

# Kruger International Airport gets Germany route

Mpumalanga Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane has announced that Lufthansa Airlines, through their Euro-Wings division, will soon establish a route from Frankfurt in Germany to Mpumalanga Kruger International Airport.



Source: Dennis Gecaj via [Unsplash](#)

"This is a major boost and a welcome investment to our ailing tourism industry.

"Our continuous engagements with European airlines for direct routes to Mpumalanga are beginning to bear fruit," Mtshweni-Tsipane said on Friday when she was delivered the State of the Province Address in the Mpumalanga Legislature.

The Premier used the occasion to outline various initiatives for attracting investments, efforts to transform the economy and create jobs.

"We have established a Just Transition and Climate Change Working Group that reports directly to the Office of the Premier on a quarterly basis. This will enable us to tap into the R131 billion that has been promised by industrialised

countries to help South Africa implement a just transition to low carbon, while addressing job security for the affected communities," Mtshweni-Tsipane said.

Last year, the Premier officially launched the sky walk project along the Panorama route in Thaba Chweu Local Municipality to unlock the province's tourism offering.

This project is a partnership between government, the private sector and the Mapulana communal property association (CPA) that owns the land. The community will have a shareholding in the project. Once completed it is expected to create more than 100 permanent jobs and during construction 300 job opportunities will be created.

"The skywalk that will turn God's Window into a global must-see location. Located at the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, God's Window skywalk project will offer visitors a 360-degree panoramic view, with a 12m walkaway suspended on the cliff. The skywalk will be much higher than any that was ever built in the world. We expect to attract two million tourists to the Blyde River Region," Mtshweni-Tsipane said.

A total of R475m in public-private investments has been raised for the skywalk project.

"We are making significant progress with the development of a new hotel and conference facility in Middelburg. The project is currently at earthworks stage. We anticipate completion in 18 months.

"Vodacom has announced that they will invest R450m in their network and power backup upgrades across the province. The South African National Roads Agency (Sanral) will invest R9bn in road infrastructure in the province," the Premier said.

Sanral's projects will include the upgrading of the N2 between Ermelo in Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal, as well as the R40 between Hazyview and Bushbuckridge.

Both these projects will create employment opportunities and will benefit enterprises owned by young people, women and people with disabilities.

The top structure buildings for the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market will soon be completed, and the province is targeting operationalisation within the 2022/2023 Financial Year.

## **Transforming the economy**

Industrialisation, localisation and export promotion is a priority area that forms part of the Mpumalanga Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan.

The plan seeks to intensify diversification of the resource-based sectors of mining, agriculture and forestry, currently dominated by large corporations, into downstream manufacturing-based industries to enable broader economic growth and labour absorption.

The Premier said the Nkomazi Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Nkomazi municipality and the Petrochemical Industrial Technology Park in Govan Mbeki municipality have a huge potential to expand the industrial base of the province.

Consequently, these projects will stimulate economic growth, alleviate poverty and reduce unemployment, including enhancing the requisite skills demanded by the provincial economy.

"These projects offer investment opportunities for companies in agro-processing, logistics, chemical industries, training sector, warehousing, office space, conference and incubation facilities. In addition, these projects will also facilitate the export of commodities through, amongst others, the South African ports, including the Maputo Port or air transportation to foreign markets using Mpumalanga Kruger International Airport," she said.

Mpumalanga contributed almost R400bn or approximately 7.5% to the Gross domestic product (GDP) of South Africa in 2019 before Covid-19. Mpumalanga's contribution was the fifth largest of the provinces.

"Our economy in 2021 grew by approximately 4.6% from a contraction of 7% in 2020. A growth rate of just around 2% is expected for 2022. It is predicted that 2023 growth may not exceed 1.5%. Risk factors to the downside include load-shedding, rising inflation, as well as Covid-19 related factors," the Premier said.

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