



## tourism

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Department:  
Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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### **Minister Hanekom launches facilities at Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge**

**21 November 2016**

FREE-STATE - Minister Derek Hanekom officially launched and handed over facilities, built by the Department at the Witsieshoek Mountain lodge, to the Batlokoa people in Phuthaditjhaba on Saturday.

“We have built these facilities to enhance this world heritage site. The Witsieshoek project is a perfect example of what can be achieved when government works hand in hand with the community to develop tourism in an inclusive and sustainable manner,” said Hanekom.

Visitors to the Lodge can look forward to improved driveways; five (5) additional chalets; central heating systems; improved sentinel buildings, and new furniture and fittings.

The Department promotes the growth of tourism products through infrastructure development in rural nodes under its Social Responsibility Implementation (SRI) programme.

“Investing in infrastructure development is not only critical to the growth of tourism, but also to the overall growth of our economy. Through such investments, our government is able to create employment opportunities, transform the sector, and transfer skills to people in the local communities,” said Hanekom.

More than 225 community members from the Moeding, Thibela, Phomolong and Dinkweng villages were employed during the construction phase at Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge.

“The lodge currently employs 51 permanent staff from the local community. More employment opportunities will be created as we introduce more tourist activities such as pony trekking and mountain hiking,” said Glyn O’Leary, CEO of the Transfrontier Parks and Destinations (TFPD).

The Witsieshoek initiative is one of more than 300 tourism infrastructure projects built by the Department across the country to bring tourism closer to the people.

“We are grateful for the infrastructure built by the Department at this lodge.”

“This Lodge was created by our forebear for the Batlokoa people. The Department’s contribution will enhance this lodge, and we will ensure that the economic benefits derived here are utilised to empower our people,” said Morena Montoeli Mota – King of the Batlokoa people.

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