

Research advances post COVID-19 tourism growth

17 March 2021

The Department of Tourism today hosted the 2021 Tourism Research Webinar with the theme: *“Advancing Tourism Growth and Development through Research: COVID-19 Impacts and Potential Opportunities.”*

This event is held annually to ensure that the research findings speak to the needs of stakeholders in the sector and to obtain constructive feedback from key stakeholders and researchers in the sector. It also aims to disseminate findings to key stakeholders in tourism, thereby ensuring that research recommendations are implemented, and translated into policy and practice. This year’s webinar was topical as it looked at the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector and the potential opportunities going forward.

In her opening remarks, Anemé Malan, Deputy Director-General: Tourism Research, Policy and International Relations at the Department of Tourism focussed on the partnership of the Department and tertiary institutions, saying: “As far back as 2010, the Department initiated engagements with several universities to foster collaboration on tourism research and enhance capacity within the tourism sector- a partnership that we are very proud to continue to have with universities until today. The main aim of the partnerships is to foster collaboration, enhance research capacity within the tourism sector and provide financial support to post-graduate students pursuing tourism-related studies.”

Dr Unathi Sonwabile Henama from the Tshwane University of Technology gave the keynote address where he highlighted that research provides the information needed by the tourism value chain for strategic decision-making and to inform policy makers and the state apparatus on how to plan the recovery of the tourism industry. Adding that the research undertaken by both the University of Johannesburg and University of Pretoria would inform all tourism stakeholders on how to prepare for the new normal, where the world co-exists with COVID-19.

Prof Christian Rogerson from the University of Johannesburg presented a study assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the demand and supply of tourism products, with a view to propose interventions to meet the needs of tourists post COVID-19 through the approach of undertaking case studies of local destinations which offer a differing mix of tourism products.

This was followed by the University of Pretoria where Professor Berendien Lubbe and Dr Joachim Vermooten looked at the impact of COVID-19 on tourism sector demand and supply and to explore the symbiotic transport – tourism interface in South Africa.

Over the years, research in tourism has provided insights into areas such as management, tourist behaviour, planning, marketing, destination development and product development. Guided by evidence-based research, the sector is able to develop and implement policies, strategies, programmes, interventions and decisions to meet the needs and expectations of different stakeholders.

The Tourism Research Webinar presentations can be found at <https://bit.ly/30Rj4X3>

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