

National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy



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FOREWORD



The provision of excellent service is important in the tourism value chain as it contributes directly to the growth and development of tourism. Historically, South Africa did not

have an integrated approach to service excellence in the tourism sector. A variety of initiatives existed, but were not incorporated into a single strategy.

Research conducted in 2009, has highlighted the inconsistencies on service levels as well as a culture of a lack of complaining for poor service, as one of the critical challenges in the tourism value chain. Following this research, as well as stakeholder engagements conducted countrywide, the National Department of Tourism (NDT) has undertaken to develop a National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy in order to offer strategic direction to the sector with the intention of improving service levels in the tourism value chain.

The long-term strategic goal of the National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy is to provide the country with an opportunity to transform the sector into a globally competitive destination of choice. This can only be achieved, once the attitudes and perceptions of the industry's employees, employers and the general public have changed.

Sustainable behavioural changes can also be enhanced by educating all major frontline job categories in the sector on appropriate behaviour and customer care. The role of the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Education SETA (CATHSSETA), is critical in ensuring that we have sufficient and accredited trainers countrywide to deliver quality service training programmes.

Consumers need to be made aware of worldclass standards and their **right not to accept poor service**. To this end, initiatives which have been developed include the Service Excellence Awards for individuals employed in the tourism sector, a service excellence newsletter and a reality-television series that will be used to educate the public on the importance of excellent service.

The National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy has been aligned to the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) which was launched in March 2011 and has also taken into account the following documents:

- The White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa (1996);
- Global Competitiveness Programme for the South African Tourism Industry (2005);

- Final Reports on the Tourism and Sports Skills Audit (2007);
- Human Resources Development Strategy for the Tourism Sector (2008);
- Research Report on Current Customer Service Delivery in South Africa (2009); and
- Report on Service Excellence Provincial Road Shows (2010).

The strategy comprises of five pillars, namely Research and Information; Upskilling Service Delivery; Public Awareness; Measuring and Monitoring Service Standards and Consumer Feedback Systems. The aim of the five pillared approach is to gradually introduce a service-orientated culture and to maintain it through various interventions in collaboration with the various institutions operating in the sector.

The successful implementation of the strategy relies on a healthy private-public partnership.

The Department is aware of the mandates of various institutions and values the inputs from these institutions as partners in implementing the strategy. Lead organisations or structures will be identified to provide guidance concerning some

of the pillars, with the NDT taking on a facilitative role in respect of some of the pillars.

Once the desired service levels have been attained, service standards must be measured and monitored on an ongoing basis, for example by issuing a mark of quality, having an annual customer satisfaction survey and introducing a web-based self-assessment tool for service excellence.

NDT wishes to acknowledge the contribution of all its stakeholders, especially provincial representatives from both the public and private sectors – during the development of the National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy. The Department wishes to also thank Mr. Shepherd Shonhiwa, author of ***Signposts to Service Excellence: An African Perspective***, for his advice and strategic direction in the development of this strategy.

AMBASSADOR, LM MAKHUBELA

Director-General

ACRONYMS

ACSA:	Airport Company of South Africa
CATHSSETA:	Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education SETA
CEO:	Chief Executive Officer
DBE:	Department of Basic Education
DHE:	Department of Higher Education and Training
DIRCO:	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
ETEYA:	Emerging Tourism Enterprise of the Year Awards
GCP:	Global Competitiveness Programme
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
MEC:	Member of the Executive Council
MINMEC:	Intergovernmental tourism forum of National Minister and Members of the Executive Councils (MECs) for Tourism
MIPTECH:	Interprovincial Tourism Technical Committee of Provincial and National officials
NCC:	National Consumer Commission
NDT:	National Department of Tourism
NTSS:	National Tourism Sector Strategy
PIE:	Product Infrastructure Environment
PES:	Process Efficiency System
PAB:	People Attitude Behaviour
SABS:	South African Bureau of Standards
SANPARKS:	South African National Parks
SAPS:	South African Police Service
SARS:	South African Revenue Service
SAT:	South African Tourism
SAQI:	South African Quality Institute
TBCSA:	Tourism Business Council of South Africa
TGCSA:	Tourism Grading Council of South Africa
TEP:	Tourism Enterprise Partnership
WEF:	World Economic Forum

KEY DEFINITIONS

Customer Service	Customer Service refers to the commitment to providing value-added services to external and internal customers, including attitude, knowledge, technical support and quality service rendered timeously.
Norms and Standards	A norm refers to a generally accepted standard that obtains in a normal situation. A standard refers to the level of qualities required and set according to specific norms.
Strategy	Strategy refers to a set course of action to be taken in a specific, assessed circumstance. It refers to how solutions to problems are crafted into an integrated programme of action.
Tourism	Refers to all travel, for whatever purpose, which results in one or more nights spent away from home.
Tourism Industry	Refers to all recipients of a tourist's direct spending. This includes pre-trip expenditure, such as transport and accommodation bookings, en route expenditure, and all spending at a destination.
Tourism Sector	Refers to the three subsectors of tourism: Hospitality; Travel and Tourism; and Conservation and Tourist Guiding.
Tourism Value Chain	Refers to the full range of activities required to bring a product or service through the various production phases (including physical transformation, and the input of various providers and services), in response to consumer demand.
Tourist	Refers to a person who travels away from home, for at least one night. A tourist can be a domestic tourist (for example a resident of Johannesburg spending one night in Durban), a regional tourist (a visitor from Zimbabwe spending one or more nights in the Free State) or an overseas tourist (a resident of Germany spending one or more nights in the North-West Province). A tourist travels for various reasons, including business, leisure, conferences, etc.
Tourist Service Experience	Refers to a tourist's experiences at all the touchpoints when visiting the country.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Current Situation

The sector has grown significantly in the past years. The New Growth Path, which was approved by Cabinet in October 2010, identified tourism as one of the six core pillars of growth, the other pillars being: infrastructure development, agriculture, mining, the green economy, and manufacturing.

Below are some of the positive attributes that have resulted in this success:

- South Africa is a value-for-money destination;
- South Africa has excellent year-round weather;
- The country's infrastructure is on a par with the best in the world;
- The country is well marketed internationally;
- The country has a diverse product offering; and
- Our currency is doing relatively well under current global financial constraints.

The hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup also showcased South Africa as an international tourist destination to the world and created huge opportunities for the tourism sector.

1.2 Challenges

However, there are numerous challenges that may hinder tourism growth in the country. Below are some obstacles that have been identified:

- There is a general culture of poor service in the tourism industry and related sectors. There is a lack of enthusiasm in delivering service or in 'going the extra mile' to satisfy customers (*White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa*, 1996);
- There is an underlying lack of service ethos in the Tourism sector (*Tourism Skills Audit*, 2006);
- In each of the tourism subsectors, there is a critical lack of skills. Communication, customer and guest relations, and languages are the most common areas in which generic skills are lacking (*HRD Strategy*, 2008);

- Skilled service-oriented people are the backbone of the tourism sector. Without the steady supply and development of people, the growth of the sector is under severe threat (*TBCSA Position Paper, 2009*);
- Overall, the current state of customer service delivery within the country is inconsistent, with visitors experiencing extremes of poor to excellent service. There are various reasons for this state of affairs, but mostly it can be ascribed to poor leadership, frontline staff not being inspired to deliver excellent service (because they are uninformed of the benefits of delivering excellent service), and because they are not treated with respect or made accountable for creating an experience. South Africans are generally loath to complain about poor service, only voicing their complaints to family members and friends. Consequently, the service providers are often ignorant of the fact that their service did not measure up to expected standards (*Current Customer Service Delivery in South Africa Research Report, 2009*); and
- According to the *Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report* published by the World Economic Forum (2009), the following are the country's ratings:
 - Number 61 out of 133 countries in terms of competitiveness
 - 3rd in Africa behind Tunisia (44th), Mauritius (40th)
 - Regulatory Environment (82/133)
 - Business Environment and Infrastructure (52/133)
 - Human, cultural and natural resources (96/133)



1.3. SWOT ANALYSIS

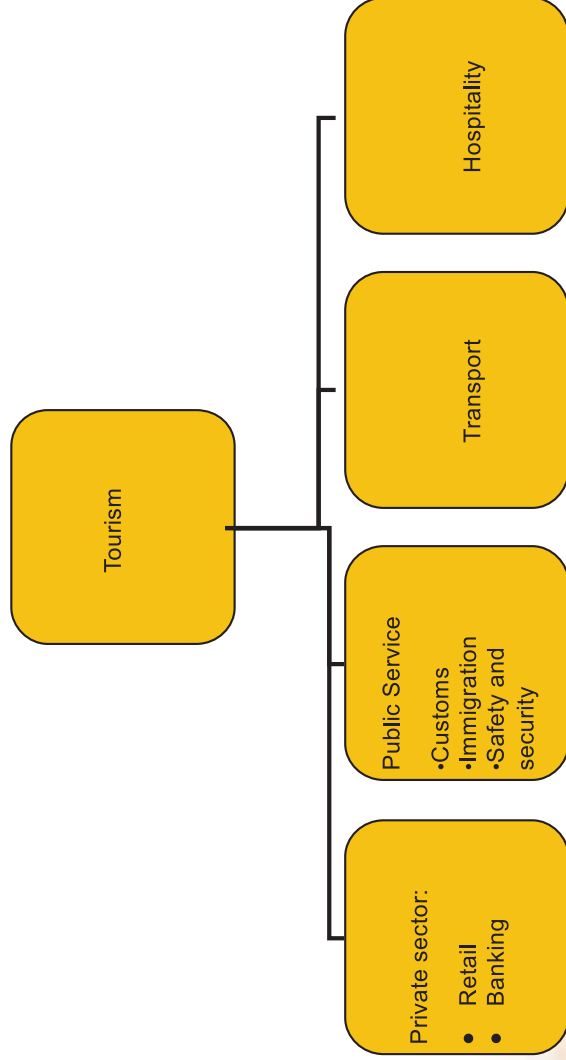
The following table illustrates the SWOT for implementing the Strategy:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service excellence has been endorsed by the National Tourism Sector Strategy as one of the strategic thrusts for tourism growth. • The current service levels in South Africa, research findings and other related strategies, such as HRD Strategy and Skills Audit, formed the basis for developing the Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A myriad of similar initiatives are currently being implemented in the tourism sector.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sector's eagerness to adopt an integrated approach to service excellence, as presented by the Strategy. • Collaboration with existing projects that have similar goals and objectives to the Strategy. • The opportunity to build a service culture in the tourism sector that will result in repeat visits by tourists and a positive economic impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of buy-in and support from management and key stakeholders in the tourism value chain. • Lack of funding to implement the proposed interventions.

2. TOURISM VALUE CHAIN

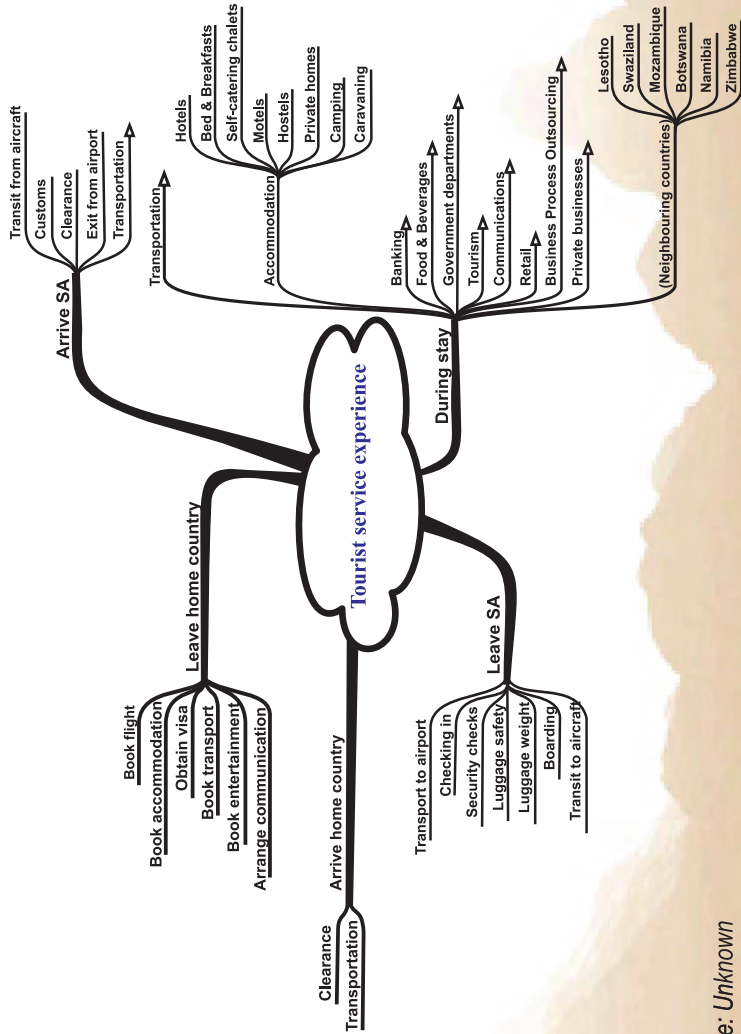
It is also important to note that the growth of the tourism industry depends on other sectors – especially sectors within the tourism value chain. The overall objective of service excellence is to create a service-oriented culture to ensure that South Africa provides visitors with a world-class experience. When tourists visit the country, they interact with numerous service touchpoints, tourism being one of them. In order to achieve the objectives of service excellence, it is imperative that this Strategy be all encompassing – including touchpoints, such as retail, transport, etc.

(a) Key stakeholders in the tourism sector (diagram 1)



Source: Unknown

(b) Tourism Service Experience (diagram 2)



Source: Unknown

3. STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Currently South Africa does not have an integrated approach to service excellence in the tourism sector. A myriad of initiatives are not integrated into a single, national strategy. There is consequently a need to rationalize efforts and to develop a strategy that will guide service excellence in the sector.

The National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy was initiated by the National Department of Tourism (NDT) in partnership with the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA). It is aimed at creating an enabling environment in which to develop a culture of excellent customer service and to ensure that all key stakeholders play a role in improving service levels in the tourism sector. National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy provides guidelines on how this can be achieved. The Strategy will be reviewed after five years to ensure that the interventions are on par with world best practices, and the sector's response to the proposed interventions will be analysed.

In order for South Africa to achieve integrated service excellence along the entire service value chain, something drastic needs to be done. All South Africans are expected to deliver a brand promise by creating a unique, personal experience at each service encounter, so that the country can earn the distinction of being a unique destination compared to the rest of the world.

World-class solutions and best practices need to be adapted to South Africa's unique environment and need to be implemented as such. Every individual offering a service to any customer should be competent to provide a pleasant experience. All partners in the tourism service value chain need to commit to service excellence.

3.1. *Service Excellence Vision*

To build a service excellence culture in the tourism sector and its value chain.

3.2. *Service Excellence Mission*

To transform service and to create a customer service-oriented environment by crafting a solution-oriented culture of customer service in the tourism sector and its value chain.

3.3. **Short-term goal**

To provide a pleasant and unforgettable service experience to South Africa's visitors, and to all other customers in the tourism sector.

3.4. **Long-term goal**

To establish South Africa as a globally competitive service economy and the world's destination of choice in terms of providing excellent customer service.

3.5. **Service Excellence Values**

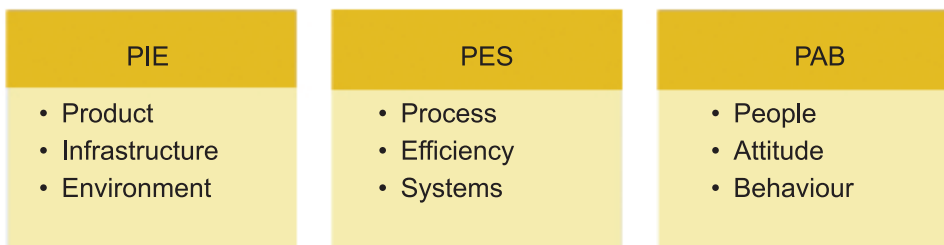
Service excellence has a direct cause-and-effect relationship with good management practices. Customer service occurs within a particular context in society, which can be either highly structured such as a business firm, or a loosely formal entity such as a community organization. Common to both situations are certain fundamental aspects (Shonhiwa: 2001). It is therefore important for the service excellence programme to reflect values that will inform all transactions.

One of the underpinning values of the National Tourism Sector Strategy is the provision of excellent service throughout the tourism sector and its value chain.

- **Cause-and-effect Relationship:** It is important to start every transaction with an end in mind. In order to provide a better service to customers, staff must have a clear vision of the purpose and direction of their organization. It is important for each individual who renders a service to understand the responsibility and consequences of each action undertaken in every transaction.
- **Customer Insight:** The critical aspect of this approach is to effectively identify customers, consult with them meaningfully and efficiently measure the outcomes of the service rendered. This approach is not only about being able to gather information, it is also about an ability to interpret and use the information gathered.
- **Organizational Culture:** It is important to build and foster a truly customer-focused culture. In order to achieve this, we need commitment throughout the organization, from strategic leadership down to the front-line staff.

- **Information and Access:** Accurate and comprehensive information must be made available to customers via the appropriate channels. Making your customer your priority is an important step towards effective communication. It is also important for staff to keep abreast of the latest trends in service developments.
- **Service Delivery:** Listening to a customers' views on a service provided can be as important as achieving key performance targets. Comments, feedback and complaints from customers are important for making vital adjustments to the manner in which a business is conducted and results in improved service delivery.
- **Timeliness and Quality of Service:** Prompt initial contact and maintaining agreed timelines is crucial to customer satisfaction. However, we need to ensure that quality is not compromised at the expense of providing a timely service.
- **Norms and Standards:** It is important for organizations to define and set norms and standards for their employees to use as benchmarks when rendering services.
- **Consistency:** Ensure that excellent service is rendered consistently in order to create favourable perceptions with customers.

4. PLATFORMS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY (diagram 3)



Source: Unknown

'Products' refers to both what is produced and to the supporting tools and technology employed. Products include domain knowledge and its application. Some products are able to automate processes or support and guide people to produce better quality and better performance.

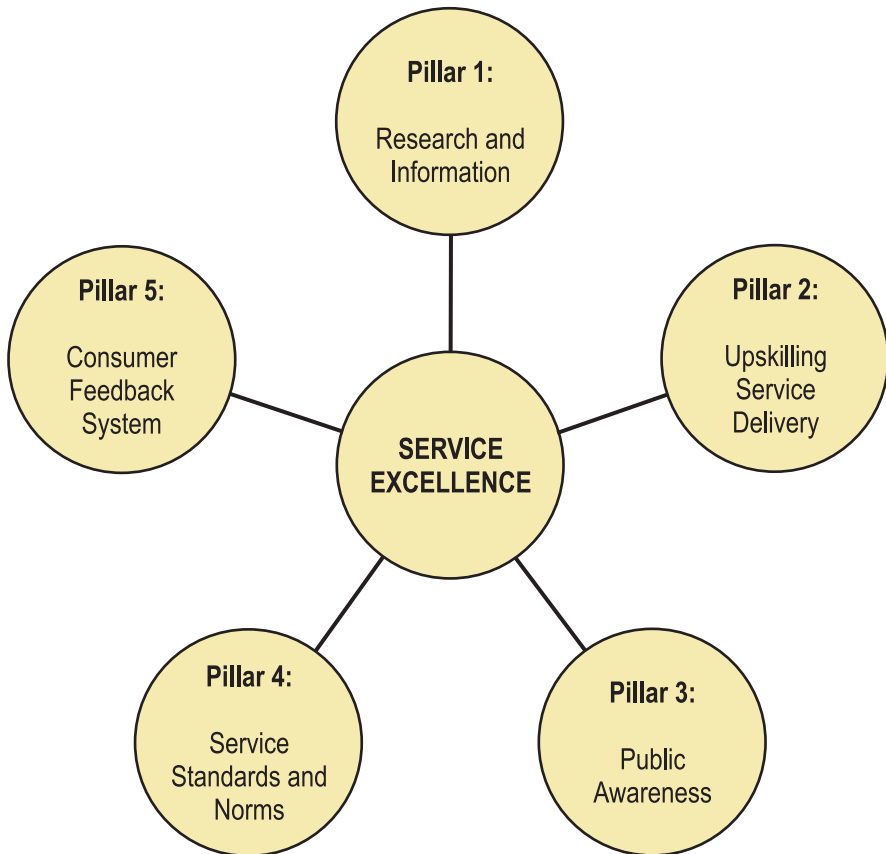
'Process' refers to the set of activities followed to produce products for customers and clients. Optimizing such processes eliminates waste, increases efficiency and reduces risk.

'People' provide the fundamental element for excellence, competitive advantage and differentiation – even more so as enterprises become more knowledge-oriented and service oriented.

The White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa, 1996, states that the fundamental guiding principles for the development of tourism in South Africa is that tourism will be government-led, private sector-driven, community-based and labour-intensive. It has often been said that South Africa cannot compete effectively in terms of infrastructure with most developed countries. Although it should be acknowledged that South Africa compares favourably with most developing countries, its performance is average in terms of the PIE and PES (as per diagram 3) and there is room for improvement. However, in terms of PAB we need to improve significantly – and this Strategy aims to achieve exactly that.

In South Africa it is said that our uniqueness lies in our people and our cultures. We need to derive the best from our employees by ensuring that they understand why they are in business and how their businesses contribute to the country's overall economic growth.

5. STRATEGIC PILLARS AND PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS (diagram 4)



The Strategy rests on five pillars that will play a critical role when implemented. All these pillars will take into consideration existing initiatives regarding service excellence. The need to combine efforts and coordinate activities cannot be overemphasized. The role of NDT will be determined by the various pillars, as some pillars fall outside the scope of its national mandate. In such cases, the Department will assume a facilitative role and a lead organization will be identified to drive the process.

5.1 Research and Information

Key Objective

To conduct research and gather information in order to determine benchmarks to understand and monitor service levels, identify service gaps and implement service improvement plans.

Current Situation

Basic research on service levels in the tourism sector has been conducted.

Guiding Principles

All interventions will be underpinned by the following principles:

- The active participation of different key stakeholders in the tourism value chain.
- The interventions will be driven by NDT.

Proposed Interventions

Actions	Sub-actions	Working Groups
<p>Conduct research and gather information to develop objective benchmarks for understanding service levels, identifying service gaps needing to be addressed, and for monitoring service improvement.</p>	<p>*Develop a comprehensive baseline for customer service satisfaction in South Africa, covering key markets (domestic, African, intercontinental; leisure, business travel, business tourism), including the entire value chain – from booking and information provision to travel, accommodation and experiences.</p> <p>*Based on customer satisfaction research, publish a National Tourism Service Index and a State of Service Excellence Report.</p> <p>*Use information from the surveys to capacitate establishments and stakeholders on where service level gaps exist, and jointly develop corrective measures.</p>	<p>Lead Organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDT <p>Supporting Organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAT • Provincial tourism authorities • Provincial departments • Academic and research institutions • TBCSA

* National Tourism Sector Strategy

◆ Provincial Service Excellence Road Show Report

5.2. Upskilling Service Delivery

Key Objective

To develop service skills and improve attitudes in order to achieve sustainable changes in behaviour and create a culture of service in the tourism value chain.

Current Situation

Numerous customer care training programmes are offered by various institutions, but they are not integrated. The following are some of the training programmes currently implemented in the tourism sector:

- SAHost
- Welcome Visitor Training Programme
- Smile Campaign
- Customer First Programme
- Tourist Buddy Campaign

Guiding Principles

All interventions will be underpinned by the following principles:

- All training and development programmes should be based on supply - demand and the needs of the tourism value chain.
- Accessible information and opportunities with specific reference to the rural areas and other marginalized groups.
- NDT will play an advocacy role to ensure that all initiatives address all challenges identified with the current programmes.
- The interventions should be championed by CATHSSETA and other related skills development organisations.
- Leaders will be encouraged to ensure that standards and norms are upheld and entrenched in a culture of service excellence.
- Leaders to be sensitized to aspects of service excellence through existing structures, such as Tourism Leadership Dialogue and the private sector's CEOs' Forum.
- Leaders will be encouraged to consistently display leadership qualities, such as selflessness, consistency, fairness, firmness, integrity, insight and passion.
- The interventions will be championed by TBCSA and private sector.

Proposed Interventions

Actions	Sub-actions	Working Groups
Facilitate the development of service skills and attitudes in order to achieve sustainable changes in behaviour and create a service oriented culture in the industry.	*Ensure that the current Customer Care Programmes are reviewed to incorporate appropriate behavioural changes as well as cover customer care for all job categories in the tourism value chain.	Leading organization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CATHSSETA Supporting organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDT TBCSA Provincial training stakeholders TEP DBE and DHET
	*Engage with CATHSSETA and other relevant training providers to ensure that sufficient, accredited trainers are available throughout the country to present service training programmes and relevant capacity-building initiatives.	
	◆ Introduce a service excellence programme and initiatives for learners and students.	
	◆ Promote the Tourism Business Incubator Programme and leverage on existing programmes, such as Adopt-a-Business	
	◆ Develop a web portal and utilize existing systems as platforms for information sharing with stakeholders on service excellence-related issues.	

* National Tourism Sector Strategy

◆ Provincial Service Excellence Road Show Report

5.3. Public Awareness

Key Objectives

- To create public awareness on world-class service standards and to foster an intolerance of poor standards.
- To create awareness among the industry's employees on the importance of customer care.
- To encourage organisations in the tourism value chain to create a customer service culture within their organizations.
- To encourage changes in attitudes and perceptions concerning customer service amongst the employees, employers and general public.

5.3.1. National Public Awareness Initiatives

Current Situation

Based on the findings of the Current Customer Service Delivery Research report, it was established that most South Africans are unable to provide constructive feedback in the workplace, which has enabled the continuation of poor service and acceptance, thereof, as the norm. It is therefore important to educate consumers to demand acceptable service standard and to motivate South Africa to be hospitable and a welcoming nation.

Guiding Principles

All interventions will be underpinned by the following principles:

- The active participation of the various stakeholders in the tourism value chain.
- Interventions will be driven jointly by NDT and the private sector.

Proposed Interventions

Actions	Sub-actions	Working Groups
<p>Create public awareness of world-class service standards among consumers, and foster an intolerance of poor service.</p> <p>Create an awareness of the importance of customer care among industry employees.</p>	<p>* Developing and introducing the "EXCELLENT SERVICE starts with ME" slogan to promote the National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School competitions • Media plans – print, TV, radio, electronic, social networks and others • Leverage on the National Quality Week and other similar events to celebrate Service Excellence Day • Introduce a (quarterly) service excellence newsletter • Establish a platform where leaders can exchange knowledge and best practices on customer service and also utilize existing structures • Developing promotional items for maximum impact • Stakeholder engagement through workshops, road shows, conferences, etc. 	<p>Leading organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDT <p>Supporting organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAT • Provincial tourism authorities • Provincial departments • Institutions of higher learning • TBCSA • Local government • SALGA • COGTA • Other key stakeholders
	<p>* Introduce service excellence reality-television (TV) series and talk shows on both radio and TV</p>	

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5.4. Service Standards and Norms

5.4.1. National Tourism Service Excellence Requirements

Key Objectives

- To develop minimum standards of service excellence that will set acceptable levels of service delivery.

Current Situation

The tourism value chain does not have integrated standards and norms that function as guiding principles in terms of customer service. Minimum standards of service excellence will be developed in collaboration with South African Bureau of Standards (SABS).

Guiding principles

All processes will be guided by the following principles:

- Organisations in the tourism value chain must be encouraged to adopt and apply the Service Excellence Standards and norms.
- The interventions should be championed by NDT and TBCSA.
- The following principles should be considered when developing and implementing the Service Excellence Standards and norms for organisations :
 - Commitment
 - Capacity Building
 - Visibility
 - Access
 - Courtesy
 - Responsiveness
 - Accuracy
 - Accountability
 - Continual Improvements
 - Value for Money
 - Safety and Security

Proposed Interventions

Actions	Sub-actions	Working Groups
Measure and monitor service standards	*Develop generic service excellence standards and norms.	Leading organization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDT
	*Collaborate with other appropriate structures responsible for rating tourism services and products to develop and introduce a service excellence mark-of-quality that may be used by all South African companies that render excellent service to tourists.	Supporting organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBCSA • SAT • SABS • SAQI • Other relevant organisations
	◆ Develop and introduce a web-based self-assessment tool for measuring service excellence.	

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5.4.2. Integrated Tourism Excellence Awards System

Key Objectives

- To develop an integrated awards system that will be used as a Platform to recognise and promote service excellence.
- To recognise Excellence in customer service rendered organisations and individuals.

Current Situation

Currently there are awards systems initiatives aimed at rewarding service excellence. These initiatives are aimed at rewarding organizations and structures that engage in positive efforts of providing excellent service. Though all of these awards recognises excellent service, they are mainly fragmented and not integrated. Events take place on an annual basis and they have been supported over the years, they are fairly well established with screening systems in place. Among other challenges, these awards systems are not inclusive of all stakeholders in the tourism value chain. It is therefore important to ensure that the criterion that is being used for screening should be inclusive and holistic in nature to ensure that all pillars of service excellence are rewarded.

Guiding Principles

All interventions will be underpinned by the following principles:

- Organisations in the tourism value chain must be encouraged to strive for service excellence in order to be nominated for the integrated service excellence award system.
- The interventions should be championed by NDT and TBCSA.

Proposed Interventions

Actions	Sub-actions	Working Groups
Develop an integrated service excellence awards for the tourism value.	♦ Develop criteria for an integrated award system that reflects service excellence principles.	Leading organization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDT
	* Introduce national integrated service excellence awards for the tourism value chain.	Supporting organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBCSA • SAT • Other relevant stakeholders

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5.5. Consumer Feedback System

Key Objectives

- To develop and introduce an accessible, easy-to-use tourism consumer feedback system

Current Situation

Currently there is no inclusive consumer feedback system for the tourism value chain. Different organizations have their own feedback systems, but these are not integrated. The Department will work closely with the National Consumer Commission regarding dispute resolution mechanisms. It is thus imperative to develop an inclusive national consumer feedback system for the tourism value chain and the public to ensure that feedback is dealt with appropriately.

Guiding Principles

All interventions will be underpinned by the following principles:

- All consumer feedback, irrespective of its nature, should be addressed appropriately.
- Consumer feedback systems should be comprehensive enough to include all important variables.
- Interventions must be driven by the private sector.

Proposed Interventions

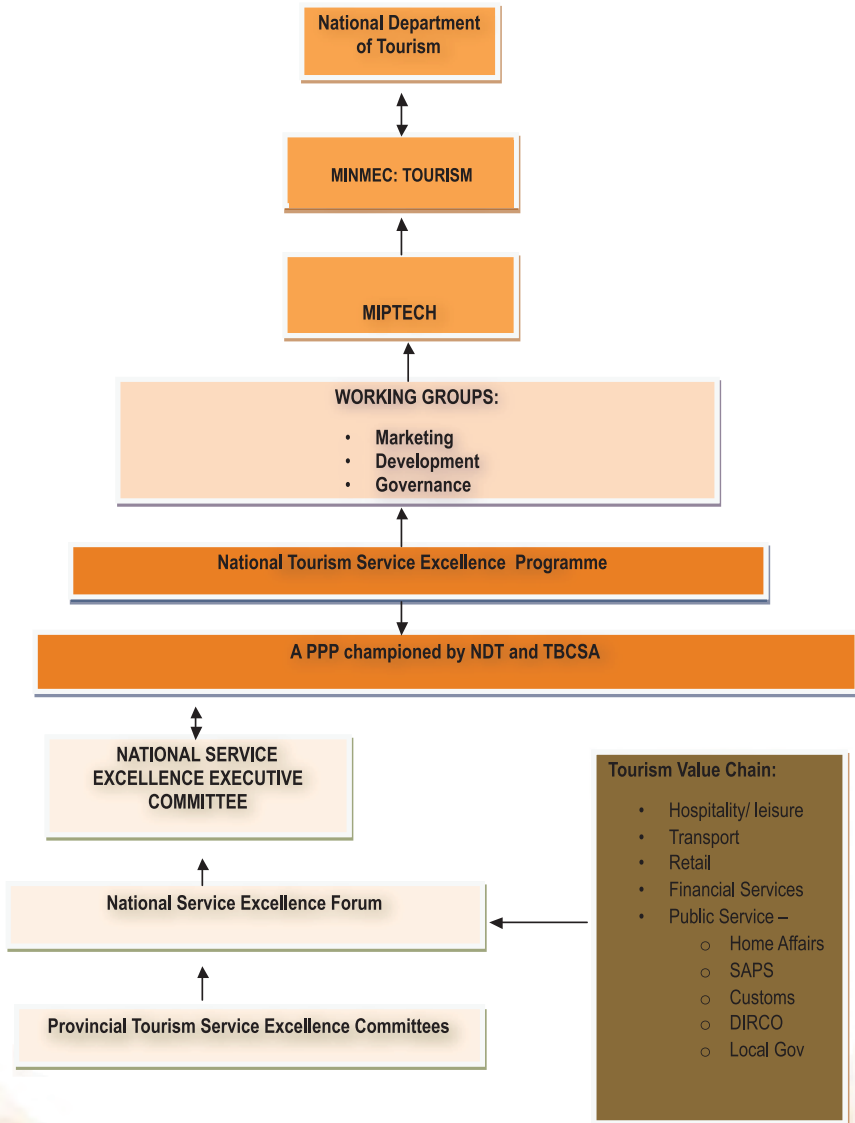
Actions	Sub-actions	Working Groups
Develop an accessible, easy-to-use tourism consumer feedback system.	♦ Develop consumer feedback guidelines that outline the processes to be followed by businesses for effective consumer feedback management.	Leading organization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDT
	* Introduce a comprehensive, industry-wide customer feedback system that includes an SMS option, phone/fax numbers, an e-mail address and a website, to cleverly initiate focused feedback, both positive and negative. Ensure that feedback is channelled to the establishment for action and that the establishment does indeed respond to the customer, i.e. South Africa's version of TripAdvisor.	Supporting organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBCSA • SAT • TGCSA • NCC
	♦ Encourage organisations/businesses to implement internal feedback systems for constant service improvement, according to the consumer feedback guidelines.	

* *National Tourism Sector Strategy*

♦ *Provincial Service Excellence Road Show Report*

6. INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION

6.1. Institutional Arrangement of the Tourism Service Excellence Programme



The diagram above reflects the institutions to be involved in order for the programme to be implemented successfully. Although this programme was initiated by the tourism sector, it cuts across all touchpoints in the tourism value chain. It is thus essential that all the role players be properly informed and mobilized accordingly.

The key structures for the National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy are:

6.1.1 National Department of Tourism

The Department is responsible for the national tourism policy, its regulation and development.

6.1.2 MINMEC: Tourism

The intergovernmental tourism forum of the National Minister of Tourism and the provincial MECs for Tourism who confer and debate on national tourism policy matters.

6.1.3 MIPTECH

The Interprovincial Technical Committee on Tourism is an intergovernmental forum comprising of national and provincial tourism officials, SALGA, heads of provincial government tourism departments, and the CEOs of tourism authorities, who coordinate provincial and national tourism affairs in preparation for and in support of the MINMEC.

6.1.4 Working Groups (Marketing, Development and Governance)

These working groups comprise of interprovincial committees, with provincial tourism authorities focusing on various aspects of the tourism sector, such as marketing, development, policy and governance issues.

6.1.5 National Tourism Service Excellence Programme

The National Tourism Service Excellence Programme was developed by NDT to ensure improved service levels and to benchmark the tourism value chain against world-class standards.

6.1.6 *Private-Public Partnership*

The Executive Committee, consisting of NDT and TBCSA, provides strategic direction for the programme and also plays an advocacy role.

6.1.7 *National Service Excellence Executive Committee*

The National Service Excellence Executive Committee is a committee that decides on the priorities of the programme and manages the general course of the implementation plan.

6.1.8 *National Service Excellence Forum*

The National Service Excellence Forum is a collaborative body of stakeholder representatives that will develop, implement and review the national strategy.

6.1.9 *Tourism Value Chain*

The Tourism Value Chain comprises of sectors that fall outside of the tourism sector, but are important to the overall tourist service experience. It forms part of the Executive Committee.

6.1.10 *Provincial Tourism Service Excellence Committees*

The Provincial Tourism Service Excellence committees will customise the national strategy to suit their specific environment.

7. ROLES OF THE PARTNERS

7.1 Tourism Business Council South Africa (TBCSA)

TBCSA is a private-sector membership organisation that has positioned itself as a united voice for the tourism industry. The TBCSA advocates the interests of its members in terms of the government and other decision makers.

The key role that TBCSA will play is to communicate and mobilize business within the tourism sector to accept, support and actively participate in this initiative. This partner will also play a leading role concerning some of the pillars that are driven by the private sector.

7.2 Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education SETA (CATHSSETA)

CATHSSETA is responsible for ensuring that training and development standards are established in the tourism and hospitality sectors. Within the industry CATHSSETA also provides leadership on skills and training matters by identifying current and future skills requirements, developing strategic plans to assist the industry to meet those needs and promoting training that will meet the needs of employers and employees.

CATHSSETA's role is to lead the implementation of training programmes, including technical expertise in monitoring and quality assurance. In this particular initiative CATHSSETA will play a significant role in the successful implementation of one of the pillars, namely **“Upskilling Service Delivery”**.

7.3 Tourism Enterprise Partnerships (TEP)

The TEP is responsible for supporting the development and growth of SMMEs in the tourism sector. The key role of TEP will be to facilitate capacity-building initiatives targeted at emerging entrepreneurs and enterprises and to ensure that information is filtered through to these target markets.

7.4 South African Tourism (SAT)

SAT is the entity responsible for marketing South Africa as an international visitor destination. It owns the South African tourism-marketing brand, under which the global tourism campaign is managed. SAT reinforces its key marketing messages by providing quality information to visitors through its website.

7.5 Tourism Provincial Departments and Provincial Tourism Authorities

Provincial Tourism Departments

The role of Provincial Tourism Departments is:

- Regulating the tourism sector in the Province through policy development, implementation, planning and strategies;
- To raise the profile of tourism in the Province;
- Creating awareness on the benefits of tourism in the Province.

Provincial Tourism Authorities

The role of Provincial Tourism Authorities is:

- Develop and market tourism in the Province;
- Promote the sustainable use of resources;
- Effective and efficient management and conservation of bio-diversity and eco-systems in the Province.

8. SERVICE EXCELLENCE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

STRATEGIC PILLAR	PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS	LEADER AND CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS	ESTIMATED BUDGET PER ANNUM R'000				
			2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Research and Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a comprehensive baseline for customer service satisfaction in South Africa, covering key markets (domestic, African, intercontinental; leisure, business travel, business tourism), including the entire value chain – from booking and information provision to travel, accommodation and experiences. Based on the customer satisfaction research, publish a National Tourism Service Index and State of Service Excellence Report. Use information from the surveys to capacitate establishments and stakeholders to identify where service level gaps exist, and jointly develop corrective measures. 	<p>Leading organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDT <p>Supporting organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAT Provincial Tourism authorities Provincial departments Academic and research institutions TBCSA 	1,500*	1,650*	1,815*	1,997*	2,197*

*Amounts reflected are not based on current allocations, but on projected estimates.

STRATEGIC PILLAR	PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS	LEADER AND CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS	ESTIMATED BUDGET PER ANNUM R'000				
			2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Upskilling Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the current Customer Care Programmes are reviewed to incorporate appropriate behavioural changes as well as cover customer care for all job categories in the tourism value chain Engage with CATHSSETA and other relevant training providers to ensure that sufficient accredited trainers are available throughout the country to present service training programmes and introduce relevant capacity-building initiatives. Introduce a service excellence programme and initiatives for learners and students. Promote the Tourism Business Incubator programmes and leverage on existing programmes such as Adopt-a-Business. Develop a web portal and utilize existing systems as platforms to share information on service excellence-related issues with stakeholders. 	<p>Leading organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CATHSSETA <p>Supporting organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial training stakeholders NDT TBCSA TEP DBE and DHET 	1,500*	1,650*	1,815*	1,997*	2,197*

*Amounts reflected are not based on current allocations, but on projected estimates.

STRATEGIC PILLAR	PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS	LEADER AND CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS	ESTIMATED BUDGET PER ANNUM R'000				
			2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Public Awareness	<p>Developing and introducing the EXCELLENT SERVICE starts with ME slogan to promote the National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School competitions • Media plans – print, TV, radio, electronic, social networks and others • Leverage the National Quality Week and other similar events to celebrate Service Excellence Day • Introduce a (quarterly) service excellence newsletter • Establish a platform where leaders can exchange knowledge and best practices on customer service and also utilize existing structures • Develop promotional items for maximum impact • Stakeholder engagement through workshops, road shows, conferences, etc. <p>Introduce service excellence reality television (TV) series and talk shows on both radio and TV</p>	<p>Leading organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDT <p>Supporting organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAT • Provincial tourism authorities • Provincial departments • Institutions of higher learning • TBCSA • SALGA • COGTA • Other relevant stakeholders 	3,000*	3,300*	3,630*	3,993*	4,392*

*Amounts reflected are not based on current allocations, but on projected estimates.

STRATEGIC PILLAR	PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS	LEADER AND CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS	ESTIMATED BUDGET PER ANNUM R'000				
			2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Service Standards and Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop generic service excellence standards and norms. Collaborate with other appropriate structures responsible for rating tourism services and products to develop and introduce a service excellence mark of quality that may be used by all South African companies that provide excellent service to tourists. Develop and introduce a webbased self-assessment tool for measuring service excellence. Develop criteria for an integrated award system reflecting the service excellence principles. Introduce national integrated service excellence award for the tourism value chain 	<p>Leading organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDT <p>Supporting organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBCSA • SAT • Other relevant stakeholders 	500*	550*	605*	666*	733*

*Amounts reflected are not based on current allocations, but on projected estimates.

STRATEGIC PILLAR	PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS	LEADER AND CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS	ESTIMATED BUDGET PER ANNUM R'000				
			2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Consumer Feedback System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop consumer feedback guidelines that outline the processes to be followed by businesses for effective consumer feedback management. Encourage organisations/businesses to implement an internal feedback system for the constant improvement of services, as per the consumer feedback guidelines. Introduce a comprehensive, industry-wide customer feedback system that includes an SMS option, phone/fax numbers, an e-mail address and a website, to cleverly initiate focused feedback, both positive and negative. Ensure that feedback is channelled to the establishment for action and that the establishment does indeed respond to the customer, i.e. South Africa's version of TripAdvisor. 	<p>Leading organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDT <p>Supporting organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBCSA • SAT • TGCSA • NCC • Other relevant stakeholders 	500*	550*	605*	666*	733*
TOTAL			7,000	7,700	8,470	9,319	10,252

*Amounts reflected are not based on current allocations, but on projected estimates.

9. COMMUNICATION PLAN

NDT is planning to engage in a number of initiatives to sensitise the tourism value chain on the importance of providing excellent service. The focus is on changing the attitudes and perceptions of all stakeholders about providing good customer services. The plan entails the following activities, namely to:

- Launch the National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy;
- Launch the EXCELLENT Service starts with ME national campaign;
- Communicate the various initiatives of the Service Excellence Programme to the industry and general public, such as Service Excellence Standards and Norms, the Consumer Feedback System and available customer service training programmes;
- Encourage organisations in the tourism value chain to foster a customer service culture within their respective institutions;
- Encourage positive attitudes and perceptual changes among employees, employers and general public concerning customer service.

10. RISKASSESSMENT

The Global Competitiveness Programme identified service levels and skills as areas requiring the concerted focus of the tourism industry. These areas were further emphasized during a supply-side diagnostic survey conducted as part of the process of developing the 2010 Tourism Organizing Plan. During the survey, a number of host locations highlighted this challenge as being a key challenge that they faced in terms of the 2010 event.

In terms of service levels, the GCP study found that, while the overall levels of satisfaction with the tourism experience in South Africa are very high (91% on average), there are signals from a small minority of dissatisfied tourists (largely business travellers) indicating that poor service levels are indeed an issue.

11. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Unequivocal support from leadership
- Allocation of adequate resources to support the implementation plan of the Strategy
- Buy-in from key partners
- Buy-in from individual enterprises
- Commitment of all South Africans to service excellence

12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The successful implementation of the National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy will be possible only through the development of proper monitoring and evaluation systems, which will be championed by NDT. In a bid to ensure that the programmes on integrated service excellence meet the objectives as set out in the Strategy, a monitoring and evaluation tool will be devised in collaboration with relevant partners.

13. CONCLUSION

The National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy requires that NDT, TBCSA and other relevant stakeholders collaborate in coordinated fashion during the implementation of the Strategy. It is the key objective of NDT to ensure that the concept of service excellence be adopted and implemented by all organisations to ensure that we achieve our goal of being a globally competitive service economy.

South Africa's hosting of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup has created a number of opportunities for the country – especially for the tourism sector. The Soccer World Cup has made it possible for the tourism sector to grow and, in order for this growth to be sustainable, it is essential to benchmark destination South Africa against the best international standards and service levels to ensure the provision of optimum service.

One of the roles of NDT, as per the *White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa*, is to facilitate the development of a tourism culture in South Africa and the supply of skilled manpower to the industry. The NDT would like to place additional emphasis on the importance of the National Tourism Service Excellence Programme, the role it plays in the growth of tourism and how the principle of service excellence should be employed as a fundamental function of every organization in the tourism value chain and, for that matter, of any other sector.

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