



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Speech delivered by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, at the occasion of the Tourism Buddies Graduation event – George**

**13 November 2015**

Programme Director, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, graduates.

It is a tremendous honour for me to be here today. What I see in front of me is awe-inspiring. You are on the cusp of blooming – just like buds. You are ready to be of service to the hospitality industry and to blossom. You are the future of this country. And I am so proud of you

It is wonderful to be here in this beautiful jewel of Eden. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the District Municipality after being awarded for the third consecutive year, as the overall winner in the Greenest District Municipalities Competition, walking away with R130 000. One of EDM's local municipalities, namely Hessequa Municipality, topped the B-municipality category. Amazing things are happening here!!

The Department of Tourism's National Tourism Sector Strategy in Cluster 3 under the heading of People Development, has, amongst others, identified a need to address skills shortages in the tourism sector by training and building capacity of unemployed youth and graduates in especially critical and scarce skills in the hospitality and tourism services sector. This dovetails with the Department's Social Responsibility Implementation Expanded Public Works Programme to deliver on its job creation and skills development target.

Over the past 20 years, tourism has experienced continued growth in South Africa and has undergone such a diversification in our country to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors. Modern tourism's success depends on, and is closely linked to skills development. These dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress.

Today, the business volume of tourism equals or even surpasses that of oil exports, food products or automobiles. Tourism has become one of the major players in international commerce, and represents at the same time one of the main income sources for many families in our country. This growth goes hand in hand with an increasing diversification and competition among the products on offer.

The aim of the Department of Tourism and government is to safeguard the long-term prosperity of the tourism industry through sustainable development, giving special attention to training human resources in specifically tourism-orientated skills, which will ensure the professionalism of service performance. Tourism businesses are no longer competing purely against each other, but against other economic sectors. Supply will have to adapt to the needs of the consumer, and consolidate a competitive advantage.

One such programme that has been implemented for several years now is the Tourism Buddies learnership programme which is aimed at transferring skills to young South Africans under the age of 35 with or without a grade 12 certificate residing within the Province.

In the 2014/2015 financial year the Department approved a budget of R24,600 000 for the training of 540 learners in the Western Cape in a 12 months learnership programme named the Tourism Buddies Learnership. Some of the students graduated yesterday in Goodwood in Cape Town. Today we see 232 of this number. The structure of this training is composed of 30% theory and 70% practical training in which learners were placed at various hospitality establishments within the province for their workplace training. The enrolled learners were trained on either one of the following qualifications:

- National Certificate Food and Beverages NQF level 4
- National Certificate Accommodation Services NQF Level 2
- Skills Programme on Food & Beverages (replaced drop outs)

## PROJECT INFORMATION

District	Area	Number Enrolled in the project Including Drop-outs	Number of Learners who Completed Project Term	Number of Learners to receive Certificates	Number of those who were Gainful Employed	Gainful Employment rate
Eden	George	31	23	21	15	60.8%
	George Skills	27	22	22	22	100%
	Knysna	40	38	32	16	42.1%
	Mossel Bay	38	30	22	23	76.6%
	Plettenberg Bay	94	76	69	35	46%
	Wilderness	30	25	24	0	0%
	Oudtshoorn	27	22	18	13	59%
	Tsitsikamma	32	25	24	5	20%
<b>Total</b>		<b>319</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>49%</b>

A total of 232 learners will be graduating and have exited the programme. In this region 58 learners dropped out of the program, however some of these learners were replaced depending on the stage of the project. The project created 128 jobs and is awaiting more jobs to be confirmed by the employers. All gainful employment recorded is based on written communication received from host employers that learners have been offered either permanent or contract. The project has thus achieved 49% gainful employment.

Please note that the Project team is in the process of identifying further exit opportunities for the graduating learners.

It is well known that the tourism industry is very dynamic and run by several skilled entrepreneurs who started off with very small businesses. I and my department have catalogued several success stories of young graduates from several of our skill programmes who over the years have gone on to own and manage successful businesses and who themselves employ graduates from our programmes. Several of our graduates are employed by the big international hospitality institutions.

Your job as graduates is to ensure that the tourist will want to come back to our country that they enjoy their stay and the activities that you will help to facilitate to make their stay enjoyable whatever the activity you are involved in the tourism sector.

There is a saying that goes: "Put a sword in the hands of your dreams and dare greatly." You have done this, dear students.

I want to wish all the students well in your future endeavours and careers and hope to meet many of you in my travels in and around South Africa. I am so immensely proud of you.

I thank you