

# Tourism growth for Stellenbosch and South Africa looks promising

The two-day Stellenbosch Business Tourism Indaba 2018 held at Cavalli Wine and Stud Farm in Stellenbosch recently saw panel discussions centred around business tourism, not only in Stellenbosch, but that of Africa; its transformation, growth and how it is empowering destinations.

South Africa Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom highlighted that Stellenbosch as a destination "had something quite exceptional to offer the global traveller and should become a destination of choice."



With reference to Stellenbosch's 200 restaurants, diversity of experiences and 150 wine estates to discover and enjoy, Hanekom added: "That's extraordinary, every one of them is special, every one of them is unique, every one of them is beautiful, and a variety of different wines."

## Business tourism

With regard to business tourism, mentioning conferences and meeting, Hanekom said that Stellenbosch and the Western Cape had experienced impressive growth.

The growth of this sector of tourism in South Africa had a positive forecast for 2018 with 54 bids, translating into some 30,000 delegates visiting South Africa and an income of almost R1bn. He said the projected figures for 2022 was set at 103 events, 100,000 delegates and R3,5bn.

## Five pillars of tourism growth

Hanekom added that every congress delegate and businessperson was bound to do some leisure tourism while visiting South Africa. He challenged all South Africans to promote Brand SA and to "be a change-agent."

He referred to the five pillars applied to tourism growth and business tourism in South Africa, including Destination South

Africa; making it easier to visit South Africa; unique visitor experiences; marketing South African tourism and inclusive growth.

## **Promise of the Western Cape and Stellenbosch**

Tim Harris, CEO of Wesgro, shared new realities of the ever-changing modern world entitled *Economic disruptors – the new normal*.

### **Gateway to Africa**

He emphasised that the Cape is a gateway to the rest of Africa, with R45 billion exported to the continent. He added: “Tapping into the rest of Africa’s growth will be key for future growth. Some \$400bn in total consumption growth in the next decade is projected for Africa”.

### **Other positive factors mentioned included:**

- A constant positive economic growth in our province of 2,5% (second in SA after Gauteng’s 2,6%) has helped to raise South Africa’s growth rate during 2011 to 2016, while the Western Cape’s lowest in SA’s employment rate of 2,5% helped to lower the national average during 2009 to 2017.

- Western Cape has a services economy with a strong manufacturing base.
- A focus on and better air connectivity has boosted trade in goods and services. The Cape Town Air Access project has added 13 new routes and 14 route expansions, adding over 1,5 million two-way seats to Cape Town International.
- This helped to drive a tourism boom in the Cape International passenger with a growth of 4% during 2016 – 2017.

### **Stellenbosch trading with the world: 2008 – 2017**

On Stellenbosch as a region, Harris indicated that the area enjoyed strong and positive growth since 2008 with exports rising from R 5,03bn in 2008 to R 11,47 billion in 2017 with a positive trade balance of R 8,17bn.

- Stellenbosch’s exports constituted 40% of the Cape Winelands regional exports in 2017.
- The municipality only imported 12% of the district’s imports.
- Over the reviewed period the municipality demonstrated a positive trade balance.
- Notwithstanding the drought, citrus fruit exports almost doubled in 2017 (2016-2017) - this led to an increase in the trade

surplus.

Annemarie Ferns, CEO of Stellenbosch 360, commented: "From our regional tourist perspective, I was especially heartened by the fact that Minister Hanekom in his opening speech pointed out the huge spin-offs for South Africa from business tourism and the leisure tourism that goes hand-in-hand, and his belief in Stellenbosch's potential as an exceptional tourism destination of choice. The statistics and projections that Tim Harris gave in his presentation about Stellenbosch and the Western Cape provide valuable information for our future strategies."

## **Business Tourism Indaba a resounding success**

Ferns confirmed that the full-house Indaba was indeed a resounding success taking this important regional business tourism strategy and investment to the next level which is essential for sustained tourism growth at all levels.

"We were fortunate to have both high-quality local and international experts as speakers that enriched us with a lot of innovative and intellectual capital, 166 enthusiastic delegates and the whole-hearted institutional support received from SA Tourism, the National Convention Bureau, Cape Town Convention Bureau, Wesgro, the Ministry and the Department of Tourism, the Stellenbosch Municipality, the Stellenbosch University, Grosvenor Conferences and Cavalli Wine and Stud Farm with its exceptional conference facilities and surrounding scenic beauty."

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