

Should you enter the tourism industry?

Yes, tourism is an exciting industry, and it does seem that South Africa, especially the Western Cape is doing well in terms of the growth of our tourism industry. However, is tourism a lucrative industry for you? Are your skills needed in tourism? And, do you have what it takes to be an entrepreneur in tourism? Tourism presents its own set of challenges, and these are not easy to overcome unless you have the perseverance and tenacity that is required.

And if you do have what it takes to make a success of a tourism business, which business should it be? Which sector is suitable for you? Where is there a gap? Which sectors are unsaturated, and where do opportunities exist? All too often, an accommodation establishment or tour operating business is started with hard earned savings, only to find once the off-peak season arrives in the Western Cape that you run the risk of losing all those savings because the business you have chosen is not viable.

These are some of the issues that you have to consider before taking the leap of faith to enter the tourism industry as an entrepreneur. As government, we have seen too many businesses fail and too many people losing money that they have worked very hard to earn. We would like to ensure that you make a well-informed decision before you decide to start your business.

Tourism Awareness Information Session

By attending a full day tourism awareness information session these questions will be discussed by the facilitator and your fellow participants. The specific modules that will be covered by this full day session are:

- The broad opportunities and challenges in tourism
- Policies and frameworks directing the growth of tourism in South Africa, and specifically the Western Cape
- A discussion of the tools that can be used to assess your strengths and weaknesses with regard to the range of opportunities in tourism
- A discussion of the tools that can be used to assess the tourism potential of an area
- An identification of the specific, direct and indirect tourism opportunities in an area and associated risks
- A broad overview of the South African tourism economy, and a closer overview of tourism in the Western Cape
- A broad overview of the relevant statutory requirements for the different options
- A broad overview of the support mechanisms, business development assistance programmes, institutional programmes and potential partnerships and networks

The information that can be received from this session is not only limited to what the facilitator can provide. One of the greatest outcomes of the session is what you learn from your fellow participants. You will soon realise that by networking with other

possible businesses and individuals, there is a greater chance of success in tourism.

You will also discover that there is already so much information that you do have about the tourism industry that you may not be aware of. A key component of South African Tourism's Growth Strategy is strengthening our Domestic Tourism. Have you thought about your immediate community as potential tourists that have not been given the opportunity previously? And what about similar communities in other parts of the country that may want to visit the Western Cape: could they be your potential market?

During the module on assessing your strengths and weaknesses, you would have the opportunity to be introspective and look at your professional background and abilities, and draw on these strengths to explore opportunities in tourism. It may be that you would be more successful being a supplier to the tourism industry, rather than operate directly in the tourism industry. Be open to considering this alternative.

The success of tourism is in thinking laterally, since tourism spans a multitude of disciplines. This session will prompt you to think about other industries and the potential of tourism around those industries. Consider the success of the "Meetings and Conferences" component of tourism. This kind of tourism is a result of the potential in other industries.

There may be other opportunities that are waiting to be discovered. Attend the Tourism Awareness Information Session and ignite your creativity. And then ask the question: "Am I ready for the exciting, yet challenging world of tourism?"

Tourism Entrepreneurship Support Agents (THDs)

If you would like to attend the Tourism Awareness Information Session, the THD in your region is the person to contact. They will take down your details for our database and notify you when a tourism awareness session is planned for your region that you can attend. Feel free to also talk to them about your business idea. They may be able to give you some suggestions, and possibly also refer you to websites, or provide you with reading material that will assist you. Their details are listed in this brochure under the section:

"Who can you contact in your region?"

Tourism Awareness Information Manual

If you sign up for the Tourism Awareness Information Session, the THD will also supply you with reading material prior to the Tourism Awareness Information Session. Read through this information before the workshop so that you can be armed with information on the industry and have the opportunity to really contribute to the discussion, and derive maximum benefit from attending.

