

Background/ Context

- Emerging – in the early growth phase of business life cycle
- Township tourism – a lucrative sector in the tourism industry
- Rural and township areas – under-resourced with limited enabling infrastructure (basic and ICT)
- Business failure rate in SA believed to be over 70%, - largest amount of support is required in the early-stage business
- Access to markets, funding and revenue generation - 3 most significant challenges of emerging companies (PWC National Survey)
- Emerging tourism enterprises in rural areas – one of the hardest hit sectors during COVID-19



Background/ Context

- Three tourism business incubators – largely rural based settings – in addition to the above challenges:
 - Business Compliance
 - General business skills and financial acumen was limited
 - Financial management of businesses poor –poor record keeping, management accounts non existent or not up to date for many
 - Was a period of uncertainty from March 2020 onward – No income, no plan B



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How did the businesses make it through (tourism business incubator specific):

Immediate focus on

- ICT strengthened support – sponsored laptops, cell-phones, data support (for virtual support)
- Compliance focus and financials
- Access to relief funding support (DT Tourism Relief Fund, Provincial grant funding opportunities, ED loan facilities from banks, etc)
- Training and skills programmes during lockdown – OHS and COVID-19 Safety protocols – TBCSA, Financial management training
- Sponsored PPEs and sanitizing items for business
- Strengthening marketing collateral
- BDO became Business Counsellors
- Side hustle
- Staying positive!



Some Practical Tips!!!

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- Find a good, reputable business mentor/ ‘**big brother**’ as a sounding board during your journey (or join a business incubator)
- Create a concise plan/ **strategic roadmap for your business**,
 - Clear actionable steps to track progress
 - Ongoing SWOT analysis,
 - identify opportunities, and plan accordingly
 - Have a plan B
- Get **compliant!** – right thing to do! no short cuts to success!
 - tax, transport
 - permits, grading, OHS, etc
 - Visit bizportal.gov.za – one stop shop
- **Safety first!**
 - Give tourists the confidence to use your product/ facility
 - Train yourself and your staff - COVID-19 Health and Safety compliance protocols,
 - Invest in PPEs and sanitizing equipment
 - TBCSA – COVID-19 H&S protocols training and certification



Some Practical Tips!!!

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- **Information is power**

- Arm yourself with industry knowledge, trends and opportunities to support your business
- Numerous industry-specific information available
- DT, TBCSA, SATSA, SAT, provincial and local tourism authorities
- SA Specialist (SAT) – know your country, sell your country
- Participate more in information webinars and use self learning tools
- ONGOING LEARNING

- **Take advantage of the various business support initiatives WHICH ARE AVAILABLE**

- Newly launched Tourism Equity Fund (DT/SEFA)
- SEDA (one-stop shop facilities for emerging tourism enterprises – incubators, funding, training, other)
- Corporate ESD programmes
- Traditional Banks (e.g. Std Bank TED funding – Soft Loan)
- Build a relationship/ become a member, ASK QUESTIONS, and become top of mind to them
- More support now than ever for township and rural tourism development!!



- Seek assistance to develop a **professional profile and bankable business plan** to access funding for your business
- Capitalize on your location – do the research - what are the local attractions, identify the opportunity, Is there a market for your product
- What unique experience are you selling? – Learn from competitors, BE DIFFERENT, Understand your customer needs – identify the gap
- **Sell your/community story** – tourists want enriching, quality, authentic experiences – lasting memories – SELL AN EXPERIENCE
- Networking and Business Linkages – **COLLABORATE!**, partner to strengthen your resource base, increase access to market opportunities



- **Embrace digital** platforms of communication and marketing - Set up a Business Facebook and Instagram account with some good photos
- **Work with local tourism authorities** to market/ profile your product as part of a broader tourism agenda for your community/ province
- Plan to diversify your income streams (**Plan B** - low cost 'side hustle' for off season?)
- Prioritise, invest in and seek support for marketing, upskilling and strengthening financial management, financial record-keeping and digital platforms
- Maintain commitment, positivity – be open to change, but remain passionate – adaptable business is one that will survive
- **Power to WIT!!!**

