

Volvo Ocean Race due to arrive in Cape Town

Hosting the Volvo Ocean Race is a boost for the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) bolstering its marine tourism and leisure strategy to create jobs, maximising the potential of international events, profiling South Africa as a premier travel destination globally, and creating awareness for youths to consider careers in the industry.



The 2014/15 Volvo Ocean Race began in Alicante, Spain on 4 October and the competitions' first stop over is expected on arrival in Cape Town in early November.

An interactive race village will be open to the public at the V&A Waterfront for the full duration of the stopover. SAMSA will, during this time, host various activities including hosting an exhibition at the Robben Island Museum on the V&A Waterfront, participate in development programmes for sailing, be part of an international sailing seminar with the all-female competitive yachters, Team SCA, who are taking part in the race. Worldsport, in association with the V&A Waterfront, will be hosting the fleet.

Previous stop overs have proved, according to Worldsport, that the race is a superb platform to achieve business tourism and sporting objectives for Cape Town and the Western Cape as well as showcase South Africa on the international stage.

The international ocean race draws thousands of international tourists to Cape Town and daily activities are televised to billions around the world. SAMSA partnering the race allows the authority to raise awareness of maritime careers, promote maritime tourism and further mainstream yachting, which has been an exclusive sport, making it more accessible to communities previously disadvantaged.

Potential for tremendous growth

SAMSA's CEO, Commander Tsietsi Mokhele, said: "We have recognised that marine tourism and leisure not only has the capacity to create jobs, it allows entrepreneurs to enter the industry, and exploit a whole new economic sector which has the potential for tremendous growth."

"Water programmes sell. They sell real estate, they sell activities, they sell everything. The tourism and economic potential of many of South Africa's marine assets has not been optimally exploited. The Volvo race compares positively to the activities of SAMSA with its association with the Duzi Marathon, the Agulhas Incredible Journey to the Antarctica, and the Durban Beach Extravaganza," said Mokhele.

These are platforms that allow a direct entry by SAMSA to boost its marine strategy.

To cement its efforts towards marine tourism further, SAMSA will, during the international Volvo race, launch the South African Ocean Racing Trust. SAMSA, as a founding partner, will be part of the trust with other key members including Worldsport, Ocean Sailing Academy and the private sector. The aim of the trust is to educate and provide a platform for youths to pursue a career in professional sailing and marine-associated industries.

A Sailing Academy will be linked to the trust. It will source students from disadvantaged areas, including working with schools, and provide them with the opportunity of making yacht racing a career which is acceptable throughout the world.

For more, go to www.volvooceanrace.com

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