

Western Cape grows air access to 10 new African cities

According to the data from the Western Cape's tourism, trade, and investment promotion agency, Wesgro, in the last year, international tourists visiting the Western Cape generated R24.3bn, supporting 10,600 jobs.

Minister of finance and economic opportunities, Mireille Wenger says that for every 100 international tourists to the Western Cape, R2.1m in direct tourist spend was generated, contributing R500,000 to the provincial Gross Domestic Product (GDP), enabling two local jobs, and supporting the movement of R1.4m worth of air cargo.



Source: AshimDSilva via [Unsplash](#)

Since 2015, Cape Town and the Western Cape have been connected directly to ten new African destinations, including Addis Ababa, Harare, Victoria Falls, Maun, Maputo, Livingstone, Kigali, Nairobi and since June of this year, Manzini and Lusaka. This brings the total cross-border African destinations served out of Cape Town to 15, with 11 operating airlines, in addition to the province's other global destinations.

Minister Wenger says: "Together with the Cape Town Air Access team, powered by Wesgro, we work hard to attract more flights to the Western Cape, because more tourists mean more jobs."

African seat capacity has also grown by a compound annual growth rate of 10% per year, between 2015 and 2023, reaching 555 000 inbound seats compared to 250 000 in 2015.

Supporting these connections are seven new African airlines, including Ethiopian Air, Kenya Airways, Fly Namibia, RwandAir, EswatiniAir, Proflight Zambia, and the recently announced LAM out of Mozambique.

"One of our key focus areas is on increasing our air connectivity to the rest of the African continent. Not only do these flights boost tourism but they also provide great opportunities to export proudly Western Cape products via air cargo, as well as easier access for business travel, which can boost investment into the province," continued Minister Wenger.

"This is why I am very pleased with the significant increase in air connectivity with the rest of the continent and would like to congratulate the Air Access team for their hard work and thank them for the work they are doing to boost tourism and investment in the province," says minister Wenger.

Improving air connectivity

The Cape Town Air Access project aims to improve air connectivity to the Western Cape to increase the number of international passengers and air freight capacity, thereby achieving improved business competitiveness by having a destination with greater global access through air connectivity, and growing air cargo.

Wesgro CEO and the official spokesperson for Cape Town Air Access, Wrenelle Stander, says: "Africa is a continent on the rise. The growing importance of connectivity between Cape Town to the rest of the continent is clearly depicted by passenger traffic - with two-way passenger numbers growing by 80% year-on-year from 2021 to 2022.

"Cape Town's strategic location, combined with its well-connected airport, positions the city as a central player in Africa's aviation landscape, facilitating seamless travel, and contributing to the continent's overall development."

"As a priority focus area of our bold economic action plan, 'Growth For Jobs' or G4J, we are on a mission to dramatically increase exports, of which tourism forms a critical part. We do this because we understand the best solution to the challenges we face as a country and in the Western Cape, is to achieve the kind of break-out economic growth that will create many more jobs, that will help lift people out of poverty and give residents opportunities they need to succeed. This is precisely what we are working towards in the province, guided by G4J," adds Minister Wenger.

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