



MINISTRY  
TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**SPEECH BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM, MAGGIE SOTYU, TOURISM  
WOMEN'S MONTH DIALOGUE IN LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT  
MUNICIPALITY IN MASILONYANA, MANGAUNG, FREE STATE 29 AUGUST  
2025**

When women come together, incredible things happen. A circle of women is a circle of strength and resilience.

It is my great honour to join you in this Tourism Women's Dialogue, in the company of phenomenal women in magnificent Mangaung. As we celebrate Women's Month, it's a time when our nation pauses to reflect on the sacrifices and contributions of the women who shaped our democracy.

This platform offers us an opportunity to engage meaningfully on our progress, what are the challenges we still face and more importantly the road we must take to achieving genuine equality.

As we come together in dialogue, we must reaffirm our shared duty to promote women's empowerment across all sectors of society, ensuring our voices are heard, our rights upheld, and our full potential realised. This is more than just a conversation — it is a pledge to act, collaborate, and bring about change.

Every platform has power and agency. This dialogue serves to commemorate our pioneers and their immense bravery and resilience as they fought against the pass laws and other forms of domination.

But this dialogue also charts the way forward. It is for women like us to stand on their shoulders and celebrate the achievements of women, reaffirm our commitment to shaping a more inclusive and equitable South Africa.

The 2025 Women's Month theme, *"Building Resilient Economies for All,"* strongly aligns with the Department of Tourism's vision to drive inclusive and sustainable growth. It reflects our commitment to creating jobs, reducing poverty, and advancing meaningful transformation within the tourism sector.

As a department, we are committed to creating meaningful opportunities for women in South Africa through a range of impactful programmes. In collaboration with our partners, we are equipping women and young people with the skills and tools they need to become active contributors to the economy. We invite you to be part of this journey - step into the world of tourism, engage with our initiatives, and help drive sustainable, inclusive economic growth for our country.

**Tourism Incentive Programmes**

Our Tourism Incentive Programme is being implemented to promote, transform, and encourage the development and growth of the tourism sector as we:

- Implement the **Tourism Transformation Fund** to provide grant funding to majority black-owned tourism enterprises, with a focus on women-owned businesses. Since the inception of the TTF, three TTF applications have been approved in the Free State, with two of them located in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.
- Support the **Market Access Support Programme (MASP)**, enabling SMMEs (including women, youth, and disability-owned enterprises) to participate in domestic and international tourism trade platforms. From April 2024, two (2) enterprises from the Free State were supported under the MASP to participate in five international tourism trade platforms, including the WYSTC, IMEX America, WTM London, IBTM World and ITB Berlin.
- **The Tourism Grading Support Programme (TGSP)** offers discounts of either 80% or 90% on grading assessment fees for accommodation and meeting venues that apply for star grading by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa.
- Facilitate the **Tourism Equity Fund** projects to increase ownership and participation of designated groups in the tourism sector.
- Implement the **Green Tourism Incentive Programme (GTIP)**, which is aimed at graded tourism establishments, offering partial grant funding support for the cost of retrofitting tourism facilities. Since the inception of the GTIP, seven GTIP applications have been approved in the Free State, with three of them located in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.

## Enterprise Development

### Community-Based Incubation Programme (CBT)

- To create a conduit through which economic inclusion is achieved by creating viable tourism businesses, to create sustainable jobs and contribute to economic development, as well as to ensure the transformation and empowerment of community-based tourism projects.
- Dithabeng CPA Trust is a programme based within the Golden Gate National Park, in partnership with SANParks and is represented by a group of 119 land claimants

Let us talk about, visitor experience,

- To enhance the visitor experience, we continue with the **Tourism Monitors Programme**, prioritising the training and placement of Tourism Monitors in all nine provinces, including young women, youth persons with disabilities. The purpose of this programme is to enhance visitor safety and experiences. All the Tourism Monitors in the Free State Province were placed at different attractions for their practical workplace training. Currently, there are 106 active tourism

monitors, and 44 have dropped out due to various reasons. Candidates are drawn from the Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, and interested parties are encouraged to register with them.

- **In regard to Tourist Guiding**, the Department will again be rolling out Mandarin language training to registered guides during the 2025/2026 financial year. The training will make South Africa a more attractive destination for the powerful Chinese market. For a Free State tourist guide, it will provide a competitive edge over your colleagues and ensure an increase in work opportunities. The advert for Mandarin training is available on [www.tourism.gov.za](http://www.tourism.gov.za) and application for this opportunity will close on 12 September 2025.

#### **Our Tourism Skills Development Programmes aim to:**

- Implement the Tourism Graduate Recruitment Programme for young graduates.
- Implement the Learn and Earn Youth Placement Programme for unemployed youth.
- Roll out the Culinary Training Programme targeting youth, women, and persons with disabilities, aligned to the Tourism Sector Human Resource Development Strategy.

#### **We advance Capacity Building & Leadership Development through the**

- Roll out of the Executive Development Programme for Women in Tourism to strengthen leadership skills and representation in management roles.
- Conduct Women in Tourism Provincial Chapters activities to foster networking, mentorship, and market linkages

These programmes have various intake dates across the provinces, so keep an eye on our website and social media platforms for more information.

South Africa's hosting of the 2025 G20 Presidency marks a significant milestone, providing a valuable opportunity to boost the country's tourism sector. This global platform presents powerful opportunities to advance women's empowerment on both national and international stages, serving as a transformative lever across the tourism value chain. Delegates will be invited to discover the unique offerings of all nine provinces, creating lasting memories while supporting local economies. Let's extend a warm South African welcome to our global guests.

As we conclude this Women's Month, let us carry forward the aspirations shared in this space. The issues we have engaged on today call for more than reflection; they demand action and collaboration. In honouring the legacy of the women who have paved the way, we are reminded that our task is not only to celebrate their achievements but to build upon them. This dialogue is therefore a testament to the

power of collective wisdom, where voices come together to reflect, inspire, and drive change.

Let us continue to work together and honour the voices, journeys, and resilience of women across South Africa, building a nation that works for all.

Thank you.

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