

Nedbank, SA Tourism announce Women in Tourism initiative participants

Nedbank and South African Tourism (SA Tourism) have announced the second phase of the Women in Tourism (WiT) initiative which is an innovative empowerment initiative to promote black women in tourism.



Source: Supplied

The Women in Tourism Entrepreneurship Training Programme is an entrepreneurship development initiative designed to create a knowledge foundation, provide mentorship, and eventually, open markets to black-women-owned small, medium and microenterprises operating in the tourism sector.

After a nationwide search, twenty-five women in each province – 225 in total – out of over 400 applicants have been selected to participate in the Women in Tourism Entrepreneurship Programme.



Nedbank, SA Tourism launch new initiative empowering women in tourism

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During the first phase, which was launched in October last year, Nedbank, SA Tourism and McGerards Entrepreneurship Centre issued a call for women to participate in this move to kick-start the tourism sector, which is much needed to ensure that women are the catalyst for transformative economic growth and job creation.

Qualifying candidates were interviewed by panels with Nedbank and SA Tourism representatives from their respective provinces and from the McGeralds team. The interviewed candidates were selected on the basis of pre-qualifying criteria with the main criterion being that the business is at least 51% Black woman-owned.

Today, 25 January 2022, marked the kick-off of the second phase, with 25 KZN entrepreneurs receiving their first training session. The training has been broken down into **three phases** and will cover different modules as follows;

- **Phase 1<>**: Business Planning and Financial Management
- **Phase 2**: Marketing Strategy and Sales
- **Phase 3**: HR, Operations and Risk Management

Each module will be covered over three days per phase and run across all nine provinces simultaneously from January until May 2022.

This partnership and agreement between Nedbank and South African Tourism support the Department of Tourism's Women in Tourism (WiT) Programme. This initiative propels and supports the development and empowerment of women in the tourism sector. Premised on the principles of respect, recognition, representation, and reward, the WiT integrates women from diverse backgrounds to converge on a set of common goals and interests that will ensure their success in the sector.

"As a bank, Nedbank is committed to supporting the empowerment of women across our initiatives. Using our financial expertise to do good goes far beyond banking - we embrace our role in society as a change agent and building our nation. The WiT initiative will contribute significantly to this," says Nirmala Reddy, enterprise development manager for Nedbank Business Banking.

"You may ask why we, as a bank, are investing in the tourism sector through this initiative? The answer is simple. Our purpose is to use our financial expertise to do good for individuals, families, businesses, and society. Our tourism sector has been challenged severely during the pandemic. But we have a good opportunity to roll up our sleeves and work together to boost the recovery to grow the economy and create jobs," adds Reddy.

The acting chief operating officer of South African Tourism, Hanneli Slabber, says: "We have seen many tourism businesses and establishments close shop over the past two years due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. South African Tourism is committed to doing all we can to rebuild and reignite our sector. This Women in Tourism initiative is a great tool in contributing to assist many women-owned businesses to be optimally functional and ready to receive domestic, regional and international travellers as the sector gradually recovers.

"Many women are still not part of the formal economy and are largely in low-paying jobs compared to their male counterparts. It is time this changed," she says.

Since it started in 2013, the WiT initiative (under the Department of Tourism) has served as a mechanism to elevate the status of women in tourism by providing training, empowerment, and networking opportunities that facilitate their competitiveness as entrepreneurs, professionals, and leaders.

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