

# Promoting local travel can aid recovery of SA tourism

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the tourism sector globally, largely due to the lockdown and travel restrictions that were enforced. According to StatsSA, the volume of same-day travellers/visitors decreased by 97,3% between January 2020 and January 2021, and the number of tourists decreased by 87,3%.



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Waldo Adams, executive director at Economic Development Solutions (EDS), a company which has provided back-office systems to the travel industry, says in the absence of international travellers, and for the sector to recover, there needs to be a concerted inward focus on marketing South Africa to South Africans.

"To help achieve this, we need our airlines to start flying again and preferably at competitive rates. Similarly, hotels, game parks, and companies that offer recreational activities should re-look at their pricing models to make it more affordable for locals to travel," says Adams.

He adds, more importantly, a huge emphasis needs to be placed on service excellence. This will especially bode well when foreign tourists start returning.

"In South Africa, we need to focus on the training and development of our tourism staff in order to ensure that they provide

excellent quality levels of service, as is the case in countries such as Mauritius and Thailand where tourism forms a large part of their gross development product," adds Adams.

With a lack of investment in the tourism sector, Adams says the government needs to increase its funding to local tourism boards so that they can campaign and advertise their province and regions, tourist attractions, and more. "This increased funding could be specifically for marketing initiatives."

"There also needs to be a massive push towards herd immunity in South Africa, to remove South Africa from all travel warning lists," adds Adams.

Adams further states that the country needs an educational drive centred around vaccines, as many anti-vaxxers may be basing their decision on incorrect information.

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