



MINISTRY
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JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, PATRICIA DE LILLE AND AIRBNB

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN TOURISM AND AIRBNB TO ENHANCE INCLUSIVE TOURISM GROWTH

DATE: 3 SEPTEMBER 2023

Today we are delighted to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between The Ministry of Tourism and Airbnb, to support the continued recovery of the tourism sector and build inclusive tourism in South Africa.

On 29 August 2023, Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille signed an MoU with the global accommodation platform, Airbnb.

The MoU will see the Department of Tourism work closely with Airbnb to advance tourism services that are aimed at growing tourism in South Africa and creating more jobs in the sector.

In terms of the MoU, Airbnb will collaborate with the Ministry of Tourism through:

1. A national registration system for Short Term Rentals

- A national database, as per section 6 of the Tourism Act 2014, will be established for short term rentals in South Africa to provide transparency into the short-term rental market.
- The sharing of information on international best practice regarding Short Term Rentals, the registration system thereof, and the policy regulations worldwide by Airbnb will help the Department of Tourism to develop a position on short term rentals, based not only on Airbnb input, but input across the industry, to ensure fairness and transparency.

2. The Airbnb Entrepreneurship Academy (Skills Development):

- Airbnb and the Ministry of Tourism will collaborate on the Airbnb Entrepreneurship Academy, a skills development programme focused on spreading the benefits of tourism to historically disadvantaged individuals by lowering barriers to entry and providing economic empowerment.

3. Tourism Insights through the City Portal:

- Access to an exclusive portal built for governments and tourism organizations that provides locally specific data and mutual sharing of knowledge and insights.

4. Collaboration at the Airbnb Africa Travel Summit.

- The Summit aims to bring together influencers, innovators and change makers to discuss how to utilise technology to drive a more inclusive and sustainable travel future in Africa.

The Summit will enable a combination of critical conversations, real solutions and firm commitments; and the Minister will present the official welcome note. It will take place in Johannesburg on 23/24th October 2023.

“This MoU seeks to grow the collaboration between government and the private sector as it is our collective responsibility to grow and enhance the tourism sector. As government, if we want to significantly grow tourism and its contribution to the economy and job creation, collaboration with the private sector is vital. We are delighted to be the first African Ministry of Tourism to sign a collaborative MoU with a successful global company such as Airbnb,” Minister de Lille said.

“By leveraging Airbnb's global reach and understanding of the market, this collaboration seeks to create a positive impact on local communities, travellers, and the tourism industry as a whole. The primary goal of this collaboration is to develop a relationship between the Ministry, its department and entity, and Airbnb, to harness and drive tourism domestically and internationally. As shared in the Department's Green paper, insufficient information is available about the unregulated Short Term Rental subsector, and this hampers informed policy decision making. Access to the Airbnb data can only assist in informing better decisions,” Minister de Lille added.

As part of the MoU, the parties will have regular engagements to evaluate opportunities for strategic collaboration on driving inclusive tourism and ensuring fair and proportionate regulation of short-term rentals.

Velma Corcoran, Regional Lead Middle East Africa at Airbnb, says: “We look forward to working together with the Department of Tourism to help build a more inclusive and sustainable tourism economy in South Africa. The Airbnb platform can help anyone, anywhere, to become a tourism entrepreneur, and we hope to continue to break down systemic barriers to entry and enable more South Africans to participate in the sector.”

We welcome the opportunity to work with the Department to develop a clear proportionate national framework for the regulation of short term rentals is crucial and see huge power in public and private sector collaborations. We also know from our work with the Airbnb Entrepreneurship Academy, that together, we can make a tangible difference and enable more people, in more places, to benefit from tourism”, says Velma Corcoran, Regional Lead Middle East Africa at Airbnb.

Tourism Recovery

The signing of this MoU is in line with the aims of the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan which is a key part of the country's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan

The Tourism Sector Recovery Plan (TSRP) was adopted by Cabinet in March 2021 to facilitate the recovery of the sector to preserve jobs and livelihoods, facilitate new job opportunities, match demand and supply, and strengthen transformation. The Plan is a product of a collaborative effort with key stakeholders from government, the private sector and other social partners.

The TSRP has three strategic themes namely: Re-Igniting Demand, Rejuvenating Supply and Strengthening Enabling Capability.

The effective implementation of the TSRP is anchored on the following seven Strategic Interventions:

- Implement norms and standards for safe operation across the tourism value chain to enable safe travel and to rebuild traveller confidence;
- Stimulate domestic demand through targeted initiatives and campaigns;
- Strengthening the supply-side through resource mobilisation and investment facilitation;
- Support for the protection of core tourism infrastructure and assets;
- Execute a global marketing programme to reignite international demand;
- Tourism regional integration; and
- Review the tourism policy to provide enhanced support for sector growth and development

Inclusive Tourism

Building an inclusive tourism sector can only happen if the public, private and non-profit sectors work together to realise the future that we know is possible. Technological advancements are a big part of this future. Platforms like Airbnb lower the barriers of entry into the tourism economy by connecting anybody with a space or a passion, with a marketplace of millions who are looking for unique experiences and authentic human connections, easily and at no cost. In a recent [survey](#)¹, half of Hosts across South Africa said the money they earn from hosting helps cover the rising cost of living, and over a third said the additional income helps them make ends meet.

The typical South African Host earns just over R36,000 - equivalent to approximately one month's additional pay for the average income earner - by renting their space on Airbnb.

Airbnb has invested millions in driving inclusive tourism, and through its Entrepreneurship Academy, delivers training programmes and interventions that help more people from historically

¹ *Based on a survey of 1151 Hosts and 685 Airbnb guests booked between June 1, 2021 and Dec. 31, 2021 and surveyed between February 17, 2022 and March 31, 2022. Margin of error under 2%.

rural and township disadvantaged communities, particularly women and youth, to benefit from the tourism economy.

Under the MoU, Airbnb has committed to continuing to roll out its Entrepreneurship Academy by providing Airbnb platform-related information, training, and tools. The Department will provide input into the criteria for participation in the Academy, where and when to roll out the programme, as well as strategic input into collaborations.

Domestic tourism kept our tourism economy afloat during the pandemic in the face of the loss of international tourism, and will continue to ensure the resilience of the industry. Platforms like Airbnb allow South Africans to travel safely and affordably. This helps to distribute tourism outside of regular tourist areas and means that the benefits of tourism are shared by more local businesses and communities throughout the country.

Collaboration and insights

This MoU also provides the Department with important insights into short term rental activity. A national database, as per section 6 of the Tourism Act 2014, will be established for short term rentals in South Africa to provide transparency into the short-term rental market.

In addition, Airbnb will grant access to the Ministry of Tourism, the Department and entity to the City Portal - a tool which provides economic activity data and travel trends to help governments understand Airbnb's footprint in their communities. Together, these mechanisms provide data transparency so that the Department can make evidence-based decisions.

By tapping into Airbnb's global insights, the Ministry, through the Department, will be better placed to control and regulate Short Term Rentals and thus enhance the tourism economy.

CONCLUSION

By working together to promote responsible tourism, empower local communities, and enhance the tourism experience, this collaboration has the potential to shape a more sustainable and culturally enriching travel landscape in South Africa. This concept has evolved into a formal Memorandum of Understanding, serving as a testament to the commitment of both parties to a shared vision of responsible and impactful tourism.

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Note to editors

In terms of the key areas of collaboration under the MoU:

A national registration system for Short Term Rentals

- Airbnb will share international best practice with respect to national registration systems for short-term rentals.
- Airbnb will communicate information to hosts to encourage registration.
- Airbnb will share best practices on regulatory frameworks for short-term rentals that help provide information on the differentiation of requirements for short-term rentals based on the level and type of activity.

Airbnb Entrepreneurship Academy (“Academy”):

- Through the Airbnb Entrepreneurship Academy, skills development will focus on previously disadvantaged to lower barriers to entry into tourism.
- Airbnb commits to rolling out the Academy to support beneficiaries from historically disadvantaged communities across South Africa to enter the tourism sector. The Academy delivers tourism and Airbnb platform related information, training, and tools.
- Airbnb will lead on the Airbnb Entrepreneurship Academy, with the following responsibilities:
- Managing the project, budget and resources for the initiative;
- Securing Academy implementation partners; and Supporting partners with recruitment, training and post-training support for tourism entrepreneurs.

The Department will support the roll out of the Academy by assisting with:

- Helping to define the criteria for participation in the Academy, to ensure consistency throughout all programs;
- Recommending and securing the cooperation of strategic partners;
- Strategic input into where and when to roll out the Academy in 2024;
- Recruitment of potential participants to take part in the program;
- Incorporation of Academy participants into new and existing Department programs aimed at tourism development

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