

Dept looks for opportunities to grow rural tourism

Tourism Deputy Minister Fish Mahlalela says opportunities must be identified to grow rural tourism.



João Vitor Heinrichs via [Pexels](#)

"We need to further engage the youth and women... on what they see as ways to economic recovery," Mahlalela said.

Speaking during a visit at the OR Tambo District Municipality in the Eastern Cape on Friday, Mahlalela said the only solution to women abuse is the emancipation of women, so they can provide for themselves financially.

"We have continued to perpetuate the culture of dependency among our youth and women. We need to applaud our government for the proactive initiative of allocation of farmland back to the people for agriculture."

Mahlalela said a tourism route with heritage products can lift the economy.

"Activation of domestic tourism will lessen the stress we have been subjected to by being indoors and not being allowed to [travel]. The Covid-19 lockdown has seen many product owners closing their businesses."

Mahlalela commended business owners who responded well to the call to apply for relief funding provided by the

government in order to keep small businesses afloat.

"Established as an intervention to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the tourism sector, the R200m Tourism Relief Fund provides once-off capped grant assistance to small, micro and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) to ensure sustainability during and post the implementation of government measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 in South Africa."

Mahlalela, however, lamented the fact that there were insufficient funds.

"It is for this reason that there are those amongst us who received letters that their applications were successful but there was no more money to pay. This is an indication of the high number of SMMEs that we have in our country and per region," he said.

Mahlalela explained that the money was not the only assistance given to SMMEs.

"We are here as government to get our communities out of their houses to visit areas of attraction that are within their municipalities and provinces.

"We believe that by word of mouth and using gadgets, we can create a circle of family friends where you share information on tourist attractions," he said.

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