

SA tourism set for growth after trade shows

Last week the second We are Africa trade show was held in Cape Town and the Tourism Indaba took place in Durban over the weekend. According to Bruce Deneys, director of sales and marketing of the Pepperclub Hotel & Spa in Cape Town, these events enable local hospitality operators and players to showcase the country and its offering to a global market. He said that this generates valuable revenue for the tourism sector and, in turn, the local economy.



It was reported by Durban Tourism that the Tourism Indaba was estimated to contribute an estimated R144 million to the local economy and generate more than 500 jobs, whilst also representing more than 24 African destinations.

These recent trade shows add to the growing list of such events taking place in South Africa. In April, [World Travel Market \(WTM\) Africa 2015](#) took place at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) - which is now widely regarded as a leading business-to-business exhibition for inbound and outbound Africa travel and tourism, forming part of Africa Travel Week.

It was reported that last year's WTM Africa event saw approximately 4,000 industry professionals negotiate deals worth \$314 million and that this year was expected to exceed these results given over 500 exhibitors confirmed the show.

Having attended the recent industry trade events, Deneys said that this year's events showed significant growth compared to 2014, as more exhibitors showcased, and the number of serious visitors and buyers attending increased. "The number of calibre buyers in attendance this year, with the intention to purchase packages, highlight that these types of events are viewed as a great platform to create and promote individual and business packages."

Able to compete on a global scale

Deneys said that the growth of these events is a sign that South African tourism is able to compete on a global scale. "The number of trade shows taking place locally is on the increase, and this is a positive sign for our tourism industry. It also highlights the increase in travellers' interest in wanting to visit the country, and to see what it offers for both business and leisure travellers."

He said that although tourism figures continue to grow, Africa has the potential to do more to attract international tourists. He referred to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, released in January 2015, which revealed that of the additional 51 million tourists travelling the world in 2014, Africa only attracted an additional one million arrivals, down from three million the previous year.

"The tourism industry is growing significantly and this year we have already seen an increase in traveller's interest into South Africa, and we expect the demand to continue to rise throughout the year," concluded Deneys.

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