

Tourist arrivals to SA increase by 5.1%

Tourist arrivals to South Africa grew by 5.1% during the first six months of 2013 compared to the same period in 2012.

"Tourism arrivals to South Africa continue to grow in 2013, with growth in arrivals recorded from all regions. Our growth is in line with global averages for the period.



(Image: GCIS)

"According the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), growth in global tourist arrivals was 5.2% during the first six months of 2013," said Minister of Tourism Marthinus van Schalkwyk.

Tourist arrivals from Europe grew by 5.5% during the first six months of 2013 to 675,595 arrivals, up from 640,231 arrivals in the same period last year.

South Africa continued to see strong growth from Germany, its third biggest source market, with arrivals growing by 13.8% in the first six months of 2013. There was also positive growth in arrivals from France (10.8%) and Italy (7.1%).

However, two of South Africa's traditional source markets, the United Kingdom (UK) and the Netherlands were still under pressure and recorded marginal declines in arrivals of -0.6% (UK) and -1.2% (Netherlands) during this period.

Arrivals from North America grew by a further 3.7% in 2013. A total of 194,586 tourist arrivals were recorded for the first six months of 2013, compared to 187,703 in 2012.

Asian growth figures for the first six months of 2013 showed growth of 12.7% to 210,776 tourist arrivals, compared to 186,981 tourist arrivals during the same period in 2012. Arrivals from China grew by 23.9% and India by 11% during this period.

Arrivals from the continent grew by 4.8% in 2013. Arrivals from Africa land markets grew by 4.4% in the first six months of 2013, while arrivals from African air markets grew by 11.4%.

There was strong growth, especially from West African air markets, albeit from lower baselines: Ghana (+27.3%) and Nigeria (+15.9%).



(Image: NASA)

"We remain confident in the growth in tourism arrivals from Africa, particularly from our air markets in West and East Africa. We are therefore proud to open a South African Tourism office in Lagos on 28 January 2014. We look forward to being part of the larger Nigerian travel community.

"Having a marketing home in this critical West African region will do much to bolster the relationships we have with both trade and consumers in the region, and unlock the full potential of tourism," said Van Schalkwyk.

Tourism's contribution to the South African economy remains a key driver of growth and employment. Tourism injected R35.3bn into the economy from January to June this year.