




SHARED GROWTH
**CHALLENGE
FUND**

	
Project Title	Project-Exposure: Elevating Experiential Travel Income Tourism Providers – Empowering South African Low
Project Partners	WHL Consulting, Raw Africa, Induna Adventures
Location	Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal
Funding	Business Trust: R2,361,733
	WHL: R2,789,743
Project Challenge	<p>Globally, experience-based tourism (nearly equivalent to the adventure tourism market and inclusive of a broad range and level of activities) is growing considerably. Traditionally, adventure travel was geared toward the youth market but more and more the baby boomer generation is seeking out experience-based and adventure travel options. And no longer does “adventure travel” refer to “extreme sport” activities but rather encompasses a wide array of activities including wildlife encounters, culture-based interactions, voluntourism and traveller philanthropy trips, social and education programs and “off the beaten track” explorations. The international market is looking for “authentic tourism products” and especially in South Africa they are looking to connect with local people. This industry demand for “Adventure Travel” is making this niche one of the fastest growing travel sectors, but even with all of this emphasis, matching the truly authentic interesting products with the consumer has been extremely difficult. And for the consumer the real challenge is how to find these adventures in a reliable trust-worthy platform.</p> <p>WHL aims to be this platform. All of the activities that have been designed in the project allow WHL to identify, evaluate and assist local entrepreneurs to build, further enhance, promote and sell innovative experience-based tourism products through various sales channels (the whl.travel booking platform being just one of them).</p> <p>The other main challenge of MSMEs in tourism is their low cash flow and small margins which don't provide them with working capital to invest in business expansion, skills or capacity development. There are many service providers that offer similar development services but MSMEs don't have the ability to finance the services. Potentially the most innovative piece to addressing this challenge of the industry is building of a new payment facilitation tool called the Tourism Development Bank (http://www.tourdevbank.com). The Tourism Development Bank is a formal barter based payment mechanism that allows accommodation providers to convert empty room stock into a tradable asset and be able to purchase goods and services they really need to improve their overall competitiveness. WHL is testing this model in the project with Market Access tools (professional photography, virtual tours, professional marketing copy, e-commerce enabled websites, etc) and may have opportunity to test other service offerings like training or energy efficiency through the Tourism Development Bank.</p>
Expected Project Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 12 jobs directly created in short term + more in longer term • Indirect employment: local participation in MRAs in each region (Mpumalanga, Northern KwaZulu-Natal and Southern Limpopo – local government, local facilitation (interns-tourism students), local MSME service providers. • Long-term increased occupancy for accommodation MSMEs, and more tours sold (i.e. increased income) • New access to finance tool developed to allow MSMEs to purchase capacity and market access building tools. • Training/transfer of knowledge to MSMEs and, in turn, greater impact on local communities • Over time, local supply chains enhanced and developed at MSME level