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## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

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### **MINISTER DE LILLE APPROVES FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SOUTH AFRICAN BUSINESSES TO EXHIBIT AT INTERNATIONAL TOURISM TRADE SHOWS**

As part of the Department of Tourism's Incentive Programme, Minister Patricia de Lille has approved the department providing financial support of around R6million to 25 South African businesses to travel to and exhibit at international tourism trade shows.

Through the Market Access Support Programme (MASP), the department provides financial support annually to qualifying small to medium enterprises (SMEs) to cover their costs to exhibit at national and international tourism trade shows.

This programme has been implemented to stimulate growth, development and transformation in the South African tourism sector.

The MASP is geared towards supporting tourism SMEs by removing financial barriers to allow them to access new markets and networking at national and international trade shows.

Each year hundreds of tourism businesses are supported financially to exhibit at trade shows such as Africa Travel Indaba, World Travel Market Africa, Meetings Africa, World Travel Market London and ITB in Berlin.

This week, Minister de Lille approved financial support to 15 South African tourism businesses to travel to and exhibit at IMEX which takes place in Las Vegas in the United States of America in October this year.

Minister de Lille also approved financial support for 10 businesses to attend the World Youth Student Travel Conference taking place in Lisbon, Portugal in September.

"This support is in line with our goals as articulated in the Tourism Sector Master Plan to reignite demand as the tourism sector is a key contributor to economic growth and job creation. By enabling SMEs greater access to international markets, we are supporting them to attract more business, expand their businesses and thereby increase tourism's contribution to economic growth and job creation," Minister de Lille said.

Through the MASP, the department covers the costs of beneficiary businesses for flights, accommodation, exhibition costs and shipping of materials.

IMEX America is one of the world's largest tourism trade shows for the global meetings, events and incentive travel sectors. Attending the show offers attendees access to buyers and suppliers from all over the world where more than 3 300 exhibitors attend from more than 180 countries. Attending IMEX America means the South African businesses have an opportunity to meet over 3 000 global decision makers with real buying power in one of the biggest meeting markets in the world.

The World Youth Student Travel Conference taking place in Portugal and is one of the world's leading trade events for youth, student and educational travel. It brings together leading buyers and sellers of youth travel products, top service providers and industry thought leaders.

The department advertises regular application calls for the MASP programme, once applications are received, an adjudication panel selects qualifying enterprises with compliant applications.

The adjudication committee then makes a recommendation to the Minister on businesses to approve for MASP funding.

For the latest round of MASP support, tourism businesses from Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal, the Western Cape, Gauteng, the Free State, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape have been approved for financial support to attend the global travel trade shows.

“The MASP programme is one of the most impactful programmes by the Department of Tourism to provide support to tourism businesses to give them exposure to international markets and thousands of potential new clients and partners. By attending these shows, these businesses can market their offerings and secure deals. Many beneficiaries in the past have made significant business deals through attending these shows with the department's support,” Minister de Lille said.

The Department of Tourism encourages tourism businesses to keep an eye on the Department's website: [www.tourism.gov.za](http://www.tourism.gov.za) and social media pages for regular calls for applications and the application processes.

“As we look to elevate the profile of tourism and grow the number of arrivals to South Africa, it is vital that we support tourism businesses who need help to gain exposure to international and national markets. We wish the businesses well for their travels and hope they secure additional business and contacts that will help grow the South African tourism sector,” Minister de Lille concluded.

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