

Procure Travel Africa postponed until 2021

With Covid-19 taking a heavy toll on the world's tourism industry, organisers of the Travel Procure Summit have decided to postpone the event until 2021. "South Africans and South African companies are, and always have been, resilient but the reality is that we have no real knowledge of how the virus will develop," says Riana Fouche, travel procurement specialist and event organiser.



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"It may take several months for the industry to recover from the turnover losses it is experiencing at the moment, especially since we are operating in an already recessed economic environment. After assessing the situation, we feel that the most responsible thing to do would be to postpone Procure Travel Africa until next year."

The virus has already had a significant adverse impact on global travel, with a number of industry events in Europe and North America being held off until concerns regarding the spread of COVID-19 have been allayed. This includes the cancellation of Germany's ITB, the largest travel and tourism show in the world.

Limiting the spread

South African event organisers have followed suit, with most cancelling upcoming events in accordance with President Ramaphosa's banning of gatherings of more than 100 people, and his call for social distancing.

Fouche says that she is disappointed to see the Travel Procure Summit fall victim to the disease as a result of the impact; however, with potential sponsors from the travel industry suffering the fallout of the travel bans imposed in an effort to limit the spread of the virus, sponsorship has inevitably been affected.

She also notes that Covid-19 is a growing public threat that has serious ramifications. "The events industry is being hard hit, with impacts that are both direct and indirect," Fouche comments. "The devastating effect of the virus on all stakeholders in the travel industry so far has been tragic."

Fouche adds that Procure Travel Africa was created as a collaborative initiative between travel buyers and

suppliers. But, with corporate clients taking extreme measures to protect and ensure the safety of their travellers by halting travel, many suppliers have been left reeling. "There has been an immediate impact," she says, citing a recent news report which stated that some suppliers have seen bookings decrease by as much as 75%.

"We are thankful to our sponsors, who are in support of this decision, and grateful that they continue to share our vision and understand the value of participating and collaborating in this initiative," concludes Fouche.

To date, there are approximately 202, 268 cases of coronavirus around the world, 150 of which have been reported in South Africa.

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