



MEETINGS AFRICA

DAILY NEWS

Issue 2 | 26 FEBRUARY 2025



Meetings Africa Opens its Doors with Strong Message of Unity and Growth

The energy was electric, the anticipation palpable, and the call to unite louder than ever as Meetings Africa 2025 kicked off its 19th edition at the Sandton Convention Centre yesterday. Under the theme “Africa’s Success Built on Quality Connections”, the venue buzzed with excitement as the ceremonial bell rang out - marking the start of two transformative days dedicated to trade, collaboration, and innovation. This moment wasn’t just the beginning of an event; it was a rallying call for Africa’s business events industry to grow stronger together, shaping a future defined by meaningful connections and endless possibilities.

The opening ceremony was a vibrant tapestry of African pride, unity, and ambition and from the exhibition floor hosts 27 African countries, alongside buyers from 63 international markets. The Soweto Gospel Choir’s soul-stirring performance set the tone, serving as a reminder of the shared heritage and aspirations binding the continent together.

CEO of South African Tourism and programme director, Nombulelo Guliwe, welcomed attendees in multiple languages to reflect the Pan-African spirit of the event. She also highlighted the event’s role in fostering meaningful connections, saying, “This is a platform for Africa to show the world who we truly are – a continent that is vibrant, dynamic and full of opportunity.”

South Africa’s Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille, delivered a keynote address that highlighted the significance of this year’s event. “This is an even more exciting event this year as South Africa chairs and hosts the G20, a historic occasion taking place on African



soil for the first time. Africa is not just rising – it is ready. Across our vast continent, we have the talent, the resources, and the vision to host the world’s most influential business events.”

Her words framed Meetings Africa as more than a trade show but a movement to position Africa as a global powerhouse in the MICE sector.

Bringing a provincial perspective to the ceremony, Lebogang Maile, Gauteng’s MEC of Economic Development and Finance, celebrated the province’s status as a global meeting point. “The 2025 edition of Meetings Africa takes place during a historic moment in a province that has cemented its place as a meeting point of the world.”

Maile also highlighted Gauteng’s economic contributions and its youthful, innovative population, “Gauteng is the nerve centre of the South African and regional economy, contributing 33% of the national GDP. Our young

population is the driving force behind the innovation that will catalyse the African rejuvenation.”

This year’s edition of Meetings Africa features over 410 exhibitors, including debut participants from Chad, Guinea, Morocco and Madagascar, and 85-first time exhibitors. The ringing of the bell was more than a ceremonial act – it signalled that Meetings Africa 2025 is open for business to forge quality connections that will propel Africa’s events industry to new heights.

Minister de Lille concluded, “Remember that every handshake, every partnership and every deal you start today is a step towards a brighter future for our beloved continent. So, let us not wait for the future to come to us. Let’s build the future together. Let us make Meetings Africa a resounding success. A resounding success for the people of our continent.”

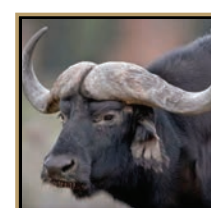
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WEDNESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2025

TIME	EVENT	VENUE
05:30 – 08:30	MEETINGS AFRICA FUN RUN A Meetings Africa Community-Building Fun outdoor activity that attracts fitness fundis of every level. Join us for a great start to the day as we explore the sights and sounds of the host city.	TBA By Registration
07:30 – 08:30	SAACI MORNING MEMO BREAKFAST COCKTAIL This year’s event is set to be particularly significant as we welcome the ICCA President to share her insights under the theme: “Moving Forward, Together.”	Convention Centre – Committee Room 5 By Invitation Only
10:00 – 16:00	EXHIBITION TIMES Pre-scheduled appointments between hosted buyers and exhibitors.	Sandton Convention Centre – Hall 1 Open to all attendees
10:00 – 11:00	GLOBAL EDITORIAL BRIEFING: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE G20 SUMMIT FOR AFRICA IN PARTNERSHIP WITH DIRCO. A media focussed panel discussion.	Media Centre - Café Nala Open to Media and other attendees
10:00 – 17:00	SUSTAINABILITY VILLAGE The Sustainability Village is an iconic feature of Meetings Africa where delegates can support local arts and crafters to purchase authentic South African products. Operates during show times.	Sandton Convention Centre – Level -2 Open to all attendees
11:00 – 11:30	BOMA TALKS - SESSION 3A: Business Opportunity Meetings Aspirations - intimate conversations between delegates.	BOMA 1: Collaboration for Success (Exhibition Level 1, Escalators) Open to all attendees
11:00 – 11:30	BOMA TALKS - SESSION 3B: Business Opportunity Meetings Aspirations - intimate conversations between delegates.	BOMA 2: Winner’s Circle (Exhibition Level -2, Restaurant) Open to all attendees
11:00 – 14:00	TKZN MEDIA BRIEFING Media briefing hosted by TKZN	Sandton Convention Centre – Committee Room 4 By Invitation Only
12:00 – 13:00	MEETINGS AFRICA INSPIRATION & GREEN STAND AWARDS Meetings Africa awards its valued exhibitors for demonstrating excellence in the various awards categories.	Sandton Convention Centre – Media Centre, Café Nala Open to all attendees
TBC	GLOBAL EDITORIAL BRIEFING: THE ROLE OF FILM, TV, AND SPORT IN PROMOTING THE AFRICAN CONTINENT IN COLLABORATION WITH JOBURG FILM FESTIVAL A media focussed panel discussion.	Media Centre - Café Nala Open to Media and other attendees
13:00 – 14:00	OFFICIAL LUNCH Partake in a wide array of authentic South African and African cuisine whilst enjoying lunchtime entertainment.	Sandton Convention Centre – Level -2 Open to all attendees
15:00 – 17:00	MEETINGS AFRICA CLOSING CELEBRATION A celebratory culmination of Meetings Africa 2025! Join the Meetings Africa team as we say thank you for a great show. See you next year!	Exhibition 1 Foyer and Maude Street Exiting Delegates

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SA Tourism:

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- Meet South Africa
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TGCSA

- The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa
- @tgcsa_

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The Sustainability Village: Showcasing Local Artisans

The Sustainability Village is an iconic feature of Meetings Africa, providing delegates with an immersive experience that fosters support for local artisans.

The Sustainability Village at Meetings Africa offers delegates an opportunity to purchase unique and sustainable South African products from local artists and crafters. Here are 10 of the 20 vendors who are showcasing their products at the 2025 edition of the trade show.

Find The Sustainability Village on Floor -2.



I create beautifully crocheted products using mainly recycled materials, with a focus on T-shirt yarn. Each piece is thoughtfully crafted to combine sustainability with style, offering unique, eco-friendly creations that stand out. The versatility of T-shirt yarn allows me to design durable and functional items, from home décor to fashion accessories, all while minimizing environmental impact. Every product is made with love and care, ensuring that it's not just a piece of art, but a sustainable choice for conscious consumers."

Contact: Tebogo Legote **Mobile:** 0717384260



Wine By GOAT offers a selection of everyday table wines, including Shiraz, Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Our focus is on creating memorable experiences through curated events where our wines take center stage in perfect pairings.

Contact: Duncan Mufumadi **Mobile:** 0719410545



Kays Casa Decor is a luxury home fragrance and décor brand specializing in scented soy candles, pillar candles, pillow mists, fragrance diffusers, planters, and vases. With a focus on elegance and relaxation, Kays Casa Decor creates beautifully crafted products that enhance any space with soothing aromas and stylish designs.

Contact: Karabo Molefe **Mobile:** 0728653588



"We are a family-owned business with a rich tradition of crafting the finest ginger beer using our unique, time-honored powder concentrate recipe. With a passion for quality and authenticity, we produce both our signature powder concentrate and pre-mixed ginger beer, ensuring a refreshing, flavorful experience for all occasions. Whether you're celebrating a special event, relaxing with friends, or simply enjoying a moment of refreshment, our ginger beer delivers the perfect balance of bold, zesty ginger flavor and just the right amount of sweetness. Our commitment to quality ingredients and family values ensures every bottle is a testament to craftsmanship, care, and a love for creating something special that can be shared with loved ones."

Contact: Maggie Mutloatse **Mobile:** 0725442903



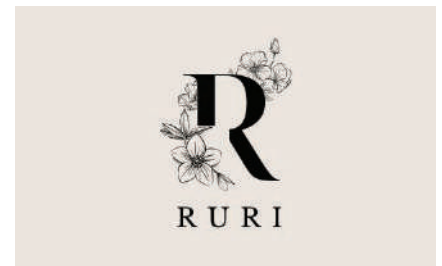
"We specialize in handmade crochet fashion items, carefully crafted to bring timeless, one-of-a-kind pieces to your wardrobe. Each item is meticulously created by skilled artisans who pour their passion into every stitch, ensuring that no two pieces are exactly alike. Our collections blend traditional crochet techniques with contemporary designs, offering everything from chic accessories to stylish apparel that can elevate any outfit. We take pride in using high-quality, sustainable materials to create fashion that is not only beautiful but also made with love and care. Whether you're looking for a unique statement piece or a cozy, handmade addition to your closet, our crochet creations are designed to make you feel confident and stylish."

Contact: Bongekile Kubheka **Mobile:** 0792980932



We create exclusive ready to wear clothing for all ages, all bodies, all humans, for all occasions. If you are a discerning consumer of worldly taste, we cater to you. From our Dungaree's and kaftans, ponchos to Kimono's we have you guaranteed to leave a lasting impression with our pieces.

Contact: Nondumiso Magubane **Mobile:** 0810494632



"Ruri is a female-owned brand dedicated to locally producing organic beauty products that nourish both your skin and the environment. We handcraft each product using carefully sourced, natural ingredients to ensure your beauty routine is as pure and effective as possible. In addition to our signature range, we also offer custom-made branded products, providing tailored solutions for businesses looking to create unique beauty experiences. Empowering women through both our products and our mission, Ruri delivers beauty that is eco-friendly, luxurious, and made just for you."

Contact: Noluthando Sithole **Mobile:** 0614643676



We specialize in handmade, elegant accessories that elevate any outfit. Crafted with care and attention to detail, each piece combines timeless style with unique artistry. Our collection is designed to add a touch of sophistication and personality to your look, perfect for any occasion."

Contact: Siza Dube **Mobile:** 0794886742



Yammie Collectionz is a trendy fashion and lifestyle brand specializing in stylish, high-quality apparel and accessories. Known for its unique designs and attention to detail, the brand caters to individuals who appreciate both comfort and elegance. Yammie Collectionz aims to inspire confidence and self-expression through its carefully curated collections.

Contact: Vuyo Mavuso **Mobile:** 0641447672



Using quality fabrics to maintain brand loyalty, presenting a signature at the best value for money. We creative sustainable fashions with a limited edition promise that guarantees exclusivity for our clients.

Contact: Sihle Dube **Mobile:** 0798646451

TTOS Paves the Way for South Africa's Business Events Sector

Building Trust and Driving Growth: The Trusted Tour Operators Scheme is set to revolutionise South Africa's tourism and business events sectors.

At Meetings Africa on Tuesday, Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille, Minister of Home Affairs Dr Leon Schreiber, and Tshivhengwa, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA), outlined how the Trusted Tour Operators Scheme (TTOS) is set to revolutionise South Africa's tourism and business events sectors.

The session, attended by media and tour operators, centred on trust as the critical foundation for seamless facilitation of visas for boosting tourism, creating jobs, and positioning South Africa as a premier destination for business events.

When discussing the global context, the panel emphasised that trust is indispensable in today's interconnected world. TTOS exemplifies this by streamlining visa processes and ensuring that tour operators meet high safety and accountability standards.

Rapid Digital Transformation

Dr Schreiber explained, "Visa inefficiency has long been a barrier to growth, especially for key tourism markets like China and India. With TTOS, we are digitally transforming our visa processes, sometimes issuing visas within three days or even hours." This rapid digital transformation not only eases entry for international visitors but also bolsters investor confidence.

Minister de Lille positioned TTOS within a broader framework of global visa reforms. "Other BRICS countries have long benefited from more flexible visa regimes," she remarked. "By relaxing visa conditions for major markets, such as China and India, we are opening our doors wider and creating a breakthrough for our tourism sector."

She further noted that South Africa recorded almost 9 million visitors in 2024, a robust figure that sets



the stage for even greater growth. "For every 12 tourists, one job is created," Minister de Lille added, underscoring the direct link between increased tourism and job creation. With an ambitious target of reaching nearly 15 million tourists by 2030, the relaxed visa regime is poised to drive sustained growth in the industry.

Trust and Collaboration

Tshivhengwa of TBCSA added valuable insights into the role of trust and collaboration. "Coming out of the challenges posed by COVID-19, we knew we had to reimagine our tourism strategies, particularly to attract markets like China and India, where the middle class is rapidly expanding. This initiative is not merely about facilitating travel; it is about building and maintaining trust. Tour operators must ensure every visitor has

a memorable experience, and the government must deliver on its promise of a seamless process. When both sides honour their commitments, we create a virtuous cycle of growth that benefits everyone."

The discussion also highlighted the critical role of digitalisation. Panellists noted that the introduction of the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) is a further step toward a fully digitalised system that eliminates paper-based processes and minimises the potential for corruption. "Digitalisation is the lowest hanging fruit. It ensures that every traveller who wishes to visit South Africa can do so quickly and securely."

Dialogue with Airlines

During the same briefing, Minister de Lille revealed plans for upcoming meetings with airlines to discuss route development and enhanced connectivity. "Airlines are a vital part of the tourism ecosystem," she stated. "While the visa exemption is a significant breakthrough, it must be supported by robust air access. We need carriers to develop more routes, direct ones specifically, to South Africa so that our relaxed visa regime translates into tangible visitor numbers."

The dialogue with airlines underscores the collaborative efforts between government and industry stakeholders, a central tenet of the Government of National Unity's approach to inclusive growth and job creation, Minister de Lille said.

"This is not just about policy; it is about ensuring that every tour operator, every digital process, and every flight connection contributes to a safe, efficient system. Our aim is to not only attract more tourists but also to ensure that the economic benefits of tourism reach every corner of our country, from urban centres to villages, townships, and small dorpiess."



ANEW Upgrades Reap Rewards

The 4-star upgrades to key properties are a reflection of our belief in the resilience of South Africa's hospitality industry, says ANEW CEO Clinton Armour.

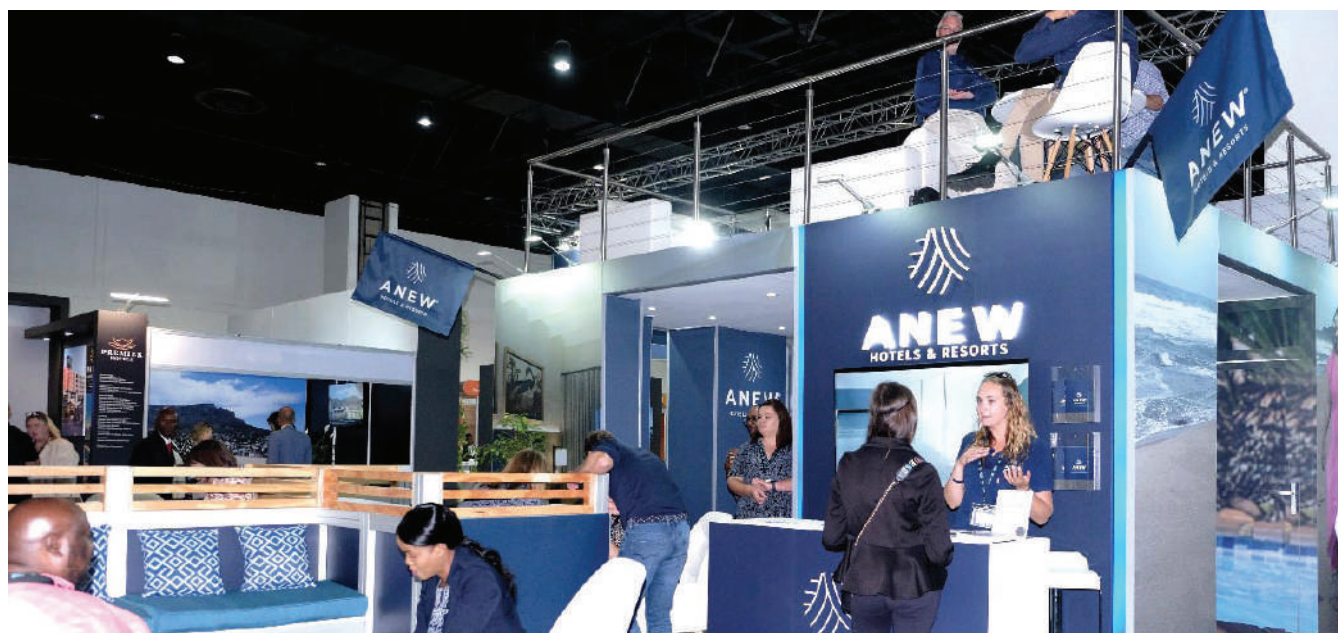
ANEW Hotels & Resorts' impactful and strategic investments to significantly improve its offerings and guest experience across several key properties has resulted in six hotels moving from 3-star to 4-star status.

The new status for these properties were recognised by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa and shows ANEW's continued investment and commitment to understanding and delivering on what today's travellers value most. Quality, comfort, good food and thoughtful details in their rooms and public areas.

The properties that recently upgraded to 4-star status include: ANEW Hotel Capital Pretoria, ANEW Hotel Hluhluwe, ANEW Hotel Highveld eMalahleni, ANEW Hotel Hatfield, ANEW Resort White River Mbombela and ANEW Hotel OR Tambo Johannesburg.

"We made a decision that we wanted to get consistency in our hotels and position our brand as an upper 4-star brand," says ANEW CEO Clinton Armour. "Because we're still a newish brand, we don't have the luxury of getting away with hotels that aren't of a quality that we would want."

From the strategic placement of plug points to the selection of pillows in the rooms, to the placement of



plants in public areas, meticulous attention to detail ensured that upgrades are not just cosmetic but enhance comfort and convenience for every traveller and remain visually pleasing to the eye, says Armour.

"The 4-star upgrades are a reflection of our belief in the resilience of South Africa's hospitality industry and our dedication to delivering on the small details that truly matter to our guests the most," he says.

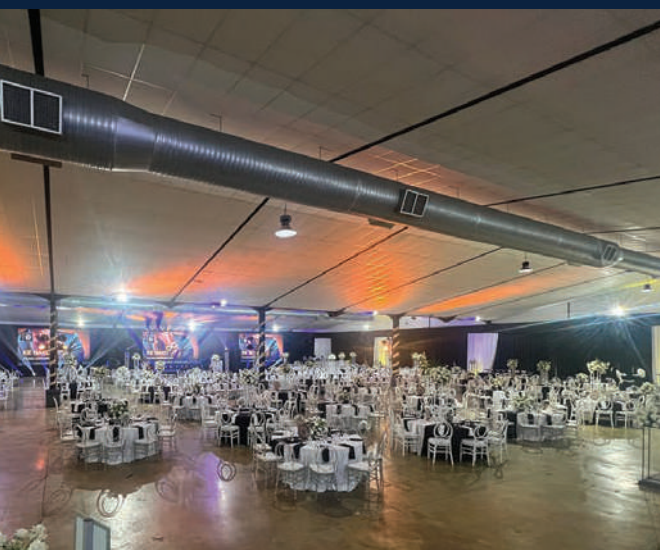


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Francine's Rise: From Domestic Worker to Industry Leader

Through relentless networking and collaboration, Francine Zana built a brand now recognised across South Africa and beyond.



Francine Zana's journey is one of resilience, determination, and vision. Born and raised in Port Elizabeth, she entered the hospitality industry at just 19 years old as a domestic worker. It was a tough beginning, but she quickly realised that hospitality offered endless possibilities for those willing to learn and grow.

"I started from the bottom - housekeeping, waitressing, front office, even the kitchen. I took every promotion that came my way until I became an operations manager," she recalls. But Francine didn't stop there.

She saw opportunities others overlooked.

'You just need to keep coming'

Determined to chart her own path, she challenged her boss: "I'm tired of working for someone else. It's time to build something of my own." With courage and faith in her skills, she stepped into the world of business, focusing on hospitality training and consulting.

Her journey wasn't easy. There were setbacks, rejections, and times when she invested her last savings just to attend networking events. "You just need to keep coming. Some will ignore you, but if you are consistent, they will pay attention," she advises aspiring hopefuls in the industry.

Take the risk

Through relentless networking and collaboration, she built her brand, Executive Exclusive Hospitality Concepts, now recognised across South Africa and beyond. Today, she works with universities, private clients, and major corporations, proving that success comes from perseverance.

Her biggest lesson? "You need to see what others don't see. Believe in yourself and take the risk. Even if you start with nothing, you can build something great."

South Africa's Ubuntu Advantage: Culture as the Ultimate Tourist Magnet

SA Tourism's CMO, Thembisile Sehloho, unveils the secret weapon driving visitor numbers – and it is not just sunshine and safaris.

South Africa's tourism sector is a vital engine of economic growth, and driving that engine is a carefully crafted marketing strategy that puts "people" and "culture" front and centre.

Thembisile Sehloho, the Chief Marketing Officer of SA Tourism, is at the helm of this strategy, and she has got a clear vision: to market South Africa authentically, showcasing the country's unique character and drawing in visitors from across the globe.

"From a South African Tourism perspective, if you look at our strategy... it is really about how we market the country authentically and how we package the country authentically," explains Sehloho. "It is not just about pretty pictures of landscapes; it is about telling the stories behind those landscapes, the stories of the people who call South Africa home."

Our People, Our Place

Sehloho emphasises that SA Tourism's strategy revolves around two core elements: "our people and our place". She elaborates, "That's our communities and really it's all-encompassing around our people. You know, the culture that we have in the way we do things, and our places – I mean the beautiful country that we hold."

This people-centric approach is more than just a feel-good marketing tactic. It is a recognition that what truly sets South Africa apart is its vibrant culture, its diverse communities, and the warmth and hospitality of its people. It is about showcasing the *ubuntu* spirit that makes South Africa so special.



Culture as a Tourism Driver

Sehloho highlighted the increasing importance of cultural tourism, stating: "We do understand from a trends perspective that culture is presented like the biggest driver of tourism, looking into the future. And those are the numbers. That's what the numbers are saying."

According to Sehloho, culture, and gastronomy are "probably the biggest growing segment in tourism." This shift in tourist preferences demands a strategic

response, and SA Tourism is taking note. Marketing efforts are increasingly focused on highlighting South Africa's rich cultural heritage, its diverse culinary traditions, and the unique experiences that visitors can have by immersing themselves in local communities.

The key takeaway? For South Africa, culture is not just an add-on to the tourism experience; it is the tourism experience. By embracing and promoting its unique cultural identity, South Africa can continue to attract visitors, boost its economy, and share its story with the world. South Africa's got it going on, don't you know!

Exciting New Developments at Aquila Collection

Meetings Africa is a great place to meet up with the world and tell what's new, tell what's exciting, says Johan Van Schalkwyk, Commercial Officer for Aquila Collection.



Meetings Africa, as the start of trade show season in South Africa, is a great starting point to come and meet up with the world and tell what's new, tell what's exciting," says Johan Van Schalkwyk, Commercial Officer for Aquila Collection.

The team on the trade floor is buzzing with updates on the significant developments at Aquila's three stunning safari lodges, a short two-hour drive from the bustling heart of Cape Town; each offers a distinct, unforgettable safari experience.

With its luxurious spa and stunning wildlife, Aquila Private Game Reserve & Spa, the flagship of the group, is an unforgettable add-on to any city event, seamlessly blending adventure and versatile event spaces. It offers a unique experience, combining modern amenities with the awe-inspiring Karoo environment.

Seven customisable day trips allow Aquila to incorporate an African wildlife experience, effortlessly, into even the most demanding conference schedule. The property provides comfortable overnight accommodation for up to 202 guests, immersed in nature.

Pop-up Tented Camp

Van Schalkwyk emphasises their recent creation of 75 pop-up tented units, expanding capacity by 150 guests. This provides unique MICE opportunities, allowing guests to sleep under the stars and enjoy early morning game drives.

"This bespoke high-end luxury camp can be put at different properties and at different places, so it gives us good versatility for events and incentive groups."

Their Stone Cottage Venue & Open-Air Boma is an exciting venue for boma and gala dinners, accommodating up to 120 guests. They also boast a stunning multipurpose space for 350 guests. The Karoo Vista Centre is a versatile venue—by day, it serves as a day visitor center, and by night, it transforms into a spectacular gala space.

Aquila is set to unveil a new à la carte safari restaurant this year, promising a luxurious and immersive dining experience in the Western Cape.

Ultra-luxurious Kuganha

"The ultra-luxurious Kuganha is reopening later this year



with 10 units. Each tent will have its own wet room and spa, featuring a cold plunge pool, hot steam shower, salt halo shower, steam room, two hot tubs, a jacuzzi, and a flotation pool. It's going to be a complete remote private luxury experience, a two-night stay to explore the landscapes and beauty of the Tankwa Karoo."

"There's a lot happening, so it's great to be here at Meetings Africa to tell those stories to the world and to bring people to the Western Cape."

Incredible Events Destination

The number one reason people visit Africa and South Africa is to see wildlife, says Johan. "We have wildlife, and then combined with the leisure capital of Africa, Cape Town. Bringing those two things together, it has developed into an incredible events destination because you can do so many things in one day. I think it's the only place in the world where you could start the morning with a lion's roar at dawn at one of our properties, make your way through the Winelands for an incredible lunch, and find yourself on top of one of the Seven Natural Wonders like Table Mountain in the evening."

Johan emphasises their commitment to the evolving narrative around business events and tourism in Africa. "I think our involvement throughout Africa at various shows with various partners makes us part of that new narrative, that new story. We're only starting to see the tip of it now, and it's going to be very exciting. I can't wait for the next five to six years. People are ready to explore Africa, and we're part of that voice. It's part of what we do, not just here at Meetings Africa but globally at shows like this."



Unveiling West Africa's Hidden Gem at Meetings Africa 2025

Discover a land of vibrant culture, and warm hospitality: Guinea is ready to capture the hearts of international travellers.

Meetings Africa 2025 has once again proven to be a vital platform for showcasing the diverse and often untapped potential of the African tourism market. This year, Guinea enters the spotlight.

For those in the hospitality industry, like Thierno Balde, Sales Manager at Noom Hotel Company, Meetings Africa presents an unparalleled opportunity. "As a new brand, this is our second time here, and we just see that Meetings Africa is a very big opportunity to meet most of the buyers, because this one is international meetings. Actually, it's not only African, so we have buyers from everywhere." This sentiment underscores the event's global reach, connecting African businesses with international partners and fostering collaborations that drive growth.

Culture and Ecotourism

Balde further emphasises the strategic importance of South Africa as a hub for agencies booking travel across the continent. "We see that in South Africa there are many agencies who book all over Africa. And that's why we try to be here every year... to make ourselves known to the public."

But what makes Guinea a destination worth considering? According to Grovogui Princesse, also a

Sales Manager at Noom Hotel Company, Guinea offers a unique blend of culture and ecotourism that is increasingly sought after by discerning travellers. "They are looking for culture. They want to explore our culture. They want to know more about our art and places, touristic areas."

Princesse also highlights the country's stunning natural landscapes. "We have the waterfall areas; we have the mountains and a World Heritage Site."

Interconnectedness

Balde also points out the interconnectedness of West African cultures. "Guinea has many things to discover. Actually, people didn't know that. Even we Africans we didn't know because you have just to go there to see. But it's linked to Senegal, linked to Ivory Coast... And this shared cultural heritage makes travelling within the region easier and more rewarding."

Guinea is also making strides in attracting international



conferences, signalling its growing importance on the global stage. Addressing concerns about accessibility, Princesse assures that Guinea has an open visa policy for many African nations. While flights from South Africa may require connections, the journey is well worth the effort to experience Guinea's unique charm.

Ultimately, Guinea offers a warm welcome and a sense of shared humanity that resonates deeply with visitors. Balde eloquently captures this sentiment: "The communication, the wellbeing, the welcomeness there is something common... we came from different places, but you know, there's this warm business. This is Africa."

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ALL ABOARD!

Harties Steam Train Set to Chug Into the Future, Boosting Tourism in Hartbeespoort



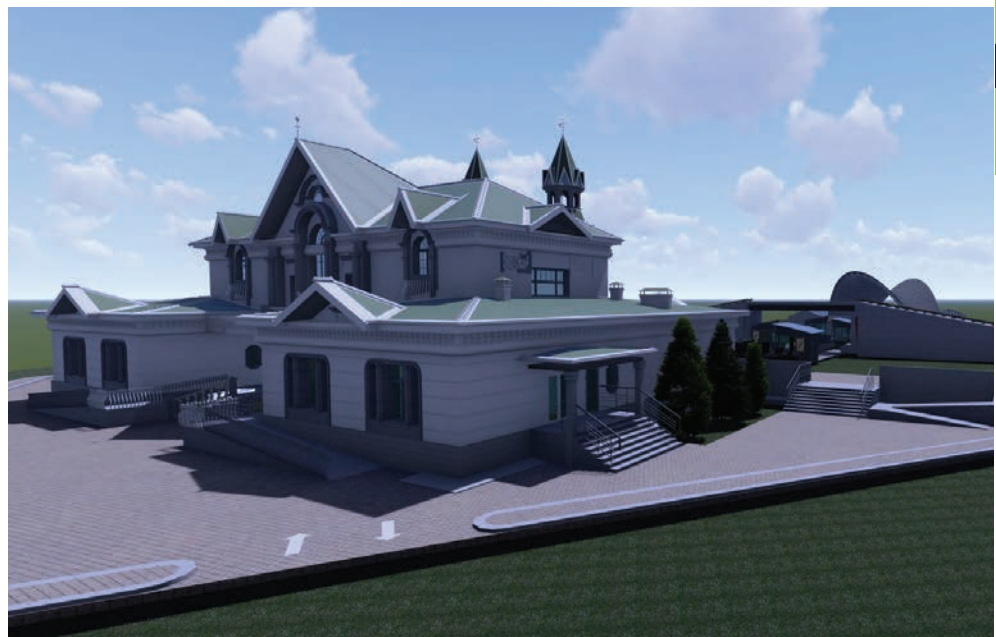
HARTBEESPOORT – Get ready to step back in time and embark on a nostalgic journey through the scenic landscapes of Hartbeespoort, as plans for the Harties Steam Train—a captivating new tourism project—gain momentum for a highly anticipated launch later this year. This innovative initiative promises to transform the region into an even more alluring destination for locals and international visitors alike, cementing Hartbeespoort's status as a jewel of South Africa's tourism crown.

The centerpiece of this exciting venture is the restoration and operation of a historic steam train, which will connect key points of interest in and around Hartbeespoort, starting with The Bay Train Station. This beautiful, soon-to-be constructed station, nestled along the region's picturesque shores, will serve as the gateway to an unforgettable experience that blends vintage charm with modern convenience.

According to Dion Mostert, one of the project developers, the Harties Steam Train is designed to be more than just a ride—it's a catalyst for a tourism boom in the area. The train will offer passengers breathtaking views of the Magaliesberg Mountains, the Hartbeespoort Dam, and the lush valleys that define this beloved region. Plans are also afoot for a hop on hop off amphibious bus to link the bay station to Harties Harbour and other tourism activities around the dam. With stops planned at cultural landmarks, local markets, and nature reserves, visitors will have the opportunity to explore Hartbeespoort's rich heritage and natural beauty at a leisurely pace, evoking the golden age of rail travel.

"This project is about creating lasting memories while driving economic growth," said a spokesperson for the initiative. "The steam train will not only attract tourists but also support local businesses, from artisans to restaurateurs, by bringing more visitors directly to their doorsteps."

Harties Steam Train is expected operate on a regular schedule, family-friendly



The proposed Bay Train Station with the SA Rail History Museum in the background.

packages, special event trains for holidays, and even romantic sunset rides. Eco-conscious travelers will appreciate the commitment to sustainable tourism practices, including the use of renewable energy sources to power certain aspects of the operation.

Construction efforts are already underway, with The Bay Train Station being designed into a vibrant hub featuring a quaint ticket office, a small museum showcasing the history of rail in South Africa, and a café offering local delicacies. The steam train itself, a beautifully preserved piece of history, is undergoing meticulous restoration to ensure both authenticity and safety for all passengers.

Tourism experts predict that the Harties Steam Train will draw thousands of visitors annually, positioning Hartbeespoort as a must-visit destination for those seeking unique, immersive experiences. With its proximity to Johannesburg and Pretoria, the project is poised to become a convenient and enchanting day-trip option for city dwellers looking to escape the urban hustle. Stay tuned for updates on the official launch date, ticket sales, and special preview events.

The whistle is about to blow on a new era of adventure in Hartbeespoort—don't miss your chance to be part of this historic journey!

For more information, contact Dion Mostert on +27 82 765 0699 or visit the Harties Steam Train website at www.hartiessteamtrain.co.za.

All aboard for an unforgettable ride!



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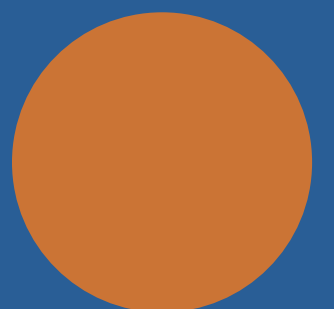
Africa's premier business & event destination

GAUTENG is the vibrant business tourism capital of Africa and boasts the highest concentration of convention centres, corporate headquarters and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Whether you are a corporate meeting planner, incentive buyer or event planner, Gauteng has it all:

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- Luxury accommodation

Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) provides you with expert information on:

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- Conference publicity and delegate boosting
- Social Programmes, Pre and Post Tours and Incentive packages
- Destination display and promotion
- Destination tourism product showcase and Site-inspection for the media, event/conference organizers and visitors
- Supplier information and quotations.
- Negotiate rates
- Information Kits and Welcome Packs for attendees



TIFA: New Tourism Investment Platform to be Launched at Meetings Africa 2025

The KwaZulu-Natal Tourism and Film Authority, in collaboration with Fatuzi and the uMhlathuze municipality, will officially launch the TIFA (Tourism Investment Forum Africa) platform at Meetings Africa 2025 today.

This strategic initiative in Richards Bay aims to leverage the area's economic potential as an industrial hub and port town.

According to Jackie Motsepe, COO of KZN Tourism and Film Authority, "TIFA is an investment platform that we're launching with Fatuzi, the municipality, in uMhlathuze. The idea was to position it outside of Durban, and uMhlathuze, being a port town and economic zone, seemed like the perfect location."

Motsepe highlighted the enthusiasm of local partners, stating, "Fatuzi were extremely keen to work with us and host the event, which has been a great partnership."

The launch is part of a broader strategy to attract diverse industries to the region. Motsepe noted, "It's broadly an investment platform for different types of industries. We're announcing it with a ceremonial signing, and we're excited to reveal the stakeholders."

The event is expected to draw significant interest, with the mayor and councillors attending. The initiative reflects a commitment to upliftment and development in the area. Motsepe shared, "It's great to work with a partner that sees the potential and opportunity."

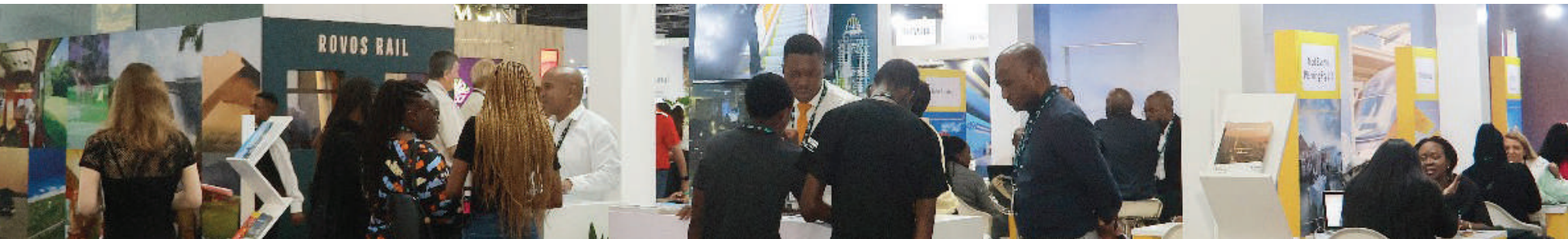
The TIFA Media Launch will be held as follows:

Date: 26 February 2025

Time: 11am – 2pm

Venue: Committee Hall 4A, Sandton Convention Centre

Voices from the Floor



Kunal Malhotra, Cvent: Regional sales manager
Exhibitor
India/Africa

Africa is a rapidly developing region with immense business potential. As organisations expand, so do the businesses and vendors they work with, creating a ripple effect of growth. South Africa, in particular, offers incredible opportunities for collaboration and investment.



Liana Boshoff-Jacobs, owner and manager: Cape Rebel Tours
Exhibitor
Cape Town, South Africa

Africa's uniqueness lies in its diversity, natural beauty, and, most importantly, its people. Our coastline, our food - people rave about it when they visit. But beyond that, we are hungry for success. We want to show the world that Africa is something special, and that drive sets us apart.



Sajjan Kumar Gupta from Vayu Seva Tours &Travel (P) LTD
International Hosted Buyer
India

"Meetings Africa has been fantastic - it's not just a trade event; it feels like a reunion with colleagues and business associates from across the continent. It's been a great space to reconnect and strengthen relationships."



Thabiso Magodiello from Fusion Travel and Tours Buyer

South Africa

Africa is a one-stop shop for business events – stunning venues, vibrant spaces, and warm hospitality rooted in Ubuntu. We don't just host events; we create exceptional experiences. Meetings Africa has been a game-changer, connecting us with international buyers and opening doors for new deals and collaborations that wouldn't have happened otherwise.



Risimati Vincent Baloyi from Zeus Shuttles and Coaches & Ashwood Boutique Hotels

Buyer

Meetings Africa has been a bit quieter this year, with lower attendance compared to previous years. Some clients, particularly from Kenya, have noticed the drop, and it raises questions about whether companies are shifting their investment strategies. That said, the event has been valuable for me - I've made key regional connections through my business, BSA GSA Holdings, which represents travel, tourism, and event management services.



Hasan Hazirlar from Kamula Tourism & Travel Agency

International Hosten Buyer

This is my first time at Meetings Africa, and it has exceeded my expectations. I've met incredible people, gained valuable insights into the tourism industry, and discovered opportunities far beyond what I had anticipated.



Betty Mumba from Zambia Tourism Agency

For Zambia, and as representatives of the Ministry of Tourism, our goal at Meetings Africa is clear 0 to see Africa do business with Africa. We've attended for 15 years, leveraging this platform to strengthen intra-African trade and partnerships. Zambia, uniquely connected to eight neighbouring countries, is positioning itself as a prime hub for meetings and conferences in the region.



Pretty Mvune from The Perfections Group

Exhibitor

South Africa

"Africa is a one-stop destination for everything you need. Beyond stunning venues and incredible event spaces, we have the people who make every experience exceptional. With our spirit of Ubuntu, we welcome visitors with warmth and offer the greatest hospitality imaginable."



Exhibitor Profile



Zuri Events is a sustainable event management firm based in Nairobi, Kenya with over 17 years in event management. We have specialized in offering end to end event solutions in Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions focusing on positive impact in People, Planet and Profit. With a focus on technology, innovation and sustainability, Zuri Events delivers professional high quality management for diverse African and Global brands.

Contact Details

Email: info@zurievents.com

Call / WhatsApp: +254705761111 / +254722289659

Website: www.zurievents.com

Rwanda to Host Premier Coffee and Tea Event in Africa

Rwanda is set to host The Africa Coffee and Tea Expo 2025 (ACT) From 7-8 July 2025.

With the theme “Africa brewing for prosperity”, the main purpose of The African Coffee & Tea Expo’s (ACT) is to be the leading coffee and tea B2B networking platform, focused on the East African Region, expressly providing targeted connections for sector growth, strategic content to serve the needs of skills development, as well as a powerful launchpad to extend the reach of export both internationally and within the African continent.

Organised by the Rwanda Events Group, in partnership with the NAEB (National Agricultural Export Development Board and the Rwanda Convention Bureau, ACT Expo 2025 will be a premier trade show featuring over 100 exhibitors, showcasing the latest innovations in the coffee and tea industries.

With participation from 25+ African countries, ACT Expo 2025 is expected to facilitate 50+ strategic trade agreements and 30+ long-term partnerships, boosting intra-African trade and international market access.

The Africa Coffee and Tea Expo 2025 is open to all coffee and tea enthusiasts, from growers and producers to consumers and connoisseurs. Attendees will have the opportunity to discover new flavours, learn from experts, and immerse themselves in the vibrant culture of African coffee and tea.

Visit africacoffeeteaexpo.com for more information.

**AFRICA
COFFEE
& TEA**



Challenge Designed to Empower African Youth in Tourism



With the collaboration of



Entries are open until 28 February 2025 for the Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Challenge, an exclusive platform designed to empower innovative African youth in the travel and tourism sector.

Tourism stakeholders, innovators, and policymakers gathered last month for the official launch of the challenge at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC) in Nairobi, Kenya. The top five finalists will be announced at the 7th edition of the Africa Tourism Innovation Summit and Challenge (AYTIS 2025), which will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 10 to 13 June 2025.

AYTIS 2025 is convened by Africa Tourism Partners and hosted by TEAMS Africa, in collaboration with UN Tourism and BDO, the AfCFTA Secretariat, the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, and the Kenya Tourism Board.

This year’s Summit will focus on intra-

Africa trade in tourism services among African youth and showcase youth-led tourism businesses across the continent.

“We are excited to bring together a dynamic gathering of African tourism stakeholders, visionary young entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, tech investors, innovators, and eager students,” said Kwakye Donkor, CEO of Africa Tourism Partners, stated. “This year’s summit promises to be a pivotal moment for collaboration and innovation in African tourism, creatives, and cultural industries.”

Registration for participation and challenge entries is still open at youthtourismsummit.com.

Winners will gain access to the Africa Tourism Innovation Hub, housed at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and the Namibia University of Science and Technology, where they will receive mentorship and meet potential funders.

AKBE: A unifying body for MICE professionals



**Association for
Kenya Business Events**

The Association for Kenya Business Events (AKBE) is the premier private-sector trade association dedicated to developing and promoting the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector in Kenya. As a unifying body for business events professionals, AKBE fosters industry growth, enhances standards, and advocates for policies that create a thriving MICE environment.

Their diverse membership includes meeting venues, MICE specialists, event planners, conference organisers, destination management companies (DMCs), destination marketing organizations (DMOs), hotels, transport companies, airlines, and other key industry suppliers.

“By uniting these stakeholders, we strengthen Kenya’s position as a top business events destination, driving economic impact through high-quality

conferences and exhibitions,” the association says.

To expand Kenya’s MICE sector globally, AKBE is exhibiting at Meetings Africa 2025. Their stand features leading Kenyan MICE service providers, including Zuri Events, Waridi Events, Africa Associations Management Company (AFAMCO), Pneuma AV, and Africa Quest Safaris.

“This platform showcases Kenya’s strengths in hosting world-class business events, connects industry leaders with international buyers, and fosters strategic partnerships.”

**Find AKBE at Stand 5E
at Meetings Africa 2025.
Visit www.akbe.or.ke or contact
them at info@akbe.or.ke**

Day 1 in Pictures





Avani Victoria Falls Resort



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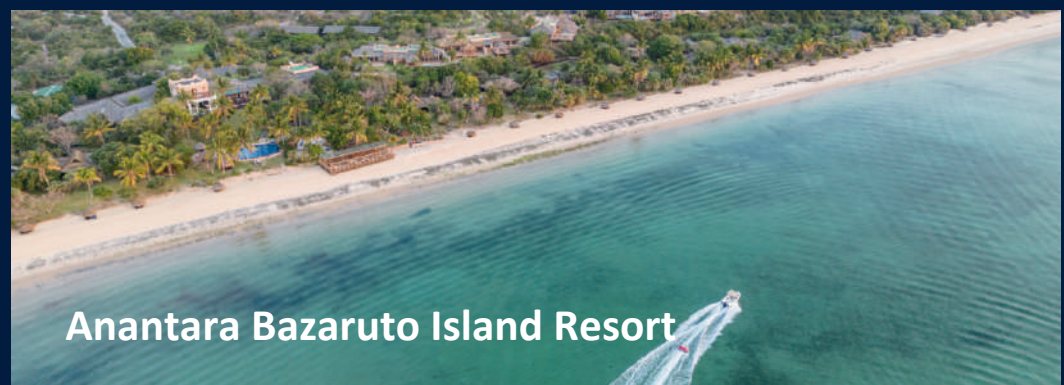
Let us show you Africa, from seamless city stays to exclusive safari lodges and luxury resorts on private islands.



The Royal Livingstone Hotel by Anantara



Anantara Stanley & Livingstone Victoria Falls Hotel



Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort



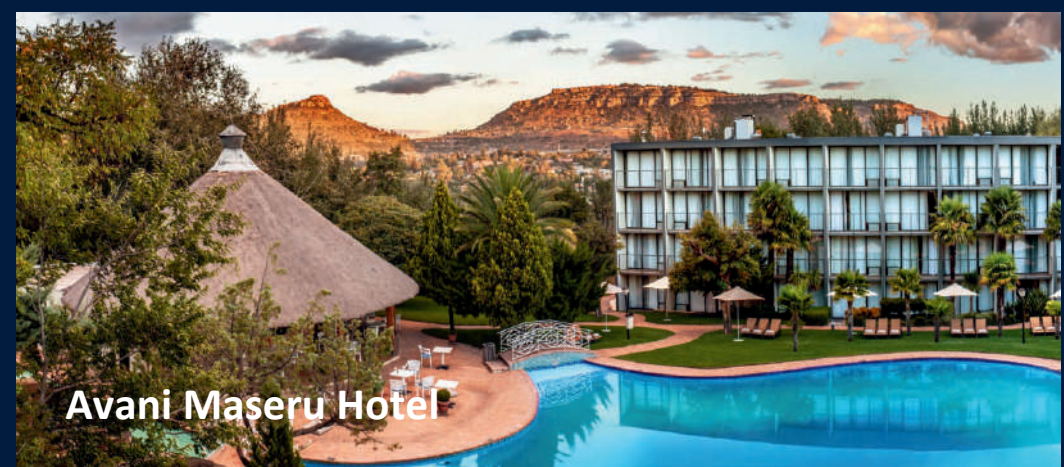
Avani Gaborone Resort & Casino



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