

# Tourism Industry Survey of South Africa: COVID-19

Reopening

**DECEMBER 2020: SURVEY 3** 







## Foreword

This survey, which is a collaboration between IFC, Department of Tourism, and TBCSA and all its member associations, is the last of three and assists all the relevant tourism stakeholders to gauge the depth of the crisis in the tourism sector of our country. The results of the surveys provide important additional data to the collaborative work that is currently underway between government and the private sector towards reopening the tourism sector, in the context of the risk-adjusted approach adopted by our government. Every bit of information is vital for us in our attempt to manage the delicate balance between protecting livelihoods and the economy on the one hand, and protecting people's health on the other.

Leaders and economists across the globe have largely admitted that the COVID-19 crisis will leave the global economy in a state not seen since the Great Depression of 1929. Undoubtedly, the tourism sector, internationally and locally, has been the biggest casualty of the current crisis. We are still uncertain about the full impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector, but also, more worringly, about how long the crisis will take to go away, if at all. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has listed our country as one of the top 15 countries that is being negatively impacted by the near-closure of the international travel industry during the pandemic. The survey results are indeed an indication that the COVID-19 crisis has already significantly devastated the supply side of the tourism sector as a result of the demand collapse in our country.

It is too early to proclaim that the worst is over because much is still unknown. Even in parts of the world where it seemed they had brought the pandemic under control, uncertainty still lingers. Our task, however, government and business, is to continue to closely work together to prepare for recovery of the sector. This too shall pass!



I would like to thank the 480 respondents who, in the midst of the worst crisis, took time to complete the survey. Let me also thank Tourism Department officials, TBCSA and IFC for this collaborative effort in administering this survey.

Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, MP Minister of Tourism

# Highlights

- 98% of responding businesses are affected by COVID-19.
- Businesses are marginally less optimistic now than in June, with 24% feeling neutral or positive about the future of tourism in this country.
   However, 65% (compared to 67% in June) still believe their business will survive and take part in the recovery.
- Many more businesses are now open, with just 23% of businesses still closed but planning to reopen, compared to 61% in June. 5% of businesses indicate they are closed and will not reopen an increase from 3% recorded in June. The most significant concern for businesses considering reopening is sufficient demand to break-even, followed by sufficient demand to make a profit.
- Revenues appear to be recovering slightly, with 92% of businesses (95% in May) reporting revenues in October 2020 are down more than 50% compared to October 2019, and 36% of businesses say revenues are 100% less. This is a significant improvement from the previous survey, where 75% of businesses said revenues were 100% less.
- 58% of businesses were unable to service their debts and 61% of businesses were unable to cover fixed costs in October 2020, showing a small improvement on June figures.
- The most common mitigation measure regarding workforce management remains wage reduction as it was during the last survey, and it has increased to include 58% of businesses with more than half their workforce on reduced wages (up from 55% in May). The number of businesses employing furlough measures has decreased, while the proportion of businesses making redundancies has grown. 33% of businesses, however, have not made any redundancies.
- Medium businesses are the most affected in terms of wage reduction (77% have reduced wages for more than half their workforce), and proportionally more large businesses have made more than half their staff redundant – at 44% compared to the sector average of 18%.
- Mitigation measures applied by businesses appear to have shifted from temporary closure, refunds and supporting booking deferment, to more forward-looking strategic interventions that include adjusting marketing strategies and dropping prices.
- In a similar pattern to the results from previous surveys, all businesses
  prioritized the need for financial support for recovery, cashflow and
  tax relief. In this survey, support to commercial debt repayment
  climbed higher and the previous priority for advice on health and
  safety measures dropped to last place.
- The support facilities with the most respondent awareness are the UIF scheme and the Tourism Relief Fund of the Department of Tourism. There has been strong uptake for all facilities, and success rates and public perception has improved dramatically since the first survey in April.



## October Respondent Profile Summary

- 480 total respondents.
- 98% of businesses state they are affected by COVID-19. Of those affected:
  - 56% are micro with 1 10 employees.
  - 39% have an annual turnover of R0 3m.
  - 43% are accommodation providers, 28% are tour operators, and 8% are activity or experience providers.
  - 67% of businesses are 10 years or older.

## June Respondent Profile Summary

- 1501 total respondents.
- 99% are affected by COVID-19. Of those affected:
  - 65% are micro with 1 10 employees.
  - 53% have an annual turnover of R0 3m.
  - 59% are accommodation providers, 16% are tour operators, and 9% are activity or experience providers.
  - 60% of businesses are 10 years or older.

## April Respondent Profile Summary

- 1610 total respondents.
- 99% are affected by COVID-19. Of those affected:
  - 66% are micro with 1 10 employees.
  - 52% have an annual turnover of R0 3m.
  - 46% are accommodation providers, 20% are tour operators, and the rest split between activity providers, Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE), conservancy-related, community-based, transport and other.
  - 62% of businesses are 10 years or older.

## Results

#### Overview

Before COVID-19, in February 2020, businesses recollect that the performance and optimism around the South African tourism economy was relatively positive. 60% of responding businesses claim they were growing, with a further 19% performing at a constant level. Most businesses felt either neutral or positive about the future of their business and tourism in South Africa.

After ten months of feeling the impact of COVID-19, 98% of businesses report they are affected by the pandemic. 24% feel neutral or positive about the future, down from 29% in June and 23% in April.

#### **BEFORE COVID-19**

85% felt neutral or optimistic about their business and the future of tourism in SA, compared to 82% in June and 79% in April, suggesting an increasingly optimistic recollection of pre-pandemic conditions.



#### **NOW IN OCTOBER 2020**

23% feel neutral or optimistic about their business and the future of tourism in SA, down from 29% in June and comparable to earlier sentiments recorded in April.



65% feel neutral or positively believe their business will survive to take part in the recovery, only slightly down from 67% in June and 64% in April.



Not at all Very optimistic

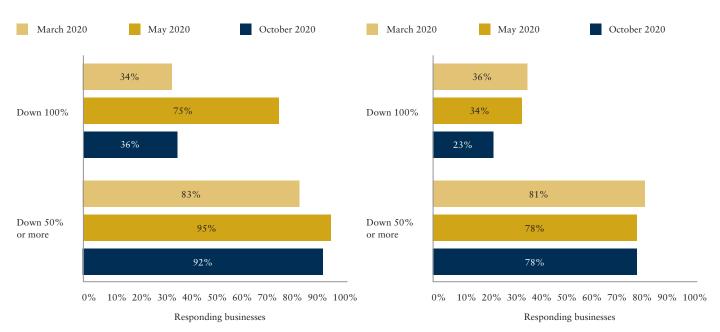
# Business impact of COVID-19

#### **REVENUE**

92% of businesses (95% in May) report revenues in October 2020 are down more than 50% compared to October 2019, and 36% of businesses say revenues are 100% less. This is a significant improvement from the previous survey, where 75% of businesses said revenues were 100% less.

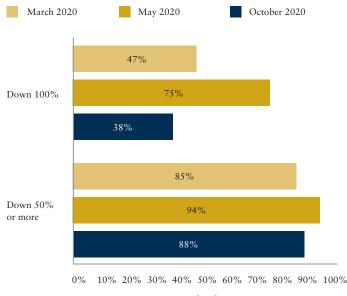
#### **FORWARD BOOKINGS**

78% of businesses (also 78% in May) report forward bookings held in October 2020 are at least 50% less than bookings held in October 2019, and 23% hold 100% fewer bookings compared to 34% in the previous survey.



#### **OCCUPANCY/CUSTOMER USE**

88% of businesses (94% in May) say occupancy in October 2020 is down more than 50% compared to October 2019, and 38% say occupancies are 100% less. This is a significant improvement on the previous survey, where 75% of businesses said occupancies were 100% less.

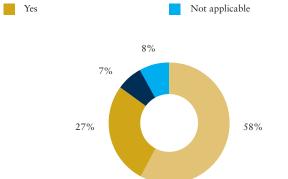


#### **DEBT SERVICE**

No

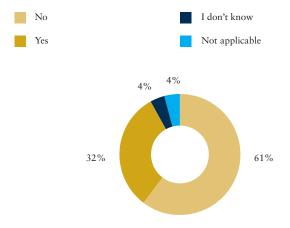
58% of businesses were unable to service their debts in October 2020, compared to 64% in May.

I don't know



#### **FIXED COSTS**

61% of businesses were unable to cover fixed costs in October 2020, compared to 67% in May.



## Business impact: Insights

#### **SIZE OF BUSINESS**

Small and medium businesses were slightly more affected in terms of loss of revenue.

		Micro	Small	Medium	Large	Total
	March 2020	83%	83%	76%	80%	83%
% of businesses with more than 50% revenue decline	May 2020	95%	96%	97%	98%	95%
	October 2020	92%	93%	94%	81%	92%
Average (mean) percentage revenue decline in 2020,	March 2020	-72%	-70%	-63%	-62%	-71%
compared to 2019	May 2020	-91%	-92%	-94%	-93%	-92%
	October 2020	-81%	-84%	-79%	-72%	-81%

#### **SUB-SECTOR**

In October, tour operators and conservancies experienced the highest revenue declines year-on-year. F&B has seen the most significant recovery – now experiencing just a 15% average decline compared to 76% in May. Conservancies and transport are holding the least forward bookings as a percentage of last year's, followed by accommodation.

		Accommodation	Activity/ experience	Community- based	Conservancy/ protected area	F&B	MICE	Tour operator	Transport	Other	Total
Average (mean)	March 2020	-66%	-80%	-76%	-87%	N/A	-83%	-74%	-69%	-73%	-71%
percentage revenue decline in 2020,	May 2020	-93%	-95%	-63%	-81%	-76%	-94%	-95%	-94%	-92%	-92%
compared to 2019	October 2020	-72%	-85%	-53%	-93%	-15%	-84%	-94%	-81%	-88%	-81%
Average (mean) forward bookings decline in 2020, compared to 2019	March 2020	-72%	-71%	-83%	-73%	N/A	-70%	-66%	-73%	-69%	-70%
	May 2020	-70%	-72%	-64%	-62%	-67%	-61%	-63%	-79%	-70%	-69%
	October 2020	-70%	-66%	-47%	-97%	-38%	-62%	-67%	-83%	-60%	-68%

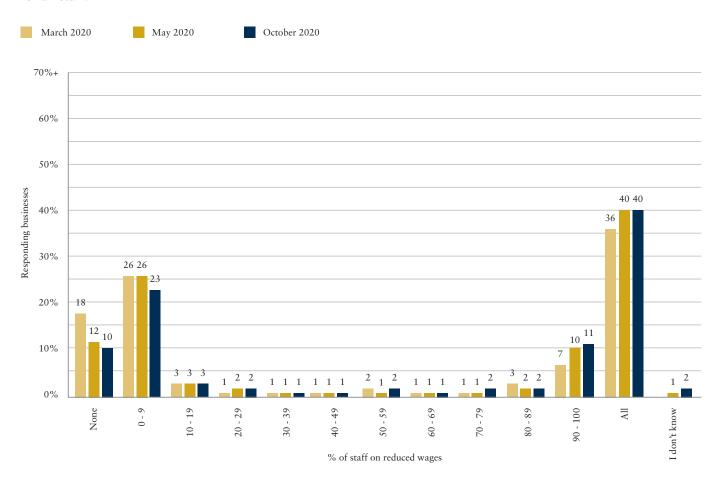
# Mitigation measures

## **Employment measures**

The most common mitigation measure regarding workforce management remains wage reduction – as it has been for all previous surveys, and it has increased to include 58% of businesses with more than half their workforce on reduced wages. The number of businesses employing furlough measures has dropped, and redundancies have seen an increase across the board.

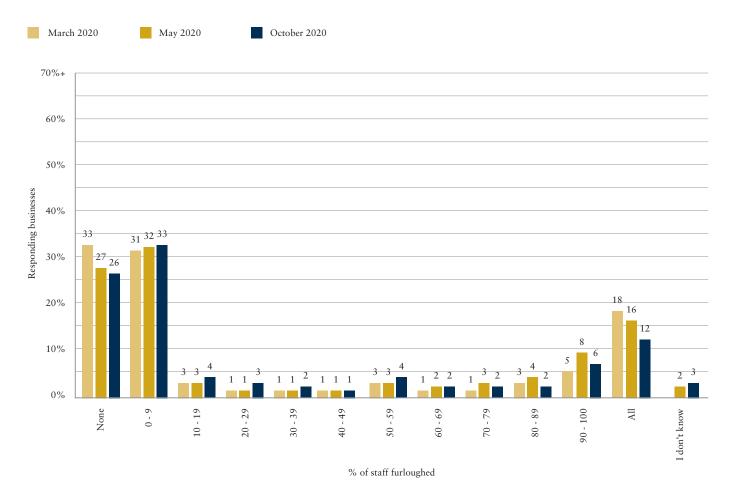
#### **REDUCED WAGES**

Reductions in wages have increased since the previous surveyed month of May. Currently 58% of businesses (55% in May) have reduced wages for more than 50% of staff, with 40% (also 40% in May) of businesses having reduced wages for all staff.



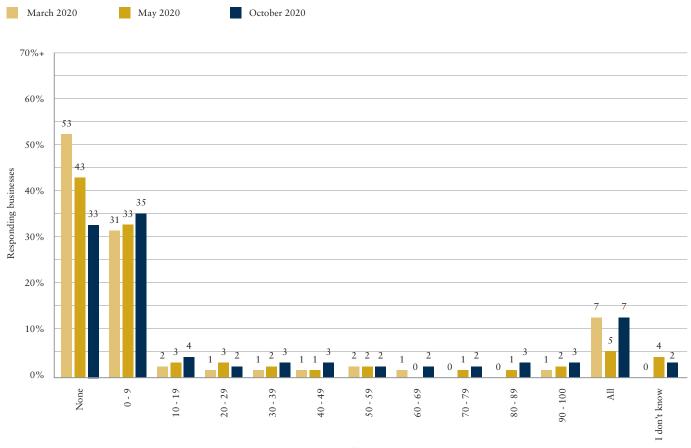
#### **FURLOUGHED STAFF**

The proportion of businesses to have furloughed staff since the previous survey has dropped, with a reduction in the number of businesses that have furloughed all staff. 28% of businesses (34% in May) have furloughed more than 50% of staff, and 12% of businesses have furloughed all staff, compared to 16% in May. 26% have not put any staff on furlough, a similar figure to the previous survey – and 33% of businesses have only furloughed less than 10% of staff.



#### **REDUNDANCIES**

The numbers of businesses making most of their staff redundant appears to have increased. 18% of businesses (11% in May) have made more than 50% of staff redundant, and 7% of businesses (5% in May) made all staff redundant. 33% have not made any redundancies - compared to 43% in the previous survey.



% of staff made redundant

## Mitigation measures: Employment measures insights

#### **SIZE OF BUSINESS**

The table below shows the percentage of each size of business that has introduced these measures to more than 50% of staff. As with the previous survey, there is evidence of greater impact on workforces of medium and large businesses than small and micro. Medium businesses are the most affected in terms of wage reduction followed by large businesses, and proportionally more large businesses have made more than half their staff redundant – at more than twice the sector average.

		Micro	Small	Medium	Large	Total
	March 2020	42%	64%	75%	61%	50%
Reduced wages	May 2020	46%	67%	89%	67%	55%
	October 2020	49%	65%	77%	74%	58%
	March 2020	27%	38%	38%	26%	32%
Furloughed staff	May 2020	25%	39%	68%	51%	33%
	October 2020	23%	33%	25%	33%	28%
	March 2020	11%	31%	12%	4%	11%
Redundancies	May 2020	11%	14%	14%	16%	12%
	October 2020	18%	17%	13%	44%	18%

#### **SUB-SECTOR**

The table below shows the percentage of each type of business that has introduced these measures to more than 50% of staff. Proportionally, tour operators and transport have been most active in reducing staff wages, with conservancies and community-based businesses furloughing staff and making redundancies. The food and beverage sector is showing the strongest levels of recovery with only 20% of businesses reporting reduced wages for more than half their staff, and registering the lowest in terms of furlough and redundancies.

		Accommodation	Activity/ experience	Community- based	Conservancy/ protected area	F&B	MICE	Tour operator	Transport	Other	Total
	March 2020	52%	37%	13%	77%	N/A	57%	52%	47%	50%	50%
Reduced wages	May 2020	55%	53%	58%	46%	49%	52%	64%	60%	48%	55%
	October 2020	55%	52%	25%	75%	20%	55%	65%	60%	63%	58%
	March 2020	34%	25%	25%	27%	N/A	27%	36%	36%	25%	32%
Furloughed staff	May 2020	35%	33%	33%	46%	39%	26%	33%	40%	23%	33%
	October 2020	24%	35%	50%	100%	0%	6%	34%	26%	22%	28%
	March 2020	9%	17%	50%	14%	N/A	9%	15%	9%	10%	11%
Redundancies	May 2020	10%	14%	24%	0%	10%	11%	18%	26%	11%	12%
	October 2020	13%	16%	50%	50%	0%	6%	28%	27%	17%	18%

## Mitigation measures: Other measures

Businesses have put in place a variety of measures to help mitigate against the impacts on their business. The most commonly applied measures are 'adjusting marketing strategies' at 72%, 'supporting deferment of bookings instead of cancelation' at 70%, and 'lowering prices' at 69%. This compares to the top measures recorded in June as; 'supporting deferment of bookings instead of cancelation' at 67%, 'providing refunds' at 64% and 'temporary closure' at 57%.

In the current survey, 60% (52% in previous survey) have canceled planned investments or upgrades which will have consequences for other areas of the economy. 51% have already borrowed capital (up from 42% in June), and 34% have invested in upskilling staff (31% in June). 60% of responding businesses are still not, so far, considering permanent closure.

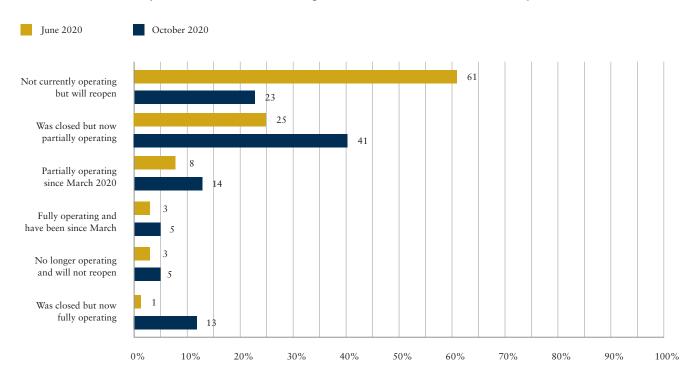
		Already done	Considering	Not considering	Not applicable	I don't know
	March 2020	18%	23%	18%	33%	8%
Introduced vouchers	May 2020	24%	15%	29%	29%	3%
	October 2020	27%	8%	36%	26%	3%
	March 2020	13%	29%	11%	42%	5%
Introduced alternative products	May 2020	23%	24%	18%	34%	2%
	October 2020	37%	20%	16%	26%	2%
	March 2020	53%	18%	8%	19%	2%
Amended cancelations/ refund policies	May 2020	55%	15%	10%	19%	1%
•	October 2020	66%	11%	7%	15%	1%
	March 2020	60%	16%	5%	16%	3%
Supported deferment instead of cancelation	May 2020	67%	12%	5%	15%	1%
	October 2020	70%	10%	5%	14%	1%
	March 2020	54%	13%	11%	19%	3%
Provided refunds	May 2020	64%	8%	9%	18%	1%
	October 2020	68%	5%	9%	17%	1%
	March 2020	28%	29%	19%	21%	2%
Offered lower prices	May 2020	45%	22%	19%	13%	1%
	October 2020	69%	13%	11%	7%	1%
	March 2020	36%	45%	5%	12%	3%
Adjusted marketing strategies	May 2020	55%	33%	4%	7%	1%
	October 2020	72%	18%	4%	5%	1%
	March 2020	25%	36%	24%	12%	3%
Borrowed capital from bank, family/friends, other	May 2020	42%	18%	25%	13%	3%
	October 2020	51%	11%	23%	13%	2%
	March 2020	17%	23%	22%	36%	2%
Upskilling staff through online courses and webinars	May 2020	31%	17%	21%	29%	1%
	October 2020	34%	15%	23%	26%	1%

Investing in renovations,	March 2020	13%	19%	46%	21%	1%
upgrades or business	May 2020	22%	18%	39%	20%	1%
improvements	October 2020	29%	14%	37%	19%	0%
	March 2020	51%	15%	11%	22%	1%
Canceled planned upgrades, expansions or improvements	May 2020	52%	14%	13%	20%	1%
	October 2020	60%	11%	12%	17%	0%
	March 2020	58%	17%	8%	15%	2%
Significant downscaling	May 2020	49%	17%	14%	18%	2%
	October 2020	61%	12%	13%	14%	1%
	March 2020	69%	10%	14%	6%	2%
Temporary closure	May 2020	57%	11%	22%	8%	2%
	October 2020	39%	17%	33%	10%	1%
	March 2020	2%	26%	53%	9%	9%
Permanent closure	May 2020	1%	20%	60%	11%	8%
	October 2020	1%	22%	60%	11%	7%
	March 2020	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Repurposed business towards a different sector	May 2020	10%	23%	36%	29%	2%
	October 2020	14%	17%	37%	29%	1%

# Reopening

#### **CURRENT STATUS**

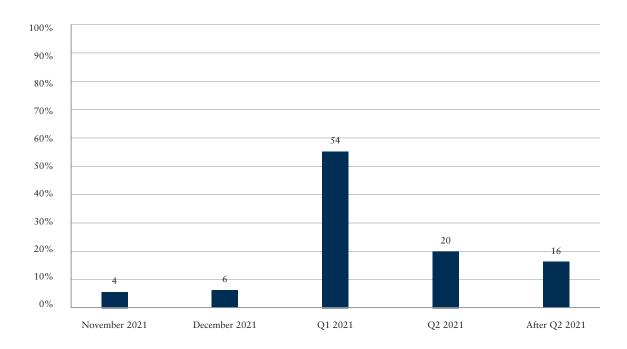
23% of responding businesses are currently not operating but plan to reopen, compared to 61% in June. 5% of businesses indicate they are closed and will not reopen – an increase on 3% recorded in June.



#### **TIMEFRAME**

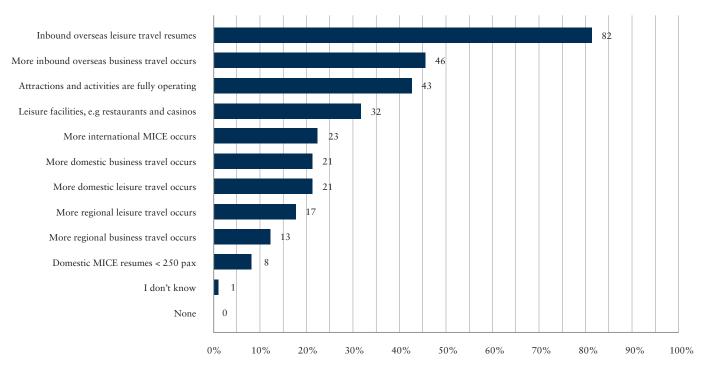
Only businesses who indicated they were temporarily closed responded to the following sections. Respondents totaled 107 businesses (23% of the total sample).

54% of non-operating respondents indicate they will reopen in Q1 2021. 78% of respondents say when they reopen it will be partial, and 22% indicate it will be in full.



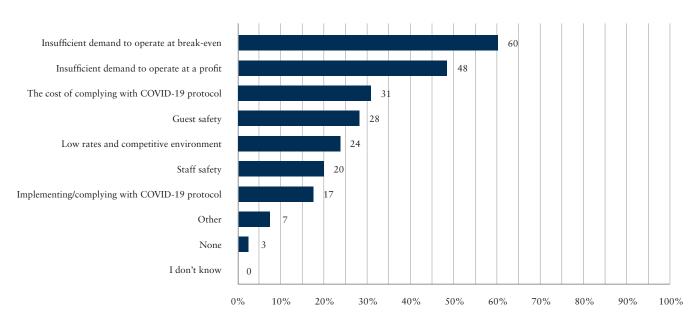
#### **DECIDING FACTORS**

The following pre-conditions to reopening have been prioritized by those businesses who remain closed. The vast majority require inbound international leisure and business travel to resume.



#### PRIMARY CONCERNS FOR REOPENING

61% highlight insufficient demand to break-even as their primary concern, followed by insufficient demand to make a profit – the same concerns that were prioritized in June. Respondents are immediately concerned with the market and the implications this has on the business.



16

# Support measures

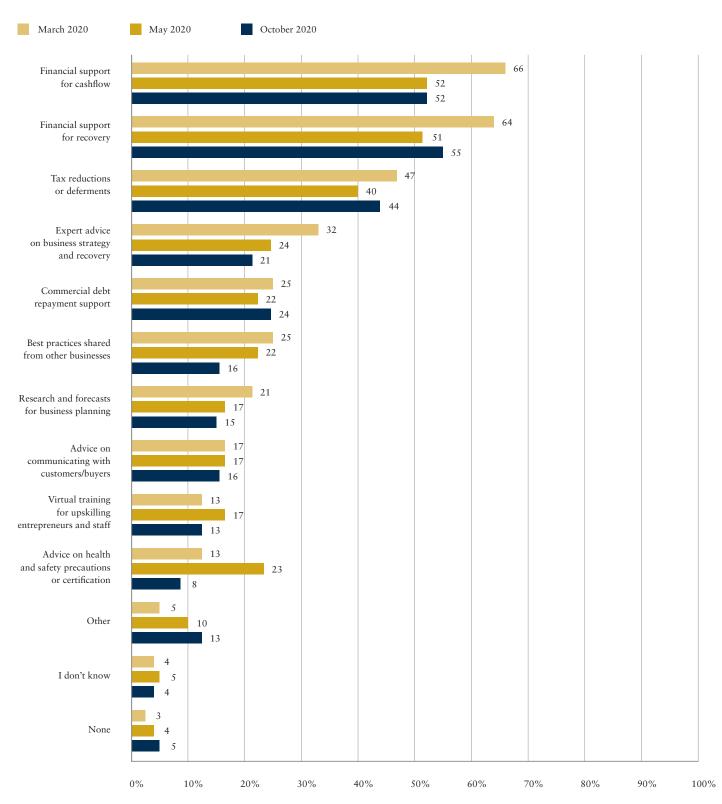
Responding businesses indicated their awareness and uptake of the following supporting mechanisms. The facilities with the most awareness are the UIF scheme and the Tourism Relief Fund of the Department of Tourism, as in previous surveys. Known eligibility is highest for the UIF scheme and there has been strong uptake for most facilities, the Solidarity Fund and IDC having the least applications. Success rates have improved for most of the schemes, especially SARS which was lagging in the previous survey, and correspondingly the perception of their value has also improved across the board.

		Aware	Of those aware, know eligible	Of those know eligible, applied	Of those applied, successful	Of those applied, perceive value
	March 2020	30%	53%	68%	1%	1%
SMME Relief Fund	May 2020	47%	25%	75%	11%	50%
	October 2020	61%	20%	57%	20%	75%
	March 2020	19%	19%	37%	9%	6%
IDC Corporate Plan	May 2020	27%	13%	49%	8%	50%
	October 2020	30%	12%	31%	0%	N/A
	March 2020	84%	39%	60%	2%	2%
Department of Tourism Relief Fund	May 2020	89%	41%	89%	32%	81%
	October 2020	88%	44%	81%	71%	76%
	March 2020	96%	67%	69%	5%	3%
UIF scheme	May 2020	97%	73%	92%	71%	78%
	October 2020	96%	78%	95%	84%	84%
	March 2020	63%	49%	35%	12%	7%
SARS tax subsidy	May 2020	60%	48%	43%	55%	82%
	October 2020	56%	52%	51%	64%	72%
	March 2020	69%	23%	48%	1%	1%
Solidarity Fund	May 2020	74%	22%	13%	6%	89%
	October 2020	70%	24%	18%	9%	80%
	March 2020	20%	42%	55%	14%	8%
SA Future Trust	May 2020	30%	48%	68%	54%	87%
	October 2020	35%	50%	69%	57%	77%

# Needs

Businesses selected their top five outstanding needs. The five most repeated needs from all businesses in October 2020 are: financial support for recovery, liquidity (cashflow), tax relief, debt repayment support, and expert advice on business recovery.

These priority requests are the same as in April and May 2020, with the increasing rise of 'commercial debt repayment support' to replace 'advice on health and safety/protocols' which has dropped to become the least pressing requirement.



## Needs: Insights

#### **SIZE OF BUSINESS**

The graphic below shows the percentage of businesses in each size category that identified their needs (five permitted). The largest proportion of micro businesses identified capital for recovery (56%), and capital for cashflow as their most pressing needs (55%). Most small businesses prioritized capital for recovery, followed by cashflow and tax relief. Most medium businesses indicated a preference for tax relief and cashflow, and large businesses had a preference for capital for recovery and tax relief.

		Micro	Small	Medium	Large	Total
	March 2020	18%	15%	17%	12%	17%
Advice on communicating with customers	May 2020	19%	14%	10%	22%	17%
	October 2020	17%	15%	13%	19%	15%
	March 2020	15%	10%	13%	25%	13%
Advice on health and safety	May 2020	13%	24%	27%	31%	22%
and surery	October 2020	7%	5%	17%	15%	8%
	March 2020	5%	69%	67%	54%	66%
Financial support for cashflow	May 2020	17%	55%	52%	38%	52%
Tor cashiow	October 2020	52%	51%	42%	41%	50%
	March 2020	51%	72%	52%	44%	63%
Financial support for recovery	May 2020	42%	58%	44%	42%	51%
ioi recovery	October 2020	53%	57%	35%	52%	53%
	March 2020	57%	57%	64%	54%	47%
Tax relief	May 2020	35%	52%	58%	45%	40%
	October 2020	36%	50%	54%	48%	42%
	March 2020	50%	34%	27%	32%	25%
Commercial debt repayment support	May 2020	54%	30%	22%	16%	21%
repayment support	October 2020	24%	41%	17%	11%	23%
	March 2020	42%	18%	27%	23%	20%
Research/forecasts for business planning	May 2020	16%	15%	21%	20%	17%
business planning	October 2020	15%	14%	13%	19%	14%
	March 2020	22%	27%	37%	26%	25%
Best practices from other business	May 2020	21%	22%	28%	13%	21%
other business	October 2020	17%	11%	17%	5%	15%
	March 2020	33%	32%	29%	19%	32%
Expert advice on business recovery	May 2020	24%	25%	23%	13%	24%
business recovery	October 2020	21%	24%	11%	19%	20%
	March 2020	14%	12%	12%	11%	13%
Virtual training for upskilling	May 2020	16%	19%	19%	15%	17%
ирэкшшід	October 2020	13%	11%	19%	4%	12%

# Survey details

## Methodology

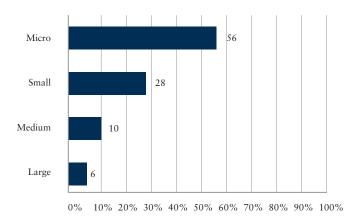
Our survey sample is made up of a wide spectrum of tourism businesses across South Africa. The survey was distributed through the networks of the Department of Tourism, and the Tourism Business Council of South Africa and all its member associations.

The questionnaire was sent out on 22nd October and closed on 12th November 2020, and was distributed electronically by email. It had five sections: general profile questions (which provide a breakdown of the type of responding businesses); questions on the business impact of COVID-19; questions on the business's response; the support measures available; and outstanding needs of the businesses.

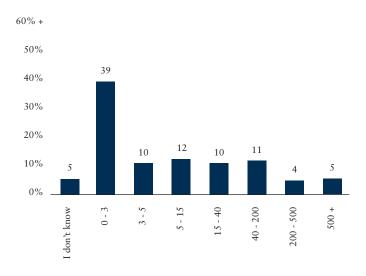
## Profile of responding businesses

The survey yielded 480 responses. 3 were discounted for not knowing the size of their business, and 11 were dropped after citing 'No' to the question 'Has your business been affected by COVID-19?' 466 respondents were left and form the basis of the report. The pre-COVID profile of 466 respondents can be seen below:

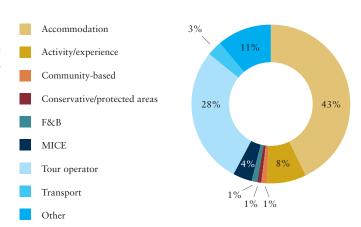
# SIZE OF BUSINESS BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES<sup>1</sup>



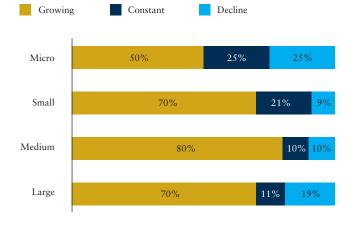
#### **ANNUAL TURNOVER IN RANDS (MN)**



#### **TYPE OF BUSINESS**

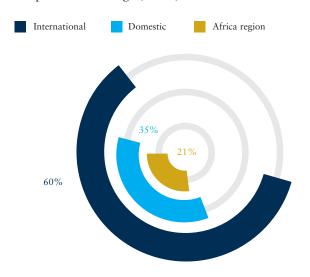


# PERFORMANCE (PRE-COVID) OF BUSINESSES

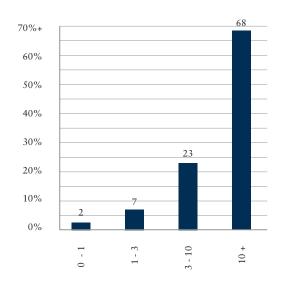


#### **MARKET FOCUS**

Respondents average (mean) market share is:



#### **AGE OF BUSINESS IN FEBRUARY 2020**



North West Northern Cape

Western Cape

#### **PROVINCE(S) OF OPERATIONS**

Respondents indicate all the provinces (can be more than one) where they have operations. The total is therefore not 100%.

