

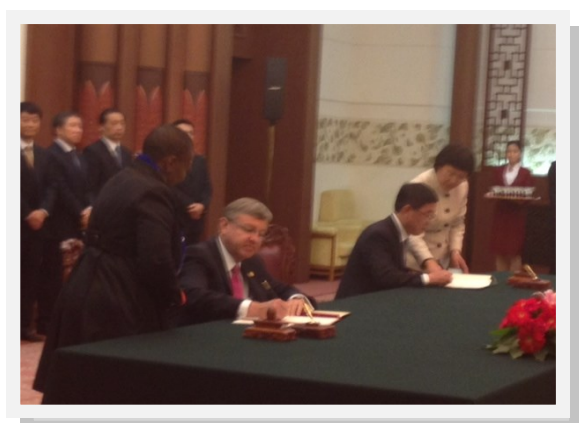
## SOUTH AFRICA AND CHINA STRENGTHEN TOURISM TIES

The government of South Africa, through the National Department of Tourism (NDT) and South African Tourism (SAT), is working closely with the government of China to boost sustainable tourism development initiatives between the two countries. These initiatives are aimed at achieving objectives of the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) in line with the National Development Plan. The partnership between South Africa and China was recently reinforced when another Tourism Agreement was signed by the two governments during the Bi-National Commission hosted by the government of China in Beijing, from 28-29 October. This visit to China was undertaken by Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe, who was accompanied by a number of Ministers, including Tourism Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk. The Tourism Agreement was signed by Minister van Schalkwyk and Mr Shao Qiwei, Chairman of the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). The signed Agreement encourages cooperation in tourism investment; information sharing; marketing and promotion; skills development and training; and tourism safety and service standards.

### IN THIS ISSUE:

South Africa and China strengthen tourism ties	1
The Journey to Service Excellence	2
Tourism Bill on its way to National Assembly	5
More than a thousand graduates into the job market	5
What to expect from Indaba 2014	8

In December 2001, South Africa and China exchanged notes regarding the establishment of the Bi-National Commission between the two governments. The following year in November, a first Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Implementation Plan for Organised Group Travel between the two countries, was signed through South



Signing of the Tourism Agreement by Minister van Schalkwyk and Mr Shao Qiwei, Chairman of CNTA



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Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Africa's Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, and the National Tourism Administration of the People's Republic of China. Last year SAT concluded joint marketing agreements with seven trade and marketing partners in China, to package and promote a variety of South African products and experiences to Chinese travellers. South Africa is amongst 146 countries that have been granted the "Approved Destination Status" by the government of China, and one of the few that have started implementing it by promoting South Africa as a preferred tourist destination to the people of China.

Tourist arrivals in South Africa from China have more than tripled since 2009, making it South Africa's fourth biggest overseas tourism market. In 2012, 132 334 tourists visited South Africa from China, a 55.9% increase in growth. This growth was driven in part by the opening up of direct SAA flights between Beijing and Johannesburg in January 2012, as well as the two new visa application centres in China that continue to facilitate ease of travel, and enhance South Africa's tourism appeal. Early this year, President Jacob Zuma announced a 10.2% growth in international tourist arrivals to South Africa in 2012. South Africa's growth rate in tourist arrivals exceeded the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's (UNWTO) estimated global arrival growth rate of 4%.

By Chief Directorate: Asia and Australasia

## THE JOURNEY TO SERVICE EXCELLENCE

The aim of the Service Excellence Strategy, which is a five-pillared approach, is to gradually introduce a service-orientated culture and to maintain it through various interventions in collaboration with the various institutions within the sector. Some of the proposed interventions of the strategy include among others, the development of norms and standards and public awareness.

The initiative is in line with Cluster Three (3) of the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) emphasising the importance of service excellence initiatives in the tourism value chain. Objective Four (4) of the Domestic Tourism Growth Strategy is also emphasising the development and implementation of tourism awareness education programmes and campaigns aimed at promoting values and attitudes that are part of the culture of tourism.

As part of achieving the vision of the strategy, NDT in partnership with the Service Excellence Forum has developed a campaign that will ensure that different organisations are exposed to Service Excellence and this is the Journey to Service Excellence (J2SE) campaign. The JSE focuses on nominating a small town in the rural tourism nodes and assisting the town to



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Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

develop a service excellence-orientated culture. The focus is on organisations and different structures in the town and the campaign is meant to create strong media attention and focus during the activation. The J2SE is meant to bring together an entire town including restaurants, accommodation facilities, tourist attractions, police, banks, petrol attendants, and other related organisations to be informed, trained and to experience the four components of the SANS 1197: 2012.

**The objectives of the J2SE are as follows:**

- Create awareness on the importance of service excellence;
- Share information about the Service Excellence Strategy and SANS 1197: 2012;
- Assist with creating a culture of service excellence in South Africa;
- Bring partners together under one roof to highlight the fact that service excellence is a cross cutting issue; and
- Gather information and suggestions on how to improve service levels in the country.



Attendees at the J2SE pilot launch in Upington, Northern Cape

**THE PILOT LAUNCH**

The launch of the pilot implementation of the J2SE Programme was held on 15 November 2013 at the Protea Hotel in Upington. The launch brought 71 delegates from various tourism value chains in the province together for their participation. The Private and Local Government Sector dominated the attendance with 22 representatives from each sector, while there were

18 representatives from the Provincial departments, five from Association & Public Entity and four delegates from the media. The pilot launch was a partnership between NDT, the Northern Cape Provincial Government, and the Upington Municipality.



Upington Service Excellence Task Team



NDT and Northern Cape Provincial Team

By Mothepane Sesele



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## TOURISM BILL ON ITS WAY TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Tourism Bill has enjoyed great spotlight and sparked meaningful debate in both the two houses of Parliament and within the circles of stakeholders. The Select Committee on Trade and International Relations, after a series of sessions and much deliberation on all the provisions of the Bill, gave an overwhelming support to the Tourism Bill. The Minister introduced the Tourism Bill 2012 in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) recently on 14 November 2013. The NCOP voted in favour of the Bill, allowing it to pass back to the National Assembly for final consideration by the Portfolio Committee on Tourism. It is expected that the Bill will move swiftly within the National Assembly and that we will have a landmark legislative framework for the management and development of tourism in South Africa in the near future.



By Mmaditonki Setwaba

## MORE THAN A THOUSAND GRADUATES INTO THE JOB MARKET

The last group of learners from the Tourism Buddies Programme and Tourism Safety Monitors 2012/13 recently completed and exited the training programme. The programme was funded by the Department of Tourism's Social Responsibility Implementation (SRI) initiative, which is being implemented through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). The Tourism Buddies Programme and Tourism Safety Monitors' common objective is to train unemployed South African young people and empower them with skills needed in the hospitality and tourism field, and then have them placed in some of the industry's establishments where they will receive work experience, industry exposure and accredited training.

The graduates received certificates in Accommodation Service NQF L2; Food and Beverage Certificate NQF L4; Customer Care Skills Programme NQF L4; Tour Guide NQF L2 and Health and Safety NQF L2. It is expected that the training will enhance their employment prospects within the tourism and hospitality industry. Graduations were held in different provinces on different dates and the placement is ongoing. This year a total of 50 Tourism Buddies learners graduated in the Limpopo province, 98 in Mpumalanga, 48 in the Northern Cape, 300 in the Western Cape, 50 in the North West, 915 in KwaZulu-Natal and 61 in the Free State province.



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Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Free State Tourism Buddies Phase 2 learners



North West Tourism Buddies Phase 2 graduates

The Tourism Safety Monitors Programme produced 200 graduates in KwaZulu-Natal, 200 in Gauteng, 200 in Mpumalanga and 193 in Limpopo province. The next phase of the Tourism Buddies Programme is expected to start early next year. Young



people who join these programmes must be unemployed South African citizens between the ages of 18 and 35 years; be proficient in English and basic numeracy skills; and have a Matric qualification.



KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Safety Monitors



KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Buddies Phase 2 graduates

By Portia Rakoma





## WHAT TO EXPECT AT INDABA 2014

Indaba 2014 will be shortened to three days and take place from 10-12 May. The focus will be on engagement and networking. It will include the introduction of two new areas and its rebranding. The two new areas to Indaba are a hosted buyers' zone and an exhibitors' zone. The hosted buyers' zone consists of three key areas that will offer different levels of engagement. These three areas will be the Premium Lounge, Buyer Cocoons and Buyer Connect. Buyer Connect will give exhibitors an opportunity to meet face to face with hosted buyers in short and informal sessions. Exhibitors can choose which buyers they want to meet, based on buyer profiles, and then queue to meet them. The sessions will take place between 16h00 and 18h00 on a first-come, first-served basis and hosted buyers will be contractually obligated to attend.

The Premium Lounge will have space for 150 exhibitors, although this will be extended in future shows. Exhibitors in this area will be given a minimum of 42 scheduled meetings, for those who wanted back-to-back meetings with buyers. Meanwhile, buyers will be profiled so that exhibitors can know them before the show starts. The Buyer Cocoon is going to have Wi-Fi access as well as a coffee bar. While this area might be a private buyer space, there would also be a concierge who would facilitate setting up meetings between exhibitors and buyers. The exhibitor zone would be laid out by zoning experiences instead of areas, and will also give exhibitors access to the latest travel technologies. They will be able to speak to representatives from online marketing platforms to find out how the various platforms, such as Expedia and TripAdvisor, were relevant to their businesses. The exhibitors' zone will also include a networking area where snacks will be served and possibly private functions hosted in the evenings.

Indaba 2014 will again feature a poken system to enable connections after the trade show. This will be facilitated by Indaba Connect vending machines that will allow delegates to download contact details. SA Tourism will package pre- and post-Indaba tours for hosted buyers and Indaba delegates. These tours will be packaged on the Indaba website and offered to delegates at special rates. As for the rebranding the tradeshow, the creative messaging around Indaba will focus on pitching the show as an African trade show and the marketing collateral would emphasise the people of the continent. Indaba will again host a speed marketing session with buyers. The themes for 2014 would likely be hidden treasures, urban vibes and adventure. These themes were chosen based on market demands in the dominant European markets as well as trends in emerging markets. The provincial stands, with SMMEs, will continue to be included in the show.

Indaba 2014 will again include an opening ceremony but there will be space for an event more focused on buyers and exhibitors. SA Tourism will also look at sponsorships in order to host networking events. These are some of the developments that



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Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Jan Hutton of SA Tourism, shared with the trade at a briefing hosted by SATSA in Sandton in late November. Hutton emphasised that the transition will take place over two years and will also be informed by feedback from the trade. Hutton committed to work closely with the trade in future to ensure Indaba was relevant to the industry and delivered a return on exhibitors' investment.



Images from Indaba 2013 Speed Marketing Session



Indaba 2013—Images of the official opening of the Pavilion

Source: Southern African Tourism Update – Online Daily News



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