

SA tourism shows steady growth in 2018

The South African Tourism's (SA Tourism) Strategic, Insights and Analytics (SIA) team have released their report for the January to October period, which shows an overall increase in growth of 1,7% when compared to the same period in 2017. This amounts to 8,6 million international tourists that have visited South Africa during this reporting period.



Matthew Bowden via [Free Images](#)

African land and air arrivals have been key to the growth with air arrivals from the continent showing a healthy 6,8% rise. Increase in arrivals from Angola (38%), DRC (19,9%) and Ghana (17,8%) has stimulated this growth. From an African land arrivals view, the 2,7% increase in growth can be attributed mainly to increase in arrivals from visitors from Malawi (13,3%) and Zimbabwe (7,7%).

"It's really encouraging to see visitors from the continent making South Africa a destination on their travel plans," said Sisa Ntshona, SA Tourism CEO.

Driving tourism

"The growth is in line with some of the recently implemented visa reforms, as well as some regional airlines, increasing their flights into South Africa. We look forward to working closely with them through our Tourism Execution team on the continent to drive more visitors to South Africa."

On the international front, Ntshona acknowledges that there is work to be done. "We are still recovering from barriers that had affected us in 2017 and the early parts of 2018, but are working extremely hard in addressing these challenges.

"With the visa reforms in place and the unabridged birth certificates issue taken care of, we can now work tirelessly in promoting South Africa as a destination of choice having taken away factors that have previously made people doubt travelling to South Africa."

International performance

Ntshona's comments are at the back of decline in visitors from Europe which is the second biggest source market. Growth was seen in the Italian and Spanish markets, but declines were recorded for UK, France, Netherlands, Portugal and Denmark.

The America's continue to show growth. North America grew by 1,2%, while South and Central America saw a 9,7% increase in arrivals. Asian arrivals are also down when compared to the same period in 2017, however, the signs from that region are positive with month on month growth from this region since April.

There was positive news on the domestic tourism front – 14.4 million trips were recorded in this period, which demonstrates a 10,5% increase; while holiday trips accounted for 2,2 million, slightly down from last year.

According to the Tourism Business Council of South Africa's (TBCSA) CEO, Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa: "This tourism performance clearly shows that we have the challenge to recover what we have lost from our international source markets. It further shows that we need to urgently deal with issues of visa waivers and communication around travelling with minors."

The private sector through TBCSA is working with South African Tourism to turnaround non-performing markets. "We look forward to continued partnership with the public sector to increase tourist arrivals, stimulating the economy, and creating more jobs."

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>