

We need to plan, re-prioritise tourism for a new post-Covid-19 reality

 By [Robin Fredericks](#)

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As part of our #LockdownLessons series, Bizcommunity is reaching out to South Africa's top industry players to share their experience of the current Covid-19 crisis, how their organisations are navigating these unusual times, where the challenges and opportunities lie, and their industry outlook for the near future.

We chat to Enver Duminy, CEO of Cape Town Tourism, to get his take.

■ **Comment on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on your organisation or economy as a whole**

As a tourism industry, Covid-19 and the SA lockdown has dealt us a massive blow. No one is travelling and no tourism businesses are operating which means that our industry has basically come to a standstill. We recently released our Cape Town Tourism Covid-19 Impact Report which predicts that more than 90,000 jobs in the tourism sector in Cape Town could be lost over six months.

This report also shows that 56% of businesses do not have a recovery plan in place and that many businesses feel that they are not able to survive an extended period of lockdown.

It's been a tough few months for our industry, and I'm sure the next few months won't be easy either, but we have started engaging with our members and the broader industry to formulate a bounce back strategy to ensure that Cape Town will be ready to welcome visitors as soon as the time is right to do so.



Enver Duminy



New report: Cape Town's tourism sector could see more than 90,000 jobs lost

12 May 2020



■ **Comment on the challenges and opportunities**

The biggest challenge has, of course, been the impact that this has had on our member businesses. The lack of income has resulted in job losses and the permanent closure of some businesses. However, we have moved from **WANTING** our tourism economy to restart, to **NEEDING** our tourism economy to restart. We need to re-imagine tourism in Cape Town and we have an opportunity to do so. We need to move from crisis to recovery by adjusting our plans to be ready for a different tourism.

We are working very closely with our partners at the City of Cape Town to align our plans and re-prioritise for the coming months, and together adjust as we need to.

■ **How is your organisation responding to the crisis? How has the lockdown affected your staff? / What temporary HR policies have you put in place regarding remote working, health and safety, etc.?**

As a result of the current coronavirus situation, we decided to temporarily close our Visitor Information Centres (VICs) and

redeploy our frontline staff to different areas of the business where they are needed and will be able to effectively assist and communicate with key stakeholders regarding updates and action plans.

The temporary shut-down did not result in any job losses. We are now providing a purely digital service to members and visitors and have also implemented a 24hour live chat function on our website [captown.travel](https://www.captown.travel).

Everyone at Cape Town Tourism is working from home at the moment and we continuously communicate with all team members as we plan the re-integration of our teams back into our offices once we get the go-ahead to be able to do so.

▣ ***What measures has Cape Town Tourism put in place for its employees?***

We have made sure all our team members are set-up at home to work and engage on digital platforms. We have regular check-ins with all team members to make sure we still deliver on our business goals.

Internally we offer our teams the support they need to make sure we all cope during this time. We have a staff wellness programme with Careways which allows our team members the opportunity to receive support in the following areas: health, wellbeing, financial, work-related matters as well as Covid-19 related situations.

▣ ***How have you had to change the way you work?***

We have all had to get used to working remotely and connecting to all our partners and colleagues digitally. I have had to become familiar with a new routine at home which wasn't easy but very necessary. It's really tricky managing our new normal and leading an organisation such as ours, where our members are the reason we exist, has forced me to become a lot more digital in my approach.

“ We have seen how other cities around the world have bounced back and we will do the same. ”

All my media interviews are done telephonically or via Zoom or Skype. It's been a big adjustment, but it's great to see how our teams have adapted so quickly.

▣ ***What are you busy working on? Any initiatives/campaigns relating to the coronavirus?***

We are working on a number of initiatives at the moment. We recently launched our 'We are worth waiting for' campaign that aims to maintain a long-distance relationship with potential visitors, reminding internationals and locals why they fell in love with Cape Town, to begin with, and making sure we remain top of mind during this time.



CPT Tourism makes long-distance love possible with new campaign

23 Apr 2020



We are communicating with our members daily with the aim of being a credible source of relevant information around Covid-19 and how it impacts them in the tourism industry.

We are also offering our members support and bridging the gap between them and local government to help them access relief measures available to them during this time. We are hosting virtual mentoring and training sessions for our members and producing business tool kits which we hope will help them transform their business offerings while we have the time to do so.

We are also engaging with our members and industry on our bounce back strategy for Cape Town and will work closely with our communities, industry and stakeholders to make sure we are ready to welcome visitors back to the Mother City.

We are also working very closely with our partners at the City of Cape Town to make sure our recovery plans are aligned and we support each other and in turn support the tourism industry during this time. It's only with our partners that we can get our tourism engine started again and we thank the City of Cape Town for their support towards the tourism sector during a time when it's most needed.

■ ***Has this global crisis changed your view of the future of the tourism industry in any way? Any opportunities you think will emerge as a result?***

It's evident that our industry will never be the same again. People will travel differently going forward and we need to be innovative in our approach to stay relevant. We are sure that domestic tourism will be the first to bounce back and will be the most important market to focus on when our borders open again.

There will be a lot of opportunity in this area, both from a national as well as a local market perspective.

“ We need to understand now that the tourism industry will be facing a new post-Covid-19 reality where companies are all vying for the hearts and minds of travellers and our response needs to be strong and united! ”

People will take advantage of the "staycation" approach, experiencing your own city and country before venturing out once more. The way in which people travel locally will also change with many opting to travel by car instead of by plane.

On the international front, we will monitor the situation in our various source markets to assess which market will be ready for us and also explore new source markets to focus on.

■ ***Any trends you've seen emerge as a result of the crisis?***

It's too soon to predict any trends right now. But what we have seen emerge and what many of us agree on is that domestic tourism will boom once this crisis has passed. People are itching to travel again and they will want to explore their own countries first.

■ ***Your key message to those in the tourism sector during this time?***

We need to understand now that the tourism industry will be facing a new post-Covid-19 reality where companies are all vying for the hearts and minds of travellers and our response needs to be strong and united! We have overcome so much as an industry in previous years and we will once again be the attractive destination so many people are yearning to explore and experience. We have seen how other cities around the world have bounced back and we will do the same.

■ ***What do you predict the next six months will be like?***

It will be tough and we will see many businesses close doors, the longer we experience the lockdown. But we will continue to support our members businesses, and we will continue to lobby with all government arms to allow the industry to start trading again.

ABOUT ROBIN FREDERICKS

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