

On March 9, the Minister of Tourism convened a meeting with tourism stakeholders to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the South African tourism sector and the possible response of the sector to the outbreak. All the major players in the tourism sector, including product owners and tourism associations, attended the meeting.

Among the crucial issues that were discussed were matters around the hosting of Tourism Indaba and other events that were in the pipeline, relief measures for the tourism sector and future plans.

Stakeholders consultations continued with the entire sector after the declaration of the state of disaster and the commencement of the lockdown.

- Engagement with small business community – 02 April 2020
- Engagement with Restaurants Association of South Africa – 13 April 2020
- Engagement with TBCSA – 18 April 2020
- Meeting with SAA and unions – 21 April 2020
- Wider stakeholder engagement on recovery – 27 April 2020
- Engagement with TBCSA – 29 April 2020
- Engagement by President with industry last week
- Other Stakeholders that the Minister has engaged with include hunters associations, tour guides, MICE industry (Meetings Conferences, Incentives and Events), and today she met with Women in Tourism. These are just a few of the engagements that we have had with industry.

In addition, the Minister continues to participate in regional and global discussions about the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector and the concomitant response. These include:

- The AU convened the First Meeting of the Bureau of the Subcommittee on Tourism of the Specialised Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIET) by video conference on April 21.
- The Minister of Tourism was invited by virtue of South Africa chairing the AU.
- The UNWTO convened a virtual conference on policies for Inclusive Recovery in Global Tourism on April 14.
- The G20 Presidency (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) convened a Tourism Ministers' virtual meeting on April 24.
- A virtual meeting of the G20 Tourism Working Group held on April 6-7 preceded the Tourism Ministers' meeting.

The current consultation and strategy development process aims to conclude a comprehensive industry/government recovery partnership to collaborate on all aspects of tourism recovery. Some of the emerging issues are outlined below:

- Deploy an enhanced Tourism Supply Support Package (grant/debt/equity capital and non-financial support) to protect tourism infrastructure.

- Implement and create awareness for globally recognised protocols across the value chain to enable safe travel and rebuild traveller confidence.
- Convene a national air access team, adopt Open Skies protocols and announce an airlift incentive programme to reconnect South Africa to the world.
- Refine the visa regime to enable e-visa rollout, extensive but selective visa-free access and the rollout of e-gates at ports of entry to reduce barriers to travel.
- Collaborate with law enforcement to bolster policing and security presence in tourist centres to reduce crime and provide stronger personal safety and security guarantees to visitors.
- Catalyse domestic demand through the phases of economic re-opening with informative and inspirational messaging that encourages safe tourism.
- Execute a high-impact global marketing programme, targeted at highest-potential source markets, to reignite international demand.
- Launch an investment and market-entry facilitation programme to stimulate capital investment, sector transformation and product diversification.
- Priorities cooperation with neighbouring destinations towards standardising protocols, enhancing transport linkages and refining immigration policy for a seamless regional visitor experience.
- Review and transform the tourism institutional architecture to deliver efficient, effective and purpose-led support for sector growth and development.