



# THE VITAL LINK BETWEEN CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Not only are South Africa's historical sites significant components of the nation's natural and cultural heritage, but they are also popular tourist attractions that boost local economic development and generate employment opportunities.

In light of this, tourism is essential to the cultural vibrancy of our nation and plays a crucial role in its socio-economic development.

Municipalities can be directly and indirectly involved in the development of tourism since the South African Constitution also requires local government to advance the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of their communities.

Local government plays a key role in tourism development through the provision of basic services like electricity, water, and sanitation; maintaining public infrastructure like roads, energy, signage, parking, and public transportation; providing and maintaining tourist attractions; and enacting by-laws that give municipalities the power to support tourism development.

## Tourism post Covid-19

Like other tourism sectors across the globe, South Africa's came to a complete halt on March 27, 2020, when the country was placed under lockdown as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and this had dire economic ramifications.

However, the tourism sector is showing strong signs of recovery post the pandemic, with the first half of 2023 recording more than 4 million tourist arrivals in the country, an increase from 2.3 million tourist arrivals between January and June 2022.

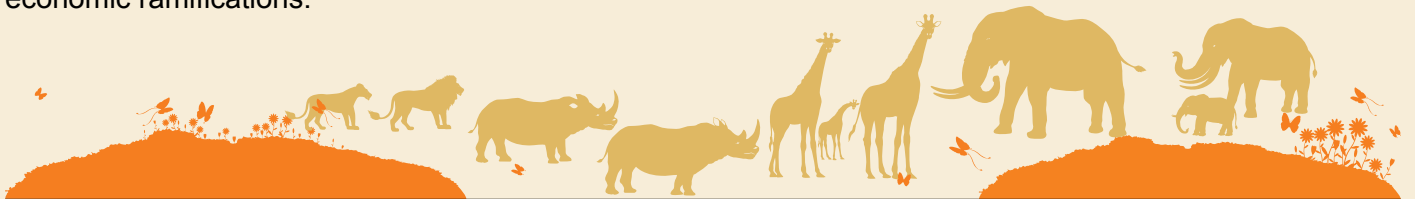
Additionally, South Africa is a popular tourist destination on the continent. From January to March 2024, 1.8 million visitors from other African countries arrived in South Africa, accounting for 74.5% of all arrivals.

In all this, municipalities across the length and breadth of the nation will keep playing a vital role in shaping the tourism landscape and experience in each of their respective local areas.

## Women in local government take centre stage

The empowerment of women in local government will be a major topic of discussion at the SALGA Women's Commission (SWC) National Elective Lekgotla, which is set for September 26–27, 2024.

The Lekgotla forms part of the annual gatherings of the SWC convened with the view to provide a structured opportunity for deliberations on women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming by municipalities.





The purpose of the Lekgotla is to offer a platform to debate the shifts and trends of women’s representation and participation in local government and to assess local government progress in meeting regional and international commitments for achieving gender equality by 2030.

The Provincial Lekgotlas, scheduled for August 22–13, 2024, will take place prior to the National Lekgotla.

## Commemorative events

- September marks Public Service Month in South Africa. Public Service Month (PSM) is an integrated strategic national event in the calendar of the Department of Public Service and Administration. The Public Service Month serves as a reminder of what it means to serve communities and to also look at the impact the government has, especially around issues of service delivery.
- Tourism Month is celebrated annually in September and provides a heightened month-long focus on the importance of the sector to the South African economy. It features themed activities that are aligned to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation’s (UNWTO) World Tourism Day celebrations.
- Environmental Health Day on September 26 addresses all the physical, chemical, and biological factors external to a person, and all the related factors impacting behaviours. It encompasses the assessment and control of those environmental factors that can potentially affect health. It is targeted towards preventing disease and creating health-supportive environments

- Heritage Day on 24 September recognises and celebrates the cultural wealth of our nation. South Africans celebrate the day by remembering the cultural heritage of the many cultures that make up the population of South Africa. Various events are staged throughout the country to commemorate this day.
- South Africa celebrates Arbor Week in the first week of September annually. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, as the custodian of forestry in South Africa, is responsible for the campaign.
- In 2007 the United Nations General Assembly resolved to observe 15 September as the International Day of Democracy—with the purpose of promoting and upholding the principles of democracy—and invited all member states and organizations to commemorate the day in an appropriate manner that contributes to raising public awareness.

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Facebook: South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

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