

tourism service excellence requirements



tourism
Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



What are the Tourism Service Excellence Requirements?

It is a set of minimum standards of service excellence that will set acceptable levels of service and can be used as a benchmarking tool in relation to world-class standards.

What are the values of the requirements?

Among others, below are some of the critical values and principles of service excellence

- Customer Insight.
- Customer First Culture.
- Information and Access.
- Service Delivery.
- Timeliness and Quality of Service.
- Norms and Standards.
- Consistency.



What is the approach of the requirements?

The emphasis is on the holistic approach on service delivery; from the initiation phase, preparation phase, servicing phase as well as feedback management phase. The emphasis is on ensuring that the provision of service is a seamless and efficient process.

Why do we need the requirements?

The White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa (1996) states that there is a general culture of poor service in the tourism industry and related services. In 2009, the outcomes of the Research on Customer Care Service Delivery in South Africa, conducted by Disney Institute in collaboration with National Department of Tourism (NDT) and Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA), indicated that there are inconsistencies in terms of levels of service in the country; ranging from excellent to poor. The recommendations from the research report also stated that it is important for a tool to be developed by the tourism value chain to measure their competitiveness in relation to world-class countries. This tool will serve as a guide on acceptable levels of service.

In 2010 roadshows were conducted in all nine provinces aimed at sharing information on the outcomes of the research report. Inputs received from the provinces confirmed the outcomes of the research.



It was also highlighted that the tourism sector did not have an integrated standard that can be used as a benchmarking tool on provision of excellent customer service. Therefore, there was a recommendation that a generic and relevant tool should be developed.

In responding to the situation, The National Department of Tourism (NDT) developed the National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy. The strategy is aligned to the National Tourism Sector Strategy and the recommendations from the provincial roadshows. The strategy is aimed at building a service excellence culture in the tourism sector and its value chain and the long term goals is to establish South Africa as a globally competitive service economy and the world destination of choice in terms of providing excellent service. It has five key pillars that are highlighted below:

- Research and information
- Upskilling of service
- Public awareness
- Service norms and standards, and
- Consumer feedback systems

One of the proposed interventions of pillar four in the strategy relate to the development of generic service excellence standards and norms. NDT in partnership with South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) embarked in the process of developing the Tourism Service Excellence Requirements (SANS 1197) that will be used as a guiding tool for improving service levels in the tourism sector.

What are the key focus areas of the Tourism Service Excellence requirements?

The standard focuses on the following four key areas:

(a) Marketing: Guidelines are provided on how to create a good and consistent impression of your organisations and how to use the different marketing channels effectively.

- Consistency of messaging
- Accuracy and accessibility of information
- Constant updating of messaging and promotional material
- Research and evolving to meet guests' needs
- Honest and truthful information
- Marketing sensitive/non-offensive marketing



(b) Product development: Provides guidance on a good quality product and expectations of guests.

- Acceptable quality
- State of repair
- Flexibility and choice of products and services
- Sufficient facilities
- Fair value for money
- Universal accessibility
- Adequate safety and security
- Continual training and skilling on product knowledge
- Information management - confidentiality and privacy of guests
- Environmentally friendly products
- Non-discriminatory access to products and services
- Adherence to the TGCSA's grading criteria

(c) Service delivery: Guidelines are provided on how to provide excellent service that will lead to the return of guests thus affecting your bottomline positively.

- Professionalism and training of staff in service proficiencies
- Adequate service that promotes a sense of value for money
- Flexibility and choice of products and services
- Professional interaction with guests
- Guest-focused attitude (staff and management)
- Guest-centred processes (systems and processes)
- Efficient service recovery
- Service Excellence-orientated organisational behavior
- Constructive peer reviewing

(d) Monitoring and evaluation, and continual improvement:

Emphasis is provided on how to conduct constant monitoring and evaluation of the guest experience to ensure that the standard of your service offering is constant.

- Consistent collection and evaluation of information
- Accuracy of information collected
- Revision and evaluation tools
- Guest feedback systems
- Rewards and awards systems

Overall the purpose of this document is to emphasize the importance of the spirit of "Ubuntu" in ultimately achieving the vision of tourism growth and development in South Africa.



What do we want to achieve with these requirements?

Tourism Service Excellence Requirements (Standard) is one of the key pillars of the strategy and the purpose of the requirements is to achieve the following:

- (a) To introduce generic standards for planning, developing, implementing and improving service excellence in the tourism value chain;
- (b) To introduce specific minimum requirements for the performance of organisations measurement and monitoring of service standards in the tourism value chain;
- (c) To introduce a credible service standard that includes, credible marketing, quality products and excellent service; and
- (d) To introduce a performance system that enables effective monitoring and evaluation.

What processes were followed to develop the requirements?

The requirements were developed with South African Bureau of Standards (SABS), as the custodians of national standards in the country. As per SABS process, the requirements were developed through a working group of experts, from different sectors within the tourism value chain that was commissioned by TC228. TC228 is a permanent technical committee within the SABS structures that has the mandate to develop all standards that are related to tourism. The SABS Working Group consisted of the following organisations:

- National Department of Tourism
- National Accommodation Association of South Africa (NAA-SA)
- South Africa Quality Institute (SAQI)
- Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)
- City of Tshwane (CoT)
- Department of Economic Development and Tourism - KZN (DEDT-KZN)
- South African Police Service (SAPS)
- Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA) and
- University of Pretoria (UP)



Once a draft was developed, the Department consulted organisations within tourism value chain to ensure that the standard was inclusive of all key issues that influence a tourist service experience. The following organisations were consulted in a form of bilateral meetings:

- South African Tourism (SAT)
- Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA)
- Restaurants Association of South Africa (RASA)
- South African Local Government Association (SALGA)
- Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA)
- National Consumer Forum (NCF)
- Culture Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA)
- Brand South Africa
- Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa (FEDHASA)
- South African Tourism Services Association (SATSA)
- Department of Home Affairs (DHA)
- Adopt-a-guesthouse (Southern Sun CSI programme)
- Ask Africa
- Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI)
- Federation of South African Tourist Guide Associations (FSATGA) and
- Proudly SA

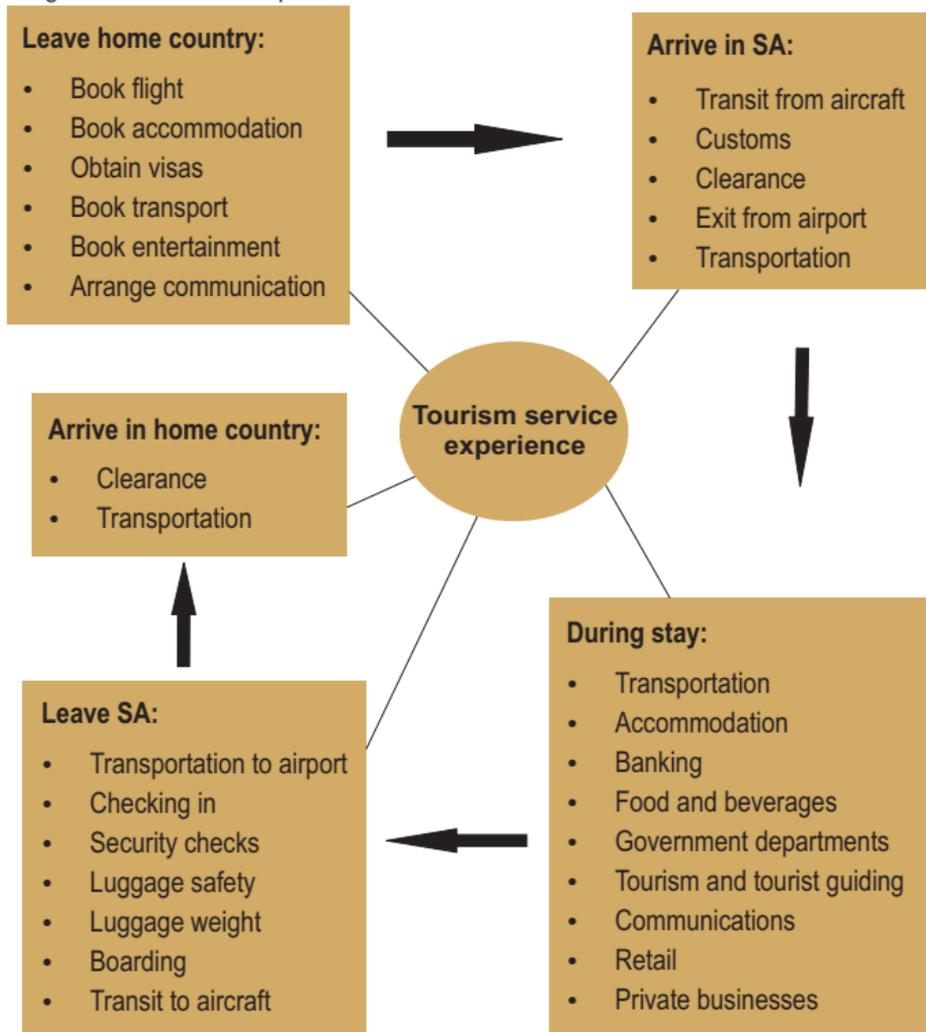
Comments received were incorporated into the document once approved by the Working Group. In December 2011, the document was then approved by the Working group and TC 228 to become a Draft South Africa Standard (DSS) and was made available on the SABS website for a two months public comment period. The comments received during all the consultations were included and the standard was published in March 2012.

Which service touchpoints will benefit from the requirements?

The requirements focused on the guest beginning-to-end service cycle. The phases in the drawing were broken down to establish the different responsibilities of each organisation in the tourism value chain (details on the cycle are reflected on page 9 in SANS 1197).



Diagram 1: Service touchpoints



It is important to mention that the requirements are generic and can be applied in all organisations functioning within the tourism value chain. Detailed explanation on these key focus areas are reflected in SANS 1197.

Who are participants and beneficiaries?

All service providers and communities are expected to use these requirements for improving their respective services and offerings.

All customers, clients, tourists, communities and government will benefit. If services are excellent there will be repeat visits that will lead to sustainability and economic growth which will in turn benefit the entire nation.

The overall emphasis is on applying the principles and the spirit of "Ubuntu" when delivering services and ultimately achieving the vision of tourism growth and development in South Africa.



How do you purchase the requirements?

The South African and international standards are available in both electronic and hardcopy format. Please Contact the Sales Office on Tel:+27(0)12 428 6883, Fax:+27(0)12 428 6928, Email:sales@sabs.co.za South African National Standards are also available online from the SABS website <http://www.sabs.co.za>

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT: THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

PRIVATE BAG X424

PRETORIA

0001

Tel: 012 444 6437

Fax: 012 444 7000

Call centre: 0860 121 929

Email: callcentre@tourism.goc.za

www.tourism.gov.za



**excellent service
starts with ME!**

