

# Bojanala

Collectively and Broadly Promoting Responsible and Sustainable Tourism for Benefit of All

Edition 03 - October/November/December 2011

## Responsible Tourism

**SANS 1162 sets a new mark for South African tourism !!!**

**Tourism Sector set to Ramp Up  
Service Excellence through National Campaigns**



**tourism**

Department:  
Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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## About the Cover



The picture shows a lapa at the Madikwe Safari Lodge, one of South Africa's six top safari lodges. Image courtesy of African Travel Experts.



LETTER  
FROM  
THE

## EDITOR



### Gearing up for 2012

It seems like only yesterday that we were inviting 2011 at the backdrop of a very successful tourism year where South Africa hosted millions of tourists. To us 2011 was hand firmly back on deck as we continued to lay a firm foundation upon which the new department would stand. We needed to put the building blocks in place for us to grow and develop tourism.

The year commenced with a total of 800 young South Africans between 18 and 35 with a matric qualification who were unemployed but have a passion for cookery and the hospitality industry, being trained as part of our engagement in the National Youth Chefs Training Programme commencing in February 2011.

This was followed by the launch of the National Unemployed Youth Hospitality Placement Programme - a programme which is implemented by the Hospitality Youth Initiative (HYI) and prepares and places young people in industry establishment for experiential learning for a period of six months where chances of full time employment are more than 50%. The first phase started with 300 young people from all over the country placed in various tourism establishments and currently it is preparing to place another group of 500 for 2011/12.

The launch of the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) marks the epitome of putting the building blocks in place; the National Department of Tourism's relocation to the new Tourism House is another notable development. The NTSS provided a backbone upon which tourism in South Africa will stand and the building simply provide a base from which the tourism function will be coordinated.

In 2011 we also launched the South African Minimum Standards for Responsible Tourism (SANMSRT) outlining our commitment to ensuring that all tourism development and activities deliver on the triple bottom-line that is economic, social and environmental sustainability. Clearly the development of these strategies cannot be attributed to the National Department of Tourism alone, but to the entire spectrum of stakeholders who participate/d at various stages of our processes. This publication looks deeper into the workshops where the SANMSRT. This edition of Bojanala provides a detailed overview of SANS 1162 which is the actual Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism.

As we focussed on tourism beyond 2010 one of the key issues that needed our attention is that of ensuring that while the tourism trajectory showed an impressive growth it is equally matched by equally impressive service standards. The tourism service excellence article articulates the methods and processes that the tourism sector has engaged to ensure that the service standards are consistent with the growth that the sector is experiencing. Without a doubt this is one of the main areas of focus if we are to continue to grow this sector.

We had cause to celebrate a number of other achievements of 2011. The selection of the City of Cape Town as a design capital of the world, coupled with the affirmation of the Table Mountains as one of the Seven Wonders of the World is not a small feat at all. Table Mountain emerged into the list after a very tough competition with thousands of other destinations seeking to be listed into to this elite list. The millions of visitors who graced our soil from all over the world to discuss the future of this world in Durban in COP 17 is another event that does the tourism sector a lot of good.

Gearing to 2012, there is a lot to look forward to. The implementation of the many strategies that we have developed so far is one of the first priorities for 2012. Gearing for 2012 we need to position the country towards achieving the targets of 2020. We further need to continue to work hard to firmly put the sector into one of the key sectors in our economic landscape.

It is for this reasons that I say **Woza 2012!**

Jay Singh  
EDITOR

EDITOR



# SANS 1162 SETS A NEW MARK FOR SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM !!!

Responsible Tourism can be defined as a management strategy that embraces planning, product development, operations and marketing. Responsible Tourism seeks to harness the power of travel to bring about positive economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts. Responsible Tourism is a central pillar of South Africa's national tourism policy and strategy, expressed as far back as 1996 when the Tourism White Paper was published and as recently as Tourism Month 2011 when South Africa's Minister of Tourism the Honourable Marthinus van Schalkwyk launched South Africa's new Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism (SANS 1162) at a special function held in Knysna, Western Cape on 12 September 2011.

The very notion of Responsible Tourism implies that tourism growth and development can be "irresponsible". Irresponsibility can take the form of excessive energy or water consumption. Irresponsibility can be measured in terms of gender inequality, lack of attention to HIV/Aids in the workplace or failure to support the local economy. Tourist enclaves that do not benefit local communities, poor wages and working conditions and lack of respect for culture, human rights and the environment are all hallmarks of irresponsibility. The fact that there is an entire website dedicated to exposing irresponsible tourism practices and follies gives weight to the need for Responsible Tourism policy and policy instruments (visit <http://www.irresponsibletourism.info/>).

Published by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) in March 2011, SANS 1162 creates a framework for Responsible Tourism and specifies how Responsible Tourism should be defined and measured in South Africa. SANS is divided into

four sections addressing sustainable management and operations; social and cultural issues; economic benefit; and environmental impact. The format of SANS 1162 is aligned to the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC), which is an international definition of sustainability in tourism endorsed by leading organizations including the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). SANS 1162 was developed by a Technical Working Group of local experts in close consultation with a Project Steering Committee comprised of major stakeholders including industry associations; provincial tourism bodies and key national stakeholders such as South African National Parks.

In addition to being consistent with global best practice, SANS 1162 speaks clearly to the South African context. Tourism can and should deliver sustainable, quality employment and the sector is presently working hard to retain jobs in a difficult trading environment. Tourism can and should deliver income to poor households, particularly those situated in rural parts of our country, which is why we need a rural tourism strategy underpinned by mechanisms to stimulate investment. Tourism can and should lead South Africa's transition to a low carbon economy based on energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources. And tourism can and should be at the heart of South Africa's path to a more inclusive, more competitive economy – but only if our country's tourism industry is developed responsibly, equitably and sustainably.

Now that SANS 1162 has been launched, incentives to stimulate responsible tourism growth and development needs to begin.

Incentives can be controversial and should stimulate risk taking and other activities that might not otherwise take place, without significantly distorting markets. Investment into Responsible Tourism can be stimulated, for example, by providing preferential access to capital to projects that comply with specific elements of SANS 1162. Staff training on Responsible Tourism can be incentivized by enabling employers to recover costs against skills development levies. Protection of biodiversity and natural resources can be incentivized by rewarding businesses that remove alien species or invest in waste water recycling infrastructure through tax rebates or other financial instruments. Community beneficiation can be incentivized by providing advisory or other business development services to operators. Incentives must be designed with particular outcomes and objectives and time frames in mind.

This is not to say that the tourism industry should become the passive recipient of incentives. The tourism private sector in South Africa has an impressive track record of innovating Responsible Tourism, as manifest in hundreds of international awards won by South African companies and initiatives and



Lena of Jan Harnsgat Country House, presenting some of her fine works.

extensive referencing of South Africa in the annals of best practice. Case studies documenting adoption of SANS 1162 by hotels, lodges, tour operators and other types of businesses should be researched, documented and widely disseminated. And existing industry awards programmes can be expanded to address particular elements of SANS 1162 and recognize innovation by the private sector.

Third-party certification is another tool to drive Responsible Tourism. Certification can be defined as a formal process of making certain that particular standards of performance or behaviour are met. In tourism, certification can speak to the quality of facilities and amenities (star grading), the efficacy of training and education as well as the extent to which Responsible Tourism practices are being followed.

Any tourism business can claim to be responsible but only claims associated with a credible third-party certificate carry any type of guarantee. "Greenwash" and "fairwash" describe situations where the Responsible Tourism concept is used indiscriminately as a marketing tool to make a particular product more appealing to consumers – but without substantive action on the part of the business making such claims. Greenwash in tourism is when customers perceive that they are being misled by a company regarding its environmental performance, while fairwash would refer to situations where community or staff upliftment and social investment are over-stated.

Thus a very good way of identifying Responsible Tourism operators is to look for independent labels or endorsements. Blue Flag, for example, is an international certification programme that endorses



Alfred, a proud waiter at Sabi Sabi Game Reserve.





Sleep out on dune: Tswalu Kalahari.

beaches that are clean and safe and well managed. There are currently 27 Blue Flag certified beaches located throughout South Africa. Closer to home, four Responsible Tourism certification schemes are currently operating in South Africa: Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA); the Green Leaf Environmental Standard; the Heritage Environmental Rating Programme; and Greenline Responsible Tourism Certificate. Government has no plans to become directly involved in sustainable tourism certification; rather, NDT will accredit or endorse certificates that are consistent with SANS 1162 and whose operations are deemed to be competent, consistent and impartial. Accredited Responsible Tourism certification schemes will help to roll-out by SANS 1162 by providing a service to the tourism industry. This service is deemed to add value operationally (how to reduce consumption and hence costs) and in the market place (improved energy efficiency can be a unique selling point).

It seems illogical then, that the combined market penetration of Responsible Tourism certification in South Africa is in the range of only 250 businesses, which is very, very, very low. While weak market penetration is not unique to South Africa, a closer working relationship between NDT and accredited third-party certification schemes is helping to increase the industry's appetite for certification. Here again incentives are needed: certified products might receive

preferential marketing by South African Tourism, or preferential inclusion in packages developed by inbound tour operators or special access to research and other market information.

In addition, the business case for certification must be demonstrated empirically, for example by benchmarking the commercial performance of certified properties versus non certified peers, by measuring the commercial value of third-party labels and by documenting the added value of the certification process at firm level. Research to support third-party certification schemes who could be potential in partners in implementing SANS 1162 need to be pursued.

The quality of South Africa as a Responsible Tourism destination hinges ultimately on the quality of the products on offer. Third party certification is a

crucial part of quality assuring the visitor experience in South Africa. The industry needs to acquire a better understanding of certification, and government needs to reduce the barriers to becoming certified in partnership with its accredited service providers. Not all barriers are financial, and thus training and education have an important role to play in making certification accessible to industry as do price subsidies.

Public demand for authentic Responsible Tourism will drive third-party certification over the long-term, assuming consumer confidence in standards and labels remains strong. A 2011 study by CMI Green Traveller found a 7.5% increase in the number of respondents who said they "researched and booked greener accommodations" compared to a similar study conducted in 2009. Significantly, over 40% of the 2011 respondents stated that they look for a third-party certification to verify that a travel supplier is truly "environmentally friendly". The robustness of South Africa's Responsible Tourism standard and the credibility of the certification schemes associated with SANS 1162 are absolutely essential to attracting socially and environmentally conscious travellers and to positioning South Africa as a bona fide Responsible Tourism destination on the world stage.

Jennifer Seif Executive Director - Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA)



Image showing cg hotel: The Peach Hotel.

# NDT TAKES RESPONSIBLE TOURISM TO PRODUCT OWNERS



The concept of Responsible Tourism started more than fifteen years ago in South Africa, with the then Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) producing a White Paper on Development and Promotion of Tourism – Responsible Tourism a guiding principle in 1996. Subsequently, various other documentation were developed to give impetus to the Responsible Tourism concept; and these include amongst others the National Responsible Tourism Guidelines of 2002, the 2002 Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism, the 2003 Responsible Tourism Manual and Handbook, to mention but a few. The establishment of the National Department of Tourism (NDT) saw further emphasis on

Responsible Tourism with the department setting as its mission “Collectively and boldly promoting **responsible and sustainable tourism** for the benefit of all South Africans”. Other documentation developed towards responsible and sustainable tourism include the 2010 National Tourism Sector Strategy and the National Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism of 2011.

Responsible Tourism has been defined as an approach to the management of tourism, aimed at maximising economic, social and environmental benefits and minimizing costs to destinations. Simply put, Responsible Tourism is tourism that creates better places for people to live in,

and better places to visit. A responsible tourism approach aims to achieve the three principal outcomes of sustainable development, i.e. economic growth, environmental integrity and social justice. The distinguishing characteristic of the approach is the focus on the responsibility of role-players in the tourism sector, and destinations in general, to take action to achieve sustainable tourism development. It is prudent therefore that all stakeholders should understand and carry out their respective roles if Responsible Tourism agenda is to make any meaningful impact in the tourism fraternity in South Africa. The NDT, together with key identified partners, namely the Department of Environmental



Affairs, the Department of Water Affairs and ESKOM decided to embark on Responsible Tourism road shows throughout South Africa.

Responsible Tourism road shows, that were launched in Richards Bay on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 2011, were taken to many corners of South Africa, visiting Polokwane and Modimolle in Limpopo on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> July 2011, and ending in the Gauteng Province during the month of October 2011. The road shows targeted mainly owners of the hospitality establishments such as Bed and Breakfast establishments, Lodges, Guesthouses, Conferencing establishments, Bars and Restaurants, as well as National and Provincial Parks. The objectives of the initiative were set to be the following:

- Raise awareness about Responsible Tourism;
- Encourage implementation of resource efficiency in tourism;
- Share progress on Climate Change and Universal Access in tourism programme and invite inputs;
- Understand barriers to implementing resource efficiency in tourism;
- Providing update on the National Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism;
- Create a national database for ongoing engagement.

### Responsible Tourism and Waste Management

The Department of Environmental Affairs (through the Directorate General Waste and Special Projects) participated in the road shows, and made presentations to road show participants. The focus for the directorate was on ensuring responsible waste management practices are up-scaled within the hospitality industry. The directorate's presentations started off by outlining the waste management hierarchy where emphasis is placed on reducing waste from the source; through reuse, recycle and energy recovery; and the last option being disposal in the event where all the other waste management options are not practicable. Practical examples that talks to the day-day activities in the tourism industry were presented, to assist tourism product owners internalise waste management challenges and potential interventions.

The DEA presentation was structured to talk to all aspects of waste management hierarchy, and the main discussion points are summarised below:

**Waste reduction at source** – some of the main interventions to consider include the following:

- Provisioning of bulk dispensers for drinking water installed instead of putting bottled water in individual guest rooms;
- Use of washable dishes and utensils over disposable dishes and utensils;
- Using refillable containers for such items as sugar and salt, as opposed to using readily packaged sachets; etc.

On **waste reuse**, examples of possible interventions include the following:

- Dyeing stained towels a dark colour for reuse as cleaning rags;
- Giving old magazines to employees, charities, schools or hospitals;
- Reusing waste paper as telephone answering pads or notes;
- Using refillable, reusable toner cartridges for laser printers; etc.

**Waste recycling** initiatives for consideration include, but are not limited to the following:

- Put recycling containers in guest rooms to be emptied regularly by housekeeping staff;
- Collecting and separating cans, bottles, glass and cardboard for recycling;
- Collecting used flowers in guestrooms for composting;



The three-bin waste collection system.



- Recycling motor oils, antifreeze and paint used by grounds' keeping and maintenance staff; etc.

**Waste recovery** initiatives include the following:

- Composting of waste food and garden waste;

**Waste disposal** - the main issues entail the following:

- Disposal of waste in a recognised properly authorised disposal site, be it a municipal landfill site or a privately owned site; and
- Disposal has to be done in a manner that prevents damage to the environment, including human living in the surrounding area.



Picture showing a waste disposal site.

### Water Conservation and Water Demand Management and Responsible Tourism

The Department of Water Affairs (DWA)s' involvement in the road shows focused on Water Conservation (WC) and Water Demand Management (WDM), which entails adopting strategies or programmes by consumers that will result in:

- Economic efficiency;
- Environmental protection; and
- Sustainability of water supply and services.

The DWA also emphasised that not focusing on water conservation and water demand management would have detrimental impacts to the tourism industry translating into elevated expenditure through high water bills and the concomitant high electricity bills (as water is one of the major



Leaking tap that requires fixing for water conservation.

requirements for electricity generation). The tourism industry could also loose revenue generation due to lower tourist numbers as a consequence of polluted streams, rivers and beaches.

The DWA outlined a wealth of interventions tourism product owners could undertake towards WC and WDM, and amongst others the key ones include the following:

- Engaging in water wise gardening;
- Development and rolling out on-going water wise awareness programmes;
- Retrofitting of inefficient water use devices such as toilets, showerheads, taps, etc.;
- Undertaking regular water audits;
- Replacement and refurbishment of water infrastructure;
- Rain water harvesting;
- Establishing a water management unit, with suitably qualified personnel to guide all aspects of water conservation and WDM.

### Responsible Tourism and Energy Efficiency

Eskom's participation focussed on their area of operation which encompasses energy efficiency and demand side management. Eskom's point of departure is that by reducing the amount of electricity used by tourism establishments, there is also a concomitant reduction in water utilisations as well as reduction in the volumes of carbon dioxide emitted. This is demonstrated in the statement from Eskom's presentation that says "By saving 1kWh of electricity you save 1.29L of water and 0.9kg of carbon dioxide".



Eskom's call to tourism product owners in relation to responsible tourism has been outlined to be three-fold as follows:

- Energy efficiency – this involves decreased in energy usage without affecting production for the same output as present;
- Load management – this entails changing the time of energy consumption, mainly shifting usage from peak to off-peak, but with the same net production rate; and
- Peak clipping – this involves reducing energy usage during the peak hours only, that may result in net production rate change.

Eskom concluded their presentation by also outlining the exciting part of their activities that entails incentives for energy efficient technologies that tourism product owners may engage in.

### **Tourism and Climate change**

In November and December of 2011, the nations of the world converged in the city of Durban to discuss climate change challenges and required interventions to address the challenge. Climate change has in many circles being hailed as the second biggest global challenge after sustainable development. Scientists have ascribed climate change to increases in the average atmospheric temperatures as a consequence of unsustainable human activities, such as elevated burning of fossil fuels for electricity, pollution, over consumption of resources, etc.

The tourism industry, as one of the major players in global economy will also be affected by climate change and also has its fair share of contribution to make towards climate change scourge. To that end, the NDT indicated their intentions to have a stand at the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP17), under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), where the NDT will showcase responsible tourism practices and products in the country.

The NDT also reported during the road shows that in partnership with the Department of environmental Affairs, the NDT has developed a Draft Tourism and Climate Change Action Plan, that outlines mitigation and adaptations required to address climate change challenges within the tourism industry. Inputs on the draft Tourism and Climate Change Action Plan were solicited from road show participants.

In closing, the road shows have without a doubt equipped tourism product owners with wealth of knowledge on changing their business operations towards responsible tourism principles. It is clear that there are massive benefits associated with responsible tourism, ranging from economic through social and environmental benefit. The call is upon the tourism product owners to embrace this giant initiative by the NDT towards Responsible and Sustainable Tourism for the Benefit of all.



# GREENING AND RESOURCE EFFICIENCY WORKSHOPS



The National Minimum Standards for Responsible Tourism (NMSRT) were compiled through a wide and comprehensive consultation process that included all the stakeholders from the tourism industry, were published as a South African Standard on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2011 in the government gazette. The subsequent launch took place on the 12 of September 2011 on a stylish ferry boat outside the Southern Cape town of Knysna. During this September launch the minister of tourism honourable Marthinus

van Schalkwyk acknowledged that while in principle the Tourism industry has been operating under the prescripts of responsible tourism, there was still a need for the development of a single unified standard and accreditation system.

The minister further remarked that the South African NMSRT has been benchmarked against the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's criteria and is based on the 3 cornerstones of sustainable tourism. These are social and

cultural, economic, and environmental responsibility.

During the launch the minister further outlined that whereas the NMSRT will be a voluntary standard, tourism certification bodies wanting to be accredited will work through the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) which will be ready to carry out this task by the middle of 2012.

A clear and key message at the launch was further reiterated by Jenifer Seif that responsible tourism is a central pillar of South Africa's tourism policy and strategy, and the launch of the Minimum Standard was seen as an important milestone in achieving a collective vision of a tourism industry that benefits people, business and the environment. She is clearly amongst many who believe that the Minimum Standard will cement South Africa's position as a leading responsible tourism destination.



Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk and other dignitaries during the NMSRT launch.



Participants engaging in discussions during the NMSRT launch.

### Spreading the Message

In a further bid to ensure that everyone in the tourism sector within the country is aware and understands the NMSRT, The National Department of Tourism (NDT) in partnership with the Department of Environmental Affairs, Department of Water Affairs and Eskom, undertook provincial road shows to engage the tourism industry on the importance and implementation of "Greening and Resource Efficiency" in Tourism. The objective of the workshops were to provide stakeholders with an update on the NMSRT; promote responsible tourism practices; as well as discussing and sharing relevant tips on energy, water saving, as well as waste management. These were scheduled as a series of provincial workshops between July and October 2011 to promote the following key issues:

- National Greening Programme
- Waste Management in Tourism
- Water Conservation and Demand Management
- Energy Efficiency in Tourism
- Universal Accessibility
- Climate Change



One of the presenters during the Greening and Resource Efficiency Workshops.

Furthermore, Mr Bhekithemba Langalibalele, the director for responsible tourism desk within the NDT outlined the other objectives of the workshops as an opportune platform to share progress on Climate Change and Universal Access in Tourism programme and to invite necessary inputs. He also hinted that the workshops will help the sector to understand barriers to implementing resource efficiency in Tourism. The other important result of this consultation process was that of enhancing the national database for ongoing engagement.

The first phase of the road shows targeted the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Western Cape and Gauteng.

### Workshop Theme and Key Messages

The communication strategy of these workshops clearly outlines the theme as well as the key messages to be transferred. Under the theme "Working together we can grow a sustainable tourism economy" the workshops were built to encourage everyone within the industry to be responsible so as to make a difference and save.

The workshops were also used to show amongst other things that tourism has a potential to grow South Africa's economy and increase its contribution to the GDP. To this end the workshops sought to demonstrate that South Africa has already secured 200 international conferences for the coming five years, which would attract 300 000 delegates and provide an economic boost worth R1,6-billion.

One other key issue tackled in the workshops was the impact that climate change will have on this industry. It is a general knowledge that the impact of climate change (water availability, loss of biodiversity etc) will have an adverse effect on tourism destinations, their competitiveness and sustainability. The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) as the custodian of environmental management framework charged that it has



a mandate of ensuring that it alleviate these impacts and as such has developed the National Greening framework to drive the greening initiatives in both the public and private sector.

The other key message that was passed through these multi-stakeholder workshops is the importance of partnerships between government and the private sector in addressing challenges of resource efficiency and responsible tourism. The workshops heard that a task team has been formed to create awareness about the optimal and sustainable usage of natural resources. This is the very task team that comprises of NDT, DEA, DWA and Eskom. One of the key mandates of this task team will be to advance resource sustainability by sharing knowledge and tools to increase awareness on the benefits of resource efficiency and to raise the level of resource stewardship.

The NMSRT is not a stand-alone document as it is intrinsically linked to the NDT'S National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) which sets a new collective vision for the tourism sector. One of the values which underpin the NTSS is Responsible Tourism.



Delegates gearing to start with the NMSRT launch.

The key implication of the strategy is that all tourism development and activities should deliver on the triple bottom-line, that is economic, social and environmental sustainability. The NTSS recognises that South Africa's natural environment is one of its greatest tourism resources, and therefore there is a need for the tourism industry to be actively involved in conserving and protecting it. The implementation of the NMSRT is thus expected to support the strategic objectives of the NTSS and enhance the competitiveness of destination South Africa.



Showing some of the tourism products made of recyclables.



Presenters during the Greening and Resource Efficiency Workshops.

## Going Forward

The honourable minister as well as the many workshop participants emphasized that responsible tourism has to continue to be about creating better places for people to live in, and better places to visit. To achieve this the NMSRT has a clear implementation strategy has been developed an one of the key actions of it included these multi-stakeholder workshops. Thus with the NMSRT as well as the workshops being conducted the whole country in general and the tourism sector in particular can concur with minister Van Schalkwyk the earnestly, the journey towards sustainable tourism has just begun!

# TOURISM SECTOR SET TO RAMP UP SERVICE



Despite the fact that the South African tourism sector has been on a growth trajectory for a number of years, poor service has remained its Achilles heel. According to the Current Customer Service Delivery in South Africa (2009), customer service delivery within the tourism value chain is inconsistent with extremes of poor to excellent service. This weakness is acknowledged in the White Paper on Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa in 1996; Skills Audit (2007); and Human Resources Development Strategy for the Tourism Sector (2008). In the White Paper the government committed itself to facilitate the development of a tourism culture in South Africa and a supply of skilled manpower for the industry. The skills audit identified the need for customer/guest skills across the whole tourism and hospitality sectors. The Department of Tourism, in collaboration with other tourism stakeholders, has moved to rid the tourism sector in South Africa of what has proven to be an albatross around its neck.

## Service Excellence Strategy as a Response to Poor Service

In response to the issue of inconsistent service levels in the tourism value chain, the government in 2008 came up with the draft Service Excellence Strategy. The National Service Excellence Strategy was a product of a very wide consultative process among stakeholders and involved an environmental scan of the tourism sector. The consultative process and environmental scan revealed that South Africa has a myriad of initiatives to boost service excellence but what was lacking was an integrated approach. Among these myriad of initiatives there

were National initiatives such as Brand South Africa's *Play Your Part*; Department of Arts and Culture's *South Africa at Heart* and South Africa Tourism's *Welcome Campaign*

The National Service Excellence Strategy was then developed to build on and integrate such initiatives to enhance service excellence throughout the sector.

The vision of the National Tourism Service Excellence strategy is to build a service excellence culture in the tourism sector and value chain. The long-term goal is to establish South Africa as a globally competitive service economy and the world destination of choice in terms of providing excellent customer service. The short term goal of the Tourism Service Excellence Strategy is to provide a pleasant and unforgettable service experience to South Africa's visitors, and to all other customers in the tourism value chain.

The strategy has five pillars namely:

- Research and Information
- Up skilling of service delivery
- Public Awareness
- Service Norms and Standards
- Consumer Feedback System

The Public Awareness Pillar is one of the most important pillars of the National Service Excellence Strategy. The pillar has the following as one its objectives; to educate consumers on minimum world class standards and motivate South Africans to provide outstanding service. Another objective is to create



a culture of customer service in the industry and eventually the country.

### The National Service Excellence Campaign

Given the importance of the Public Awareness pillar, the National Department of Tourism (NDT) is set to launch the National Service Excellence Campaigns starting in 2012. The goal of these national campaigns is to create awareness around the National Tourism Excellence Requirements and the Strategy. National Service Excellence Campaign will see the launch the National Tourism Service Excellence Requirements (norms and standards); the communication of the approved National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy; the introduction of the collaboration between Service Excellence and Welcome Campaign; and the introduction of other partnerships such as Brand South Africa.



The national campaign, to be spearheaded by the NDT in conjunction with South Africa Tourism (SAT), is set to target a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the tourism sector such as the tourism trade in South Africa; ordinary South Africans; global, African and domestic tourists; as well as international thought leaders and influencers. The campaign is going to be rolled out through three phases starting with the launch of national campaign; followed by a media campaign; and ultimately the implementation of the national campaign and public awareness initiatives.

Phase 1 of the campaign involves the launch of the national campaign in early 2012. Preparatory work before the launch will involve NDT and SAT sharing information to establish a common goal. NDT will share research findings with SAT while Brand South Africa will share information on *Domestic Competitiveness Report and National Perceptions Audit*. In the run up to the launch, set for March 2012, the NDT and SAT are set to make the following preparations;

- Development of a service toolkit which include the National Tourism Service Excellence Strategy; National Tourism

Service Excellence Requirements (SANS 1197); Guidebooks on applying SANS 1197; Guidelines on utilizing the web-based self assessment tool; and the Customer Service Levels in South Africa Research Report.

- Development of a joint messaging document by SAT and NDT;
- Incorporation of Service Excellence into the Welcome campaign website;
- Incorporation of the Service Excellence theme in the current welcome logo;



- Development of Audio Visual (AV) showcasing what a warm and friendly welcome is, the importance of service excellence and how to achieve that as an organization;
- Identification of an item that can be used as a promotional collateral for service excellence and welcome campaigns;
- Development of joint Public Relations plans;
- Identification of the thought leader or face of the programme.

The National Department of Tourism is set to launch the National Tourism Excellence Campaign in 2012 once all the preparatory work has been finalised. The Minister will address the tourism captains, stakeholders and media on the National Tourism Service Excellence Requirements. Speakers at the launch will be drawn from the captains of the tourism industry as well as other tourism stakeholders.

After the launch there will be a media blitz to create publicity on the importance of Service Excellence and the welcome





Performance given by kids group.

campaign; to disseminate information on the Service Excellence programme, strategy and welcome campaign; and to create an opportunity for the Department's principals to engage the tourism stakeholders and general public on the National Tourism Service Excellence Requirements and related issues. The 2012 Tourism Indaba will present a platform for showcasing the Service Excellence campaign. The Indaba will play host to an interactive exhibition stand showcasing Service Excellence and Welcome campaign as well as a workshop on Service Excellence which will be graced by the face of programme. SAT and NDT will also develop joint public relations plans which will involve joint press releases and messaging. Through a well coordinated communications plan the campaign will be profiled in both the print and electronic media as well as on social networking sites which have of late emerged as powerful communication tools.

After the launch of the campaigns, the National Campaign and Public Awareness Initiatives will be implemented to communicate the world-class service standards that organisations should strive to achieve; to encourage organisations in the industry and value chain to create customer service culture within their organisations; and to encourage attitude and perception change of employees, employers, and general public on customer service. The implementation of the campaign will be through provincial road shows, joint manifesto12/pledge to Service Excellence and the development of audio visual materials showcasing a warm and friendly welcome; the importance of service excellence and how to achieve that as an organisation.

The planned National Service Excellence Campaign is set to provide the much needed antidote which will help heal the Achilles Heel of the South African tourism industry. It will help catapult South Africa to being a globally competitive service economy and the world destination of choice in terms of providing excellent customer service.



Mrs Obama during her official visit in South Africa.



# TABLE MOUNTAIN IS A NEW 7 WONDER OF NATURE



Hurray!! Table Mountain has made it among the elite world tourist attractions in the world. The 11<sup>th</sup> of November was a momentous occasion for the tourism community in South Africa as the Table Mountains; one of the republic's prime tourist attractions was announced as the New 7 Wonder of Nature. After a gruelling three year battle in the race to choose the world's seven most wonderful natural sites, Table Mountain in Cape Town was named alongside The Amazon rainforest, Vietnam's Halong Bay and Argentina's Iguazu Falls, South Korea's Jeju Island, Indonesia's Komodo, and the Philippines' Puerto Princesa Underground River as the new 7 wonder of nature.

## How it All Started

The campaign to have Table Mountain as one of the New 7 Wonder of Nature was mooted by the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway in 2008 after they realised the benefits which would accrue from the accolade. An official supporters committee was then set up to spearhead the campaign and the committee was spearheaded by Table Mountain National Park, Cape Town Tourism and Table Mountain Aerial Cableway. Sabine Lehmann, the Chief Executive Officer

(CEO) of Table Mountain Aerial Cableway was the chairperson of the committee. It is this committee that started the journey and long battle that saw Table Mountain rise from the initial list of 440 candidates in 2009 into the final 28 in January 2011 and ultimately in the top 7 by the close of voting on the 7th of November 2011.

## The Campaign

After laying the foundation stone for the campaign and upon realising the enormity of the task, the committee in January 2011 appointed a fulltime campaign manager. The campaign managed to mobilise (and was ultimately driven by) a number of partnerships. The campaign was embraced by the City of Cape Town, endorsed by the Springboks; backed by the SABC and Ster-Kinekor and SuperSport; supported by SA Tourism (SAT); profiled by the electronic and print media as well as on social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter and MXit) and hyped about and taken to the people by a team of celebrity ambassadors.

The Minister of Tourism has also been involved in the campaign to drum up public support from the beginning. At the invitation of the organisers of the Vote for



Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk voting for Table Mountain.

Table Mountain campaign the Minister became the first person to launch the campaign in South Africa. In September 2010 by using his cell phone to vote for Table Mountain to be recognised as one of the seven natural wonders of the world.

Minister van Schalkwyk encouraged South Africans to make use of the SMS voting mechanism to support South Africa's entrant in the global New 7 Wonders of Nature contest. "The Department of Tourism supports the campaign as it aims to preserve the top seven wonders of nature for future generations and gives South Africa the opportunity to be written into the history books for thousands of years to come" said the minister.





Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk leading the voting campaign.

SAT gave direction, support and facilitated the consummation of partnerships, particularly the partnership with SABC. SABC fully backed the campaign with all the 18 SABC radio stations and 3 TV stations backing the campaign through free adverts, blanket news coverage as well as presenters hyping up the campaign during their



shows. City Cape Town bankrolled the campaign after coming on board with seven weeks to the finishing line. City of Cape Town availed funding for the massive media drive and the outreach to township skills to facilitate electronic voting. Super Sport and Ster-Kinekor played adverts for the campaign for free during their normal programming and before movies. In the print media, the Argus and Die Burger stood out for all the editorial support for the campaign. MXit provided a voting platform that was inexpensive and easy to use.

The campaign was buttressed by a team of celebrities

and eminent persons. The campaign was promoted and taken to the people by a number of celebrity ambassadors, with the notable ones being Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, Hollywood actor Blair Underwood and the Springbok rugby team.

### **Celebrity Ambassadors for the Campaign, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Springboks and Blair Underwood**

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu will for some time be remembered for the incredible TV advert which captured the imagination of the viewing voting public.





### The Substance of the Campaign

The campaign profiled the Table Mountain as an iconic landmark and tourist attractions. It is one of the world's oldest mountains at 360-million years old. It was profiled as the most accessible of all the final 28 contenders for the New 7 Wonders of Nature as it is only 20 minutes' drive away from Cape Town International Airport.

The campaign hyped the fact that the Table Mountain Cableway, established in 1929, has taken more than 21-million visitors to the top of the mountain, where there are fantastic views of the Cape Town coastline, city centre and suburbs.

Table Mountain's richness in biodiversity was also a major selling point as it is home to a wide range of fauna and flora, boasting more species of plants than the entire United Kingdom. Table Mountain forms part of the Cape Floral Region, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### How it Went

The last five days created anxiety and consternation for all those following and/or involved with the campaign as Table Mountain was outside the top 10 list with only five days to go. Table Mountain then went on a late rally in the last five days and wrestled the top 7 spot. Table

Mountain attracted millions of votes from around the world before voting closed on Monday the 7th of November 2011. Table Mountain can now proudly carry the title Official New 7 Wonder of Nature. This achievement came on the back of a concerted promotional effort by a broad spectrum of tourism stakeholders and other eminent persons.

### How They Responded

It was at the V & A Waterfront in the evening of Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011 where Table Mountain was named as a New 7 Wonder of Nature after a gruelling three year race to be one of the world's seven most wonderful natural sites. In Cape Town, a crowd gathered at the V&A Waterfront amphitheatre for the official announcement on the night.

The honour to announce the Top 7 places fell to Sabine Lehmann; the CEO of Table Mountain Cableway and Fiona Furey, the Campaign Manager. There were huge celebrations when Sabine Lehmann, CEO of the Table Mountain Cableway, read out the results in alphabetical order.

Responding to the win, Cape Town Tourism CEO Mariëtte Du Toit-Helmbold is quoted having said:

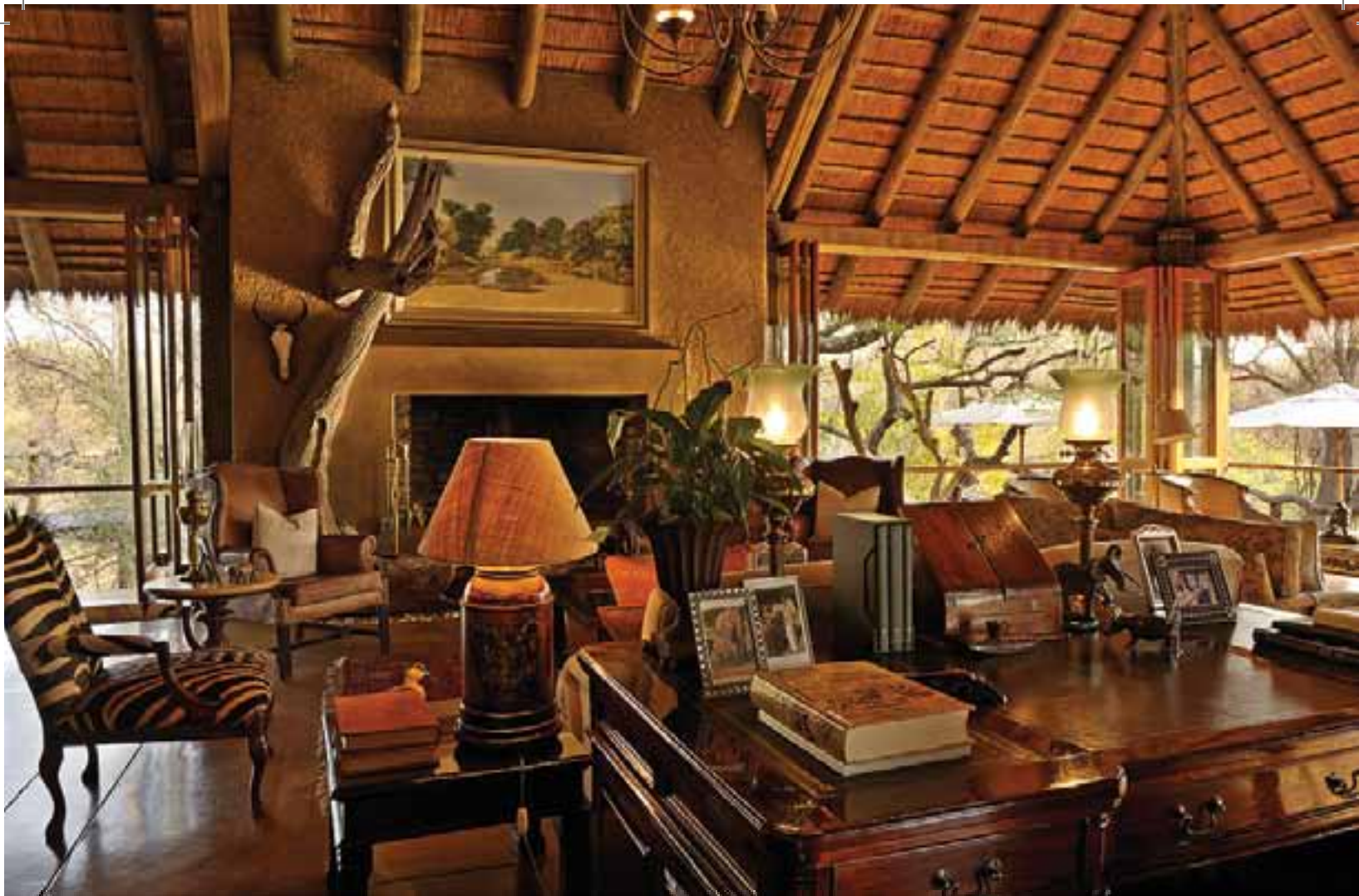
We are very, very excited about this win! From being awarded the World Design Capital 2014 designation just

a few weeks ago to Table Mountain being named one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature today, Cape Town and South Africa are standing proud!

An elated Sabine Lehman could only say: What an amazing feat for South Africa, ...I would like to thank everyone who took the time to vote for Table Mountain and the celebrity ambassadors - from Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Springbok Rugby team to all the journalists, musicians, comedians, actors, politicians and sports stars who campaigned on our behalf. Your voices were heard and it is because of you that Table Mountain's natural assets have been acknowledged.

### Implications of the New Status

The accolade won by Table Mountain is estimated to have generated more than R35.2 million worth of exposure for the mountain, raising its profile globally and generating massive good will toward South Africa. The honour bestowed on Table Mountain is set to be a boon for tourism not only in Cape Town but in the broader South Africa. A survey by respected accounting firm, Grant Thornton, forecasts a R1.4-billion annual boost to the South African economy, as well as the creation of 11 000 jobs in the next 5 years.



## ***RECENT AND UPCOMING TOURISM EVENTS***

| <b>Date</b>                        | <b>Event</b>                               | <b>Venue</b>    |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| 30 October 2011                    | Annual Tourism Conference                  | Gauteng         |
| 16 November 2011                   | Heritage and Culture Workshop              | Gauteng         |
| 26 November 2011                   | Launch of The Cruise Tourism Study         | KwaZulu-Natal   |
| 28 November 2011 - 9 December 2011 | Cop 17                                     | KwaZulu-Natal   |
| 9 January 2012                     | State of the Nation Address                | Gauteng         |
| 22 - 26 January 2012               | Cabinet Lekgotla                           | Gauteng         |
| 15 – 16 February 2012              | NDT Lekgotla                               | TBC             |
| 21 February 2012                   | International Tourist Guiding Celebrations | Mpumalanga      |
| 22 February 2012                   | Budget Speech                              | Western Cape    |
| 08, 09 & 12 March 2012             | International Women's Day                  | Gauteng         |
| 7 – 11 March 2012                  | Internationale Tourismus Borse (ITB)       | Berlin, Germany |
| 19 March 2012                      | Tourism Leadership Dialogue                | Western Cape    |