

## Media Release

**Attention: News Editors / Journalist**  
**For immediate release**

**Thursday, 08 May 2025**

### **FREE STATE SHOWCASES TOURISM POTENTIAL AT AFRICA TRAVEL INDABA 2025**

The Free State Department of Economic Development and Tourism will be participating in the Africa Travel Indaba (ATI) 2025, at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre in Durban from 13 to 15 May 2025. This platform is widely regarded as the leading tourism leisure travel trade show in the continent, offering an exceptional marketing opportunity for the Free State to promote its unique tourism offerings and fostering collaborations to global as well as domestic markets.

This year's ATI theme: "Unlimited Africa" - driving strategic conversations around sustainable tourism. "Telling Our Story, the Free State Way," indicates the province's intention to take a quantum leap of faith to increase engagements with hosted buyers and media to spark conversation around strategic collaborations.

About 24 Free State tourism exhibitors will be showcasing their products ranging from travel services, adventure, wine tourism and tourism structures. The few will be representing thousands for stakeholders across the tourism value chain to market the majestic and serene open spaces that rejuvenate the soul and mind, the adrenaline action and adventure experiences, the captivating culture and heritage, our kaside and city lifestyle vibes and vast lands of wildlife and safaris.

MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Hon. Ketso Makume, highlighted that market access for stakeholders in the tourism sector should not be measured in numbers but on impact that they brought for the province and their contribution to priorities of the seventh administration. We shall hold them accountable as we walk new path towards rejuvenation of tourism supply and reigniting demand to the province.

"This is a business opportunity for those identified Free State exhibitors to engage in strategic conversations to forge collaborative partnerships with fellow exhibitors and buyers from the globe to increase the market share of the province so that the province grow the economy and contributes to reduction in the high unemployment in the province," MEC said

In 2024, the Free State had 692 engagement/s with local and international buyers from 1 628 vetted buyers hosted by the Department of Tourism. This represents 57% of the total number of hosted buyers that interacted with various markets across the globe.

During the launch of the Africa's Travel Indaba -Minister for Tourism, Patricia De Lille, indicated that this year's trade show will host 1 200 exhibitors from across 26 African countries, with over 297 unique offering. Furthermore, the Minister alluded to the fact that the trade show will host 908 vetted international buyers representing 55 markets across the globe.

With the G20 heading to South Africa, concerted efforts to engage the member states buyers to sell as much packages as possible for them to share with their fellow country media houses to seize the opportunity to visit the Free State while attending the summit later this year.

“Let's all open our doors to welcome the world later this year in the true welcoming spirit of the Free State – ***“Free State is a place to go to and not a place to go through”*** – concluded MEC Makume.

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