

The Tourism Enterprise Programme (TEP) was announced winner of the Tourism Investor Awards' Best Initiative in Facilitating SME Tourism Investment category during a gala event held on Monday night in Rosebank.



The Tourism Investor Awards are designed to showcase Africa's opportunities and achievements to the rest of the world, collectively raise awareness about Africa as a tourist destination and reward those groups developing the African tourism industry as a vehicle to drive sustainable economic growth.

'These awards are the only initiative designed to recognise the achievement of those businesses, governments, organisations and individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the growth of sustainable tourism investment in Africa.' Geoffrey Lipman, Assistant Secretary General of the UNWTO and Chairman of the Tourism investor Awards judging panel.

TEP is a public-private partnership between the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and Business Trust and is implemented by Imbumba Tourism Services. Since its inception in July 2000 TEP has been extended and expanded, evolving into what is now recognised as the most successful job creation programme within tourism in South Africa.

TEP facilitates the growth and development of marginalised small, micro and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) in the South African tourism economy, through access to finance and markets, and capacity building. This results in revenue and job creation, and develops an enabling environment which unlocks the potential for SMMEs to benefit from the tourism economy in a sustainable manner.

To date TEP has:

- Assisted 4,166 tourism SMMEs
- Facilitated incremental revenue growth of R3,4 billion for these SMMEs
- Facilitated the creation of 43,711 new job opportunities in the sector

In addition TEP is also addressing skills and capacity building through training and information provision and unlocking opportunities for tourism SMMEs to benefit from the 2010 FIFA World Cup™, a first in the history of this World Cup™.

"TEP's deep understanding of the tourism industry has been gained by active participation, from grass-roots level to policy making. With national coverage, excellent coordination and interaction with stakeholders, TEP is a valued resource in all provinces and at a national level." said Prof

Job Mokgoro, Acting Director, Tourism Enterprise Programme.

Building on the success that TEP has achieved and to ensure the long term support of enterprise development in the tourism sector, TEP will be transformed from a limited duration programme to a fully fledged Section 21 Company called Tourism Enterprise Partnership. The partnership, which takes effect 1 April 2008, will contribute to TEP becoming an even more integrated role player in the tourism industry for the long term.

For more information on TEP please visit www.tep.co.za

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