



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Tourism House, 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside. Private Bag X 424, PRETORIA · 0001
Tel + 27 (0) 12 444 6000· Fax + 27 (0) 444 7000. Call Center: 0860 121 929

Skills Development - Essential to a Successful and Robust Tourism Sector

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An adequately skilled workforce is imperative if tourism is to reach its potential of contributing to socio-economic development, job creation and business opportunities. This is one of the key outcomes that resonated at the Tourism Leadership Dialogue on Skills development hosted by the National Department of Tourism at Emperor's Palace in Johannesburg on Friday.

Aptly themed "Unskilled Work and the Travel and Tourism Industry: Myth or Reality?" the event sought to provide a platform for dialogue with a view of identifying challenges and possible resolutions to skills issues that have hampered development within the sector.

The discussion was led by a panel of tourism stakeholders from the public and private sector who critically offered an informed analysis of the state of the tourism employment market – focusing on issues around the tourism curriculum; the readiness of tourism graduates entering the job market; how employers could attract and retain relevant skills within the industry, ending with an overview of the current tourism skills development initiatives being conducted by the National Department of Tourism.

The lack of a standardised tourism curriculum was viewed as a factor that was contributing to an influx of tourism graduates with un-equal skill levels and qualifications. This shortfall is resulting in high levels of unemployment as potential employers are uncertain about the graduate's competency levels, and seen as a risky investment that could harm the integrity of their businesses. It was recommended that the tourism curriculum and skills development programmes be designed in a manner that addresses the needs of the sector, thus bridging the gap between the education system and the workplace - preparing the graduates for employment.

Tourism is identified as one of the top six priority areas in the New Growth Path for the promotion of economic development and job creation. There is a growing concern from the public sector about the increased reliance on imported labour to fill skilled local job positions. Not only has this contributed to revenue losses for South Africa, but has also resulted in a sector littered with low paying job opportunities. Government initiated programmes such as CATHSSETA's Skills development programmes are underutilised. Employers and tourism businesses have a role to play in attracting and retaining skills within the sector and are encouraged to utilise these initiatives to aid stimulate the sustainability of the tourism sector.

The National Department on Tourism has embarked on the following skills development programmes/ initiatives to address skills shortages within the sector:

- Partnership between National Department of Tourism (NDT), UMALUSI and CATHSSETA to conduct analysis and evaluation of the existing curriculum for Tourism, Hospitality and Consumer Studies subjects from NQF levels 2, 3 and 4 of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV offered at FET Colleges) and National

Senior Certificate (NSC offered at high schools).

- National Tourism Careers Expo has been attended by more than 56 891 young people since 2008. At the NTCE unemployed graduates are able to access existing vacancies and apply directly.
- NDT is in partnership with the Ubuntu Institution on International placements managed to place 500 unemployed youth in Canada and USA after securing funding from the DBSA. It is envisaged that another 500 will be placed this financial year 2013/2014. The objective is to make young people employable by providing them with much needed work experience.
- 186 young people from Gauteng and the Western Cape were trained under NDT's Sommelier training programmes.
- In terms of the EPWP Programme, 500 young people have graduated as chefs and 120 have already been placed with established hospitality institutes, such as hotels, bed-and-breakfast establishments and restaurants as part of the Young Chefs training programme. 300 of the mentioned 500 have been enrolled for second-level training which is equivalent to NQF level 5 (National Diploma), and, owing to the success of the programme, another 500 young people have been enrolled for the first time in the programme for 2013.
- In terms of SMMEs, the NDT is working in collaboration with the Tourism Enterprise Partnership (TEP) to implement skills development programmes. In 2012, TEP supported 5,003 jobs created by SMMEs, which delivered an increased turnover of R785 million. This raised TEP's overall contribution to job creation over the past ten years to more than 75 786 jobs and a turnover increase of over R6,4 billion.

For further information contact:

Mr. Trevor Bloem

NDT spokesperson

Communications - National Department of Tourism (NDT)

Telephone: +27 (0) 12 444-6607

E-mail: tbloem@tourism.gov.za

Website: www.tourism.gov.za

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