

Round of applause for graduates of new tourism and SanParks empowerment programme

One hundred and six youth from the Mpumalanga and Limpopo Provinces have successfully completed the Tourism Monitors Training Programme thanks to a joint partnership between the Department of Tourism and South African National Parks (SanParks).



Source: Supplied. Front row: The KNP managing executive, Oscar Mthinkhulu, KNP general manager of finance, Khethiwe Silubane, the deputy minister of tourism, Fish Mahlalela and the chief director of the department of tourism, Lizzy Mathopa. With them at the back are some of the graduates of the Tourism Monitors Training Programme.

The youth received Cathsseta-accredited (NQF level 2-4) national certificates in categories namely: occupationally directed education training and development practices, tourist guiding, project management, nature conservation and new venture creation.

The Tourism Monitors Training Programme is part of a greater objective of the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) to ensure an adequately skilled and professional tourism workforce that is able to deliver a world-class visitor experience.

Tourism has long been viewed as a sector that has the potential to grow the economy and create opportunities.

Speaking at the event in the Kruger National Park's Berg en Dal Rest Camp, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela highlighted the significance of multi-sector partnerships in fast-tracking economic growth, and in creating the much-needed opportunities for the youth.

“The tourism monitors you see today are an extension of the critical services that are provided by various cross-cutting sectors of our economy that contribute to tourist safety, and an enhanced visitor experience.

“Our collaboration with SanParks has been impactful. Not only has it amassed benefits for the conservation community, but it has offered a lifeline to the youth in the communities that border our national parks. Multi-sector partnerships are critical, and will continue to play a key role in sustaining tourism and our overall economy,” said Mahlalela.

Where it all started

In 2019, the department entered into a three-year agreement with SanParks to implement the Tourism Monitors Programme. Learners were placed at all national parks in South Africa, including the Kruger National Park (KNP), to gain theoretical and workplace training.

“Through this collaboration, we have invested in the youth who will safeguard our natural resources for the benefit of generations to come. Out of the 259 youth who enrolled for the Tourism Monitors programme, SanParks has employed 130 at its 21 national parks,” said the KNP managing executive, Oscar Mthimkhulu.

“We are extremely proud of our contribution to youth empowerment, but mostly in our efforts to usher in a new understanding on the importance of conservation, and the overall functioning of our national parks,” added Mthimkhulu.

Graduates of the Tourism Monitors Programme took an opportunity to share their learnership experience with guests and thanked both entities for initiating the programme.

Thinking ahead

Shedron Mukhumo said the programme taught her a lot about the importance of conserving and preserving our natural resources for future generations. “It has also opened my eyes to a variety of opportunities that I didn’t know existed in tourism. I’m currently a SanParks research assistant and I am proud of playing a critical role in conserving our natural resources.”

Prudence Vuyisile added: “Through the Tourism Monitors Programme, I have gained experience in conservation practices and a knowledge of supply-chain management practices. The programme has given me hope and inspired me to further my studies. I’m currently on a fixed-term contract with SanParks as a debtor’s clerk.”

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