



MINISTRY
TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT

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MINISTER DE LILLE CONDUCTS AN OVERSIGHT VISIT TO THE INCOMPLETE MANYANE LODGE PROJECT IN MAHIKENG, NORTH WEST

Today, together with stakeholders, I conducted an oversight visit to the incomplete Manyane Lodge tourism infrastructure project in Mahikeng in the North West Province.

This project has been incomplete for several years which led to various stakeholders being concerned about the future of this project. The completion of the Manyane Lodge, however, remains a key priority for the Department of Tourism as investment in infrastructure development will boost further private sector investment in the region and result in more job opportunities for neighbouring communities.

“The Manyane Lodge is one of the longstanding, delayed and incomplete projects and my visit today was geared towards meeting with stakeholders to inject urgency into this project. The delay on this project has a negative impact on tourism activities, the community and especially the tourism sector in the region and it is imperative that we finally complete this project,” Minister De Lille said.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Lodge falls under the management of North West Parks and Tourism Agency. The Agency, made a request to the Department of Tourism for the upgrade of facilities at the Manyane Lodge. The upgrades included refurbishing 20 chalets and the guardhouse, constructing 10 new chalets, a restaurant, parking and upgrading of bulk – water, sewer and electricity.

In November 2011, the Department appointed a contractor, Re A Aga Infrastructure Pty Ltd with a budget of R 48,4 million. Planning commenced in 2012 and construction started in November 2013. A total of R 47,884,114 was spent on this project of which R 36,184,114 was for construction and R 11,700,000 on creating employment opportunities through the EPWP and transportation of EPWP workers.

At the end of 2015, the contractor made a request for additional funds to complete the project as a result of cost escalations and variations. However, this funding was not approved. The Department commissioned the Government Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC) in 2016 to review various projects including the Manyane Lodge Project. Work on the Manyane Lodge project was effectively halted, while this review was underway, during which time the contract with the company also lapsed. Following the review, in 2018 GTAC recommended that the Manyane Lodge Project should be completed.

Unfortunately, no work has taken place at the Manyane Lodge since 2016 and security services have been provided on site. The Lodge has, however experienced several incidents of vandalism and theft since 2020. Numerous police cases were opened with the Mahikeng SAPS.

Fruitless and wasteful expenditure on this project was declared in the Department's 2018/19 audit report by the Auditor-General. Consequence management proceedings are also underway against affected parties. The State Attorney in Pretoria has been instructed to recover the money on behalf of the Department of Tourism. The project is also currently the subject of a case by the Public Protector's Office.

"The history of this project is extremely unfortunate but sadly a common occurrence with infrastructure projects, which are vital for growth in communities and economic growth. I am therefore determined to unblock this project and see it completed on time and within budget this time around," said Minister De Lille.

WAY FORWARD

The Department of Tourism contracted the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) in 2021 to complete various tourism infrastructure projects, including the Manyane Lodge. The DBSA appointed a Professional Service Provider and Contractor for the project at a total cost of R27.9 million. This is in addition to the nearly R48billion already spent on the project.

The scope of work to refurbish and complete the project includes the following:

- Completion of the restaurant building
- Construction of a 50-seater Conference Hall
- Refurbishment of 10 Standard Chalets
- Refurbishment of nine Executive Chalets
- Reconstruction of one Executive Chalet
- Refurbishment of the swimming pool and replacement of pool pump
- Refurbishment of the pond and bill board
- Refurbishment of guardhouse
- General landscaping (kerbing and cutting grass)
- Refurbishment of paving on walkways and parking areas
- Installation of diamond mesh security fence

The site handover took place on 13 November 2023 with construction commencing shortly thereafter. The anticipated project end date is October 2024.

"The delays on this project for more than a decade is a disgrace. The Portfolio Committee on Tourism also conducted an oversight visit on this project and released a damning report on it. Corruption steals from the poor and where corruption is confirmed on this case, those responsible must face the full might of the law," Minister de Lille concluded.

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