

EXPLORING ADVENTURE WITHIN THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Enhancing Sustainability

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying thicknesses, slanted diagonally from the bottom-left towards the top-right, set against a solid green background.



WHAT IS ADVENTURE TOURISM?

- There is no universally accepted definition but there is broad agreement about common features
- The Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) notes three broad components for the traveller:
 - 1) physical activity
 - 2) a connection to nature and the environment
 - 3) an immersive cultural experience.



MY PREFERRED DEFINITION

Adventure Tourism involves

- A **physical activity** which includes a degree of **risk** to the participant.
- The activity is **managed** by a competent, **specialist guide** who is able to help mitigate these risks
- The environment (cultural, natural or built environment) is an intrinsic part of the experience

Adventure Tourism? NO

Walking Township Tour:

- ▶ The physical activity of walking does not present any additional risk and does not require a specialist guide
- ▶ The cultural environment is intrinsic to the experience

Adventure Tourism? YES

Township Tour on a quad bike:

- ▶ The physical activity requires some skill and carries risk and the guide needs specialist skills to manage this risk
- ▶ The cultural environment is intrinsic to the experience



IF YOU THINK
ADVENTURE IS DANGEROUS

—
TRY ROUTINE

— IT'S —
LETHAL

- PAULO COELHO -

WHY?

- Exploration, inner and outer
- Learning and growing
- Connected/disconnected
- To feel alive



HOW?

There is an adventure for everyone!

FEATURES OF THE ADVENTURE TOURISM SECTOR IN SA

- Very little data exists and what there is has not been properly analysed.
- 55% domestic, 45% international
- Mostly small and micro businesses – 90% turn over less than R5 million per year and, of that, more than 50% have turnovers of less than R1 million per year
- It is fast a growing sector globally and especially in Africa
- Around 50%of guides (just over 5000) are employed full time, around 50% part time (i.e. freelance)
- Turnover in 2015 estimated to be R5 billion
- Regulation, guide training and certification varies widely according to activity but, for certain activities, industry recognised training and certification is world class
- Just under 60% are registered in some way
- Few adventure guides are currently legally registered although this number is slowly increasing (anecdotal)
- Adventure guides are not well paid compared to other tourist guides (anecdotal)

INTEGRATING ADVENTURE INTO THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Opportunities are endless for integrating adventure activities into our natural and cultural environment

It is what clients want!

Increasingly, visitors want to move from 'seeing' to 'doing' and research shows that they are seeking experiences that are **authentic** and **enlightening**

These trends apply to all sectors of tourism - Adventure tourism falls onto the more extreme end of the continuum.



CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS: GUIDES


- Because of the element of risk, competent, specialist guides are non negotiable.
- Educate yourself about the discipline and use industry standards wherever possible.
 - Examples: Level 3 First Aid instead of Level 1 for paddling Trip Leaders, guide to client ratios etc.
- Guide training and development cannot be over-emphasised. Depending on the discipline, developing the **skill** and **judgment** needed can take a long time.
- Guides should have an understanding of and respect for the social, cultural and natural environment and be able to share their knowledge with their clients.

OTHER CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Operators

- ▶ Managing risk is your top priority – OWN it!
- ▶ KNOW the discipline
- ▶ Systems – Minimum operating standards, SOPs, EOPs, KISS
- ▶ Wherever adventure activities can take place in natural environments, minimum impact is non negotiable – a robust and credible EMP is essential
- ▶ Positive social impact is non negotiable – train and employ local guides wherever possible, bearing in mind that this can be a long process
- ▶ Respect for local traditions and culture is non negotiable

Authorities

- ▶ When developing PPPs, in protected areas, focus on the essentials and be realistic about the nature of the adventure sector.
 - ▶ Allow enough time for the training of guides to be effective and for the business to become viable
 - ▶ Use flexible fee structures and achievable targets
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THE FUTURE

- Strong base
- Innovative approach
- Excellent skills in the private sector
- Government support