
Tourism KwaZulu-Natal



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To : All Media

Attention : News Editors/ Journalists

MEC ZIKALALA CALLS ON KZN'S TOURISM SECTOR TO ENTER FOR THE 2017 LILIZELA TOURISM AWARDS

The MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Mr Sihle Zikalala has made a clarion call to all tourism players in KwaZulu-Natal to take part in this year's prestigious Lilizela Tourism Awards. Entries for this year's instalment of the awards were officially opened on 1 March 2017.

The Lilizela Tourism Awards, which recognise service excellence in South Africa's tourism sector, are an initiative of the National Department of Tourism and the MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs has called on the KZN sector to enter in order for the province's service excellence to be recognised.

"I would like to make a special call to all the tourism players in the province to take part in the programme, which honours those that have raised the bar in terms of entrepreneurial and service excellence standards,"

Eager to see more tourism players from KZN participating in the programme, the MEC added, “As government, we want to usher in an era of radical economic transformation and we see tourism as the sector that will assist us in achieving this. Therefore, we encourage our tourism players, most importantly those that are still emerging to take full advantage of such platforms. Entering programs like these puts businesses at a competitive advantage within the sector.”

Participants within this programme will be given support to ensure that they are equipped with the tools to enable them to continue to grow within the sector and also become major players in the international space.

“Particularly for emerging businesses, through Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN), they will be given access to new market platforms where they can attend international tourism exhibitions, allowing them the opportunity to broker international deals with major players. Furthermore, during platforms like the Tourism Indaba, Lilizela participants are provided with a special SMME pavilion where they can meet and network with an estimated 200 hosted international tourism, buyers that attend Indaba.”

KZN has set its sights on increasing the number of participants in the programme in 2017 from the 124 eligible entries in 2015, and 149 in 2016. The province also aimed for even greater performance at the 2017 awards, Zikalala added.

“In order to grow our numbers this year, TKZN will be engaging district municipalities across the province to ensure that tourism businesses across the spectrum participate. Furthermore, we will be talking to major hotel groups and tourism associations to encourage their members to be part of these prestigious awards. It is important for the sector to embrace such programs, as they go a long way towards positioning KZN as a top tourism destination. If tourists and international tour operators believe in our tourism products, they will be more comfortable to book their next holiday in KZN,” concluded Zikalala

All tourism businesses that enter the Lilizela Awards need to be registered with the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, and graded with the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa

The best of the best in the tourism sector in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) will be celebrated at a red carpet affair to be hosted by the MEC Zikalala during Tourism Month in September 2017. The provincial winners will go on to represent the province at the National Lilizela Tourism Awards ceremony to be hosted by the Minister of Tourism later in the year.

For more information on the Lilizela Tourism Awards, visit www.lilizela.co.za and entries will close on 31 May 2017.

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About Tourism KwaZulu-Natal

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal was established in 1996 and is responsible for the development, promotion and marketing of tourism into and within the province, both domestically and internationally. The organisation is an entity that reports to the provincial Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

Social links to Tourism KwaZulu-Natal:

Website: <https://www.zulu.org.za>

Facebook: Tourism KwaZulu-Natal

Instagram: Tourismkzn_offical

Twitter: [@TourismKZN](https://twitter.com/TourismKZN)

Hashtags: #GottaLuvKZN

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