

SADC, AviaDev partner on air connectivity workshop

The SADC Business Council Tourism Alliance has partnered with AviaDev Africa to host a workshop dedicated to boosting air connectivity across the region. The workshop, scheduled to take place during the upcoming AviaDev conference from 19 to 21 June in Namibia, Windhoek, will bring together key stakeholders from the tourism and aviation sectors to explore strategies for sustainable route development and increased visitor arrivals.



Source: Unsplash via [Fxabay](#)

Air transport a cornerstone for regional growth

Air access isn't just an element on the SADC policy agenda; it's a cornerstone for growth and a top priority, says Natalia Rosa, the project lead at the SADC Business Council Tourism Alliance. "Effective transport systems, including air transport, are essential not just for tourism but for economic growth and enhancing the quality of life in the region."

The workshop will feature a line-up of industry experts, including Gavin Eccles, known for his consultancy work and academic insights; Sylvain Bosc, former Chief Commercial Officer at SAA and Fastjet; Tim Harris from Consulum, who has extensive knowledge in economic strategies; Kojo Bentum-Williams from VoyagesAfriq, a key voice in African tourism media; and Jillian Blackbeard, CEO Africa's Eden Tourism Association, who has first-hand experience with regional tourism collaboration.

Collaborative effort required for route viability

Participants will delve into the complexities of route development, share effective marketing strategies, and discuss how to foster sustainable tourism growth by working together as airlines, National Tourism Organisations and private sector associations and companies. The workshop aims to provide practical insights and engage leaders directly, exploring innovative solutions to common challenges faced by the industry.

"We know that simply launching new air routes isn't enough. It requires a collective effort to ensure their success and sustainability," Rosa adds. "That's why we need to come together to figure out how best to support these routes."

She further explains: "Launching a new route is just the beginning; its success and sustainability rely on the collective

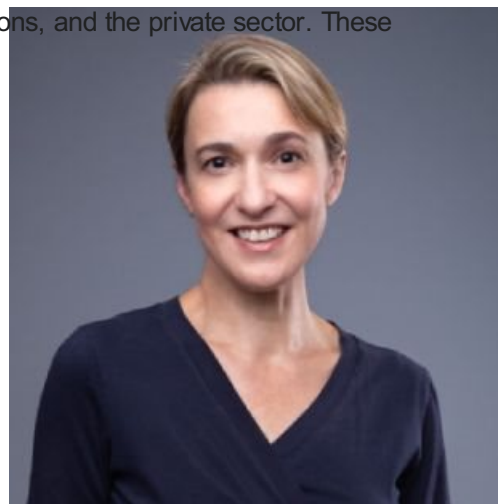
efforts of an ecosystem comprising airlines, airports, national tourism organisations, and the private sector. These stakeholders must work together to 'hunt in packs' – collaborating to identify, secure, and promote new routes.

The SADC Business Council Tourism Alliance, established in November 2023, was created to spearhead the SADC Programme 2020-2030 from the perspective of the private sector. The Alliance advocates for sweeping reforms like the adoption of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) and harmonisation of aviation regulations to reduce costs and expand air service accessibility, ultimately boosting both business and leisure travel in the region.

Fostering a collaborative environment for development

Jon Howell, CEO and founder of AviaDev Africa, has expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership, stating: "We're delighted to be working with the SADC Business Council Tourism Alliance on this crucial initiative. By bringing together key players from the tourism and aviation sectors, we aim to foster a collaborative approach to route development and create a more seamless and accessible travel experience for visitors to the region."

Natalia Rosa, Project Lead, SADC BC Tourism Alliance



Says Jon: " All parties involved in route development must continue to cooperate in marketing the route, ensuring its viability and long-term success. This ongoing collaboration is crucial for attracting passengers, supporting the airline's investment, and driving economic benefits for the destination. By working together, we can create a supportive environment that encourages the growth of air connectivity and sustainable tourism in the region."

The workshop is open to National Tourism Organisations, private sector tourism associations, and other key stakeholders attending [AviaDev](#) who are looking to leverage air connectivity to enhance tourism across the SADC region. During AviaDev, workshop attendees will have an opportunity to network with role players in the aviation value chain and gain valuable insights to drive sustainable growth in their respective sectors.

[Learn more about the initiative through the following AviaDev Podcast.](#)

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