



tourism

Department:
Tourism
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MEDIA STATEMENT

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Research guides the way to tourism recovery

The Department of Tourism today hosted its 10th Tourism Research Seminar with the theme: "Advancing Tourism Growth and Development through Research: Towards a Road to Tourism Recovery"

Research paves the way to identify knowledge gaps as well as prioritise important trends in order to inform planning, policy and decision-making. Because tourism is a cross functional sector, it requires collaboration with its stakeholders. Since the onset of the pandemic, the Department shifted away from the traditional way of hosting physical seminars and embraced digital avenues to disseminate the research findings. This is the third seminar in digital format but a first in hybrid format

The Department hosts the Tourism Research Seminar on an annual basis to disseminate research findings and recommendations to different stakeholders in order to enhance strategies, planning, programmes, policy and decision-making within the tourism sector. Previously, the Department has hosted nine (9) research seminars, i.e. seven (7) physical and two (2) webinars.

The seminar is targeted at tourism practitioners, researchers, academics students, public and private sector organisations, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in tourism and related sub-sectors.

In her opening remarks, the Deputy Director-General for Destination Development, Ms Shamilla Chettiar said: "This year we celebrate 10 years of academic excellence. As a developmental state, our partnerships with universities and research institutions are critical as it helps the Department and sector to deliver the best interventions for the industry."

The revised 2017 National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) recognises research as one of the key success factors for sustainable competitiveness in destination management and emphasises the important role research plays to guide planning and decision-making. The strategy furthermore, puts an emphasis in building capacity for high quality tourism research and promoting development of a research culture within the tourism sector to enhance individual and institutional capacity. This should be done through implementation of strategy, building partnerships and collaboration to strengthen the context, use and dissemination of research findings in order to inform policy, planning and decision-making. It is on this basis that the Department strives to collaborate with institutions of higher learning and research institutions to conduct tourism research.

The Department has been collaborating with universities offering tourism qualifications to conduct research studies and enhance capacity within the sector since 2012. The collaborations were governed through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to foster collaboration, enhance research capacity within the tourism sector and provide financial support to post-graduate students pursuing tourism-related studies. The collaboration with the universities produced quality research outputs including research reports, frameworks and models which assisted to inform planning, policy, programmes and decision making to grow and develop the sector.

In 2019/20 financial year, the Department undertook a process to review the MoUs with the universities. Based on the review and lessons learnt in collaborating with universities over the years, a Research Collaboration and Funding Framework was therefore compiled. The framework aims to improve and guide the department's collaboration with public universities and research institutions on tourism research. As a result, the Department adopted a new approach to appoint a panel of institutions through an open tender system for a period of three (3) years, from 2021/22 to 2023/24 financial year, to conduct tourism related research studies in line with the department's and sector's research priorities.

The above process culminated in the appointment of University of Pretoria (UP), University of Johannesburg (UJ), University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), University of Venda (UNIVEN), North-West University (NWU) and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to conduct research under relevant themes highlighted below:

- Transformation and Tourism Value Chain
- Revolutionising Domestic Tourism
- Tourism and transport interface
- Tourism Sector Demand and Supply

These academic and research institutions delivered their findings at the webinar today.

Dissemination of research findings and recommendations is a critical step of a research process. The sharing of research findings assists to avoid duplication of same research efforts but rather assist to point out areas that require further investigation and/or areas of collaboration. As such, the Department has been demonstrating efforts to ensure that research findings are publicised through platforms such as the research seminar and the research repository.

Over the years, research in tourism has provided insights into areas such as management, tourist behaviour, planning, marketing, destination development and product development. Guided by evidence-based research, the sector would be able to develop and implement policies, strategies, programmes, interventions and inform decisions to meet the needs and expectations of different stakeholders.

The Department continues to strengthen and advance the body of knowledge and research in the sector.

ENQUIRIES:

Ms Susan De Bruin

Acting Chief Director: Communications

Department of Tourism

Tel: +27 (0)12 444 6605

Cell: +27 (0) 82 921 7303

Email: sdebruin@tourism.gov.za