

Towards a Regional Sustainable Tourism Initiative

In late 2007, a workshop entitled "Towards a Regional Sustainable Tourism Initiative for Southern Africa" took place in Johannesburg, South Africa. Seven countries – Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland – participated in this ground-breaking initiative, taking a major step forward towards the establishment of a sustainable tourism network in the region. The workshop provided an opportunity to discuss ways of sharing, expanding and recognizing sustainable tourism practices in southern Africa.

Through the initiative, which has been developed with the support of the EU-SADC Investment Promotion Programme (ESIPP) and the Southern Africa Trust (SAT), members would be able to share information and experiences about best practices, quality standards, marketing and promotion, as well as work closely with governments and other stakeholders in the travel industry to promote the development of sustainable tourism in southern Africa. As a result, tour operators catering for southern Africa would be able to maximise both the positive contribution that tourism can bring to national and local economies and cultures, as well as the range of products they offer to their clients. Participant countries in this workshop also reached consensus on the need for an integrated approach to tourism certification in southern Africa with a view to the possible future creation of a regional brand.



Workshop participants

The workshop took place from November 29th – December 1st, 2007, at Accor Hotel's Mercure Bedfordview in Johannesburg, the first Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA)-certified city-based hotel. The event was organised by FTTSA, the Namibian Community-Based Tourism Assistance Trust (NACOBTA) and the Netherlands-based European Centre for Eco- and Agro- Tourism (ECEAT).



Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA)

Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) is one of the most well-known sustainable tourism certification programmes in southern Africa and is, in fact, the world's first "fair trade" label for the tourism industry.



FTTSA is a global leader in promoting fair social / labour standards and advocates business operations that respect the triple-bottom-line of social, economic and environmental sustainability.

FTTSA has developed a system for measuring and monitoring how local tourism enterprises subscribe to fair trade principles by assessing 13 operational areas including HR practice, skills development, community investment and environmental performance. To date, FTTSA has awarded its trademark to 31 tourism organisations in South Africa that demonstrate adherence to the FTTSA-criteria.

INDABA 2008 – tourism fair for Southern Africa

INDABA is the largest tourism marketing and networking event on the African calendar. It showcases the widest variety of southern Africa's best tourism products, and attracts visitors and media from around the world.

INDABA 2008 will take place from 10 – 13 May 2008 at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Convention Centre in Durban (previously Durban ICC).

For more information about FTTSA initiatives, including the regional sustainable tourism network, stop by FTTSA's stand at Indaba, DEC026.



For more information:
www.indaba-southafrica.co.za



Mercure Bedfordview, Johannesburg

On 8 May 2008 – 2 days before the Indaba Tourism Fair starts – FTTSA will be hosting a follow-up network meeting in Durban for intermediary organisations from all 14 SADC (Southern African Development Community) countries to further discuss the process of moving forward with the regional sustainable tourism network initiative.

FTTSA: independent non-profit organisation that promotes equitable and sustainable tourism development in South Africa.

NACOBTA: non-profit membership organisation which supports Namibian communities in their efforts to develop and operate tourism enterprises profitably as well as sustainably.

ECEAT: an international non-governmental organisation for the promotion and integration of tourism with rural development, sustainable land use and nature protection. ECEAT provides professional expertise in the field of sustainable tourism through **number of different projects all over the world.**



Singita Boulders Lodge (Sabie Sand Reserve)

Tour Operator access to Fair Trade in Tourism suppliers

FTTSA gives tour operators access to tourism businesses that comply with travellers' increasing demands for fair tourism experiences. FTTSA-certified tourism establishments include all levels of tourist accommodation, activities and attractions such as a traditional guesthouse offering panoramic views of the Southern Drakenberg Mountains; an exclusive country lodge located on a farm close to Cape Town; nature activities such as treetop canopy tours and whale watching; and a lodge on the banks of the Luvuhuhu River. For more information about FTTSA-certified tourism establishments, consult their website:

www.fairtourismsa.org.za

Eco Awards Namibia, eco-friendly accommodation



Eco Awards Namibia recognises accommodation suppliers who manage their business according to eco-friendly principles. Similar to a star grading system, Eco-awards Namibia awards different levels of recognition, but rather than a star, uses the desert flower of Namibia to identify certified businesses.

Up to five desert flowers may be awarded to an accommodation – the so-called eco-award Namibia bouquet. One of the accommodations that received the bouquet was Skeleton Coast Camp, which is located in the Skeleton Coast National Park, one of the most fragile ecosystems in the world. The camp was built in an eco-friendly manner with minimal impact on the environment.



Skeleton Ghost Camp - Namibia

For more information: www.ecoawards-namibia.org

Sustainable Tourism Products in Tour Packages

Although many tour operators are aware of the necessity to preserve the environment and culture of the destinations they visit, in practice it does not seem to be that easy. At the Travelife Market you will find a complete range of sustainable tourism products from southern Africa (e.g. products certified by Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa) and other world regions. All products are rated based on sustainability standards for their support to environmental, social or nature protection goals. This unique online guide is designed to help tour operators integrate responsible travel suppliers from around the globe into tour packages.



Jan Harmsgat Country Lodge
Western Cape (S.A.), FTTSA

Travelife Market is supported by the following Tour Operators Associations: ANVR in The Netherlands, FTO in the United Kingdom, Forum Anders Reisen in Germany, ABTO, BTOV, VVR, BFNO, FBAA in Belgium with the support of Tourism Vlaanderen, as well as the Tour Operators' Initiative for sustainable tourism development (TOI).

For more information:

www.travelife.eu

Colofon

This newsletter on southern Africa is published by Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) and the European Centre for Eco and Agro Tourism (ECEAT). This is a special, one-time publication distributed within the framework of the project entitled 'SEAL-Towards a Southern African Ecotourism Accreditation Label'. This project is managed by **FTTSA**. Partner organisations in the project are **ECEAT** and **NACOBTA**. This project is financed by **€SIPP**, an EU – SADC partnership programme for the promotion of investment and technology flows to enterprises operating within key growth sectors in the SADC member states. For more information on €SIPP: www.esipp.org.

Community-Based Tourism: NACOBTA

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) supports the well-being of the local population and environment. The growing community-based tourism sector in southern Africa is offering jobs and hope for sustainable development to marginalized peoples. Community-based tourism shows that Africa is not only about scenery and animals, but also about people, culture and crafts.

Community-based tourism initiatives and networks in southern Africa offer a variety of products such as lodging, (township) tours, handicrafts, adventure experiences and rural homestays.

One of the first community based tourism networks in southern Africa was the Namibia Community Based Tourism Assistance Trust (NACOBTA), a non-governmental organization



NACOBTA was established in 1995 by local Namibians who had started tourism businesses and who wanted to be represented in the tourism industry.

NACOBTA currently has 37 members, including accommodations, restaurants, guides, tour operators and campsites. A tourism experiences with their members brings you to all corners of Namibia: from the Bondelswart people from the far South to the Himba tribe in the North West; from the Bushmen in the East to the Owambo people in the North Central. NACOBTA's tours through the townships of Windhoek and Swakopmund combine all of these cultures.



Township Tour - Namibia

For more information on NACOBTA, consult their website: www.nacobta.com.na

