

# Pilot phase of new tourism booking tool kicks off

Jurni has launched the pilot phase of its tourism booking tool and tourism data hub. "There are over 30,000 hospitality providers in South Africa. Only 20% of these businesses currently have a professional digital presence that makes them visible to travellers. "The tourism booking tool will address this challenge and allow all tourism players in the South African market to have a professional digital preference and access the global market, "says Dr Nomvuselelo Songelwa, Jurni CEO.



From left to right: Jerry Mabena, Chief Executive Officer: Thebe Services Division, Angelica Mkok, Amadeus Head of Industry Affairs Southern Africa, Dr Nomvuselelo Songelwa, CEO Jurni, Sandile Niseoane, GMSAVRALA, Maylene Broderick, Chief Director: Enterprise Development and Transformation National Department of Tourism, and Svend Leirvaag, Vice President: Industry Affairs Amadeus IT Group.

The booking tool is expected to level the playing field for tourism players in South Africa by empowering all tourism businesses, including smaller and rural-based SMMEs, to access customers through a digital platform.

During the pilot phase, Jurni will prioritise accommodation establishments. Some 80 accommodation establishments have already been onboarded on the tool.

To ensure that there is value for money experience for visitors, a process of activating the property will include quality assurance, that is driven by South African Tourism (SAT) and the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA). Product owners will receive training on how to use the booking tool on their own. They will also be able to administer, manage and run their businesses in the digital space, directly accessing the market through their websites and any channels digitally.

The booking tool is also a backbone enabling the online booking capability for domestic marketing campaigns driven by SAT. Trainers have been appointed to hand-hold, assist and guide product owners.

## Accelerating tourism data intelligence

The data generated through the booking tool will be consolidated with existing data sources into the tourism data hub. The hub will equip South Africa's tourism businesses with improved insights to inform their business strategies and decision making.

"Tourism data sources in South Africa today are disparate and do not provide intelligence at a granular level to inform South Africa's travel and tourism sector. Through meaningful data, we can monitor changes, make forecasts, devise strategies and policies, determine whether these have been successful and if we are achieving the goals we set out as an industry and a country," says Dr Songelwa.

Jurni has agreements in place with industry organisation, such as SA Tourism, StatsSA, TBCSA, SAVRALA, as well as with international organisations.

"Industry collaboration is essential to derive as much value as possible from the data hub. The integration of data from multiple sources implies the merging, de-duplication and qualification of data. South Africa's tourism data will be standardised, verified, validated and cleansed into a single and trustworthy 'quality data' repository."

As all the different stakeholders converge to create quality data, the data quality rules will be cross-checked between the stakeholders. Data security has been implemented with encrypted processes and password-protected platforms.

"A key driver of jobs growth for our economy, the tourism sector is being elevated as a critical economic and social driver. Tourism intelligence, that is meaningful tourism data that is consolidated into an independent data hub, helps us to strengthen this debate," says Maylene Broderick, National Department of Tourism Chief Director: Enterprise Development and Transformation.

*The booking tool is live and bookable to visitors with a number of establishments having been verified and quality assured.*

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