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## **TEDA INITIATES TSHWANE WEBINARS TOWARDS A POST-COVID TOURISM FUTURE**

Following an update from the Minister of Tourism on the COVID-19 alert level 3 risk-adjusted strategy tourism sector response measures and directions, the Tshwane Economic Development Agency (TEDA) has held its first webinar on 2 June 2020 with Tshwane tourism industry stakeholders to start mapping a way forward as the sector gradually opens.

Tourism has been recognised as the industry hardest hit by the pandemic, with global and national companies and airlines shutting down while tourists' movements are restricted across the world. The impact, however, has not been felt by big business alone, but also by thousands of small businesses and tourism workers, all deriving their livelihoods from this sector.

It is for this reason that TEDA, as the new custodian of destination marketing for Tshwane, has initiated a digital series of webinars to support the local tourism industry as tourism businesses work their way to recovery.

As Chief Executive Officer, Solly Mogaladi, explains "The challenges faced by the tourism industry are unprecedented, necessitating an innovative and robust recovery plan that all stakeholders can engage in and support in unison. The focus of the Tshwane tourism webinars is on local solutions, skills transfer and information sharing."

Yesterday's webinar, which was hosted by TEDA's Chief Marketing Officer, Mandla Ndlovu and attended by tourism associations, local business owners and tourism practitioners, achieved these objectives, boding well for the industry as it works together to pioneer a progressive, but practical plan.

Titled "Tshwane: A Post-COVID Tourism Future", the webinar addressed practical solutions that need to be implemented by the industry in response to the risks posed by COVID 19 to both travellers and sector employees. It was successful in articulating a unified vision for the local industry's compliance with government regulations in response to the coronavirus pandemic, as expressed by inspired speakers and guests. All agreed that in securing a future

for Tshwane under the current circumstances, unity, adaptability and standardised compliance among the industry members are crucial.

As Ndlovu echoed, even if businesses are allowed by government to open, they should only do so once sufficiently ready. Staff training and policy reviews need to be prioritised and some businesses may even consider repurposing measures during the crisis. Furthermore, attracting travellers will require building and maintaining trust across the board through health and safety protocols, as well as service levels; offering value-for-money experiences; providing clear and simple communication throughout; and using digital platforms to reach prospective travellers.

As part of navigating the road to recovery, speakers Nico Rowan, Vice-chairperson of the Tshwane Tourism Association, Solani Mthethwa, General Manager of Dinokeng Tourism Association, Susan Marais, Director of The Ultimate Pretoria Bucketlist and Beulah Mosupye, Managing Director of Hauweng Business Services, gave their valuable input on staff training, small business resilience, and visitor expectations.

Speaker Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa, Chief Executive Officer of the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA), introduced the Tourism Industry Standard Protocols for COVID-19 Operations. The comprehensive protocols, prepared by the TBCSA and aligned with the World Health Organisation, National Institute for Communicable Diseases and the Department of Health, were welcomed by the local industry.

Practical, standard guidelines are set out for the operation of all types of tourism businesses and facilities during the pandemic to enable safe operation as COVID-19 restrictions are eased. All owners, directors and managers of related businesses are urged to sign a pledge to adhere to these industry protocols. The TBCSA and sector leaders, including TEDA, will provide support and guidance to smaller establishments in the implementation of these protocols.

In response to the cancellation of global and national tourism exhibitions and roadshow platforms and the increasing focus on digital platforms, TEDA will be hosting more webinars on topics such as mastering digital marketing and revealing Tshwane's hidden gems. The latter will showcase select Tshwane attractions, SMME-owned and township tourism products, giving digital exposure to these businesses during the lockdown.

To view the new guidelines, see the [Tourism Industry Standard Protocols for COVID-19 Operations](#). The webinar video can be viewed here <https://youtu.be/6paEKzrGSos>.

*The Tshwane Economic Development Agency is a municipal entity of the City of Tshwane, responsible for destination marketing, trade and investment promotion in Tshwane. Its mandate expanded recently to include tourism, a function that was migrated from the municipality. Visit [www.teda.org.za](http://www.teda.org.za).*

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