

NEWS RELEASE

SPORTS TOURISM EXHIBITION PLANNED FOR SA

South African Tourism (SAT) and the Thebe Exhibitions and Projects Group (TEPG) have joined forces to stage a sports tourism exhibition to showcase South Africa's ability to host major sporting events.

The inaugural Events & Sports Tourism Exchange, to be held in June or July 2011, will enhance sports tourism to South Africa and showcase the country's experience and expertise in hosting and managing large international events.

Sugen Pillay, Global Manager: Events at SAT says the need for a sports tourism exhibition is informed by the Sports Tourism Strategy that was compiled by SAT and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) in 2006. "Definite coordination between the sports and tourism sectors is needed. Sport provides an added attraction in the tourist offering, encouraging more people to travel to events."

According to research conducted by SAT more than 10 percent of foreign tourists come to South Africa to watch or participate in sports events, with spectators accounting for 60 to 80 percent of these arrivals.

The contribution of sports tourism to the South African economy is estimated to be approximately R6 billion.

Major sports events that have taken place in South Africa include the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the 2003 Cricket World Cup and the Women's World Cup of Golf from 2005 to 2008.

"Now the country is gearing up for the biggest of them all, the 2010 FIFA World Cup," says TEPG Managing Director Carol Weaving, "and our challenge is to capitalise on the opportunities this event will present to the tourism sector.

"Thebe Exhibitions and Projects has extensive experience in the tourism marketing field and we look forward to working with South African Tourism to grow the sports tourism segment of this huge industry."

The Events & Sports Tourism Exchange will become an annual event and will involve industry stakeholders, venues, sponsors and the hospitality and tourism industries. A mini sports tourism pavilion will be incorporated into Meetings Africa 2010 and the exchange will include a hosted international buyer programme.

Cities across South Africa have tendered to host the event for the first three years and the winning city will be announced in June.

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