

Businesses urged to apply to tourism relief fund

The Department of Tourism has encouraged eligible businesses to apply for the COVID-19 Tourism Relief Fund.



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The R200m Tourism Relief Fund has been established as an intervention to mitigate against the impact of COVID-19 in the tourism sector.

"We acknowledge the difficulties experienced by businesses during this time, hence the need to support the industry and communities to cope with the negative effects of this pandemic.

"Our tourism industry is comprised of mainly small micro and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs), most of which are survivalists in nature, with limited access to funding from commercial institutions. We hope the support offered through the Tourism Relief Fund will assure the continued survival of SMMEs beyond the Covid-19 pandemic," Tourism Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane said in a statement on Tuesday.

The fund provides a once-off capped grant assistance to SMMEs to ensure sustainability during and post the implementation of government measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 in South Africa.

Applications for the fund are being accepted until 30 May 2020.

Capped at R50,000 per entity, the grant funding can be utilised to subsidise expenses towards fixed costs, operational costs, supplies and other pressure cost items.

Preference will be given to enterprises with the highest score in terms of the criteria, which serve as a pre-qualification. A panel of experts will conduct the final evaluation in terms of functionality.

The Tourism Relief Fund is administered in line with the objectives of Economic Transformation, and South Africa's vision of ensuring sustainable and inclusive tourism development.

The process will be guided by the Tourism Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Codes of Good Practices approved by the Minister of Trade and Industries in 2015 (in line with the B-BBEE Amendment Act No. 46 of 2013).

The disbursement of funds will ensure equitable spatial distribution in terms of provinces.

Businesses can visit www.tourism.gov.za for comprehensive information on the fund terms and qualifying criteria.

SMMEs can submit funding applications by completing a form accessible [online](#).

Inquiries on the fund can be emailed to callcentre@tourism.gov.za or covidrelief@tourism.gov.za or at the call centre on 0860 TOURISM (868 747) weekdays from 8am–10pm.

Categories eligible to apply for the Tourism Relief Fund include the following:

Accommodation establishments: Hotels; resort properties; bed and breakfast (B&B's); guest houses; lodges and backpackers.

Hospitality and related services: Restaurants (not attached to hotels); conference venues (not attached to hotels), professional catering; and attractions

Travel and related services: Tour operators; travel agents; tourist guiding; car rental companies; and coach operators.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>