



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa. Tel. (+27 12) 444 6780, Fax (+27 12) 444 7027
Private Bag X9154, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa. Tel. (+27 21) 469 5800, Fax: (+27 21)
465 321

MEDIA STATEMENT

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MINISTER DE LILLE HOSTS TOURISM STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN OVERBERG

Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille, today hosted a tourism stakeholder session in the Overberg District Municipality in the Western Cape. In celebration of Tourism Month and ahead of the summer season, the Minister visited the region to report back on the state of tourism as well as to actively engage with tourism enterprises across the value chain.

This engagement gives impetus to the commitment by government to strengthen its partnerships by working with all spheres of government to enhance the capacity of the state. In her capacity as District Champion of the Overberg region, this alignment is critical at the coalface of service delivery.

Tourism is a significant economic lever supporting many other sectors and creating direct and indirect jobs. All sectors feed into tourism in building a strong brand. Tourism is the golden thread that links many other sectors with the ultimate goal of delivering a world class South African experience.

The tourism sector is one of the critical intervention areas that has been identified in the country's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan as tourism is a key driver economic activity and job creation.

The latest figures released by StatsSA shows continued growth for the sector and we are very grateful for these improvements and the work of StatsSA in this regard. The arrival figures for January to July this year demonstrate South Africa's rising momentum in the global travel industry is indisputably affirmed. The numbers speak for themselves and South Africa remains an attractive destination, for both domestic and international travelers.

The country continues to attract travelers with its unique blend of nature, culture, and history.

For the first seven months of the year, we welcomed 4.8million tourists from all over the world and our goal is to surpass pre-COVID arrival numbers and exceed 10 million arrivals by the end of March 2024. The arrival numbers thus far are encouraging as we gear up for a bumper summer season.

The Overberg is home to a unique combination of tourism treasures including pristine landscapes and seascapes with abundant and diverse birdlife and floristic treasures. Attractions include the renowned Harold Porter Botanical Gardens, Stony Point, Agulhas National Park, Bontebok National Park, Cape Agulhas Lighthouse, De Hoop Nature Reserve, De Mond Nature Reserve, Kogelberg Nature Reserve and the Shipwreck Museum. Collectively these attractions welcomed a total of 204 981 visitors between January and December 2022.

Successful projects implemented in the Overberg region include:

- The Department of Tourism is implementing various tourism infrastructure projects across the country. Two sites were prioritized in the Overberg region for maintenance namely; De Hoop Nature Reserve – in the Cape Agulhas Local Municipality and Kogelberg Nature Reserve in the Overberg District Municipality.

The total budget allocation for these projects is R3.2million per site. Construction has commenced on these sites and job creation numbers are expected to grow as sub-contracting on the projects commence.

- The Department of Tourism is also funding an infrastructure project under SANParks in the Agulhas National Park which includes the **Map of Africa** and the **Agulhas Lighthouse** projects. The **Map of Africa** project employed 79 local people during the construction period and made use of seven SMME's to contribute to local economic development.

The Department's investment into this project amounts to R14.1million and the work included construction of a Map of Africa structure in the Southernmost tip of Africa, paving of a road and rehabilitation of the terrain and re-alignment of the boardwalk.

- On the **Agulhas Lighthouse Project**, the scope of work is 69% complete and includes construction of a restaurant, interpretation center including vendor stalls, ablution facilities, curio shops, a booking office and a lecture theatre, construction of a reception area, external works and bulk infrastructure. The department's investment into this project amounts to R54million.
- **The Tourism Incentive Programme (TIP)** serves as a tool to stimulate the growth, development and transformation of the South African Tourism sector. All aspects of the TIP are implemented in collaboration with other government departments and entities.

In this regard, the department has formal partnerships through memoranda of agreement with entities such as the National Empowerment Fund (NEF), the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA). This programme seeks to bring about greater destination competitiveness, transformation and accelerated tourism and enterprise growth.

- The Department implements **skills programmes** in line with the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) and the Tourism Human Resource Development Strategy (THRDS), to strategically support the tourism sector's developmental objectives.

In the current financial year 2023/2024 two (2) skills development programmes have been implemented in Overberg District Municipality, Western Cape Province which are Wine

Service Training Programme and Food Safety Quality Assurer Training Programme. The programmes were implemented for three (3) months period from March to May 2023 through the appointed service providers; Tourism World and Tourism Business Council of Southern Africa (TTBISA). In June this year, more than 40 young people from the Overberg region graduated from these accredited courses funded by the Department of Tourism.

- The **Educators Development Programme** creates a platform where educators in provinces are equipped with practical knowledge to teach in the hospitality and tourism sectors. It also exposes educators to industry products, workplace experiences and facilities that will promote experiential learning.
- **The Norms and standards for safe operations** in the tourism industry were initiated as a result of a Tourism Sector Recovery Plan for the sector as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The objectives of the training include: to train SMMEs on the COVID-19 norms and standards in order for them to adhere COVID -19 health and safety protocols; to build traveler confidence on their safety if they travel; to introduce training initiatives that will assist small businesses to survive the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and to support the tourism recovery and growth initiatives.
- **Green Tourism Incentive Programme** - as the Department we are proud of the immense benefits our Green Tourism Incentive Programme (GTIP) has brought in recent years. Through this programme, the Department has been able to help tourism establishments across the country to keep the lights on and keep operating despite loadshedding. With this Programme, the Department provides funding to tourism establishments to retrofit their facilities with energy (solar PV systems) and water efficiency technologies to help them to operate optimally despite water and energy constraints and load shedding.

Since the inception of the GTIP, 37 applications from Western Cape tourism establishments have been approved with 5 of these approved applicants located in the Overberg region.

The Minister also shared key updates on the progress the Department has made to date:

- **Tourism Equity Fund** – yesterday the Department took the Tourism Equity Fund framework to Cabinet for approval to unblock this R1.2billion fund to support transformation and growth in the sector in line with existing legislation.
- **National Transport Regulator** - in July this year, Minister Chikunga sent a letter to all MECs for Transport to stop unduly penalising tour operators who have applied for license renewals and are still awaiting their renewed licenses from the department.
- **Ease of Travel** - we are committed to continuing to work together with Home Affairs on the visa applications process
- **Safety** - We are resolute that collaboration with various stakeholders including the Ministry of Police, will help us forge a comprehensive review of the country's National Tourism Safety Strategy. This includes hosting of quarterly Tourism Safety Forum Meetings. The Department of Tourism has also awarded the tender for the deployment of 2 200 Tourism Monitors to key tourist areas in all nine provinces to be deployed before the busy summer season starts.

Under the auspices of the private sector, on 31 August, we launched the tourist safety App called SECURA, which is solely dedicated to tourists' safety nationally.

- **The Green Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa** was published on 1 September for public comment. The objective of the Green Paper is to sustainably and competitively grow the South African economy through an inclusive, inspiring, visitor-oriented tourism sector that consistently builds partnerships to strengthen the impact of the sector nationally, regionally and globally. Its aim is also to address barriers to tourism growth; and to respond to the social cohesion imperatives of the country.

Next week, on 19 September Minister de Lille will also officially launch the Summer Campaign in the Eastern Cape ahead of the peak summer period for tourism for South Africa.

“As we celebrate Tourism Month and gear up for the peak summer season, I expressed my gratitude to the tourism stakeholders in the Overberg region for all their hard work to grow tourism and urged them to continue enhancing our tourism offering so that we can welcome more visitors and increase the economic contribution of tourism to our economy. The success of tourism lies in mutually beneficial partnerships and collaborations. As we celebrate our success, so too do we address our obstacles – collectively. We can only grow by working together and I am determined to work with the private sector to exponentially grow tourism across South Africa,” Minister de Lille said.

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Media Enquiries:

Zara Nicholson

Media Liaison Officer

Cell: +27 (0) 79 416 5996

Email: znicholson@tourism.gov.za