

SA Tourism launches global MegaFam project

Encouraged by the uptake in the travel, tourism and hospitality industries after the disruptions of the past two years, SA Tourism is scaling up the implementation of its sector growth plans, with the launch MegaFam a follow-up on its 'Live Again' global campaign.



Source: ©lzfzf via [123RF](#)

The strategy is dubbed MegaFam, to emphasize its scale and ambition, which is bigger than a typical destination-marketing familiarisation (Fam) campaign.

The main thrust of the #MegaFam phase of SA Tourism's 'Live Again' growth campaign will see the brand invite some 840 carefully-selected people from varied backgrounds across all continents, time zones, linguistic and cultural regions, professions, and social standing, to South Africa's shores over the coming months.

Bronwen Aurret, chief quality assurance of South Africa of SA Tourism says: "The idea is for them to come and be immersed in, to touch, feel and experience South Africa for themselves. They, in turn, will be touched by our Ubuntu-centric spirit of hospitality, such that when they go back to their home countries, they won't be able to keep quiet about their experiences here, and will want to Tweet it out loud, Instagram it boldly, blog it boisterously and of course for those in the tourism booking business; 'sell it' (as that old TV advert used to say)."

Exploring niche tourism markets

What the invitees have in common is their status as opinion-makers, thought-leaders, and agenda-setters in niche tourism markets. They include influential travel bloggers, writers and journalists for established media, international tour operators from various regions of the world, and conversation-framers who focus on the travel needs of specific tourism niche markets such as the LGBTQIA+ community, women, and romantic-travel seekers.

Examples of the invitees include a London-based French and Greek couple Stefan and Sebastien who have dedicated the past 10 years to travelling to more than 80 countries around the world, and reviewing them for the global LGBTQIA+ community on their blog 'Nomadic Boys'.

They include US-based Danny Rivers Mitchell whose 'Black Girls Travel Too' agency and blog curates for black women, travel experiences around the world, typically lasting a week on average. And they include the Rwandan travel photographer Winnie Rioba, who lets her lens tell the story of the incredible destinations she has visited on the African continent.

Stimulating the tourism sector

Stats SA's numbers reveal that by June this year, South Africa had received about 2.28 million international visitors, well on track toward surpassing 2021's full-year total of just over 2.3 million. This phase of the campaign also tallies up with growing confidence being shown in South Africa as a destination, through such moves as Air Belgium launching direct flights twice a week between Brussels, Johannesburg and Cape Town.

The significance of this move, along with Qatar Airways' cooperation agreement with Airlink, signed a few months ago cannot be overstated. They underscore the importance of airlifts in the recovery of our tourism sector.



Qatar Airways, Airlink to enhance connectivity across southern Africa

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They also bode well for SA Tourism's ambitious target of raising international tourist arrivals beyond the 10 million per annum averaged in the three years immediately before the pandemic, which Aurret has likened our nation's founding president Nelson Mandela's long walk;

"Our long walk is not ended until we match and pole-vault over this sector's benchmark contribution to our economy's GDP, which was 3.9% in 2019, yielding at least 774,000 jobs and some R 122bn in foreign currency earnings that year. Our walk is not ended until we vindicate the World Travel and Tourism Council in its prediction that our country's tourism sector will grow at an average of 7.6% per annum, over the next decade."

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