



**MINISTER  
TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**DATE: 8 JULY 2025**

**Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille Budget Speech  
Vote 38: Tourism Budget for The 2025/26 Financial Year**

House Chairperson

Deputy Minister Hon Ms Maggie Sotyu

Hon Tourism Portfolio Committee Chairperson, Ms Ronalda Nalumango

Honourable PC members and Members

DG for the Department of Tourism, Mr Victor Vele

CFO for the Department of Tourism, Ms Malemane Maponya

SA Tourism CEO, Ms Nombulelo Guliwe

Entity Representatives, colleagues, and guests

Good Afternoon, Goeie Middag, Molweni, Dumelang, As-Salam Alaikum

It is my honour to present the Tourism Budget Vote 38 for the 2025/26 financial year.

Today, I will demonstrate how our R2.434 billion budget:

- Builds on the achievements of the last year of the Sixth Administration,
- How we are planning for the future, and
- How we are addressing oversight concerns raised by the Portfolio Committee in their Budget Report.

This budget is based on the Government of National Unity's Programme of Action for the next five years, which aims to:

- Drive rapid, inclusive and sustainable economic growth to create jobs.
- Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living.
- Build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

However, the government cannot do it alone, and we must stop repeating the same actions expecting different results.

Our mission is clear: to elevate the profile of tourism as a key driver of economic growth and job creation, as it is identified in the National Development Plan and the Tourism Sector Master Plan.

Together with the private sector and communities, we are transforming tourism into a turbo-charger for inclusive growth, jobs, and community upliftment.

## **BUDGET AT A GLANCE**

House Chairperson, I am here today to discuss the future and what the Tourism Budget Vote of R2.434 billion will deliver to South Africans, as well as its impact on people's lives.

The main allocations of the budget are as follows:

- R1.3 billion to the Department's main entity - SA Tourism
- R331 million for Destination Development – the majority will go to the Working for Tourism Programme
- R331 million for Tourism Sector Support Services, which include tourism incentive programmes like the Green Tourism Incentive Programme (GTIP), the Market Access Programme, the Tourism Grading programme, and the Tourism Transformation Fund (TFF).
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## **ADDRESSING OVERSIGHT CONCERNS RAISED BY THE COMMITTEE**

House Chairperson, I would like to demonstrate how we are addressing the concerns raised by the Portfolio Committee's Budget Report.

For the Legislative and Policy Reviews, the Department will finalise and table the Tourism Amendment Bill, aligning it with the White Paper, with a focus on short-term rentals, grading enforcement, and governance.

We will review outdated strategies, including Heritage & Cultural Tourism, Domestic Growth, Rural Tourism, Service Excellence, and Climate Change.

We will enhance all new fund contracts for GTIP, TEF, and TTF to include clear deliverables. This will include 60-day approval targets and consequence management when we fail to meet these targets.

We will ensure the implementation of our Community Tourism Aftercare program, providing post-handover support to community lodges, including business mentorship, marketing linkages, governance training, and asset protection.

House Chairperson, we are focusing on the future through our Digital Transformation and Risk Management Initiatives, which include developing a Digital Maturity Roadmap, a real-time tourism dashboard, data analytics, and mobile tools.

We will implement the Sector Risk and Mitigation Plan, with a focus on climate change, health, safety, and governance.

We will enhance Governance and Oversight to ensure we meet the objectives outlined in the Tourism Growth Partnership Plan.

Other interventions to improve governance include quarterly public dashboards for EPWP placements, fund disbursements, policy reviews, and risk metrics.

We will strengthen internal controls, audit committees and contract and consequence-management frameworks.

The Deputy Minister and I appreciate the concerns raised by the Portfolio Committee and will work together to find lasting solutions.

## **SUCCESS OF THE PAST YEAR**

Let us pause to reflect on the success and growth of the past financial year 2024/25.

South Africa experienced an upswing in tourism, with an increase in international visitors, reaching a peak of 9.1 million.

Domestic overnight travel continued its upward trajectory, with 40 million trips recorded, up from 37.7 million in the previous year.

International tourists contributed a total foreign direct spend of R92.8 billion in the previous financial year, while domestic tourism grew by 7.6%, reaching R133.1 billion in the 2024/25 financial year.

Domestic Tourism is the bedrock of our sector, and to strengthen it further, the Department of Tourism and South African Tourism will provide support for events.

We directed 76% of our budget to growth-and-jobs initiatives, with 40% of procurement from SMMEs and 40% from women-owned businesses.

We paid 100% of compliant invoices within 30 days, improving supplier confidence.

Our Green Tourism Incentive Programme retrofitted 103 properties.

We supported 266 SMMEs in participating in global trade shows through the Market Access Support Programme.

We spent R144 million to train and deploy 2,305 Tourism Monitors.

On a Policy level, we completed and implemented the Tourism Master Plan and finalised the Tourism White Paper and Tourism Route Development Marketing Plan.

For our two major future source markets, in collaboration with the Department of Home Affairs, we implemented and marketed the Trusted Tour Operator Scheme, welcoming our first Chinese and Indian travellers via digital visas.

## **TOURISM SECTOR GROWTH PARTNERSHIP PLAN**

The Department of Tourism undertook a review of all its policy documents implemented during the Sixth Administration, including the ERRP, the Tourism Master Plan, the White Paper, and the National Development Plan targets.

House Chairperson, out of this, we set ourselves an ambitious and practical guide on how to jumpstart and sustain tourism growth.

The Tourism Growth Partnership Plan identifies five core pillars for sector-wide action:

- Ease of Access – visa reform, air connectivity, road transport

- Coordinated Destination Marketing – international, continental, domestic, and MICE segments
- Tourist Safety and Security – awareness campaigns, responsive support, and crisis management
- Tourism Product Development – quality infrastructure and immersive route/experience design
- Job Creation – youth employment acceleration and skills development pathways

The five-pillar Tourism Growth Partnership Plan sets targets for government, the sector and the whole of society to achieve by 2030.

The Department of Tourism, together with sector leaders, will host an Execution Lab later this month to discuss practical ways to achieve the targets set by the Tourism Growth Partnership Plan, including who, when, and how.

## **COORDINATED DESTINATION MARKETING**

Our flagship “South Africa Awaits – Come Find Your Joy!” brand campaign resonated in seven key markets—Asia, Europe, the Americas and Africa—boosting website traffic by 35 per cent and generating 1.2 million digital engagements.

Domestically, our “Sho’t Left/Travel Week” and Summer campaigns drove a 9 per cent rise in South Africans travelling across provinces, supporting 920 Sho’t Left deals and 914 new jobs. We will spend R20m on marketing our National Domestic Tourism.

We utilise data-driven decision-making and foster better partnerships to plan and execute effective marketing campaigns.

We commissioned five new tracking surveys—departure, domestic, business events, PR sentiment, and brand perception—giving us real-time insights into arrivals, spend, and visitor moods. Our Corporate Brand Index rose from 71.8 to 74.2, while our first Sentiment Index reveals where travellers’ hearts lie.

We are also sharpening our game to remain Africa’s premier hub for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions.

Hosting Meetings Africa and Travel Indaba 2026–2028 will be refined with a more effective business model to enhance sustainability and promote a 15% increase in exhibitor diversity.

We will support 105 MICE bid submissions, aiming to convert 25 into closed wins worth R120 million in economic impact, and host 10 events in villages, townships, and small dorpies for inclusive regional uplift.

## **TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**

The Department will invest R 95 million in ten high-impact maintenance and enhancement projects on Department-owned sites.

We will complete 25 new community-based tourism lodges and branded routes in villages, townships and small towns.

Host our first Tourism Investment Conference to showcase 30 prioritised projects and attract five anchor investors in September 2025 in Cape Town – launch our Tourism Investment Booklet with UN Tourism.

We are also working to finalise condition assessments for five heritage sites and prepare detailed conservation plans. We will finalise the Short-Term Rental Framework in consultation with industry.

## **CONCLUSION**

House Chairperson, this vote represents our commitment to action—legislative, operational, and strategic.

It aligns resources to remove barriers, strengthen partnerships, and embed innovation and technology so that tourism can realise the full potential of our people and places.

Together, we will create a resilient and inclusive tourism sector that powers South Africa's future.

I thank you.

## **ENDS**