

Take advantage of the business travel upswing

South Africa's travel and tourism sector continues to make a significant contribution to the country's economic growth; however there's a need to grow business travel to stay ahead of rapidly emerging African countries, said Wiza Nyondo, head of tourism of FNB Business.



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"Most business tourists tend to include a portion of leisure in their activities and this generates added revenue for the South African travel and tourism economy. Hence the need to offer attractive all-in-one packages for business travellers," he continued.

According to the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA), global business travel spending is expected to increase by 8.2% in 2014. Year 2015 and 2016 are forecast at 7.6% and 7.2%, respectively.

A strong position to grow our revenue base

Nyondo said: "It's important to take advantage of the predicted upward trend because, as a business tourism destination, our country has developed conferencing establishments, world-class infrastructure and a stable business environment. Our track record for successfully hosting big events is remarkable and we are in a strong position to grow our revenue base in the value chain of the tourism economy.

"It's encouraging to see influential entities, such as the South African National Convention Bureau and other trade bodies, playing their part by actively positioning the country to secure more leads in this lucrative subsector. Their contribution is vital because there are competitor destinations in East, West and North Africa that are rapidly offering attractive and unique local tourism product offerings," he said.

The strong competition emerging from other African regions puts pressure on South Africa to re-invent itself continuously as the business hub of the continent. "Being a major economy in the continent is great, but we must not be complacent. We must continue to position ourselves as a value-for-money destination, with innovative packages in order to stay ahead of our peers," Nyondo concluded.

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