



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**REMARKS BY MR FISH MAHLALELA, DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM AT
AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA TOUR OPERATORS INDABA IN DURBAN ON 10 MAY
2023**

Programme Director

Mr Akash Singh – Sigma International

Ms Ngoato Presca Matjea – Travel Daring Adventures

Ms Mmaditlonki Setwaba - DDG

Esteemed Graduates

Members of the media

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Let me express my profound appreciation to you all for attending this Africa Travel Indaba here in Durban and are looking forward to sharing the beauty of the city of Durban and the majestic beauty of our country with you.

On the sidelines of this Indaba, we are also hosting the graduation ceremony of the Tour Operators Incubator Programme, where we welcome this new cohort of tourism professionals to the sector.

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They are the first point of contact with the host country and sets the scene for the visit. Already it creates both the expectation and anticipation

We all converged here indeed to forge new connections, deepen existing relationships, and build a brighter future for all through the power of travel.

This largest tourism trade show on the African continent, bringing together travel industry professionals, exhibitors, and media from around the world to showcase the best of Africa's tourism offerings.

All African countries must utilize this platform to promote their destinations, products, and services while offering networking opportunities, educational seminars, and insights into the latest trends in the travel industry.

Apart from all glitz and glamour as exhibited here, we decided to reward and celebrate outstanding achievements of our hardworking tourist operators on the side lines of the Indaba. Indeed, they are the cornerstone of the tourism sector through their combination of all travel experiences and packaging.

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This sector needs truly a radical transformation as it remains insufficiently inclusive and faces high barriers to entry due to the need of specialized knowledge, exposure to various offerings across the country, networking with in-bound operators, expertise in product and service pairing and packaging for a diverse market.

The aim of the programme is to create, implement and manage a National Emerging Tour Operation Incubation for a period of two years, tailored to meet the individual needs of 44 tour operator businesses across all nine Provinces

The primary emphasis and the operational scope include hybrid incubation model combining virtual and physical needs-based business development support, regularly quarterly reporting, strategic stakeholder engagement, partnership development, business coaching, quality control and event management as part of project management and implementation process.

The incubator model and approach were guided by practical findings from business assessments, individual SMME growth-plan development and the local specific realities of each incubate.

Leveraging existing networks and patterns, the incubator aimed at balancing a scorecard approach to partner investment in the enterprise development programme. It was agile and quick to act when collaborating with partners and ensured alignment with partner enterprise development programme objectives by innovating and adapting to the varying needs across organizations

We remain committed to our mandate to lead a sustainable tourism development for inclusive economic growth in South Africa

A framework was developed by our government, following a greater consultation with all Tour Operators in the nine Provinces on how they can be supported on key challenges they facing.

As a result, we established the Emerging Tour Operators Business Incubator last year to capacitate emerging tour operators with necessary knowledge, training and skills to ensure sustainability, competitiveness and growth of their business operations.

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and with incubates located all over South Africa, we opted for the implementation through a virtual incubation model by providing business development and support services to forty-four emerging tour operators.

This project is in its final year of implementation and will officially come to an end now in May 2023.

Business development needs analysis identified through engagements with the 44 Tour Operators under incubation included access to finance, market access support, business networking platforms as well as Green Energy Efficiency Incentives or Capital

In response as the Department, we provided business compliance support to 37 entries on areas of transformation, SARS, license, B-BBEE and CIPC, access to market facilitated to 21 tour operators. A total of 84 partners secured finance to the value of R 950. 000.00 facilitated for incubates.

We also provided Business System Improvement to 15 enterprises, Business Operational plans developed for 13 enterprises and Improvement of ICT capacity to 44 incubates.

This event is a celebration of the achievements and successful completion of a two-year incubation programme for the 44 incubates. It is a transition from one stage to another as per the growth wheels signed by each incubate as part of their business growth and development.

We strongly believe that as you go out there, you will represent the sector so well and become true ambassadors.

I thank you all