



**tourism**

Department:  
Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **Mandarin language boost for local tourism sector**

**18 August 2022**

The Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr Fish Mahlalela, today officiated the closing ceremony of the Mandarin Language Training for 34 Tourist Guides as they received their certification for participation in the Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK) 2 course.

Deputy Minister Mahlalela stated that the Chinese tourist market presents a huge opportunity to South Africa. “According to the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer of October 2018, China was the leading outbound market in terms of tourism expenditure followed by the United States of America and Germany,” said the Deputy Minister.

This was confirmed by a needs analysis that was conducted during the 2018/19 financial year to establish whether there was a need for training of guides in the various foreign languages. Based on the responses, foreign language training, with specific focus on the emerging Chinese market, was highlighted as a critical area for skills development in tourist guiding.

A concept document for the implementation of the Mandarin language programme for tourist guides was developed after consultations with various key stakeholders such as the Department of International Relations and Cooperation and the Embassy for the People’s Republic of China as well as the National and Provincial Registrars of Tourist Guides. Implementing the training programme following a phased approach, prioritising three provinces at a time was agreed upon as the best and most effective approach.

The HSK is an international standardised (writing, reading and listening) language proficiency examination that has six levels. Phase I of the Mandarin language training programme which the Department rolled out, saw 55 tourist guides being trained across all nine provinces. Out of the 55 guides who were trained a total of 45 successfully passed the formal HSK1 exam and considered eligible for participation in the second phase of the training programme. A total of 34 tourist guides have confirmed their availability for participation in Phase II.

Due to employment opportunities and other commitments, the remaining tourist guides were unable to attend the second phase.

The Chinese Culture and International Exchange Centre has been appointed as the training provider to implement Phase II of the training from 11 July to 22 August 2022 at the Kopanong Hotel and Conference Centre in Gauteng. The second phase of the training programme entailed the attainment of the next level of the Mandarin language proficiency which will include the HSK2 exam on Sunday, 21 August 2022.

“Even though the phase three has not yet been planned, it will focus on exposure to platforms where guides can have the opportunity to practice their Mandarin skills and, in the process, gain more confidence and experience. “Only those who have passed both HSK 1 and 2 will be eligible to be considered for this phase. It is envisaged that the immersion phase of the programme will take place in China,” concluded Deputy Minister Mahlalela.

### **ENQUIRIES:**

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