



## tourism

Department:  
Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Tourism House, 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside. Private Bag X 424, PRETORIA · 0001  
Tel + 27 (0) 12 444 6000· Fax + 27 (0) 12 444 7000. Call Center: 0860 121 929

### Research is critical for inclusive tourism growth

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The Department of Tourism hosted its annual Research Seminar on 17 March 2017 at the Innovation Hub in Pretoria under the theme: “Advancing Tourism Growth and Development through Research”. The Seminar is an annual interactive platform for tertiary institutions to share tourism research findings and obtain constructive feedback from industry stakeholders and other academics.

Over the years, research in hospitality and tourism has provided insights into areas, such as management, human behaviour, finance, planning and marketing. Initially, tourism research focused on economic benefits. However, due to the growing importance of this industry in both developed and emerging economies, the shift of tourism research has been seen, currently focusing on the nature of the tourist, tourist experiences, socio-cultural, environmental and economic impacts, training and education needs, and the demand and the supply sides of tourism.

The Department of Tourism identified research as a critical area for the development and growth of the tourism sector in its 2011 National Tourism Sector Strategy. The strategy highlighted among other, the lack of research capacity to conduct high quality research that meets the needs of the various stakeholders in the tourism sector.

In his opening remarks, Minister of Tourism Derek Hanekom highlighted the importance of putting more emphasis on policy relevant research and its value to the tourism sector.

“As the Tourism Department, we attach great value to research so that our decisions are evidence based, therefore, the role of researchers must never be undermined. We need research to guide us on the gaps that exist in our offerings to tell us for example on what components of our visitor’s experience we need to be improved”, said Minister Hanekom.

He encouraged researchers to prioritise the public understanding of tourism. “All of us here are in the tourism field and therefore we are tourism ambassadors. We need to play a role in educating the public about the industry and how they can contribute or even benefit from it. We need you to assist us in presenting a case for tourism. We also need to know what opportunities are created by the tourism growth and how that contributes to transformation of our country,” concluded Hanekom.

During the full day Seminar five research studies were presented:

- “The potential of creative industry for destination development in South Africa” - University of Pretoria
- “Destination development through understanding tourists’ expectations and memorable tourist experiences at major tourist attractions” - University of Pretoria
- “Interventions and incentives needed to improve the number of enterprises, including state-owned tourism attractions that embrace responsible tourism management practices” - University of Venda
- “Tourism value chain and opportunities for transformation in South Africa” - University of Johannesburg
- “Development of a framework to assess the economic impact of coastal and marine tourism in South Africa” - Cape Peninsula University of Technology

The Department views these research studies as crucial as they will inform future planning, policy and decision making. Moreover, these studies are aligned to the proposed five strategic pillars of the revised National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS), which aims to advance inclusive tourism economic growth and job creation. For instance, both the destination development studies by the University of Pretoria support the NTSS pillars of Destination Management Practices and the Visitor Experience; and the University of Johannesburg study is aligned to the Broad-based Benefits strategic objective of this revised strategy.

All the research papers will be available on [www.tourism.gov.za](http://www.tourism.gov.za) from mid-April 2017.

Mr. Trevor Bloem  
NDT spokesperson  
Chief Director: Communications  
Telephone: +27 (0) 12 444 6607  
E-mail: [tbloem@tourism.gov.za](mailto:tbloem@tourism.gov.za)  
Website: [www.tourism.gov.za](http://www.tourism.gov.za)

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