

Cape Town to host SA's first Ocean Festival

The South African Ocean Festival will take place from 21 October to 8 November 2015 at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town.



The festival is a joint initiative by the South African Marine Safety Authority (SAMSA), the V&A Waterfront and Worldsport - celebrating the beauty and power of the ocean through various ocean sports, art, music and food.

According to SAMSA, the main goal of the festival is not only to boost the tourism potential of South Africa's marine assets, but also to create business and job opportunities. SAMSA Centre of Maritime Excellence's executive head, Sindiswa Nhlumayo, says that the ocean provides a perfect platform to achieve the above-mentioned objectives.

The inaugural Ocean Festival is the first of a series to be held annually, with plans to link it to the international Volvo Ocean Race every third year, and is aimed as a platform to further grow and expand the country's marine tourism and leisure sector.

Primary objectives

It forms part of SAMSA's marine tourism and leisure strategy, with its primary broad objectives being to unlock the country's maritime assets for growth in tourism and leisure activities, develop a national platform to foster nation building and attract investment into South Africa.

According to SAMSA, the initiative took shape from about a year ago following SAMSA's involvement in the Volvo Ocean Race's South African leg in Cape Town, and during which partnerships were struck with key role players leading to the resuscitation of the South African Racing Trust, and formation of an ocean racing college, and also plans to establish a South African national yacht racing team that will eventually take part in the international Volvo Ocean Race in the near future.

"The ultimate goal is to make South Africa a prosperous maritime nation and an appealing tourist /events destination globally and thereby unlocking SA's marine assets tourism and leisure potential, growing ocean and inland waterways

tourism, leisure and boat sector, developing a national initiative that will achieve nation building and attract investment into South Africa, transform the country's ocean racing sector and create business and job opportunities," says Nhlumayo.

Inland areas

The broad plan for the Ocean Festival is to spread it nationwide from 2016 onwards and thereby ensure inclusion also of inland areas endowed with waterways such as rivers, dams and lakes. Provinces currently sufficiently positioned to partake in the annual festivals from next year stand a chance to benefit immensely from the initiative through early exposure.

Also central to the planned Oceans Festival event will be the launch of a South African ocean yacht racing team to take part in the international Volvo Ocean Race hopefully from the 2017 leg onwards. The country's challenge team will be housed in Cape Town.

"Partnerships between the public and private sector are effective vehicles to boost job creation and to raise awareness of public sector strategy," says Bruce Parker-Forsyth, CEO of Worldsport.

"SAMSA's initiation of this event will provide a brilliant platform through which to engage the public and secure support in their vigorous pursuit to unlock the potential and possibilities of our oceans for the benefit of our economy," he said.

For more, go to oceanfestival.co.za

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