

Call for remote working visas to help tourism recovery

The Western Cape Minister of Finance and Economic Opportunities, David Maynier has written to the Minister of Tourism, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, and the Minister of Home Affairs, Aaron Motsoaledi, with a submission to request that national government urgently introduce a 'Remote Working Visa' to allow international visitors to stay longer and work remotely while travelling in South Africa.



Peggy_Marco via [Fixabay](#)

Globally, many countries are competing to capture the market for the longer-stay tourist who can work online from anywhere in the world while earning and spending foreign currency in the country they are visiting.

Removing regulatory barriers

This is an important market right now, says Maynier as this type of tourist is more resilient to the challenges that traditional tourism is facing given ongoing travel restrictions. Such tourists will also remain an important source of sustainable tourism long after the Covid-19 pandemic. "The Western Cape has everything it takes to be of the best remote working location in the world if we remove the red tape and roll out the red carpet for digital nomad tourists. To support tourism recovery in the Western Cape we are working hard to find innovative ways to attract visitors by embracing new forms of global travel that have emerged with the Covid-19 pandemic."

"For that reason, we have also written to the Deputy Minister of Finance, David Masondo, in his role as part of Operation Vulindela, because removing regulatory barriers such as this one will be key to driving investment in South Africa and stimulating overall economic recovery and growth."

Announcing his support for the 'Remote Working Visa', Premier Alan Winde said: "I am pleased that today we are able to deliver on a promise I made in my State of the Province Address earlier this year and submit our request to national government to urgently introduce a Remote Working Visa.

"Given the severe impact that Covid-19 has had on the tourism sector in South Africa, this innovative visa would be a great contribution to our recovery. The Western Cape is a great place to live and to work and we are ready to welcome these visitors and provide them with a great place to explore while they work."

Promoting location services

In addition, to ensure that digital nomads are considering the province as a destination for remote work, Wesgro will launch a dedicated portal that curates and promotes a range of accommodation establishments and services across multiple locations to guide those looking for longer-stay options in the Western Cape.

This follows a campaign run in partnership with Airbnb to promote remote working domestically, encouraging South Africans to take advantage of the flexibility that working from anywhere brings.

Cape Town has made the 2021 list for the 50 "Best Cities for Remote Working" according to Big 7 Travel, but many of the small, coastal towns such as Langebaan and Hermanus are also proving popular with those looking for destinations that offer good connectivity and a great outdoor lifestyle.

"With family-friendly options in the city as well as a world of activities to explore across the province, the Western Cape is perfect for those who want more out of their day - a meeting on the mountain, a dip in the ocean during screen breaks or the joy of working from the many breath-taking wine farms and quaint towns," says Maynier.

"The region has everything a remote worker needs for one day, three months, or even longer, and promises experiences that are wallet-friendly and world-class. Introducing a Remote Working Visa makes business sense.

"Not only will it attract a significant number of long-term, financially independent travellers to South Africa during this period of economic uncertainty, and in the long term, but remote workers are also more likely to invite their family and friends to visit in the future. This could also have positive spin-offs for foreign direct investment, and the promotion of South African goods and services exports as travellers get to know and love all the great things about our country."

"It is hoped that Minister Kubayi-Ngubane and Deputy Minister Maseko will both see the clear value in this regulatory change and will both be able to work with their counterpart, Minister of Home Affairs, Aaron Motsoaledi, to fast track the necessary changes to the Immigration Act 13 of 2002 Regulations," concludes Maynier.