



# Webinar 1

## Destination Readiness

### Panel Members



#### **Nisha Barkathunnisha**

**Founder and Principal Consultant**  
**Elevated Consultancy and Training**  
**World Women Tourism**

Nisha is a **management consultant, corporate trainer and academic** with more than 25 years extensive management experience in the Tourism, Hospitality and Events industry.

As the Founder of Elevated Consultancy and Training, Nisha is currently involved in **regional and international consultancy** work in the area of tourism and hospitality development in destinations that include Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Vietnam, South Africa and Malaysia. She has provided marketing and management consul to destination marketing teams to develop long term strategic plans. Nisha is also involved in capacity planning and development of tourism workforce to enhance the quality of service provision in emerging tourism markets. She has extensively trained and developed travel intermediaries, tourism boards and hospitality employees.

Nisha is a co-founder of **World Women Tourism**, a network intelligence platform that provides opportunities to women in tourism to connect, grow and flourish. The organization visions to impact

the trajectory of women in the tourism industry through promoting diversity, knowledge sharing, building networks, capacity building and opening up business opportunities. Capitalising on her tourism experience and knowledge, Nisha is an invited keynote speaker, thought leader and panelist for conferences and seminars in internationally.

Nisha is also a qualified corporate trainer and professional coach. Her wide training exposure in diverse fields, industries and destinations provides her with a unique advantage to transfer best practices and service standards to organisations and destinations. In recognition of her high-quality work, Nisha has been bestowed with several awards, including the Outstanding Tourism Trainer 2010 accolade by Workforce Development Authority (WDA) of Singapore.

Nisha is a passionate academic and lecturers at several higher educational institutions teaching a wide range of tourism, hospitality and events management subjects as well as a curriculum developer for academic and professional skills-based programs. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in the area of tourism education. Her research interests are in the areas of women in tourism, tourism branding and marketing, tourism education, halal tourism and sustainable tourism.



## **Gillian Saunders**

### **Gillian Saunders Consulting**

Gillian is an Independent Tourism and Hospitality Advisor. From April 2018 to May 2019 Gillian was Special Advisor to the then Tourism Minister; Minister Derek Hanekom. Gillian also works as a consultant to the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) and worked on the TBCSA's Public Private Growth Initiative (PPGI) Tourism Growth Strategy which projected the potential 21 million tourist arrivals which President Cyril Ramaphosa mentioned in both 2019 SONAs.

Until mid-2018 Gillian was Deputy CEO of Audit Tax and Advisory Firm, Grant Thornton in Johannesburg, and head of their Advisory Services in South Africa. Gillian's client facing expertise while at Grant Thornton was consulting to the hospitality, tourism and leisure industries and she has a long track record, of more than 30 years in her area of speciality.

In 2012 Gillian was appointed Global Sector Leader, Hotels and Tourism for Grant Thornton and she led a team of experts in various fields related to the industry from over 25 countries. Gillian has

consulted extensively in all aspects of these industries for the public and private sector throughout Africa. Her work includes tourism destination and tourism marketing strategies and plans, and working on many aspects of feasibility, market development, economic and social impacts across the industry including for hotel and tourism accommodation, conference and exhibition industry, air-routes, airports, attractions, and more.

Prior to consulting she worked in the industry in Europe and South Africa, with stints with EUREST (a contract catering subsidiary of Nestle and Wagon Lits), in France, and with Sheraton in Germany and Switzerland, before joining the Southern Sun Group in South Africa in 1982.

Gillian has a BSc Hotel Catering and Tourism Administration (Surrey 1981) and an MBA (Wits 1988 cum Laude).

Gillian is the author of a number of articles and a regular commentator in the media on many issues related to Tourism and Hospitality.

She is a member (and previous chairperson) of the board of the University of Johannesburg's School of Tourism and Hospitality and is passionate about education and education in the Hospitality and Tourism sector.



## Sabine Lehmann

### CEO of Curiositas

With more than 25 years' experience in the tourism and visitor attractions management industry, Sabine has deep insight into the changing nature of tourism and visitor attractions. Sabine was the MD of Table Mountain Cableway and the opening COO for the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa.

Sabine is the founder and CEO of **CURIOSITAS**. A specialist attractions and tourism futures consulting company. The company merges the art and science of visitor attraction management with futures thinking. It's focus is on the tourism industry.

Sabine holds an MBA and a Masters in Futures Thinking. She is on the editorial board of the international **Journal of Tourism Futures**, a member of the **Association of Professional Futurists**, and a research associate of **Institute of Futures Research**, at the Stellenbosch Business School.

# Moderator



## Rashid Toefy

### **Deputy Director General: Economic Operations in the Department of Economic Development and Tourism**

Before joining the department, Rashid was the Managing Director of MCI in Africa. The MCI Group is world's largest conference and association management company, and brings people together through innovative meetings, events and congresses and provides strategic association management consultancy in 60 cities around the world.

He served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), the leading convention centre in Africa from 2008 to 2014, positioning it as a global leader in sustainability.

He has worked extensively in the travel and tourism industry, both in South Africa and abroad. He spent three years based in Amsterdam, developing business and marketing strategies for travel companies and tourism businesses in over 30 countries, working extensively in Central Europe and Latin America.

Rashid is a member of the United Nations Global Compact Advisory Board in South Africa.

He has a degree in Economics and Environmental Science, as well an MBA from the University of Cape Town with his Masters Dissertation focusing on Collaborative Leadership, balancing discipline and diversity in effective decision making.

Rashid has become a thought leader on sustainability and implementation of triple bottom line principles within an organisation. He has spoken at several conferences, both in South Africa and abroad, about the importance and value of establishing social and environmental consciousness in businesses.

Rashid hates settling for mediocrity, and wants to do profound things that impact positively on all those around him.

He says: "we all need to make the following two ancient philosophies part of our lives....the first is the Japanese concept of *Kaizen* – "continuous improvement" and the second is the uniquely African concept of *Ubuntu* meaning "I am because we are".

