

Map of Africa unveiled, set to boost local SA tourism economy

The Map of Africa Monument has been unveiled at the Agulhas National Park in the Southern Overberg region of the Western Cape. The Southernmost Tip of Africa landmark is one of the infrastructure features commissioned and developed at the Agulhas National Park by the Department of Tourism in collaboration with South African National Parks (SANParks), to enhance visitor experience and boost the local tourism economy.



Image Supplied.

The symbolism of the map pays homage to the African continent and boasts a circumference of 30 metres.

The monument design shows the direction of the compass and includes representation of several African landmarks. It also lends itself to walking meditation or quiet contemplation while visitors behold the majestic confluence of the two mighty oceans – the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

During his address, Hanekom said: "South Africa's rich biodiversity and natural heritage found in our national parks are key tourism drawcards. We can only enhance these amazing tourism offerings by adding features like the Iconic Map of Africa Monument to deliver memorable experiences to our visitors and ensure many happy returns.

"The funding and supporting of infrastructure development projects are particularly important to us – it enables us to fulfil our mandate of creating inclusive economic opportunities for our people. Remember, through these initiatives, people get jobs and local SMMEs also generate income from the services they render. All South Africans should desire tourism growth as it translates into economic growth, jobs and opportunities for many."

Tourism destination enhancement

Tourism is one of the main economic drivers and a significant generator of jobs and revenue. To give expression to its mandate, the Department of Tourism has been at the forefront of the commissioning and construction of destination enhancement tourism facilities through its Working for Tourism Programme.

The Working for Tourism Programme supports both skills and infrastructure development projects. This is an Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) to promote employment opportunities and the transfer of skills to members of the community. By extension, it seeks to create jobs through Public Employment Programmes (PEP) for tourism, by increasing the labour intensity of government-funded infrastructure projects.

The funding for this project was R15m. During the year-long construction of the project, employment was provided for 79 local community members and involved seven small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs).

Tourism and community beneficiation

The project also included the construction of a 1 km road, re-alignment of the boardwalk and rehabilitation of the terrain. It also provided training opportunities to beneficiaries in different skills programmes such as painting, plumbing, tiling and plastering - clearly demonstrating the broad benefits of tourism and community beneficiation.

"Tourism is an industry that can readily deliver the jobs and sustainable economic growth that our country so urgently needs. Through partnerships and collaboration of this nature, we are able to ensure the sustainability of the sector's growth. I would like to thank South African National Parks as well as colleagues from all spheres of government, for the excellent collaboration that saw this project come to fruition," said Hanekom.

Speaking at the same event the chief executive officer of SANParks, Fundisile Mketeni said this monument marks the geographical and spiritual significance of the Southernmost Tip of Africa to enhance the status of the area as a prime national and international tourist destination. "We have earmarked this park in our tourism growth strategy as a necessary vehicle particularly in attracting visitors to this part of the world."

Phase two of this project, due to commence in April 2019, will be the development of Lighthouse Precinct Project – which will include construction of a conference facility, and development a restaurant, interpretive centre, paving and walkways.