

Over R1 million boost for rural crafters

A R1.4 million project is underway to promote cultural tourism in Limpopo, funded by the provincial government, the Mopani district municipality, the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the European Union.

By [Neville Maakana](#) 30 Aug 2007

The Heritage-based Arts, Crafts and Tourism Cluster, which was launched recently in Haenertsburg outside Polokwane, aims to help village artists, crafters and tourism projects to improve and market their products.

"The overall aim is to bring tourism to rural communities," said spokesman Michael Gardner.

It is implemented by the Village Tourism Trust, a non-governmental organisation based in Haenertsburg.

"The project will assist artists and crafters in the local informal economy to become more competitive and make it easier for them to gain access to the formal arts and crafts and tourism economies," said Gardner.

The project will provide training and also put in place mechanisms to monitor product quality to meet market requirements.

Gardner said a database of pottery and jewellery entrepreneurs, traditional musicians, poets and storytellers, woodcarvers, basket weavers, tour guides and village tourism enterprises would be created online.

More than 500 artists and crafters are expected to benefit from the project.

Gardner said the project is in line with the Limpopo Provincial Growth and Development Strategy, which was adopted in October 2004.

The strategy identifies tourism, as well as mining and agri-business, as sectors in which the province enjoys a competitive advantage.

Under the tourism cluster, the strategy calls for the commercialisation of provincial game reserves, rehabilitation of degraded landscapes, skills and product development, the improvement of access roads and collective marketing.

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