

# African Responsible Tourism Awards announces top 15 finalists for 2019

The finalists for the 2019 African Responsible Tourism Awards have been announced. This year's awards ceremony will include organisations specialising in sporting events, treks and safari beach lodges. Judging took place in Johannesburg on 29 March, with 15 organisations being shortlisted.



## The finalists are:

- !Khwa ttu San Culture and Education Centre (South Africa)
- Anvil Bay (Mozambique)
- Cape Town Marathon (South Africa)
- Dorobo Tours and Safaris (Tanzania)
- Events Greening Forum 2018 Conference & Master Class (South Africa)
- GCIP-SA Annual Awards 2017 (South Africa)
- Great Plains Conservation Sapi Reserve (Zimbabwe)
- Grootbos Private Nature Reserve (South Africa)

- Mdumbi Green Fair Festival (South Africa)
- Meetings Africa (South Africa)
- Panthera Africa Big Cat Sanctuary (South Africa)
- Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company (South Africa)
- Two Oceans Aquarium (South Africa)
- Ultimate Safaris' //HUAB Under Canvas (Namibia)
- WOWZULU Isandlwana (South Africa)

The 2019 African Responsible Tourism Awards winners will be announced during WTM Africa at a ceremony to be held on Wednesday, 10 April 2019 at 4.45pm at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, Cape Town, South Africa.

Namibian judge Sisco Auala said the following of the judging process: "Judges were supplied with clear criteria to guide the selection of winners. We were given plenty of opportunities to freely debate, exchange views and clarify our diverse perspectives in a rigorous manner before we reached consensus."

Commenting on the finalists, Heidi van der Watt, managing director of Better Tourism Africa, said: "From an aquarium actively campaigning against single-use plastics to an immersive cultural experience near a famous battlefield, this year's finalists are worthy examples of changemakers who bravely use tourism to create positive change for Africa's people and environments.

"We have inspiring Gold and Silver winners, but some categories are surprisingly weak. We know that there are many more worthy contenders on the continent. The judges can only award from among those who are nominated and complete the entry process. The categories for next year will be announced at the end of the Awards ceremony."

Professor Harold Goodwin, Chair of the Judging Panel and WTM Responsible Tourism Advisor, reflected on the decisions made on the Judging Day: "With a high calibre panel of judges, there is always much passionate discussion and argument about the category and overall winners in the Responsible Tourism Awards family of awards.

"Chairing the judges is a privilege, the more so when there are lively debates as there were again this year in the 2019 African Responsible Tourism Awards. The worthy winners, Gold and Silver, are demonstrating their responsibility and we are pleased to recognise them, and we have identified a number of ones to watch - there are some great new responsible businesses emerging."

**Sponsors and partners**, several of whom have demonstrated their commitment to responsible tourism by sponsoring the awards several years in a row, include:

- Wesgro – Headline sponsor
- Bulk SMS – Gold sponsor
- Singer Group – Gold sponsor
- Cape Whale Coast – Function sponsor
- MLT Corp - Car hire sponsor

- Travel Massive Cape Town – Organising partner
- TravelChatSA – Media partner
- Nomad Africa Magazine – Media partner
- Responsible Traveller – Media partner

Tim Harris, Chief Executive Officer of Wesgro, is following the outcome of the awards closely: "We're going through a phase in which tried and tested tourism business models are being challenged. This year's African Responsible Tourism Awards finalists entries reflect this landscape and shine a light on innovative strategies for tourism. We are thrilled with the list of finalists. Each one sets a precedent for excellent work in their category and represents the exciting, diverse range of best practice in the African tourism industry."

### **The judging expertise included:**

- Prof. Harold Goodwin: Emeritus Professor Responsible Tourism at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) and Founder of the International Centre for Responsible Tourism
- Darryl Erasmus: Chief Quality Assurance Officer, South African Tourism
- Greg McManus: CEO, Heritage Environmental Management Company
- Dawn Robertson: CEO, The Constitution Hill Human Rights Precinct
- Heidi van der Watt: Managing Director, Better Tourism Africa and Institute of Development Studies, Massey University
- Sisco Auala: Independent sustainable tourism consultant, Namibia
- Dr Harriet Davies-Mostert: Head of Conservation, Endangered Wildlife Trust
- Bekithemba Langalibalele: Director: Responsible Tourism, Department of Tourism – South Africa
- Adriaan Liebetrau: General Manager, Faircity Hotel Roodevalley
- Megan Oberholzer: Portfolio General Manager, Reed Exhibitions
- Lee-Hendor Ruiters: Regional Manager, National Cleaner Production Centre SA

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