

## Local chapter for Meeting Professionals International

Meeting Professionals International (MPI) yesterday, Tuesday, 27 November 2007, announced strategic alliance with the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI) to create the MPI Southern Africa Chapter. This will be the first chapter for MPI on the African continent.

The alliance reinforces MPI's commitment to its ambitious global strategy to support the organisation's new vision to build a rich global meetings industry community. The key objectives include developing the community on an international level while expanding its activities into new buoyant geographical zones.

Joyce Dogniez, CMM, MPI director of operations EMEA, commented, "We are delighted to start new operations in southern Africa and it shows the importance and support MPI wants to give to the development of the region.

"We know that everyone in the industry is excited about this alliance as it will give an international component to the SAACI membership as well as providing access to international knowledge and a global marketplace. At the same time, we are adding to the global map for our European and US members. Southern Africa is definitely in the picture as an active and professional part of the meetings industry."

### Generate new ideas

SAACI national chairman Thomas Overbeck said the alliance will allow SAACI to generate new ideas, inspire innovative thinking, and share knowledge and skills on a global platform. "For SAACI members this means that a new door is opening on excellent educational and business opportunities that will broaden the horizons of all our industry players."

Angeline Lue, GM, business tourism at South African Tourism, congratulated both bodies. "A global alliance of this nature opens up wonderful opportunities for further professionalisation and knowledge exchange for the South African industry. In addition, our industry associations are now able to realistically benchmark themselves with their counterparts around the world."

Of special benefit, she said, is the fact that SAACI members now have access to a global network of industry specialists who are at the forefront of driving professionalisation and recognition of the meetings industry.

### Additional benefits

Every SAACI member (planner and supplier) will have an opportunity to become a member of the MPI Southern Africa Chapter. The members deciding to join will remain SAACI members with all the local benefits, but will also be able to join the international network of MPI, benefiting from all the additional benefits.

MPI Southern Africa will focus on extending the educational offer and the international focus while SAACI will be delivering the local education, accreditation, lobbying and the national agenda.

For more information on MPI, go to [www.mpiweb.org](http://www.mpiweb.org).

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