

# FIFA to assess Zim's capacity to host 2010 teams

By [Kennedy Langat](#)

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A delegation of FIFA officials is to travel to Zimbabwe to assess the country's capacity to host visitors and teams for the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa.

Although the tournament will be hosted by its southern neighbour, South Africa, Zimbabwe is hoping to play a role in accommodating those travelling to the event.

Zimbabwe, which plans to invest \$20 million on hotels and stadiums, is one of South Africa's neighbours hoping to host training camps, accommodation and fan parks for teams and visitors during the tournament.

The Zimbabwe government intends to refurbish hotels despite a marked drop in foreign visitors since the implosion of the economy. Plans for constructing a new stadium are also underway.

The FIFA delegation will also be looking at issues such as ports of entry, customs and immigration, transport, as well as touring possibilities and activities.

In May this year South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique had signed agreements to share the tourism spin-offs of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, through "border free" tourism packages.

The Limpopo Tourism Parks Board, Zambia National Tourists Board, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority and Mozambique signed the agreement at the Tourism Indaba in Durban.

Together, the parties are called the Limpopo - Zambezi Destination.

The cooperation is premised in the view of the 2010 FIFA World Cup as an opportunity to position the region as a tourist destination of choice for world cup visitors.

The Limpopo - Zambezi Destination will, following the agreement, undertake tourism research, collect data and statistics to help them gain better understanding of the profile of the present travellers and the needs of future market sectors.

The tourism package of four countries would ensure that benefits of the tournament were shared by the region.

Some of the undertaking that would take place includes the branding for Limpopo - Zambezi Destination, and joint marketing strategies in support of the package tours.

Also high on the agenda, is the easing of border formalities to ensure that the passage of travellers through border posts is swift and trouble free.

The Limpopo - Zambezi Destination will also analyse the current range of tourism products with the aim to refresh and upgrade to meet changes in visitor demand.

World Cup fixtures will be played in ten stadia, distributed across nine cities in South Africa. Five of these arenas are being renovated to comply with FIFA's requirements, while the other half are being built from scratch.

Construction has started on all the five arenas to be newly built.

Renovations to four of the stadiums set to host 2010 fixtures would be complete by December 2008.

These stadiums are Vodacom Park in Mangaung, Royal Bafokeng in Rustenburg, Loftus stadium in Pretoria and Ellis Park in Johannesburg.

Those who will be completed by October 2009 are Mbombela in Nelspruit, Peter Mokaba (Polokwane), Nelson Mandela Bay, Green Point (Cape Town) Moses Mabhida (Durban) and the Soccer City in Johannesburg.

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