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FACTS ABOUT THE COVER:

Hartebeespoort Dam Wall

The Hartebeespoort dam wall was first opened in 1923 and later renovated in 1969. It is situated on the slopes of Magalies mountain and the banks of Hartebeespoort dam. The dam wall is 149.5 meters long and 59.4 meters high. It spans across a gorge in the Magalies and provides picturesque moments for tourists visiting the area.

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Editorial



We celebrate Tourism Month in all provinces and it culminated in World Tourism Day celebrations hosted by the North West Province.

World Tourism Day is a United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) initiative, celebrated every year on 27 September. World Tourism Day also has an objective to promote the importance of tourism towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through its social, cultural, political and economic value.

World Tourism Day 2023 was a call to action to the international community, governments, multilateral financial institutions, development partners and

private sector investors to unite around a new tourism investment strategy.

The purpose of highlighting Tourism Month is to create awareness about domestic tourism activities planned and to enthuse South Africans to travel their country.

The local theme was "Tourism invests in a green future." This lends impetus on having a climate-resilient tourism economy. Accelerating climate action in tourism is therefore critical for the resilience of the sector.

In keeping with our mandate, the Department has also embarked on a number of Izimbizos that ensure

participatory democracy in taking government to the people. After all, Tourism belongs to the people of South Africa.

We have nurtured multi-lateral partnerships to ensure the continued accelerated growth of the sector. Legislation is our North Star and we welcome Cabinet's concurrence on the Green Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa.

As we ready ourselves for the summer season, we wish to remind you about all our touristic treasures just waiting to be experienced. Let us all continue to "do tourism".

- Seapei Lebele





World Tourism Day 2023 - Tourism invests in a Green Future

On 23 September 2023, the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela, proudly hosted the World Tourism Day Celebrations at Hartbeespoort Dam in the North West Province under the theme: "Tourism invests in a green future."

Since 1980, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has annually celebrated World Tourism Day on 27 September based on a global theme. Although not gazetted, the Department of Tourism celebrates September as Tourism Month. Various activations take place across all provinces throughout the month to encourage South Africans to plan a Sho't Left break or holiday.

"In light of the UN roadmap for a better world by 2030, the urgency for innovative solutions that transcend traditional investments has never been greater. We acknowledge the role of sustainable investments in forging a resilient and inclusive future for tourism," stated the Deputy Minister.

In keeping with the theme, green investments play a pivotal role in nurturing a tourism sector that is both economically vibrant and environmentally responsible. Our vision is clear: to foster a tourism ecosystem where every investment is

green, every endeavour nurtures our environment, and every step brings us closer to the Sustainable Development Goals outlined for 2030. Now is the time to innovate, to think beyond the beaten path, to envision tourist facilities powered by renewable energies, accommodations that are a haven of green architecture, and experiences that enable our guests to leave a green footprint behind. Investments in green technologies and infrastructures not only preserve our exquisite landscapes for generations to come but also spawn new avenues for economic growth and job creation. Furthermore, it is our moral imperative to safeguard our rich cultural heritage.

The purpose of highlighting Tourism Month is to create awareness about domestic tourism activities planned and to enthuse South Africans to travel their country. Locally, the World Tourism Day celebration is held under the Domestic Tourism campaign. It aims to foster awareness about domestic travel among communities as well as create awareness about the importance of tourism to the economy. This is important as domestic tourism is a significant pillar in the recovery process.

The host province this year was the



North West Province. This province hosts many cultural gems and natural attractions. It is an idyllic province with all year sunny climate with various cultural and historical attractions. It is known as South Africa's "platinum province" for its vast underground resources and also produces platinum, gold diamonds and uranium. Popular destinations are the Magaliesberg Region and Pilanesberg Nature Reserve. The North West Province is also home to the world-renowned Sun City Resort and Hartbeespoort Aerial



Cableway. The Unesco Taung Skull Fossil World Heritage Site can also be found here.

All South Africans are encouraged to be part of the We Do Tourism campaign and during the month of September visit family, friends or heritage sites to

reconnect with our past. During Tourism Month, we promote domestic travel and encourage a culture of travel among South Africans while showcasing the variety of experiences, attractions and establishments that we have to offer and encourage everyone to take a Sho't Left.



reconnect with our past. During Tourism Month, we promote domestic travel and encourage a culture of travel among South Africans while showcasing the variety of experiences, attractions and establishments that we have to offer and encourage everyone to take a Sho't Left.

"Tourism extends beyond simply powering economies and creating jobs or offering wanderlust explorers unforgettable experiences. It is a formidable force in building cohesive societies. It facilitates the breaking down of barriers of race, gender and class, thus fostering understanding and nurturing the rich tapestry of our shared humanity" the Deputy Minister added.

International travel is making a great comeback, as per the statistics reported by StatsSA. From January to July 2023, a total of 4.8 million international tourists

arrived in South Africa, signifying a remarkable 70.6% surge compared to the same period in 2022. While this resurgence is undoubtedly encouraging, it's important to note that these figures still lag behind the pre-pandemic levels of 2019 by a 19% shortfall.

The tourism sector is encouraged by these figures. Within these 4.8 million arrivals, the African region has the biggest share while Europe played a significant role, contributing 14.3% (equivalent to 682,828) of the total tourists. These significant numbers paint a vibrant picture of South Africa's continued allure, an epitome of the global trend steering towards a post-pandemic recovery in travel. It is clear that our nation remains a choice destination, captivating the hearts of many with its rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and remarkable wildlife. However, to reach our ambitious target of 21 million arrivals by 2023, we must flip the script and drive a clear well illuminated united path to our destination marketing. We must implement insight-driven marketing strategies and strengthen telling the story of our beautiful destination as

we continue our efforts of attracting the new traveller in the post-COVID-19 landscape.

"We aim to foster a future of tourism that harmonises with nature, promotes prosperity responsibly, and embodies a green heart. I am talking about the proverbial "Triple Bottom Line," which consists of People, Planet, and Profit. Let us set forth on this path with vigour and determination, for the road ahead is green and bright, brimming with sustainable, innovative, and genuinely South African possibilities that inspire new ways. Let's make South Africa a great place to visit and a green destination to remember," the Deputy Minister concluded.

South Africa is open for tourism, embracing visitors from the rest of our beloved continent of Africa and beyond to immerse themselves in the rich tapestry of diverse cultures and heritages that define us.



South Africa's Double Triumph: Best Country and Cape Town Wins Best City in the World at the 2023 Telegraph Travel Awards 2023



South Africa, a land of unparalleled beauty and rich cultural heritage, celebrates a remarkable double triumph at the 2023 Telegraph Travel Awards. The country has been honoured with the prestigious title of "Best Country," while its iconic city, Cape Town, has claimed the coveted title of "Best City in the World." These exceptional accolades, voted for by 27,000 passionate readers, are a testament to South Africa's undeniable allure and the enduring impact it has on travellers.

The Telegraph Travel Awards, a distinguished platform within the travel industry, recognizes destinations that captivate the imagination and leave an indelible mark on visitors. South Africa's resounding success in winning both the "Best Country" and "Best City in the World" categories underscores

its unparalleled natural landscapes, rich biodiversity, and vibrant cultural experiences.

Cape Town, often hailed as the "Mother City," has long been celebrated for its picturesque beauty, world-famous landmarks, and warm hospitality. The city's win as the "Best City in the World" is a resounding affirmation of its status as a global tourism gem. From the majestic Table Mountain and stunning beaches to the captivating Cape Winelands and vibrant neighbourhoods, Cape Town offers an abundance of experiences that appeal to the senses and nourish the soul.

"We are thrilled and immensely proud that South Africa has been recognized as the 'Best Country' at the 2023 Telegraph Travel Awards, and our vibrant city of

Cape Town has been crowned the 'Best City in the World.' These accolades are a testament to the remarkable experiences our country offers and the unwavering dedication of our tourism industry. South Africa's diverse landscapes, rich wildlife, and warm hospitality continue to captivate the hearts of travellers from around the globe. We extend our deepest gratitude to the 27,000 Telegraph readers who voted for us and invite everyone to come and experience the magic of South Africa firsthand," says Kgomotso Ramothea, Acting Hub Head for UK and Ireland Hub.

In 2022, South Africa welcomed 303,848 arrivals from the UK and Ireland. January to May 2023 arrivals from the UK now stand at 164,232 which is a 50.2% increase when compared to January to May 2022 arrivals of 109,372.



Green Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa

To celebrate Tourism Month, the Department of Tourism welcomes Cabinet's concurrence of the Green Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa and invites South Africans to make their inputs.

The country's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) identifies tourism recovery as one of the priority interventions to drive the reconstruction and recovery of the economy. The Tourism Sector's Recovery Plan also identifies the need to review the policy framework to support the sector's growth.

The tourism sector has continued to grow for the past decade, earning the reputation of being one of the most significant and fastest-growing sectors before COVID-19. In 2019, it contributed 3.7% to the local GDP and created 780,096 direct South African jobs. Despite numerous advances, the tourism sector lags relative to its potential.

To respond to this challenge and to accelerate inclusive tourism growth, the Department of Tourism embarked on a process of reviewing the 1996 Tourism White Paper. The policy review process

has yielded the Green Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa. The Green Paper seeks to sustainably grow a more inclusive tourism sector that creates mass employment, reacts to innovations and adapts to future crises.

The vision of the Green Paper is to sustainably and competitively grow the South African economy through an inclusive, inspiring, visitor-oriented tourism sector that consistently builds partnerships to strengthen the impact of the sector nationally, regionally and globally. Its aim is also to address barriers to tourism growth; and to respond to the social cohesion imperatives of the country.

Key elements include but are not limited to:

- Implementation of a research-based tourism safety response programme in partnership with relevant agencies;
- Develop and regularly review tourism crisis management framework to enable a response to crises;
- Implementation of Tourism BBBEE Codes & strengthening mechanism

for access to finance;

- Facilitation of ease of access to the destination, especially as it relates to immigration and transport.
- Recommitting the sector to the responsible tourism agenda, and
- Regulation of short-term rental accommodation to ensure policy certainty

To enable the sector to reach its potential, The Green Paper focuses on four policy thematic areas with a specific focus under each.

The gazette for public comment was published on Friday 1 September 2023. Any person who wishes to submit written inputs in connection with the Green Paper is invited to do so within 60 days from the date of the gazette. All South Africans are encouraged to participate in this process and take ownership of this space. Public participation is a critical component of good governance and transparency and promotes inclusivity.



Minister of Tourism launches the #Khomani Twee Rivieren Interpretative Centre in Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park

Minister of Tourism Ms Patricia de Lille, launched the R3.5 million Twee Rivieren (#Khomani) Interpretative Centre and Narrative Development Project at the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park in honour of the world's oldest ancient tribe, the #Khomani.

The launch took place on 19 July 2023 alongside confirmation of 10 Tourist Guides who completed their training and received not only their certificates of competence but their Tourist Guide Badges and Identity cards.

The Interpretative Centre will provide a unique stop for tourists at Twee Rivieren Rest Camp in the Kalahari, known for its rich cultural and tourism offerings, and home to the #Khomani. The exhibition installation will provide visitors with a demonstration of the cultural and natural heritage of the Park and ensure an immersive experience.

It includes the collection of narratives and storyline of the local #Khomani communities within the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. The Interpretation Centre will ensure that these Tourist Guides as well as all other registered

Tourist Guides from across the province, will have access to information that is comprehensive, correct and objective.

“Since the completion of the training, we are also happy to report that two of the learners have already been offered employment opportunities as Tourist Guides. We wish all 10 newly registered Tourist Guides all the best on their new journey as they provide tourists with an authentic experience about the heritage and culture of the region and attempt to stimulate repeat visits to the area,” said Minister De Lille.





She further said, "Through this centre, the Department of Tourism has enabled the local community to proudly share the narrative of their captivating culture to thousands of tourists who visit the park annually. Training and development

the Implementing Agency.

The Interpretative Centre is situated in a rural node within the Northern Cape Province in Upington, one of the regions identified by government for socio-economic development. The #Khomani Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site is an important landscape as it forms part of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park with Botswana and borders Namibia.

SANParks Chief Executive Officer, Ms Hapiloe Sello said that they are proud to be the custodian of the project that will assist in showcasing the rich culture of the #Khomani and Mier communities and which is also the reason why Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park was incepted as one of the World Heritage Sites in South Africa.

Ms Roseline Van Neel, one of the confirmed Tourist Guides said, "We as the Mier and #Khomani Tourist Guides learners are filled with gratitude for this opportunity afforded to us by the Department of Tourism, we value the support and education as this experience will open new doors for us."



are an integral part of the growth and success of the tourism sector and capacity building and upskilling initiatives therefore aim to improve the levels of services rendered by registered Tourist Guides in South Africa."

The outcomes of this initiative are to improve the overall visitor experience of tourists to the Red Dune Kalahari Region, facilitate educational trips of school groups and provide entrepreneurial opportunities for the local communities. This project is funded by the Department of Tourism. The South African National Parks (SANParks) has been appointed as

The learners completed training as both Nature and Culture Site Guides for the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park and surroundings areas. This training allowed the communities to directly benefit from the interpretation centre and tourism activities in the area.

"I encourage tourists to the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park to visit the Twee Rivieren Interpretative Centre as well as take a guided hike with a #Khomani Tourist Guide to learn about the wisdom, customs and folklore of this ancient tribe, without it, no tour to the Kahalari will be complete," the Minister concluded.



Minister De Lille reflects on Madiba's 67 minutes of service at Riemvasmaak



It was a beautiful day filled with joy and laughter at Riemvasmaak, a settlement in ZF Mgcawu District Municipality in the Northern Cape Province on 18 July 2023 when Minister of Tourism Ms Patricia de Lille, celebrated the annual global Mandela Day to honour the life and legacy of former President Nelson Mandela.

The day was celebrated under the theme: "It is in Your Hands." These were the words of Mr Mandela, in addressing the scourge of poverty, suffering and deprivation, saying: "It is in your hands to make our world a better one for all, especially the poor, vulnerable and marginalised."

Riemvasmaak is 75 000 hectares of sheer mountain desert wilderness, located between the Orange and the dry Molopo Rivers, approximately 57kms from Kakamas and 170kms from the Nakop Border Post with Namibia. The town is managed by a Riemvasmaak Board of Trustees. The Trust has realised that one way to make Riemvasmaak sustainable, is through enhanced tourism development.

Mandela Day is marked by South Africans by coming together to perform an act of service to those in need. Also known as "67 minutes for Mandela" to reflect Madiba's 67 years of service to the country, people all over the country roll up their sleeves to serve the needy. This year South Africans were called to

contribute to turning the tide against food insecurity and climate change in honour of Mandela's legacy.

Minister De Lille said, "There is so much more we can do in our daily lives to feed a hungry person. Our gestures need not be grand but any small offer of service or donation we can make, will mean the world to someone in need. Unpacking clothing or blankets no longer being used and donating it to someone in need, is the wave of warmth we need more of to bring comfort and hope to those living in despair."

"In the early 1970s Riemvasmaak people were forcefully removed from this beautiful mountain desert wilderness



mostly Damara and Koranna Khoi tribes - by the then Apartheid government. Around 1 500 people were divided into three groups according to their 'racial' classification and sent to either Welcomewood in the Ciskei, Khorixas in Northern Namibia, or the nearby towns of Marchand, Augrabies and Keimoes.

A little after 1994, the democratic government chose to return this land to the children of the original residents. In 1994 the land was returned to the people of Riemvasmaak. This was the first land restitution project announced by then State President of South Africa, Mr Nelson Mandela. As such, it is a legacy project of former President Mandela.

One of the projects is a community-owned tourism facility, Riemvasmaak Hot Springs, where the Northern Cape Department of Tourism improved holiday chalets to the value of R649 000.00. The Riemvasmaak Trust, which is partnering on this project, has also created several job opportunities for community members, explained the Minister, noting that upgrading the chalets has improved the guests' comfort and experience, ultimately increasing guest satisfaction. This also ensures that guests return as, facilities are more appealing and ultimately will increase visitor numbers and income."

Accommodation at the Riemvasmaak Hot Springs is in comfortable eight-bed or



bed-bed chalets, with spectacular views over the Riemvasmaak granite canyon. Each chalet has a kitchenette, toilet, shower, wash basin, and braai area. More jobs were created with the purchasing of new furniture for the chalets, artwork bought from local artists, the building of ablution facilities for the day visitors and camping ground, replacement of the electricity line, replacing of the roof for the Lapa at the Hot Springs, office equipment, two-way radios and Wi-Fi installation.

Plans for the community include redevelopment of the recreational area and establishing a day spa at the hot springs. Conceptual designs have been started for this project by the Northern Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism. "As the National Department of Tourism, we work closely with the provincial department and the Northern Cape Tourism Authority on various projects. We will continue to support tourism development for all areas of the Northern Cape as one of our country's most unique and awe-inspiring holiday destinations," said Minister De Lille.

She further emphasised, "It is in our hands. We must take our hands and work closer with communities to bring about economic development that will truly free all our people from poverty and hunger."

"Mandela's life and sacrifices should be a reminder and motivator to all of us each day to serve with humility and help bring progress in any way we can to ensure all people in South Africa taste the fruits of our democracy," concluded Minister De Lille.





Minister De Lille undertakes a visit to Kruger National Park

Minister of Tourism Ms Patricia de Lille took time out of her busy schedule to take an oversight visit to the Kruger National Park (KNP). The visit took place from 11 to 13 July 2023 inside Kruger National Park and surroundings following the investment projects by the Department and the private sector at this world renowned, a top tourist attraction in South Africa.

“Kruger National Park has massive natural beauty and wildlife, it is a must-see attraction on the bucket lists of travellers from all over the world and the country. As with all tourist attractions, it is vital that this attraction is maintained to provide tourists with a world class and authentically South African experience,” said Minister De Lille.

The Department of Tourism manages a Pipeline of Nationally Prioritised Tourism Investment Projects (greenfield and brownfield projects) with bias towards projects located in underdeveloped areas with high tourism potential around major attractions such as the National Parks, World Heritage Sites, Coastal Areas and Inland Waterways. Tourism’s Investment Promotion, Facilitation, Aftercare and project preparation packaging efforts focus mainly on private sector-led projects, in order to drive investment into the tourism sector.

Around the Orpen and the Skukuza gates of the KNP, the Directorate: Tourism Investment Coordination is facilitating the following high-impact projects: New Airport Terminal at the Eastgate Airport (Hoedspruit Military Base), SleepOver Motel Orpen Gate, The Orpen Kruger Lodge (formerly known as Mnisi Resort),

Kruger Shalati - The Train on the Bridge (Skukuza) and SleepOver Kruger Gate (Skukuza).

Consistent escalation of electricity prices, coupled with energy supply challenges, load shedding and general water scarcity pose a significant risk to the future growth potential and sustainability of the tourism sector.

The project sites selected in the KNP for implementation of solar PV energy generating systems included two rest camps (Skukuza and Lower Sabie) with existing electricity supply from the national Eskom grid (grid-connected sites) and two more-remote picnic sites (Tshokwane and Nkuhlu) that were originally reliant on diesel generators (off-grid sites).

“It is worth noting that all these interventions took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, amounting to about R160 million worth of private sector investments. The unblocking of regulatory barriers such as long-term leases (from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development; the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure as well as the Department of Defence) could unlock further investments,” said the Minister

She further stated that tourism is an important sector in the country’s economy due to South Africa’s attractiveness to travellers and the many jobs created by this vibrant sector. “In order to grow the economic contribution of tourism even further, we need to work harder on all fronts, with government, communities and the private sector working hand-in-hand, to grow our tourism offering and attract more tourists to South Africa from all over the world.”

“As we aim to continue attracting more tourists to South Africa, continued investment and maintenance of tourist attractions is of strategic importance and this can only be achieved by government, communities and the private sector working together. This partnership has been demonstrated in a number of projects within the KNP,” emphasised the Minister.

“We are committed to doing all we can to enhance tourism investment, tourism safety and attract more tourists to our beautiful country with all stakeholders and we will work to find and action solutions to anything that stands in the way of that objective to grow tourism’s contribution to the country’s economy as espoused in the country’s Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan,” concluded Minister De Lille.



Explore the World of Tourism



Scores of enthusiastic Tourism, Hospitality and Consumer Studies Grade 10 - 11 learners from across the Province assembled at the Central University of Technology (CUT) in Bloemfontein for the 2nd Annual Free State Provincial Tourism Careers Expo 2023 (PTCE).

The PTCE, which took place from the 3rd – 4th August 2023, commenced with a Schools Competition and the Youth Business Zone, where Grade 11 learners competed in three categories namely; public speaking, cooking, and baking, and the development of new products.

For the Youth Business Zone, Motheo TVET College and CUT tourism final-year students pitched their tourism-related business ideas to a panel of judges.

The winners of the competitions were announced at a grand Gala Dinner hosted at the Motheo TVET College Artisan Building. The learners were awarded medals and certificates of attendance, winners from this competition will represent Free State Province at the National Tourism Career Expo planned to take place in September 2023. And the Youth Business Zone overall winner walked away with R50 000, R20 000 for the 2nd runner-up, and R10 000 for the 3rd runner-up.

During the main event, the two and fifty (250) learners had an opportunity to engage with industry experts from tourism sub-sectors such as Tourist Guiding, Accommodation, and Transport Management to mention but a few who were exhibiting as well as speaking at the event.

In his keynote address at the main event, the Head of the Department for DESTEA, Dr. Mbulelo Nokwequ stressed the importance of the PTCE, “this event presents an opportunity for the tourism and hospitality organizations to promote their establishments whilst affording tourism learners an opportunity and exposure to learn more about the sector and engage potential employers” he said.

In order to make the PTCE a success and impactful, the Department collaborated with the stakeholders in the skills development sector, sister departments, as well as higher education institutions such as Free State Department of

Education, CATHSSETA, CUT, Motheo TVET College and the Free State Gambling, Liquor, and Tourism Authority.

Winners of the Competitions are as follows:

Youth Business Zone:

Pitta Platter: Rethabile Khatlake and Phemelo Moholo

Schools Competition:

Consumer Studies - Baking Cake: Anaashe Sange, Ficksburg High School

Consumer Studies – Soft Furnishing: Natasha De Jangh, Staats President Swart Secondary

Tourism Studies – Public Speaking: Jabulile Mbongo, Cedar Secondary

Hospitality – Baking Cake: Relebogile Ndumo, Excelsior

Compiled By:

DESTEA Communications





The Department leads Stakeholder Engagement ahead of Presidential Imbizo in Ladysmith

The Director-General of the Department of Tourism Mr Victor Tharage, led a Stakeholders Engagement on 29 June 2023 at Ndaba Hotel in Ladysmith uThukela District Municipality, Kwazulu-Natal Province.

The engagement was held a day before the District Development Model (DDM) Presidential Imbizo and was attended by tourism students, Women-in-Tourism, industry role-players as well as interested community members and representatives from local tourism establishments around uThukela District Municipality. The intention was to hear first-hand, how the communities feel government can be of assistance to them in relation to tourism issues.

Among the issues raised at the Stakeholder Engagement were, amongst others, Tour Operator Licences, Homestays, roads infrastructure, Tourism Safety, the role of the entertainment industry in tourism and job opportunities closer to home.

One of the tourism operators, Mr Mkhulise from Snaye Tours said that his vehicles are operating on the basis that he has made applications to renew his Tour Operator Licence and as a result, he

is accumulating traffic fines daily.

“The issuing of Tour Operator Licences is a mandate of the Department of Transport. We have had engagements with the Minister of Transport and Operation Vulindlela in the Presidency, regarding this matter. We agreed that the Minister of Transport should issue an instruction to the provinces to place a moratorium on the harassment of tour operators. We are currently waiting for the Minister of Transport to issue the moratorium,” responded Mr Tharage

The issue of poor road infrastructure was also raised as a concern. Most notably, the three main roads used to access tourism infrastructure, namely: the R600, R74 and R616. It was noted that the Department of Tourism will engage with the National Department of Transport regarding the issue of fixing the identified roads.

Mr Tharage stated, “It is clear that government needs to work hand-in-hand with communities across our country, so that targeted measures can be put in place to deliver adequate services.”

The uThukela District Municipality is a region that has abundant natural resources and opportunities. Tourist destinations include the uKahlamba

Drakensberg Mountains where approximately half a million tourists a year are attracted to this World Heritage Site as well as to the historic battlefields in the region. Bergville is described as the gateway the Drakensberg.

Some of the most attractive holiday resorts, like Catkin Peak, Cathedral Peak, Champagne Castle, Oliviershoek, and Spioenkop’s historical site, all of which are situated close to the town. As such, it is one of the major sources of income generation within the tourism industry as the spending in the area contributes significantly to the economy.

“Issues raised during this engagement are cross-cutting and speak directly to the purpose of the District Development Model, which aims to eliminate the silos in which government departments have historically worked,” emphasised the Director-General.

After outlining the different programmes and skills development opportunities available in the Department of Tourism and sector, Mr Tharage concluded by saying, “The Department will address the concerns raised and return to the area to report back within the next three months.”



Ladysmith communities outline challenges during Presidential Imbizo

The communities around Ladysmith in KwaZulu-Natal outlined their expectations ahead of the Presidential Imbizo convened by President Cyril Ramaphosa. The 7th Presidential District Development Model (DDM) Imbizo was held on 30 June 2023 at the Oqungwini Sport Field in Alfred Duma Local Municipality, under Uthukela District Municipality.

It was held under the theme, "Leave No One Behind," in line with government's collaboration with all sectors of society to transform the country through a sustainable, equitable and inclusive economy.

Local residents from communities in and around Ladysmith were eager to engage with the President face-to-face. The communities of Uthukela District Municipality are facing various challenges including unemployment, lack of basic services such as water supply and electricity, dilapidated roads, no cellphone network coverage, the R350.00 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant and limited healthcare facilities.

One of the community members, Mr Nduduzo Sithole, from Emjindini, said he could not wait to tell the President about the challenges they face, including the shortage of water, the high rate of unemployment among the youth and the availability of funding for higher education.

"My hope is to hear the President address the high unemployment rate faced by the youth in our communities. I expect him to outline plans from government on how they are going to deal with this challenge. We want them to build areas where the youth can get skills, which will eventually help them in securing employment.

"Another challenge is water, which is very scarce in our area. We do not have water at all. We want the President to tell us how they are going to fix the water woes for us," Sithole.

Ms Thulani Khumalo, 26, from Ward 1 in Ladysmith said she would like to see hospitals around her area servicing patients for free, as they do not have any source of income. "I ask the President and his delegation to please scrap the R45.00 fee we pay for opening a file at the hospital because as it is, we are not working so we cannot afford to pay such a fee," she said.

During his address to the community, President Ramaphosa said, "National government would intervene directly when it comes to service delivery projects in KwaZulu-Natal municipalities and this includes the building of bridges, access to water and other public infrastructure."

The President said this was a request made by KwaZulu-Natal Premier Ms Nomusa Dube-Ncube. Also emphasising

that the municipalities need national government's help, he said, "We have seen that in local government, there is lack of capacity - there are fewer engineers and planners. This is why we want national government to support local much more directly."

Cabinet approved the District Development Model in August of 2019 as a comprehensive planning model for cooperative governance, which seeks to be an integrated, district-based service delivery approach aimed at fast-tracking service delivery. It also seeks to ensure that municipalities are adequately supported and resourced to carry out their mandate. The DDM is also aimed at ensuring that the key priorities of government are implemented across all the spheres of government.

To date, President Ramaphosa has visited seven provinces, namely the North West, Free State, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, Northern Cape, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal where he interacted with communities. The Presidential Imbizos are held following the commitment made by the President during the 2022 State of the Nation Address to engage with communities throughout the country.

President Ramaphosa undertook to attend to the residents' problems and also gave relevant Cabinet Ministers a platform to respond to community's problems.

Minister De Lille conducts Stakeholder Engagement ahead of Presidential Imbizo in Sekhukhune District



“We have come here to listen to you, ahead of the Presidential Imbizo tomorrow. We need your assistance to resolve tourism challenges you are facing. We need you to give us solutions because you know best and we will rectify where we can as government,” said Minister of Tourism Ms Patricia de Lille on 14 July 2023 at Thaba Moshate Hotel and Casino in Limpopo Province.

Minister De Lille wanted to hear first-hand how the communities feel government can be of assistance to them in relation to tourism issues. Department of Tourism made it a norm to hold a Stakeholder Engagement day before the District Development Model (DDM) Presidential Imbizo.

Sekhukhune Tourism Business Association raised the following issues which have impact in operating their tourism businesses:

- The need to protect their tourism business from crime they face because of robbery experienced on daily basis.
- The need to be included in order to benefit from the tourism budget to upgrade their tourism business.
- Plea to Sekhukhune District Municipality to maintain road infrastructure in order to make it easier for tourists to visit tourist attractions in their area.

- The need to develop communication relationship between Sekhukhune Tourism Association with national, provincial and local government.
- Plea to maintain dilapidated and neglected tourist attractions and heritage sites in their area.

In response to issues raised, Member of Executive Council (MEC) for Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Mr Rogers Monama said, “The South African Police Service (SAPS) in the Limpopo Province will be consulted for proper guidance on how to operate tourism establishments without the fear of robbery. The issue of poor conditions of the roads, will be referred to Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure to attend to them.”

Minister De Lille added, “The Department offers funding programmes to upgrade Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprises (SMMEs) in the tourism sector. To resolve communication relationship issues, I task the Director-General of the Department of Tourism Mr Victor Tharage, to compile the database for all tourism associations in the Limpopo Province in order to have flow of information.”

She further said, “All heritage sites in the country belong to the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture but the Department of Tourism is responsible for maintenance thereof. The Department of Tourism is busy with the refurbishment projects on some heritage sites in the Limpopo Province and urged that both national and provincial departments as well local government join hands in dealing with projects of that nature.”

There was a plea from the Black Management Forum for the Department of Tourism to simplify and shorten the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) application form in order to accommodate the applicants. It was noted that the Department of Tourism will look into the matter.

The Minister outlined the programmes offered by the Department of Tourism such as the Green Tourism Incentive Programme, Market Access

Support, Tourism Grading Support, Transformation and Equity Fund. “The delegation from the Department will return to give feedback on issue raised, assign responsibilities and timelines,” concluded Minister De Lille.



President Ramaphosa leads Presidential Imbizo in Sekhukhune District

President Cyril Ramaphosa led the 8th District Development Model (DDM) Presidential Imbizo in Sekhukhune District Municipality in Limpopo Province where he interacted with communities on service delivery issues.

Held under the themed 'Leave No One Behind', the Imbizo was held at the Motodi Sports Complex in Ga-Motodi Village in the Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality which falls under the Sekhukhune District Municipality (Burgersfort) on 14 July 2023.

The President began the Imbizo by conducting inspection site visiting the R37 Driekop-Steelpoort Interchange Road Project, followed by a community engagement. During the visit, President Ramaphosa engaged directly with the communities and stakeholders in Sekhukhune, addressing their concerns and seeking solutions to unblock challenges hindering integrated service delivery.

The President Ramaphosa, who was accompanied by Cabinet Ministers and senior government officials, assessed progress made in relation to service delivery and the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan.

Local Chief Mathabile Maila asked the President to work hard to bring loadshedding to an end. Chief Maila, who is blind, asked the President to build a school for the blind and an office in his village. He, however, warned politicians not use the Imbizo as a lobbying pad for the 2024 general elections.

"I appeal to all leaders to put the interest of those who elected them into office above their own," said Chief Maila

President Ramaphosa said that he heard and accepted all the challenges faced by communities, including those of Chief Maila and his plea for a prompt action against loadshedding. He promised problems will be attended to promptly.

The Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan aims to build a new economy and unleash South Africa's true potential. The overarching goal of the plan is to create a sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy. It focuses on the following priority areas:



- Energy security
- Industrial base to create jobs
- Mass public employment programme
- Infrastructure development
- Macro-economic interventions
- Green economy
- Food security
- Reviving the tourism sector

"Government has set aside billions of rands to address the chronic water shortages in Sekhukhune District and elsewhere in the country. We are, however, saddened by poor planning and lack of capacity in municipal infrastructure development," said the President.

President Ramaphosa interacted with communities on their experience of daily life in the province, service delivery challenges, initiatives and sought solutions to improve socio-economic conditions.

The Presidential Imbizo is geared as a driving force towards the President's stated commitment that no one will be left behind as government works with all sectors of society to move the country forward. It will also assist to highlight challenges and remove any barriers to service delivery in line with the DDM.

Just as in many provinces, basic services such as a shortage of water and electricity, dilapidated roads, poverty and unemployment, are some of the challenges that community members expect the three spheres of government to address.



Ms Sophie Makine, who works as a street vendor in Burgersfort, said she is looking forward to the services that the Presidential Imbizo brings to the area, especially the Home Affairs truck that will assist community members to apply for Identity Documents for their children.

"As you can see, I work as a street vendor in order to be able to provide for my children. However, I would like for the President to give our children jobs so that they can be independent as well. When it comes to issues of service delivery, the main challenges are water and bad roads. I am pleading with the President to give us a stable water supply," Ms Makine told SAnews.

The Presidential Imbizo is attended by the government leaders from the national, provincial and local spheres of government. Sekhukhune District has been identified by the Limpopo Provincial Government as a district with immense potential for economic growth, given its abundant mineral resources and water supply.

Leading up to the engagement with the community at the DDM Presidential Imbizo, government leaders from all three spheres have interacted with key stakeholders and paid visits to service delivery projects within the four local municipalities in the Sekhukhune District Municipality.

Minister de Lille Welcomes the Launch of SECURA Traveller App to Enhance Visitor Experience



The Minister joined private sector tourism representatives from the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) to launch the Secura Traveller app and Operations Centre in Johannesburg.

The launch comes a few months after a commitment by the TBCSA to launch the app which is aimed at enhancing our visitor's experience.

The TBCSA is a member of the National Tourism Safety Forum and the app is one of the measures which the forum committed to implementing as part of tourism safety measures.

The launch of the Secura Traveller app is a clear indication of just how much positive change can come from partnerships between the public and private sectors. "I look forward to continuing collaborations with the private sector as we work towards exceeding our 2019 arrival figures by March 2024. I wish to thank the private sector for this investment and all their hard work to launch the app and the Operations Centre," said Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille.

The app integrates a range of affordable services including emergency medical responses, breakdowns, and crime-related incident assistance.

The Secura App connects travellers and tourism stakeholders to hundreds of service providers when every second counts. The service providers are ready and equipped to assist in any situation.

In addition to the Secura app, a hotline number has been set up that can further assist in speeding up response times. The hotline number is +27 (0) 83 318 2475.

"While it is the mandate of the South African Police Service to ensure the safety of all South Africans and our visitors, we all have a role to play in ensuring we provide the best possible visitor experience to this beautiful country of ours. In the coming weeks, I will meet with members of the Diplomatic Corps as well as Heads of our Missions abroad to inform them of the work we are doing collaboratively as tourism stakeholders," added Minister de Lille.

"We are committed to continuing our work with all members of the National Tourism Safety Forum as our collective goal remains to grow tourism and its contribution to the country's economy and job creation," concluded Minister de Lille.





Department of Tourism co-hosts Provincial Tourism Statistics Workshop

outlined the difference between SA Tourism and Stats SA domestic tourism surveys. Different users of tourism statistics have often experienced

confusion since the two surveys produce two different findings due to some differences in applied methodology and the target population. During the presentation, it was highlighted that the two surveys are in the process of being integrated into one survey that will be conducted by Stats SA. Delegates from the various provinces were also provided with an opportunity to present their own Domestic Tourism Surveys conducted at the provincial level. This was followed by a presentation on the various data sources that are accessed by the Department of Tourism through data subscriptions. These subscriptions include STR Global Hotel, which provides data on hotel performance globally, nationally and provincially, focusing on occupancy rates, average daily rate and revenue per available room. It was also highlighted that discussions are underway to check if provinces can partner in accessing these licenses at a discounted rate, where possible. Other data licenses that have been accessed by the Department include Euromonitor, OAG, ForwardKeys and Oxford Economics.

The third day of the workshop included break-away sessions on the following topics: Inbound Tourism Statistics, Domestic Statistics as well as other Statistics and Impact of Tourism. Delegates had to highlight current challenges, recommend solutions, and propose partnerships for advancing work to be done in line with the topics. As part of key messaging for the workshop, delegates were encouraged to seek quality and reliable data to assist with monitoring the performance of the tourism sector.

From the 25th to 27th of July 2023, the Department of Tourism in partnership with the Department of Home Affairs, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), South African Tourism (SA Tourism) and Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) hosted the Provincial Tourism Statistics Workshop for members of the Provincial Tourism Statistics Committee.

The main purpose of the workshop included, among others, to capacitate key officials responsible for tourism statistics at the provincial level on understanding the standard definitions applied for the different tourism concepts, process of collecting key tourism statistics as well as indicators used for reporting on the performance of the tourism sector. Moreover, understanding the process that needs to be followed in quality-assuring the tourism statistics collected at the provincial level was also deliberated on. After all, accurate statistics and information would allow for efficient monitoring and evaluation of the tourism sector's performance.

The welcome and opening remarks were delivered by the Department of Tourism as a main host, and mainly outlined the purpose of the workshop and encouraged delegates to thoroughly engage with the various presentations presented at the workshop.

The first presentation focused on the importance of quality statistics and Stats SA's role in producing official statistics. It emphasised the importance of closing the gap between supply and demand of quality statistics. The morning session also included presentations about

the South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF), a tool used at Stats SA in the broader National Statistical System (NSS) to address the quality gap in the statistical system. A presentation on official tourism concepts and definitions as well as the process being followed in developing them was also presented. The first session concluded with a presentation on the various partnerships the Department has established, which also highlighted the established Inter-Departmental Tourism Statistics Technical Committee, the Tourism Statistics Steering Committee and the Provincial Tourism Statistics Committee.

The afternoon session of the first day focused on Inbound Tourism Statistics. This session zoomed in on the Departure Survey, which collects information on foreign tourists who visited South Africa. This monthly Departure Survey aims to understand and track the travel and expenditure patterns of foreign tourists as well as gain information on which sites and attractions they visited within the country. Recent results found that international tourist arrivals increased by 102,5% amounting to 2,1 million arrivals in Q1 of 2023 compared to Q1 of 2022. These findings show a significant surge in international tourist arrivals and are edging closer to 2019 pre-covid levels. Impressively, Africa continues to dominate as the largest source market for tourists with a contribution of 73,1% of the total arrivals during this period.

Day two of the workshop focused on domestic tourism statistics and data licenses. The morning presentation



Tourism signs Memorandum of Understanding with AirBnB

On 29 August 2023, Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille signed an MoU with the global accommodation platform, Airbnb. The MoU will see the Department of Tourism work closely with Airbnb to advance tourism services that are aimed at growing tourism in South Africa and creating more jobs in the sector.

In terms of the MoU, Airbnb will collaborate with the Ministry of Tourism through:

1. A national registration system for Short Term Rentals
 - A national database, as per section 6 of the Tourism Act 2014, will be established for short term rentals in South Africa to provide transparency into the short-term rental market.
 - The sharing of information on international best practice regarding Short Term Rentals, the registration system thereof, and the policy regulations worldwide by Airbnb will help the Department of Tourism to develop a position on short term rentals, based not only on Airbnb input, but input across the industry, to ensure fairness and transparency.

2. The Airbnb Entrepreneurship Academy (Skills Development):
 - Airbnb and the Ministry of Tourism will collaborate on the Airbnb Entrepreneurship Academy, a skills development programme focused on spreading the benefits of tourism to historically disadvantaged individuals by lowering barriers to entry and providing economic empowerment.
3. Tourism Insights through the City Portal:
 - Access to an exclusive portal built for governments and tourism organizations that provides locally specific data and mutual sharing of knowledge and insights.
4. Collaboration at the Airbnb Africa Travel Summit.
 - The Summit aims to bring together influencers, innovators and change makers to discuss how to utilise technology to drive a more inclusive and sustainable travel future in Africa.

The Summit will enable a combination of critical conversations, real solutions and firm commitments; and the Minister will

present the official welcome note. It will take place in Johannesburg on 23/24th October 2023.

“This MoU seeks to grow the collaboration between government and the private sector as it is our collective responsibility to grow and enhance the tourism sector. As government, if we want to significantly grow tourism and its contribution to the economy and job creation, collaboration with the private sector is vital. We are delighted to be the first African Ministry of Tourism to sign a collaborative MoU with a successful global company such as Airbnb,” Minister de Lille said.

“By leveraging Airbnb’s global reach and understanding of the market, this collaboration seeks to create a positive impact on local communities, travellers, and the tourism industry as a whole. The primary goal of this collaboration is to develop a relationship between the Ministry, its department and entity, and Airbnb, to harness and drive tourism domestically and internationally. As shared in the Department’s Green paper, insufficient information is available about the unregulated Short Term Rental subsector, and this hampers informed

policy decision making. Access to the Airbnb data can only assist in informing better decisions,” Minister de Lille added.

As part of the MoU, the parties will have regular engagements to evaluate opportunities for strategic collaboration on driving inclusive tourism and ensuring fair and proportionate regulation of short-term rentals.

Velma Corcoran, Regional Lead Middle East Africa at Airbnb, says: “We look forward to working together with the Department of Tourism to help build a more inclusive and sustainable tourism economy in South Africa. The Airbnb platform can help anyone, anywhere, to become a tourism entrepreneur, and we hope to continue to break down systemic barriers to entry and enable more South Africans to participate in the sector.”

We welcome the opportunity to work with the Department to develop a clear proportionate national framework for the regulation of short term rentals is crucial and see huge power in public and private sector collaborations. We also know from our work with the Airbnb Entrepreneurship Academy, that together, we can make a tangible difference and enable more people, in more places, to benefit from tourism”, says Velma Corcoran, Regional Lead Middle East Africa at Airbnb.

Tourism Recovery

The signing of this MoU is in line with the aims of the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan which is a key part of the country’s Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan.

The Tourism Sector Recovery Plan (TSRP) was adopted by Cabinet in March 2021 to facilitate the recovery of the sector to preserve jobs and livelihoods, facilitate new job opportunities, match demand and supply, and strengthen transformation. The Plan is a product of a collaborative effort with key stakeholders from government, the private sector and other social partners.

The TSRP has three strategic themes namely: Re-Igniting Demand, Rejuvenating Supply and Strengthening Enabling Capability.

The effective implementation of the TSRP is anchored on the following seven Strategic Interventions:

- Implement norms and standards for safe operation across the tourism value chain to enable safe travel and to rebuild traveller confidence;
- Stimulate domestic demand through targeted initiatives and campaigns;
- Strengthening 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
- Review the tourism policy to provide enhanced support for sector growth and development

Inclusive Tourism

Building an inclusive tourism sector can only happen if the public, private and non-profit sectors work together to realise the future that we know is possible. Technological advancements are a big part of this future. Platforms like Airbnb lower the barriers of entry into the tourism economy by connecting anybody with a space or a passion, with a marketplace of millions who are looking for unique experiences and authentic human connections, easily and at no cost. In a recent survey, half of Hosts across South Africa said the money they earn from hosting helps cover the rising cost of living, and over a third said the additional income helps them make ends meet.

The typical South African Host earns just over R36,000 - equivalent to approximately one month’s additional pay for the average income earner - by renting their space on Airbnb.

Airbnb has invested millions in driving inclusive tourism, and through its Entrepreneurship Academy, delivers training programmes and interventions that help more people from historically rural and township disadvantaged communities, particularly women and youth, to benefit from the tourism economy.

Under the MoU, Airbnb has committed to continuing to roll out its Entrepreneurship Academy by providing Airbnb platform-related information, training, and tools.

The Department will provide input into the criteria for participation in the Academy, where and when to roll out the programme, as well as strategic input into collaborations.

Domestic tourism kept our tourism economy afloat during the pandemic in the face of the loss of international tourism, and will continue to ensure the resilience of the industry. Platforms like Airbnb allow South Africans to travel safely and affordably. This helps to distribute tourism outside of regular tourist areas and means that the benefits of tourism are shared by more local businesses and communities throughout the country.

Collaboration and insights

This MoU also provides the Department with important insights into short term rental activity. A national database, as per section 6 of the Tourism Act 2014, will be established for short term rentals in South Africa to provide transparency into the short-term rental market.

In addition, Airbnb will grant access to the Ministry of Tourism, the Department and entity to the City Portal - a tool which provides economic activity data and travel trends to help governments understand Airbnb’s footprint in their communities. Together, these mechanisms provide data transparency so that the Department can make evidence-based decisions.

By tapping into Airbnb’s global insights, the Ministry, through the Department, will be better placed to control and regulate Short Term Rentals and thus enhance the tourism economy.

By working together to promote responsible tourism, empower local communities, and enhance the tourism experience, this collaboration has the potential to shape a more sustainable and culturally enriching travel landscape in South Africa. This concept has evolved into a formal Memorandum of Understanding, serving as a testament to the commitment of both parties to a shared vision of responsible and impactful tourism.



The Best of South African Excellence - Siya Kolisi is South African Tourism's New Global Advocate

There is no doubt South Africa's excellent tourism offering is unmatched. The country boasts diverse and breathtaking landscapes, wildlife, wide open spaces, and a 3000-kilometer coastline with some of the best beaches in the world. But, what really makes South Africa special and so attractive? It is the warm people whose hospitality and excellence have captivated the hearts of many travellers from around the world.

In promoting the best of South Africa, earlier tonight South African Tourism revealed, in a moving 90-second video entitled "The Best Of Us", that South Africa's rugby captain, Siya Kolisi, is the marketing entities' new global brand advocate. The world-acclaimed Springbok captain is the first of the advocates who form part of a new global campaign that looks to celebrate the country's excellence by profiling and partnering with South Africans who are making waves on the global stage in their various fields including sports, arts and culture, academia etc.

The partnership between Siya and South African Tourism is in collaboration with Roc Nation Sports International, the world-renowned agency that represents Kolisi locally and internationally.

Hailing from Zwide, a Township in Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape province, Siya has captured the hearts of South Africans and the world as captain of the South African rugby team, the Springboks. He captained the South African team at the 2019 International Rugby World Cup in Yokohama, Japan, defeating England 32-12 in the final to lift the Webb Ellis Cup. This was South Africa's third World Cup win, tying with New Zealand, and with that Siya became the first black captain of a World Cup-winning side in the history of the sport.

"I'm super excited about this partnership because as a proud advocate for our country, I've always spoken about how much I love South Africa, and what a special place it is," Kolisi commented. "I see this partnership as an opportunity to promote the entire tourism sector in South Africa, and I want to be a leading voice in encouraging everyone to come and see the best of what the country, and we as South Africans, have to offer."

Siya's authentic leadership and worldwide appeal is the compelling reason why South African Tourism has come to walk this journey with him towards inspiring the nation, inspiring the tourism sector, and inspiring travellers. Our year long collaboration will see Siya represent the

country in different capacities as we aim to re-position South Africa locally and in our key source markets internationally.

"With the global tourism industry well on its recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic, various destinations are showcasing their tourism offerings to attract travellers. For South Africa we know where our best comes from. It comes from our unique places, our exceptional people and our authentic and rich cultures and way of life," says Acting Chief Executive Officer at South African Tourism, Nomasonto Ndlovu.

The tourism industry and media stakeholders gathered at a star-studded event, which kicked off with a nostalgic performance by South African Jazz legend Vusi Mahlasela, who also curated a song specially for "The Best Of Us" reveal. In keeping with the 'best of us' spirit, the event also featured Grammy award-winning South African musician, Zakes Bantwini, as well as some members of the Springbok team.

Before Covid-19, the South African Tourism sector welcomed about 10 million arrivals and contributed 3,7% to GDP. The sector is currently showing great signs of recovery and this campaign will go a long way in inspiring travellers to choose South Africa.

Western Cape Vineyard in Top 5 of the World's Best Vineyards



The results of the World's Best Vineyards (WBV) ratings have just been announced at a special live event in Rioja, Spain. Creation Wines in the Hemel-en-Aarde, situated near the coastal town of Hermanus, Western Cape, South Africa has, for the fourth year, been placed among the world's top 50 vineyards and joins a prestigious line-up of the top five: Catena Wines, Argentina; Bodegas de los Herederos del Marqués de Riscal, Spain; VIK, Chile; Creation Wines, South Africa and Château Smith Haut Lafitte, France. This is the fourth time that Creation has been listed as the number one estate in South Africa and on the African continent.

Andrew Reed, Managing Director Wine and Exhibitions at William Reed, comments: "The World's Best Vineyards continues to highlight wine tourism destinations around the globe and with an impressive list of new entries this year, it's more important than ever. We've found that local and international tourists are looking for experiences that offer a range of activities and our host Rioja truly fits the bill with stunning scenery, delicious food and of course, amazing wines."

The World's Best Vineyards is an annual listing that highlights the best winery destinations and experiences in the world. The prestigious list spans five

continents and is created after the nominations of some 500 wine, travel and wine tourism experts have been counted and collated. Voters are asked to nominate the overall experiences they consider to be the best in the world and that they personally would recommend.

Carolyn Martin, co-owner and creative director of Creation Wines, was in Spain, representing South Africa at the international Sustainable Wine Tourism Roundtable, one of several invitations over the past four years that allowed her the opportunity to talk with passion and knowledge about the South African fine wine industry.



"The positive impact this listing has on the estate and our fine wine industry, cannot be underestimated. Creation's commitment to a sustainable wine and tourism industry has been well documented, and being given a world stage such as this provides further impetus and inspiration to our team. "So many elements need to be brought into harmony to create and enhance our visitor experience. We want to preserve our natural heritage for generations to come and this must be at the very core of not only the fine wines we produce, but the fine people we must grow."

The excellent ratings reflected by the WBV panel serve as further motivation to the entire Creation team. From the custodians who work in the vineyards and cellar to the chefs and wine ambassadors in the Tasting Room, the sense of affirmation over the past number of years has been palpable. It also underscores Carolyn's contention that a key factor in a sustainable wine tourism industry is the focus on people.

"We actively encourage every member of our team to be goal oriented and offer them opportunities to advance their skills on many levels. Our training is as diverse as leadership and communication courses to lectures on mental health." The result is an extremely high retention rate, a supportive and cohesive team and most importantly, a community eager to develop its potential to the highest possible level.

"We are enormously grateful to receive the recognition of our entire team's efforts and for the impact it has on everyone involved," says Carolyn.

The recognition also reflects on Creation's close collaboration with leading scientific and academic initiatives such as ClimaVin, a global climate change

project spearheaded by Stellenbosch University. Another ongoing venture is the Vititec GEN-Z project, involving experimental plantings of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir to establish clones and rootstocks best suited to mitigate climate change. Participating in panel discussions such as the recent ARENI Global think tank on the Future of Fine Wine in California offers the opportunity to contribute to building a sustainably secure, prosperous and just global wine industry.

Creation's people are acutely aware of the responsibility that lies with a farm that borders the Cape Floral Kingdom. All of them have become champions of biodiversity and preserving the surrounding natural world of fauna and flora. Guests also begin their Creation experience through indigenous gardens fragrant with natural vegetation. As Carolyn so succinctly puts it, "visiting Creation is an immersion in nature."

Without a doubt, the recognition this award affords Creation is a huge boost to their vision of a sustainable, caring and innovative estate, in pursuit of a proudly ethical wine tourism industry in South Africa.

The last word goes to Carolyn: "Our purpose at Creation is to produce fine wine, especially Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, and pair it with equally fine food. This is critically important for us to grow and thrive; opening the way to our mantra, and that is 'innovation'. Without innovation, we cannot be sustainable. We also have a mission to broaden horizons and create a world view, which includes strengthening bilateral relations, assisting in building cultural diversity and inclusion, and securing the future of fine wine in South Africa."





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