

BA introduces direct route to Durban

British Airways (BA) may ramp up the number of flights on its new direct route between Durban and London should the service prove successful.



King Shaka International Airport

The three-times-a-week service may increase if there is sufficient demand, BA said. The maiden flight touched down at King Shaka International Airport (KSIA) on Monday.

The commencement of service is the result of intensive collaboration with the airline and among tourism bodies, provincial and local government and other members of the Durban Direct initiative.

United Kingdom was one of the region's best tourism markets, said Phindile Makwakwa, the acting chief executive of Tourism KZN (TKZN). "We have had a healthy increase every year but what was missing was direct access and we know that if there is direct access, there will be robust interest from tour operators," she said.

The province has set itself a target of attracting 3.4m international visitors by 2030 and the new route gave "great impetus to our prospects of reaching this target," said Sihle Zikalala, MEC for economic development, tourism and environmental affairs.

"We are inspired that this new development comes at the time when we are working hard to grow our tourism as we intend

to clock anything between R65bn and R98bn over the next two years.

“The Durban-London route will play a role in us achieving this target which is expected to contribute to some 183,000 direct jobs for our people.”

KSIA handled some 5.6 million passengers during the 2017/2018 financial year and is forecast to handle 5.9-million passengers by the end of the current financial year.

“We believe that this route has the potential to become a daily service and we will continue working with British Airways to provide any support needed to make this a reality. King Shaka International Airport already meets all the requirements to land aircraft such as the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner that BA will use on the route, as well as the giant Airbus A380. However, the airport is investing in the region of R420m in new infrastructure projects which include the extension of taxiways and the addition of two further aircraft Code F stands to create for capacity for expansion,” said Terence Delomoney, general manager at KSIA.

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