

# Tourism recovery plan to be submitted to cabinet next month

Tourism Minister Mmamokolo Kubayi-Ngubane says the department is finalising the country's tourism recovery plan with a view of submitting it to cabinet next month.



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She said this when she outlined the department's priorities for the year ahead during a National Assembly virtual mini-plenary on Wednesday.

She said this as the tourism sector finds itself in a severe state due to the after-effects of lockdown.

"Working together with various stakeholders we have put together the tourism recovery plan and we are in the final stages of consultation and we will within the month of August submit the plan for cabinet for approval.

"So far, the indications are that Tourism recovery will experience a number of phases, from hyper-local community attractions, through to broader domestic tourism, regional land and air markets, and resumption of world-wide international

travel," she said.

Kubayi-Ngubane said with regards to interventions, the department envisages that phase one of interventions will primarily focus on the protection of the domestic supply side of the sector. In phase two, the emphasis will be on managing the re-opening of the sector as tourism activities scale up.

Phase 3 will target factors that can drive long term growth in tourism supply and demand.

"One intervention that will drive demand in the recovery period is the MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) sector.

"We will aggressively bid to host large international events in anticipation of the opening of the borders so that upon opening, we can immediately drive up demand for our supply market and also build confidence that South Africa is safe and open for business," she said.

The Minister said the department would work with its sister departments and tourism stakeholders in implementing a set of interventions so that they can induce a quick recovery.

This will include readiness for the rollout of the e-visa system, resolving the challenges around the issuance of licenses for tour operators, and ensuring that all the marketing campaigns, globally and domestically and associated partnerships are in place and ready to be rolled out.

"We have also been engaging with global bodies so that we coordinate with our partners around the world, especially our source markets, in preparation for the sector recovery."

## **9,000 tour guides apply for Covid-19 relief**

Addressing the virtual plenary, she said 9 000 freelance tourist guides have applied for financial relief as the Covid-19 pandemic takes its toll on the sector.

This comes after she announced the establishment of a R30m Tourist Guides Relief Fund just over a month ago aimed at helping freelance tour guides with financial relief for two to three months.

"The beneficiaries of this scheme must be registered in terms of the Tourism Act.

"So far we have received a list of 9,380 tourist guides from the provinces and we are finalising the verification process to start paying the eligible beneficiaries," she said.

## **Programme to steer enterprises to clean energy, water resources**

Kubayi-Ngubane said, meanwhile, that the department introduced the Green Tourism Incentive Programme (GTIP), administered by the IDC, to encourage private tourism enterprises to move towards more efficient utilisation of energy and water resources.

"The department is reviewing the implementation modalities of the GTIP to ensure that the much needed relief for businesses to retrofit is speedily disbursed, so that they can reduce operational costs.

"We have set aside R40m for this programme. This will go a long way in providing the much need relief in this Covid-19 environment and beyond.

"With regards to grading, South African Tourism has resolved to support the sector with provision of an exemption for up to 12 months of the grading assessments and fees followed by a payment holiday of 100% grading discount, when the sector

resumes operation to aid the recovery of the sector," she said.

## **Tourism Relief Funds provides relief to 4,000 businesses**

The Minister said when the Tourism Relief Fund was introduced, its implementation came under much scrutiny and led to a court challenge due to the use of the government adopted policy of BBBEE.

"For our part, we redirected R200m which assisted 4,000 businesses through the Tourism Relief Fund.

"We ensured that the benefit is spread geographically across the country to cover even businesses in small dorpies and townships as per the discussions in the portfolio committee," she said.

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