



Tourism Help Desk Programme



Background

The growth of tourism will be of limited value if it did not contribute towards achieving the goals of reconstructing our country. This would be achieved through the development of small and medium enterprises.

While the Western Cape Province has the economies of scale to render support to a number of entrepreneurs in a variety of industries, there are indications that existing support services are not geared up towards satisfying the needs of tourism entrepreneurs. They remain poorly serviced and require a greater degree of focus in terms of support. It is therefore imperative that the capacity of Local Business Service Centres and other Small Business Support Services at Local and District Councils be increased to enable them to provide much needed assistance to tourism entrepreneurs.

It is in the light thereof that the Tourism Help Desk programme was instituted. Phase I comprised of the training of suitable individuals with Tourism Help Desk Agent potential. (Please refer to Annexure A for a full chronology of the Tourism Help Desk Programme.) A substantial degree of momentum had been built up and these individuals were very keen to start work on identifying opportunities and entrepreneurs and kick-starting the growth of tourism SMMEs in especially the rural areas. Hence the need for Phase II of this programme which entails formalising the Tourism Help Desk Function in the various regions and municipalities.

The Tourism Help Desk Consortium, appointed to manage Phase I, is familiar with these individuals and the areas that they are from and has engaged in preliminary consultations with them as to the preferred and most sustainable means of structuring the Tourism Help Desk Function in the various regions. Their discussions have also covered opportunities that are available and initiatives that the individuals are currently involved in that would govern their commitment to the Tourism Help Desk Function. They were thus recommended (to the Tender Board) for appointment as the consultant to assist in the implementation of Phase II.

Phase II

A. Initial Technical Assistance for THD Setup

- Visit to each Region for initial consultation on THD structure and setup –6 Regions
- Assistance in negotiations with former structures in each region
- Drafting of Service Agreements, Code of Conduct, Performance Agreement, and THDA (Tourism Help Desk Agent) Manual
- Submission of Business Plan and requirements from each THDA in the Regions, to be used as input for Performance Agreements.

B. Technical Support to each THDA Agent

- Site visits, off-site work on documentation, agreements and manual assistance to THDA's on setting up of consistent reporting system, record keeping, recording of clients etc. for each Desk.
- Provision of reporting systems on diskette for each Agent, and agreement between THDA and the Tourism Chief Directorate on frequency of reporting.
- Mentor Directory consolidation and agreements with mentors
- Reviewing of operations at each THD

C. THD Learnership Structure and Accreditation

- Existing course to be linked to Unit Standards that are applicable to SMME/Entrepreneurship requirements.
- Additional Unit Standards to be added according to qualification requirements, e.g. IT, financial analysis etc.
- Negotiations with THETA
- Documentation of learning process, assessment and linkages to registered Unit Standards and submission to SAQA.

Progress

Below is a report of the progress made with Phase II after the substantial number of negotiations held with Local and District Council Municipalities to sign the Tourism Help Desk Service Level Agreement.

Unicity

Shahid Solomon, the previous Interim Manager (Local Economic Development) found the programme extremely useful and placed Nombulelo Mkefa and Zimlo Lalendle in charge of realising the potential locally. The plan thus far is that the Unicity envisages 11 service points throughout the Unicity. They would like to start in the areas of most need which is Guguletu (Sivuyile) and Khayelitsha (Training Centre), with Abel Mtebele and Themba Mqobozi earmarked as the THD agents in these areas. They are THD trainees. These two centres can be up and running quite soon and development will be tracked with Abel Mtebele. In the interim, the direct tourism entrepreneurship support will be handled through Ms Mkefa's office.

West Coast:

The District Municipality is undergoing the process of restructuring after which they will ascertain how the THD function fits in. In the interim, the WCII (West Coast Investment Initiative) has agreed to use funds available for the project manager post to support expenses incurred by the interim THD function in the West Coast. For this, a Memorandum of Understanding needs to be in place, which is being prepared.

Boland

There are two active municipalities in this case. They are Stellenbosch (which ties in the THD agents in Stellenbosch, Pniel and Franschoek) and there is Drakenstein (Paarl). In the former case, the municipality agrees with the concept, but would need to create a post for the function. This, as with us at Provincial level is a lengthy process. However, the Greater Stellenbosch Development Trust was recently formed and there has been an offer from the Municipality to second Marina Scheffers (the THD Trainee) to the trust to work on development fulltime. Their pilot project would be Kayamandi, but would expand at a later stage to include the other two THD's as well, in their own locations.

For Drakenstein: The Municipal manager agreed with the idea, but would still need to include it into their IDP.

Overberg:

It is on their IDP and economic development plan. Two Councillors, Annelie Rabie and Nicolette Botha are driving the process, so there is great confidence that it will be promoted, but once again, only after the IDP is adopted.

South Cape:

It is part of the Oudtshoorn IDP and since SCBC (South Cape Business Centre) has been asked to write the economic development strategy for the municipality, the THD will feature on that as well. The municipality has promised office space to house the THDs and funds are expected to follow.

Central Karoo:

The THD is on their IDP, but they would have to wait until the next financial year for the budget to be available to appoint the two THDs that have been trained. Stefanus Jooste has given us an indication of end 2002 – early 2003.

In Conclusion

The focus of this project has been on the signing of the service level agreement as a deliverable. It would take quite some time considering the IDP Process and organisational restructuring that would need to take place as a result. Furthermore, even though a number of THDs sit inside municipal structures already, their current job description is not equal to that of a THD, and if they do THD work, someone has to be found to do their current work. This is the dilemma. A recommendation is that we allow them some time to sort themselves out. A number of them have submitted projects for funding that they could use in the interim to impress the municipality of their abilities. In the new financial year we can also ask them to submit THD specific projects which will pave the way for the THD function when it gets set up and in this way valuable time will not be all lost. Examples of these would be SMME workshops, answering all the questions that are out there about opportunities, funding etc., developing an SMME database, mentor panels and so forth.

TOURISMHELPDESK

PROJECTCHRONOLOGY

PHASE1	
15May2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The THDProjectstarts . • TheTourismDirectorateidentifies"Champions"inthe8regions. • TheTHDProjectWorkingCommitteeisconstitutedandchairedbyMs CNhlumayo.
June2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetingwith"Champions". • Set-upofregionalstakeholdersmeetings.
July2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholdersmeetingsintheregions . • Morethan1000SMMEQuestionnairesaredistributed.
August2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-onofstakeholdersmeetings. • AllregionsbutBreedeRiverValleyagreeontherelevanceoftheTHD Agency. • TheTHDConsortiumpresentsa ProgressReport and Reporton Facts&Findings fortheconsiderationoftheWorkingCommittee. • Thereportisacceptedandan"incrementalapproach"issuggestedfor thesettingupoftheAgencies. • Trainingperregionisrecommended.
Sept2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IdentificationofprospectiveTHDAgents (max20). • DevelopmentofTrainingandCapacitationCourse . • TrainingtheTrainerWorkshop. • RegionaltimetableforAgentsworkshopsandexperientiallearning.
3Oct2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THDAgentTrainingstarts inOverberg,followedimmediatelybyother regions. • 53prospectiveAgentssignthelearnershipagreement andthey committocompletethetraining.
13-21Nov2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THDConsortiummeetswithAgentsandtheirreportinglinestoexplore waysforwardandorganisationalstructuresfortheAgencies -to-be.
29Nov2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THDConsortiumpresentsdraft FinalReport toWorkingCommittee forconsiderationandapproval.

2Dec2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overberg prospective Agents scheduled to complete the assignments. Other regions to follow within a week.
5Dec2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Report presentation . Presentation of THD Agents statistics, recommendations and plan for way forward.
19Jan2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project sign-off.
Interim Phase	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations for Phase 2 activities, and negotiation with C. Nhlumayo on the approach to be followed for effective handover to Department. Preparation of Graduation Ceremony for prospective THD Agents. Development of THD Project Presentation and Launch of Phase 2. Graduation Ceremony held at Cape Technikon Hotel School. Re-formulation of proposal for Phase 2 to accommodate for DE AAT resource in the Phase 2 activities.
PHASE 2	
Feb-Mar2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of Ms Firfirey. Identification of principles for Service Agreement, Code of Conduct, Job description, Performance Agreement.
4April2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First draft of Service Agreements sent to Ms Firfirey for comments and delivery to WC Legal Department.
17April2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit, with Ms Firfirey, to prospective Agents in Southern Cape Administration, Caledon and Hermanus.
6June2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval for Phase II.
18June2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing of WC Legal Services on THD and Service Agreement. Visits to all prospective Agencies to launch Phase II.
July2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of the THD Project and negotiations with prospective Agents and Local Councils
23July2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress meeting with Chief Directorate and definition of co-operative governance details and drafting of programme introductory letters for follow-up by the Department to consolidate agreements.
August2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial collection of inputs from Agents on budget and performance targets. Deliver introductory letters .
23Aug2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress meeting with Chief Directorate to present Regional Status Report and agree on to -dolist . Deliver remaining introductory letters to Stellenbosch, Paarl.

Sept2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ChiefDirectorate:Tourismfollow -uponto -dolist –agreementswith LocalCouncils. • AgreementonTechnical AssistanceWorkshops –meeting17 September. • DevelopTHDBudget ,deliveredearlyOctoberforperusal. • PreparationandpresentationtoChiefDirectorofinterimprojectoutlines perrequest. • Follow-uponServiceAgreementongoing. • THETAdiscussionso nlearnerships andaccreditationwithAgents.
October2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design,developandconductTechnicalAssistanceWorkshopsin allregions . • Finalise THDTechnicalAssistanceManual withAgents. • ServiceAgreementfinalisedandagreedbyChiefDirector: Tourism.
November2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AttendTHETAworkshops ondevelopmentofCertificateinTourism SmallBusinessandalignwithTHDtrainingprogramme. • DevelopTHDBusinessPlan forpresentationat ProgressMeeting scheduledfor6December2001.