

Ensuring safety: De Lille vows to protect Kruger National Park

Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille affirms government's dedication to boosting tourism investment and safety measures, aiming to attract a larger influx of visitors to South Africa.



Source: [Pexels](#)

“We will work to find and action solutions to anything that stands in the way of that objective to grow tourism’s contribution to the country’s economy as espoused in the country’s Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP),” she stressed.

As part of her oversight duties, De Lille on Wednesday, 12 July, visited various sites within the Kruger National Park (KNP) to inspect investment projects by her Ministry and the private sector.

“With our vast natural beauty and wildlife, the KNP is a must-see attraction on the bucket lists of travellers from all over the world and the country.

“As with all tourist attractions, it is vital that this attraction is maintained to provide tourists with a world-class and authentically South African experience.”

The visit aimed to chart a way forward on how the KNP and all government spheres can unite to enhance tourism’s performance to achieve progress on the key priorities outlined by President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The priorities, De Lille said, include tour operator licenses, e-visas, tourism safety, the Tourism Equity Fund, infrastructure development, increasing the volume and value of domestic and international tourism, and the Tourism Sector Master Plan.

These, according to the minister, are all aimed at increasing demand for tourism and boosting the number of domestic and international tourists visiting South Africa.

Safeguarding tourists and promoting prosperity

“It is well known that unfortunately there have been many crime incidents in and around the Kruger with criminals attacking tourists and this is a matter that we take very seriously, not only because we want to safeguard tourists.

“But we cannot have criminality stand in the way of our tourist attractions thriving because that is how we can ultimately create more jobs for our people and bring prosperity for all.”

The minister labelled tourism as an important sector in the country’s economy due to South Africa’s attractiveness to travellers and the thousands of jobs created.



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She said she also received a briefing from the South African National Parks (SanParks) management on general tourism activities and safety matters.

The minister has since committed to work with the national, provincial and local government, private sector and communities to enhance safety in and around the KNP.

In May this year, she held a National Tourism Safety Forum meeting with all MECs for tourism and the private sector on plans to enhance safety and how to communicate these security measures worldwide.

Meanwhile, she said the department is finalising a training curriculum which is set to deploy more than 2,200 tourism safety monitors to key tourist attractions and hotspot areas across the country in the coming months.

De Lille also announced that her department has set aside R174m for this programme to improve safety around the 59 tourism hotspots identified by the National Tourism Safety Forum.

Of these, 350 will be stationed at SanParks establishments, with 100 to be deployed to the KNP.

Green Tourism Incentive Programme

She also gave an update on the department’s Green Tourism Incentive Programme (GTIP), a key project to address climate change and water and electricity constraints in the country.

The GTIP, she said, will see the department co-funding energy and water retrofitting projects at privately owned tourism establishments to facilitate more sustainable operations and uninterrupted visitor experiences.



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She announced that they opened eight GTIP application windows to date, with the most recent application window closing on 30 June 2023.

“While applications received during the eight application windows are currently being processed, the previous seven application windows of the GTIP already yielded 130 approved applications with a total grant value of R76.1m disbursed by the department for the installation of energy- and water-saving measures at tourism establishments across the country,” she explained.

Meanwhile, before the rolling out of the GTIP programme, the department provided eight state-owned tourist attractions with solar photovoltaic (PV) installations.

These sites included Robben Island, three national botanical gardens in the Western Cape, Free State and Northern Cape as well as four sites in KNP in Mpumalanga to the tune of R98.5m for a combined total of 2.7 megawatts (MW) of installed renewable energy generating capacity.

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