



## **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 OF TOURISM, PATRICIA DE LILLE AND GOOGLE SIGN COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT**

Today, we are delighted to announce the signing of an Agreement between the Minister of Tourism of South Africa, Patricia de Lille and global tech giant, Google, aimed at promoting South Africa as a prime tourist destination and providing training and support to the sector in digital training.

Minister de Lille and Dr. Alistair Mokoena, Country Director for Google South Africa signed the Agreement in Cape Town today.

The Ministry of Tourism is mandated to create conditions conducive for growth and development of tourism in South Africa by the private sector. Google intends to provide support to the Ministry to achieve its mandate through providing access to its initiatives and programmes in South Africa that are beneficial to the sector.

The primary goal of this collaboration is to harness Google's technological expertise to support the Ministry of Tourism's efforts in promoting South Africa as a prime tourist destination. The partnership aims to facilitate knowledge sharing, skills development, and the use of digital tools to enhance tourism experiences and sustainability.

It is important to note that no monetary exchange will take place as a result of this agreement.

This partnership is in line with Minister de Lille's mission to grow tourism to its full potential, unlock the power of technology in the sector and increase arrivals to South Africa to support economic growth and job creation in South Africa.

Minister de Lille said: "In an era of digital transformation, collaboration between technology giants and government entities has the potential to reshape industries and enhance public services. As stated in the Tourism Sector Green Paper, there is a 'lack of support mechanisms for the (tourism) sector, particularly SMMEs, to adapt to a digital future and other technological advancements'. This visionary partnership between Google and the Ministry of Tourism, focusing on non-monetary exchanges to leverage each parties' strengths for mutual benefits".

” We are excited to partner with the Department of Tourism and to sign the letter of intent which aims to position South Africa as a great tourist destination. As a company that prides itself in organising the world’s information and making it universally accessible and useful, we look forward to rolling out various programmes in conjunction with the department, to fast track digital transformation in the sector, helping with digital skills and showcasing South African tourism through our Google Arts & Culture platform,” Google SA Country Director, Dr Alistair Mokoena said.

## **The Areas of Collaboration**

### **Insights**

Collaborating with the Ministry of Tourism, Google can provide insights into global travel trends. This information can guide the Department of Tourism and South African Tourism’s strategies for targeting specific markets and tailoring experiences to visitor expectations.

Specific studies to investigate the impact of digital platforms and online content are to be undertaken by Google and shared at no cost to the Ministry or Department.

### **Digital Skills Training**

Google offers skills training programmes including the Google Hustle Academy and master classes. These digital skills initiatives will be extended to offer training programs for individuals and businesses within the Ministry ecosystem. This would equip local entrepreneurs with the digital skills needed to market their offerings online, potentially attracting a wider audience of travellers.

Tourism start-ups can be supported by Google programmes such as the Startup Accelerator and the Black Founders Fund.

The training will also include Google Ads training on the fundamentals of Google Ads. To date, more than 2 773 South African SMMES have previously benefited from these support programmes offered by Google.

### **Culture and heritage**

Google can showcase South African tourism sites and unique cultural heritage to the world through the Google Arts and Culture Portal.

This is already being done, however, through closer partnership with the Ministry of Tourism, more information will be shared on unique travel sites and hidden gems like South Africa’s little townships, villages and dorpiess.

To enhance digitization of South Africa’s tourism offerings, Google Art & Culture will work with the Ministry to showcase South African tourist sites and cultural heritage to the world, by getting more sites online and featuring thematic stories of importance to the Department.

### **Thought leadership**

Collaborating in creating a tourism thought leadership seminar through presenting commissioned research results on the opportunity and impact of online content and digital platforms in the tourism sector.

A co-hosted thought leadership seminar will focus on the digital opportunities for accelerating economic growth in the tourism sector.

The aims of the seminar will be to facilitate knowledge sharing and understanding of the digital opportunity in accelerating economic growth and upskilling governments and tourism promotion agencies with global best practices on how to use digital platforms.

“By tapping into Google's technology through digital skills training and the sharing of insights, South Africa's industry, notably SMMEs, can be present their offerings in innovative ways, engaging potential tourists, and inspiring them to explore the country,” Minister de Lille said.

An important part of this agreement is the empowerment of local businesses especially emerging enterprises. Through digital skills training, small businesses within the tourism sector can become more competitive on the global stage.

These empowerment objectives aligns with Google's commitment to fostering economic growth and entrepreneurship and the Department's focus on SMMEs and tourism growth.

Minister de Lille added: “We are committed to tapping into more technological innovation. Collaborating with a tech leader like Google encourages the Ministry to adopt innovative solutions for promoting tourism. This can create a forward-looking image for South Africa and its attractions”.

In terms of Cultural and Heritage Preservation, working with the Google Arts and Culture team on the showcasing of South African heritage and historical sites will result in digitally archiving these to ensure their accessibility for future generations.

“The envisioned partnership between Google and the Ministry signifies the convergence of technological innovation and public service. This strategic partnership embraces the spirit of cooperation and mutual benefit, setting an inspiring precedent for future public-private collaborations. It is important to emphasise that this agreement by no means precludes the Ministry and its department from collaborating with other technological partners in a similar fashion, to benefit the tourism industry in totality,” Minister de Lille concluded.

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**For Media Enquiries:**

**Zara Nicholson**

Media Liaison Officer  
Cell: +27 (0) 79 416 5996  
Email: [znicholson@tourism.gov.za](mailto:znicholson@tourism.gov.za)

**OR**

Siya Madikane

Communications Manager, Google SA  
Cell: +27 (0) 72 969 8036  
Email: [siyamadikane@google.com](mailto:siyamadikane@google.com)