

SME Tourism Indaba a go

The SME Tourism Indaba, aimed at fostering transformation by introducing the tourism industry to 60 carefully selected and prepared emerging Gauteng tourism businesses, has kicked off.



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The two-day programme will be jam-packed with new business opportunities, cultural experiences, educational value and helpful critique, and will incorporate a speed marketing component, robust transformation debate with industry stakeholders and visits to various Gauteng townships.

Identifying the best of the best local products

Says David Frost, CEO SATSA: “The way SMEs have traditionally been showcased in South Africa has been suboptimal. SATSA has the ability to directly link smaller players with established inbound operators, which represents a more holistic and meaningful approach to industry transformation.”

David says these ‘domestic’ Indabas should be rolled out to other provinces as they can assist in identifying the best of the best local products to then take forward to the annual Tourism Indaba in Durban. “SATSA will be pursuing these partnerships and is happy to have embarked on this path initially with the Gauteng Tourism Authority. Ensuring full representation for the province, we are honoured to have Joburg Tourism and South African Tourism on board as sponsors.”

As part of this exciting public-private initiative, 60 SMEs will participate in speed marketing to introduce their products and services during the two days. Three unique townships experiences will be offered exposing travel industry players to new sights, sounds and activities, from Ma Elizabeth who was forcibly removed from Sophiatown to the gallery homes of Alexandra.

The state of transformation in tourism

The second day of the SME Tourism Indaba will see a Transformation Breakfast hosted by Joburg Tourism. A panel of forward-thinking industry leaders will debate the state of transformation in tourism.

The SME Tourism Indaba initiative comes as the Amended Tourism Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Sector Code has been handed over to the Tourism Business Council of South Africa, signalling the start of an integrated industry-wide process to transform the tourism sector.

Revised targets and scorecard measurements are designed to be more inclusive of all South Africans at ownership and management levels, improve procurement from small Black businesses, and enhance the development of skills needed across the tourism value chain. The Amended Code seeks to accelerate transformation of the tourism sector by significantly increasing the number of Black people who own, control and manage tourism enterprises.

Transformation is a pressing issue in South Africa, adds David. It is incumbent on all of us to look for innovative ways to bring people and businesses of colour into the mainstream of tourism.

“SATSA has taken the lead in conceptualising an intermediate marketplace where emerging products can meet with DMCs in an environment that allows for an informed discussion about the market readiness of the products. Our objective is to allow DMCs to evaluate SME products that may appeal to their overseas clients, thereby, to use the traditional parlance, ‘get the product into brochures,’ so that Herr Schultz can book the experience in the travel agency in Dusseldorf as part of his SA holiday.”

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