

Tourism, Airbnb sign MoU to grow sector

Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille has announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between her department and Airbnb to support the continued recovery of the tourism sector and build inclusive tourism in South Africa.



Image source: Taryn Elliott from [Pexels](#)

“The MoU will see the Department of Tourism work closely with Airbnb to advance tourism services that are aimed at growing tourism in South Africa and creating more jobs in the sector,” De Lille said.

The MoU seeks to grow collaboration between government and the private sector, as it is “a collective responsibility to grow and enhance tourism sector”.

“As government, if we want to significantly grow tourism and its contribution to the economy and job creation, collaboration with the private sector is vital. We are delighted to be the first African Ministry of Tourism to sign a collaborative MoU with a successful global company such as Airbnb,” she said.

The Minister explained that by leveraging Airbnb's global reach and understanding of the market, the collaboration seeks to create a positive impact on local communities, travellers and the tourism industry as a whole.

“The primary goal of this collaboration is to develop a relationship between the Ministry, entity and Airbnb to harness and

drive tourism domestically and internationally.

“As shared in the department’s Green paper, insufficient information is available about the unregulated short-term rental subsector, and this hampers informed policy decision making. Access to the Airbnb data can only assist in informing better decisions,” De Lille said.

As part of the MoU, the parties will have regular engagements to evaluate opportunities for strategic collaboration on driving inclusive tourism and ensuring fair and proportionate regulation of short-term rentals.

Velma Corcoran, regional lead: Middle East Africa at Airbnb, said they look forward to working with the Department of Tourism to help build a more inclusive and sustainable tourism economy in South Africa.

Corcoran said the Airbnb platform can help anyone, anywhere, to become a tourism entrepreneur, and that they hope to continue to break down systemic barriers to entry and enable more South Africans to participate in the sector.

“We welcome the opportunity to work with the department to develop a clear, proportionate national framework for the regulation of short-term rentals and see huge power in public and private sector collaborations. We also know from our work with the Airbnb Entrepreneurship Academy, that together, we can make a tangible difference and enable more people, in more places, to benefit from tourism,” said Corcoran.

The signing of the MoU is in line with the aims of the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan, which is key to the country’s Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan.

The Tourism Sector Recovery Plan (TSRP) was adopted by Cabinet in March 2021 to facilitate the recovery of the sector to preserve jobs and livelihoods, facilitate new job opportunities, match demand and supply, and strengthen transformation.

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