



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**SPEECH TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM
HON. FISH MAHLALELA, MP
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, CAPE TOWN
TOURISM BUDGET VOTE 38
19 MAY 2022**

Honourable House Chairperson,
Minister of Tourism, Honourable Lindiwe Sisulu
Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Tourism,
Honourable Thandi Mahambehlala
Honourable Members of the House
Members of the South African Tourism Board
Director-General,
Acting CEO of South African Tourism and
Senior Managers of the Department and South African Tourism
Distinguished guests

Chairperson our approach in this financial year is guided by cautious optimism emboldened by the green shoots of recovery that are beginning to emerge. After two years of stunted tourism performance owing to COVID19 containment measures globally, we began year 2022 with positive signs of tourism activities opening up globally.

We are indeed cautious honorable chairperson, by taking to heart what President Ramaphosa advised us about during SONA that there is both prospect of great progress and the risk of reversal.

We are moving with necessary speed to implement the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan to ensure that we put a dent on the COVID19 induced 70% losses of arrivals and earnings.

We are dedicating the 2022/23 budget to providing meaningful support to the operations of the sector that has seen so much loss. On the back of our rich heritage and natural beauty, and our vibrant people, we have an opportunity to reclaim our share of international arrivals and boost tourism performance.

As we cast our sights to the future, we continue our efforts to promote domestic tourism and to reignite demand from the African continent and the rest of key international source markets. Addressing existing travel barriers is critical for sector recovery, and in this regard we will continue to work with our partners in the public and private sectors to remove such barriers.

The gains we have made in inculcating a culture of travel amongst South Africans is evidenced by the traction that our Sho't Left campaign has received. The campaign inspired South Africans to "get out of the house" and take more days and holiday trips by showcasing a variety of affordable, desired experiences in a clear and accessible manner that is underlined by personal safety messages.

At the same time we have also implemented the Domestic Tourism Scheme in the 2021/22 financial year in Northern Cape, Gauteng and Limpopo highlighting the role and responsibility of tour operators to help contribute in making travel accessible, enabling the participation of people with modest income and previously marginalized groups in society. In 2022/23, we will focus on growing domestic demand by growing trips.

MICE

While we focus on growing leisure visitor numbers stimulation through three domestic marketing campaigns, we will also focus on developing leads for a pipeline of business events for our destination. From a business events perspective, with the gradual relaxation of lockdown regulations, our business events sector has made significant strides with the resumption of hosting of physical events, albeit in a limited capacity.

The South African National Convention Bureau (SANCB) will actively seek to develop leads for future business events to ensure that South Africa develops and maintains a bid pipeline for continued growth of the event sector. One of the key strategies to maintain South Africa's position as the number one business events destination in Africa and the Middle East, and to be truly competitive on the international stage, is the enhanced focus on business development support to maximize South Africa's chances of winning the rights to host business events.

As part of the recovery plan, South African Tourism, through its National Association Project drives the development of secondary meetings destination by encouraging local-based associations, federations, and societies to:

- 1) Rotate their national meetings/conferences across South Africa – spreading the economic impact of local meetings and conferences to villages, towns and small dorpiess (VTSD).
- 2) Create bidding opportunities for VTSD with the assistance of the provincial and city convention bureaus.
- 3) Assist VTSDs across South Africa to develop their meeting and conferencing infrastructure by bidding for National Association meetings and conferences.

For the medium to long term, the SANCB will continue its focus on demand creation and bid support globally, as it focuses on bids for future MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Trade Exhibitions) within the six focus sectors of the SANCB.

The Quality Assurance function will continue its drive to grow the number of graded properties across South Africa, which will improve our overall perceptions as a quality destination that offers a wide variety of products and price points for tourists. Greater emphasis will be placed on assisting new entrants to be more sustainable. The projects to support emerging sharing economy participants in their quality assurance journey are planned. For this financial year and beyond, a specific focus will be on reviewing the grading system to include emerging product and accommodation of SMMEs.

A key component of our strategy is to ensure that demand is met by adequate, diverse and unique tourism products and services to entice and excite visitors to our shores. In the wake of supply side losses due to reduced tourism activity during the pandemic, the maintenance programme was introduced to protect key tourism infrastructure.

The program started life in response to the Jobs Summit process in 2018 with the primary objective to improve and ensure proper maintenance of 19 National Park Assets for destination enhancement, job creation and Small Medium and Micro Enterprises empowerment.

The regular maintenance of our nature-based tourism assets is so important to our local economy. Well maintained attractions are critical to improve our tourism infrastructure supply and also enhance the visitors' experience.

It is therefore for this reason, that this programme responds directly to the outcomes of the Covid-19 Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan and the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan, viz protecting supply.

Total cumulative employment created by the programme was 857 with an expenditure of **R82,081,695** by mid-March.

The contractors overseeing the work have progressed through, at least one level in their grading, allowing them to bid for bigger contracts going forward – some have progressed through more than one.

Given the nature of the parks, the programme was predominantly rural, benefitting communities and participants in proximity to the parks, many of whom have hitherto felt that they do not benefit from the parks.

In this financial year, to further accelerate the destination enhancement work, we will expand the Maintenance Programme to include several provincial parks as part of the Presidential Employment Stimulus. These prioritised parks have been identified in consultation with relevant authorities in all provinces.

We are implementing youth skills development program nationwide, leaving a dent on the scourge of unemployment and consequential social strife. The various training programmes being offered focus on interventions to improve visitor experience and are based on industry demand for these skills.

They are implemented in partnership with private sector, and with the objectives to contribute towards poverty alleviation through payment of stipends; placement of learners in Tourism & Hospitality establishments thereby granting them exposure to job opportunities and income generation.

At the conclusion of these programmes, learners are provided with accredited or recognized certificates and are well positioned to further their studies at TVET Colleges.

In the previous financial year, the Department was implementing Food Safety Quality Assurer Programme with training on norms and standards for safe tourism operations, including COVID-19 Protocols in the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces in line with projects plans, targeting 300 unemployed and retrenched youth.

In this financial year, we will also continue with the implementation of the Programme by training on norms and standards for safe tourism operations, including COVID-19 Protocols in the following three provinces: KZN, WC and GP, also targeting 300 unemployed and retrenched youth.

NATIONAL YOUTH CHEFS TRAINING PROGRAMME

About 300 unemployed and retrenched youth in 2021/22 financial year, benefitted from the CHEF / Professional Cookery training on norms and standards for safe tourism operations, including COVID-19 Protocols in Free State and Northern Cape provinces in line with our projects plans

Whilst also 300 unemployed and retrenched youth are targeted for this financial year for the same training Programme in North West, Free State and Northern Cape.

Hospitality Youth Programme Food and Beverage was being implemented in the KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape (Cluster 1 and 2), North West, Gauteng and Mpumalanga provinces was finalised. 340 youth are currently being trained or active in the Programme in the following provinces: Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Northern Cape.

Hospitality Youth Programme Food and beverage with training on norms and standards for safe tourism operations, including COVID-19 Protocols will be implemented in all nine provinces and about 1000 youth are targeted for this financial year.

WINE SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMME

The Wine Service Training Programme (Sommelier) with special focused training on norms and standards for safe tourism operations, including COVID-19 Protocols was implemented in KwaZulu- Natal, Western Cape and Northern Cape provinces in line with projects plans for 252 unemployed and retrenched youth.

The Department will continue to implement this programme in 2022/23 financial year, the Wine Service Training Programme (Sommelier) with training on norms and standards for safe tourism operations, including COVID-19 Protocols in the KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape, targeting 252 unemployed and retrenched youth.

About thirty (30) Chefs were taken through a Recognition of Prior Learning process for a qualification or designation. The project is aimed at recognizing the experience of Chefs who do not have formal qualifications. The Chefs undergo an RPL process and get awarded an NQF Level 5 Artisan Chef qualification or designation by SA Chefs Association.

Capacity building workshops focusing on a number of critical tourism issues such as raising awareness on tourism programmes, incentives and business support programmes were conducted for rural communities in Limpopo at Waterberg, Vhembe and Mopani Districts and Mpumalanga at Gert Sibande and Nkangala Districts, Western Cape at Overberg District. In total nine sessions covering 395 participants were held. These initiatives will be expanded to cover other provinces during this current financial year.

NATIONAL TOURISM CAREERS EXPO (NTCE)

Over 3000 learners and students participated in the National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) 2021 and 80% of these learners came from Gauteng as the host province. About 45 schools from Gauteng attended, with 15 schools attending each day of the three days of the event.

The NTCE 2021 was hosted on 25-27 March 2022 at NASREC. The NTCE positions tourism as a career of choice to learners and students. The date for the NTCE 2022 has been announced and will work with provinces for their own provincial careers' expos. In 2021/22 a total number of 1178 of educators participated in the Educator Development Programme. The objective of the programme is to ensure that tourism and hospitality educators are capacitated on latest tourism issues and exposed to the sector.

In order to capacitate Tourists Guides, we have just completed phase I of the implementation of the Mandarin language training programme for 55 tourist guides. With the implementation of phase 2 of the Mandarin language training we will be targeting 38 tourist guides in this financial year. These are guides who made it at phase 1 and got selected for phase 2.

Honourable chairperson, plans are already underway to develop an integrated central database to enable the management of tourist guides at both national and provincial levels. The database is critical for the discharging of legislated mandates of the two spheres of government with respect to growth and transformation of this subsector.

In order to introduce efficiencies into the system that provides the sector with skills development support, two **knowledge systems** will be developed and implemented, namely the Tourism Skills and Employment Portal and the Tourism Sentiments Analysis.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Department will also continue to engage the diplomatic community in sharing information and empowering them on the tourism recovery plan. One of the platforms that the Department uses to advance the implementation of the MoUs that we have signed in partnership with Provincial and Local Government spheres and Private Sector is the Best Practices Workshop that is held annually.

The workshop is targeted at countries that we signed agreements with in Africa and across the globe, creating a platform that the representatives from each invited country and the experts in the field of tourism shares the best practices within the tourism field.

Such workshops also allow the South African side to implement the signed agreements as well as contribute to regional integration.

BUILD AND MAINTAIN ETHICAL WORKPLACES TO ACHIEVE AN ETHICAL STATE AND PROFESSIONALIZE THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Our Development Plan calls for a state that is capable of playing a developmental and transformative role as result good governance and zero maladministration become a solid foundation for such an ethical state. Systems of internal controls are vital to ensure integrity and achieve efficiency in service delivery.

A Comprehensive Risk Assessment was undertaken as an efficient internal control system to root out maladministration. Priority was on reviewing inherent risks, existing controls and strengthening mitigation plans in the areas of weaknesses/ vulnerability flagged by Auditor General and other oversight structures.

Strengthen preventative control in business operations to prevent unauthorized, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

In support of professionalization the public service, recruitment processes will continue to be directed at sourcing the appointment of suitably qualified and appropriately skilled personnel with a strong ethical disposition. Fair and transparent people management practices were prioritized to support an advanced ethical culture.

We committed to ethically intelligent/competent employees developed through ongoing ethics training and awareness to support improved decision making. The implementation of the departmental ethics strategy will continue to prioritize ethics as an important organisational value and core of our organisational culture.

In conclusion honourable Chairperson gradually our country proceeds steadily further away from its painful era of the pandemic, charting new path of developmental growth. We wish to join the clarion call by the President that no one should be left behind. We therefore call upon all our social partners to lend all hands-on deck as part of social compact as we confront all challenges facing this beautiful country of ours.

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