



**tourism**

Department:  
Tourism  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



## **Robben Island goes green**

**19 October 2017**

ROBBEN ISLAND – Minister Tokozile Xasa today launched and handed over a solar photovoltaic (PV) power plant to the Robben Island Museum (RIM) as part of the Department's mandate to support sustainable and inclusive tourism development.

The solar PV mini-grid on Robben Island is part of a broader departmental pilot initiative implemented in collaboration with the management authorities of government-owned tourism attractions to retrofit facilities with solar energy generating systems.

"Preserving our environment and reducing our carbon footprint is critical to the sustainability of the tourism industry. The construction of the solar PV mini-grid on Robben Island is a shining example of what can be achieved when government structures work together to preserve our ecological and cultural tourism assets for future generations."

"This collaborative initiative not only affirms our country's capability to engineer sustainable energy solutions, but it inspires hope that the business of tourism can be conducted in a sustainable manner," said Minister Tokozile Xasa.

The solar PV mini-grid has the capacity of generating 666.4 kWp (kilo Watt peak) of clean energy, reducing the site's reliance on the existing diesel generating system. The integrated system carries the entire daytime electricity load and prioritises solar PV energy generation, which is supported by an 837 kWh (kilo Watt hours) battery storage bank— enabling the utilisation of solar generated energy on cloudy days and at night.

Chief Executive Officer for RIM, Mr Mava Dada, thanked the Department for the solar PV mini-grid and stated that the initiative was an incredible advancement for Robben Island.

"Prior to the construction of the solar plant, we relied solely on expensive diesel generators to provide electricity on the Island. This transition will see the island largely powered by the solar plant. This will not only reduce the Island's carbon emissions by almost 940 tons per year, but will bring about a monetary saving of around R million 4 per annum," said Mr Mava Dada

The United Nations General Assembly adopted 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development – allowing for a dedicated focus on tourism's ability to contribute to economic growth, social inclusion, cultural and environmental preservation, peace and mutual understanding. Building on the United Nations theme, and the overall government mandate to advance radical socio-economic transformation, Minister Xasa made a pronouncement on the establishment of a new financial support mechanism to encourage greater energy efficient operations in the tourism sector

"Renewable energy generating systems, such as the one we have installed on Robben Island and other technologies to improve energy efficiency, should be more accessible to all within the sector. As a department, the next phase our work in this area is the introduction of the Green Tourism Incentive Programme (GTIP) developed in partnership with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). The aim of the programme is to encourage small tourism enterprises through a cost-sharing grant to retrofit their facilities with energy efficiency systems."

The results of an energy efficiency audit, together with the information on the transformation status and size of an eligible applicant will be considered to inform the extent of grant funding that the applicant can qualify for. The grant funding component will typically range between 30% and 90% of the cost of approved

solutions to achieve the projected energy efficiency and will be capped at a maximum of IDC will open in November 2017. More information will be published on the websites of the IDC and the department.

“Responsible tourism is everyone’s business, with an immense potential to increase our country’s global competitiveness and I urge the industry to embrace the Green Tourism Incentive Programme, and help us build a sustainable and inclusive tourism sector,” concluded Xasa.

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For further information on the Green Tourism Incentive Programme (GTIP), visit [www.idc.co.za](http://www.idc.co.za) or [www.tourism.gov.za](http://www.tourism.gov.za). The first application window will open November 2017.