 23 April 2024, Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille visited Portland High School in Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town, alongside private sector company representatives. The purpose of the visit was to share career and training opportunities in the tourism sector, with matric pupils.

"You are about to complete your school career and you will all go into the world and take up your place in a career where you can share your talents and contribute to the growth of our beautiful country. This can also be a very scary time but I want to say to all of you, the world is yours, you can go out there and do anything you dream of; the key is simple: work hard," Minister de Lille urged her audience.

School principal Mr Ridwaan Williams was clearly delighted and filled with enthusiasm regarding the opportunities communicated to his learners. "Your visit is a wonderful gesture and we appreciate what the Department of Tourism is doing in providing our children with knowledge on job opportunities within the tourism sector. This will surely assist them to choose their careers wisely," Mr Williams said, while welcoming the Minister and guests to the career expo.

Among the speakers was a Tourism teacher at Portland High School who highlighted the challenges that students face when they choose subjects. There was also Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the South African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI) Mr Glenston de Kock, Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) lecturer in

the Tourism faculty Ms Tauhieda Brandt, Mr Jerry Mabena, Chairperson of the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) and private sector speaker Mr Michael Tollman, CEO of the Cullinan Holdings.

De Lille further said, "I hope that their stories have inspired you to know that you too can achieve this and so much more. Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in South Africa and all over the world. There are tremendous opportunities for employment across South Africa that offers various career opportunities in the travel and tourism sector, for example in government, hospitality, conservation, coastal marine, adventure, luxury, township and village tourism."

Department of Tourism offers full-time bursaries and internships for various study fields for young people and they are advertised in national newspapers and on the departmental website every year. Other bursary funders from the sector includes SANParks, the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality, and Sport Sector Education and

Training Authority (CATHSSETA), Provincial Tourism Departments, authorities and the private sector organisations.

The Department has identified challenges that have been prioritised in the Tourism and Hospitality sector on how skills development can contribute towards sustainable economic growth and labour absorption. The Department therefore has a number of Youth Skills Development Programmes, the aim of which is to address the skills shortage facing the industry. The programmes include the Wine Service Training Programme, Chefs Training Programme/Professional Cookery, Food Safety Quality Assurers Training Programme, Hospitality Youth Training Programme: Food and Beverage, Tourism Monitors Programme and Tourist Guide Training.

"Learners, I'd like to close by saying to you: please stop looking at the wrong people and wrong influences in your communities. The plagues of drug abuse and gangsterism will take you nowhere. Rise up above those circumstances and take charge of your own future, A future where you can be an example to others, where you will work in your communities and help to uplift people. You can create a future where you become a leader in your field and go out there and make a difference and see the world," Minister de Lille said.

"Do not let the problems and where you are now stop you. Your difficulties can shape you into the strong person you need to be to go out there and create a success story. I wish you all the best with your matric year and your future beyond school," concluded Minister de Lille.

**By Annah Mashile**



# SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUTH OF MPUMALANGA



“To our graduates this marks an important milestone in the life of a human being; indeed, it is a time to celebrate achieving a pivotal life goal while leaving behind a formative stage in life. This is a great start for all our graduates to build a better future for themselves and their families. Let me wish you all a great future with many prospects!” Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela addressed Food and Beverage Training Programme graduates at their graduation ceremony, held at the Mercure Nelspruit Hotel, Mpumalanga, on 22 May 2024.

The Department appointed MMC Business Solutions as a training provider for the Food and Beverage Training Programme in Mpumalanga. Training consisted of 30% of

theoretical learning and 70% of workplace exposure to acquire practical experience within the relevant settings. The Food and Beverage Training Programme targeted 100 unemployed youth from Ehlanzeni and Nkangala District Municipality. In all, 81 learners were issued competency certificates accredited by FoodBev Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA), and Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality, and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) during the ceremony.

Through its National Tourism Sector Strategy, the Department of Tourism has, among other things, recognised the need to address the skills shortages in the tourism industry by providing graduates and unemployed youth with training and capacity building in

particularly important and rare skills in the hospitality and tourism services sector.

Mahlalela went on to say, “We all think that education includes all the components needed to develop a person into a fully realised human being on a holistic level. For the past 30 years, our goal has been to bring social and economic justice back to our country and to aggressively combat the inequality that served as a defining feature of systemic discrimination and dispossession.”

“Over these years, we sought to use education as a tool to create equality, employment and fighting poverty, having witnessed the worst injustices of apartheid of using education as a tool to perpetuate inequality.” the Deputy Minister continued.

One of the graduates, Monacia Mokoena from Mbombela, said, “I am grateful for the opportunity afforded to me by the Department of Tourism and MMC! I am now a casual worker at Mdluli Safari where I was placed to complete my practical. This course made my dreams come true as it has opened doors for me.”

“We therefore make a call to all prospective employers to join hands with our Government in ensuring suitable placements of these graduates to grow our hospitality sector. Tourism is the world’s fastest growing employment sector that continues to adapt to new trends. South Africa is therefore rebuilding the sector to ensure its sustainability for future generations,” Deputy Minister Fish Mahlalela said in closing.

*By Annah Mashile*





# UNLOCKING SMME PROGRESSION IN THE TOURISM VALUE CHAIN

In the vibrant tapestry of the tourism industry, small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) play an important role, offering unique experiences that weave the fabric of travellers' experiences and memories. However, despite the countless opportunities afforded to the SMMEs by various tourism market access interventions, numerous SMMEs still face significant hurdles in their quest for growth and sustainability.

Many SMMEs in the tourism sector struggle to carve out a distinct corporate identity that resonates with their target audience. Whether it's a bespoke boutique hotel, a family-owned adventure tour company or an eatery, establishing a brand that speaks to the essence and values of the business is essential for differentiation and customer engagement. Without a clear brand strategy and visual identity, SMMEs risk blending into the crowded marketplace, overshadowed by larger competitors with more prominent profiles.

In an increasingly digital world, a professional website serves as the cornerstone of a business's digital footprint, providing a platform to showcase offerings, engage with customers, and facilitate bookings. Many SMMEs struggle to invest in professional website development, opting for makeshift solutions that fail to capture the essence of their brand or inspire confidence in potential customers.

Similarly, overlooking the importance of a professional email address and business

stationery can undermine the credibility of SMMEs in the eyes of customers and partners alike. Whether it's a custom domain email or branded letterheads and business cards, attention to detail in corporate identity signals professionalism and reliability, and captures the essence of the brand while providing a seamless user experience. Moreover, establishing a presence on social media platforms offers SMMEs a powerful tool to connect with travellers, share captivating stories, and build a loyal community of followers.

Furthermore, establishments that are graded by reputable bodies such as the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) and belong to industry associations demonstrate a commitment to quality and professionalism. Active participation in industry networks and associations not only provides SMMEs with access to resources and support but also enhances credibility and visibility within the tourism ecosystem.

Financial assistance and incentives can play a vital role in alleviating the financial burden associated with running functional, robust and sustainable SMMEs. Grants, subsidies, or low-interest loans can enable SMMEs to invest in professional services for their individual business requirements, setting the stage for long-term success in the tourism industry.

SMMEs should also seek funding opportunities from tourism-related government departments and agencies, the banking sector as well as Sector Education and Training Authority

(SETAs) in the Travel, Tourism and Hospitality sector. One avenue for support is the provision of targeted training and capacity-building programmes aimed at equipping SMMEs with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate requirements effectively. These initiatives can empower SMMEs to overcome barriers and seize opportunities for growth.

Collaboration and partnership within the tourism ecosystem also hold promise for overcoming compliance barriers and driving SMME progression. By forging alliances with industry peers, leveraging collective resources, and sharing best practices, SMMEs can amplify their impact and navigate compliance requirements more effectively. Whether through collaborative marketing campaigns, joint training initiatives, or shared infrastructure projects, collaboration offers SMMEs a pathway to success in the tourism value chain.

SMMEs in the tourism sector stand at the forefront of innovation and resilience. By embracing the challenges of branding, digital presence, regulatory compliance, and industry standards, these enterprises pave the way for growth and sustainability.

With determination and strategic investments, SMMEs can transcend barriers, unlocking their full potential to enrich the tourism landscape by having their businesses thrive and take tourists' and travellers' experiences to new heights.

*By Gwen Ncube*

# BUSH BRAAIS NOW OFFERED IN MOUNTAIN ZEBRA NATIONAL PARK

The bush braai, a unique experience where guests dine under the stars in the wonder of nature, is now being offered to visitors at Mountain Zebra National Park (MZNP) outside Cradock in the Eastern Cape. This dining option is already well established in other South African National Parks such as Kruger and Mapungubwe National Parks.

This special pocket of karoo veld in MZNP, which is untouched other than the area directly identified for this new activity, is known as the “Ebuhlanti Bush Braai”. “Ebuhlanti” means “kraal” in isiXhosa – a place where rituals that connect the living with their ancestors is performed, marrying the two worlds for the vitality and harmony of African homes, and so too, to this African adventure.

A game drive into the heart of the park ushers guests to the open-air restaurant, where

they’re warmly welcomed to the kraal by attending staff and a bonfire for the perfect amount of ambiance. Solar lights strung up on poles and on the tables provide additional lighting to add to the unique setting – with only the natural sounds of the surrounding bush and the crackling of the fires to be heard.

*“Ebuhlanti” means “kraal” in isiXhosa – a place where rituals that connect the living with their ancestors is performed, marrying the two worlds for the vitality and harmony of African homes, and so too, to this African adventure.*

The park’s restaurant staff members ensure not only a festive atmosphere, but also a hearty meal – typical of what one may expect in the karoo. Non-alcoholic beverages are included in the all-inclusive price of R790, while there is a cash mini-bar available for alcoholic drinks.

As the park starts introducing the bush braais, they request that bookings be made at least 48 hours in advance – for a minimum of six people at a time. No children under the age of six years are allowed on the activity.

They will kick off from the park’s Reception building at 16:00, but this will change per season, and the event will last approximately four hours. Guests are requested to confirm departure times with Reception on the day.

**By SANParks**





# KZN SOUTH COAST PREPARES TO HOST MAJOR GOLFING TOURNAMENT IN SEPTEMBER

Boasting 11 top-class golf courses, the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) South Coast has earned its title as 'The Golf Coast' while playing host to several major golfing tournaments. This year, from 4 to 6 September, San Lameer Estate welcomes the country's top golfing stars vying for the top title at the relaunched South African Women's Masters.

Established in 1996, this is the third oldest and second most contested professional women's golf tournament in South Africa after the South African Women's Open. The South African Women's Masters, sanctioned by the Womens Professional Golf Association (WPGA) South Africa, has seen legendary golfers take the title.

The inaugural win went to Sally Little, a two-time LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association) Major winner with Olympian, Ashleigh Buhai (née Simon) winning the event in 2006 as an amateur, the year before she turned professional.

Jenny Havenga of Lifestyle Golf said bringing the tournament home to the KZN South Coast was significant as the region was known as the 'Home of Women's Golf', having hosted the SA Women's Open from 2012 to 2017, and the SA Women's Masters from 2018 to 2020. Sponsored by Ray Nkonyeni Municipality, the Masters drove domestic and international tourism and investment to the KZN South Coast.

"Relaunching this event on the lower KZN South Coast is exciting and the sponsors and

promoters are committed to hosting this as an annual event to showcase what the region has to offer in terms of property investment opportunities. It has a year-round subtropical climate, and boasts the province's most Blue Flag beaches, great golf courses, and so much natural beauty," said Havenga.

Golfers and spectators will get to enjoy the 18-hole championship golf course of San Lameer Estate – the country's first golfing estate – which is set within a 200-hectare nature conservancy, landscaped with 620 luxury villas offering world-class accommodation. The tournament format will include a pre-tournament Pro-am on Day 1, followed by the 2-day Pro tournament.

Deborah Ludick, Acting CEO of South Coast Tourism & Investment Enterprise (SCTIE) said they welcomed the relaunch of the South African Women's Masters on The Golf Coast: "As a key MICE\* destination, with top golf courses, great accommodation, and so much to see and do, hosting the Masters on the KZN South Coast is a natural fit. San Lameer Estate is an exquisite setting, and we look forward to welcoming the country's top golfers while encouraging spectators to take advantage of the great tourism offerings found throughout the KZN South Coast!"

Don't miss out on the golfing action at the KZN South Coast where ocean sunrises and hinterland adventures await!

 Find out more by visiting the KZN South Coast [website](#); following South



Coast Tourism on [Facebook](#); South Coast Tourism and Investment Enterprise on [YouTube](#); @infosouthcoast on [X](#) (ex-Twitter) or [Instagram](#); and South Coast Tourism & Investment Enterprise on [LinkedIn](#). And [click here](#) to check out previous SCTIE press releases. See why KZN South Coast is a top tourism destination [here](#). Check out the latest Southern Explorer Route Guide for the KZN South Coast [here](#).

 For bookings to play in the pre-tournament Pro-am and for sponsorship opportunities, contact Jenny Havenga from Lifestyle Golf on 083 411 7237 or email [jenny@lifestylegolf.co.za](mailto:jenny@lifestylegolf.co.za).

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\*MICE: Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions

By Cara Smith



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