



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MEDIA STATEMENT

TOURISM UNVEILS A SMART VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE AT OR TAMBO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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GAUTENG – Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille today launched a Smart Tourism Visitor Information Centre (VIC) at the OR Tambo International Airport, marking a significant milestone in the tourism sector's effort towards digital transformation, innovation, and inclusive development.

The Smart Tourism VIC is an interactive, paperless destination marketing centre that offers real-time information on the diverse tourism, culture, and heritage offerings that span across all nine South African provinces.

Situated at the international arrivals' precinct of the OR Tambo International Airport, travellers who arrive in South Africa will immediately be greeted by the enthralling displays of South Africa's culture and nature offerings on the Smart Tourism VIC's screens, and a reminder to explore our beautiful country responsibly. The centre's inclusive design encourages physical accessibility for all visitors, including those with special access needs.

"I am proud to officially unveil the Smart Visitors Information Centre that is designed to fundamentally transform how visitors experience South Africa from the moment they arrive."

"Tourism is one of the sectors with the greatest potential to create jobs, support small businesses, and drive inclusive economic growth. To unlock this potential, we must modernise, innovate, and compete on the global stage. That is exactly what today represents," Tourism Minister De Lille said.

As the world adapts to technological advancements, it is clear that the future of travel is technology-based. The Smart Tourism VIC is one of the number of initiatives that the sector plans to implement to position South Africa as a smart destination that provides solutions for tourism enterprises, whilst responding to the needs of travellers in real-time.

Tourism's Smart VIC boasts a new automated tourism complaints management system. Travellers will be able to lodge their tourism-related complaints digitally at the centre, marking an efficient transition away from manual processing. The centre will be manned by six information officers who can assist travellers in filing the information and documentation related to their complaint at the VIC.

“This Smart VIC is an investment in our future. In the long term, we are developing a smart visitor app that will integrate seamlessly with the centre, offering digital navigation, curated itineraries, transport options, and province-by-province tourism content. This will ensure that visitors carry South Africa in their pocket, throughout their stay,” Minister De Lille added.

Beyond its functionality as a resource of information for tourists, the Smart Tourism VIC will provide much needed ICT support to tourism businesses, especially those in remote areas such as villages, small towns and dorps. The ICT solutions offered by the centre will enable tourism businesses to tailor their products, services, and experiences to the needs of consumers, whilst being marketed at the VIC.

This Smart VIC will connect communities and small businesses to travellers, whilst promoting transformation in the tourism sector. We are happy to be part of this initiative, and we look forward to more digital VIC’s being rolled out across the country,” said Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa, CEO of Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA).

In the long term, a Smart Tourism App will be created to ensure that visitors have a wholistic digital experience while visiting the VIC. The APP will allow users to gain access to useful content and information about various monuments around Provinces, an audio guide in several languages, multiple videos and a rich photo gallery.

Partnerships between government and the private sector are essential in driving the advancement of the tourism sector, and in assuring South Africa's competitiveness globally. Tourism Growth Partnership Plan seeks to strategically align government, the private sector, and sector stakeholders to stimulate tourism growth, create jobs, and boost the economy through collaboration over the next five years.

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