



destea
department of
Economic, Small Business Development,
Tourism and Environmental Affairs
FREE STATE PROVINCE

VISITOR EXPERIENCE BOOST TOURISM AND ECONOMY



Bloemfontein is a beehive of activities for the duration of the ten day Mangaung African Cultural Festival (Macufe). More than 200 000 revellers are expected to decent on the City of Roses to participate in the annual signature event.

This is a confirmation that events are the natural driver of tourism across the world. It is for this reason that government has introduced the Visitation Economy of similar events throughout the country in order to ascertain business activities during such events. This should include how many SMME's benefited, how many jobs were created and how much was spent. The emphasis is on restaurants, hotels, B&Bs, filling stations and entertainment places.

To this end the Minister of the Department of Tourism accompanied by MEC for Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs and MEC for Department of Sports, Arts and Culture will interact with visitors in Bloemfontein during their stay to establish their expe-

riences, preferences, places and activities they enjoyed the most and what improvements they could want to see. One of the activities included for the benefit of visitors in Bloemfontein is 360° open bus tours at scheduled intervals around Mangaung Metro providing a Hop-On Hop-Off. Some of the sightseeing will be at the Planetarium, Nelson Mandela statue, on Naval Hill Maphikela House, and Waaihoek museum church and many tourist attractions around town.

Whilst the full Economic Impact Assessment study is yet to be conducted, socio-economic impact assessment conducted by the Centre for Development Support of the University of the Free State in 2017 revealed that MACUFE attracts an estimated 140 000 revellers who inject an estimated R91 million in visitor expenditure in Bloemfontein. If expenditure by locals is included, a total of R150 million is spent by the patrons of MACUFE. It is estimated that this year, the Festival will attract nearly 200 visitors from outside Mangaung. The media is invited to join the 360° open bus tour on Friday 11th October 2019 at 17:00.

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CANNABIS INDUSTRY VIABLE FOR JOB CREATION



The Free State budding cannabis industry has made huge strides over the last three days at the Cannabis Value Chain Development Programme and Expo held in Bloemfontein at Urth Garden Centre on the 04 – 06 November 2019. This was a consultative forum that brought diverse experts in the Cannabis Industry to unpack the legislative frame work and discuss regulatory requirements in order to develop a roadmap that will fully unearth this new industry in the province.

The event was put together by the Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs in collaboration with the Cannabis Development Council of South Africa and the All Africa Rastafari Gathering. The inaugural event attracted about 250 participants all over from United Kingdom, Ethiopia, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Caribbean Islands, KwaZulu Natal, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and North West.

The summit is the first of its kind in the Free State in the wake of the Constitutional Court ruling of 2018 which permits the personal use of cannabis in private. The first two days of the three day programme had a panel of experts and delegates discussing robust issues pertaining to legislation, compliance, policing, policy,

licences, infrastructure, environmental management and the development of strategy. The last day was a visit to the Botshabelo Industrial Park to view potential sites and factories to utilize as cannabis greenhouse projects. The potential cannabis enterprises in South Africa were urged to comply with regulation laws of the industry to avoid unintended consequences. Businesses within craft and agro-processing industries were offered an opportunity to exhibit during the two days. Almost all the businesses in South Africa are cashing in on the growing demand for medicinal cannabis products illegally. The South African Health Products Regulatory Authority and South African Police Service are urging the potential enterprises to apply for permits for trade.

A handpicked task team will be formed and will be responsible for constructing a framework policy strategy that will represent the cannabis industry of the Free State Province. The strategy will focus on legislation & policy, Research & Development, Marketing & Sales, local & global perspective, health & safety, quality assurance and role players in the industry.

At the moment, the South African medicinal cannabis market is unknown. The potential enterprises are all aiming to bite a slice of the global cannabis market

that is worth about R2.2 trillion. The rapidly growing market could surge to R4 trillion by 2028. According to SAHPRA, 95 licence applications have been received so far for the cultivation of medicinal cannabis and only five application have been inspected and graded so far. Medicinal cannabis will be cultivated, manufactured,

and distributed in a competitive marketplace by licensed companies. The cannabis industry has the potential to create many jobs along the value chain in agriculture, manufacturing, infrastructure, wholesaling, and Research & Development, Green Economy and distribution channels.

STOKVELS TO TAKE PART INTO THE MAINSTREAM ECONOMY



In his recent budget vote, MEC for the department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Makalo Mohale pledged the department's support to local Stokvels. The main purpose is to provide necessary support mechanisms such as acquisition of necessary licences to formalise Stokvels and ensure that their investments are best utilised to truly liberate them economically. Currently, 40% of SA population belong to stokvel. The research has shown that there are 820 830 and 11, 4 million stokvel members in South Africa. With an estimated value of R44 billion contribution to the GDP. (Survey; African Response 2011). Most popular types of Stokvels are; savings stokvels and burial societies. Estimated value of stokvels contributions per month is R3.7 billion.

On the 27 September 2019, the MEC convened Chairperson's and Secretaries of Stokvels across the province at Willem Pretorius Resorts. This interaction between these Stokvels and the department was an important building block towards a sustainable support programme for this sector. Forty two stokvels represent more than eleven thousands members throughout the Free State attended the meeting. More than twenty five percent of the participants were buri-

al societies mostly headed by women. The first session on the day was networking, where the stokvels were sharing experiences, challenges as well as their long term visions. This exchange of knowledge created a conducive environment for constructive discussions. One of the respected experts in stokvels matters in South Africa Ms Busisiwe Skenjana addressed delegates about possible solutions to some of the challenges. Busisiwe Skenjana has a 32 years marketing experience, specializing in the niche Stokvel market segment. She currently runs the stokvel academy which provide stokvels with sustainable programmes such as Entrepreneurship, Youth Development, Financial Literacy training, Crime Prevention, after school Care and Environmental preservation. Making a strong case for support to stokvels in the Free State, Skenjana said

'Sokvels are the masses social currency that feeds mainstream economy which unfortunately excludes same masses. The Free State government's support is a welcome intervention which need to be applauded'.

In his address to the members of stokvels, MEC Makalo Mohale made a commitment to ensure that the department will deliver in its promise to support the stokvels. 'Stokvels and burial societies have been the pillars and source of financial support to many families in townships and rural areas. Our programme around revitalisation of the township and rural economy will therefore not be complete without the support of stokvels' said the MEC. Among interventions being considered for stokvels are training in stokvel administration, exposure to business and investment opportunities. One of the outcomes Destea hope to achieve is to attract stokvels to participate in the tourism industry, among others by owning property and or time shares. A long-term plan to support stokvels will be developed in the near future.