



Media Release

TBCSA and SA TOURISM Report Back on Tourism Marketing Levy

In keeping with the theme of September being Tourism Month, the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) has scheduled TOMSA Collector Feedback Sessions in the country's three major cities – Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg.

The TOMSA road show is a collaborative programme of the TBCSA (the Administrators of the tourism levy) and SA Tourism (the recipients of the tourism levy) used to provide feedback to the levy collectors and the travel and tourism industry at large on the past and future marketing activities of South Africa as a tourist destination, says Mmatšatši Marobe, Chief Executive Officer of the TBCSA.

The TBCSA and SA Tourism have been conducting these annual road shows, using them to report back to levy collectors on the marketing activities of SA Tourism as the country's marketing agency while at the same time enlisting contribution from the private sector on future plans and strategies. "TOMSA is the strongest and most effective link between SAT and the tourism private sector in South Africa says Nils Heckscher, TOMSA Board Chairman. I believe it is high time for us, as the private sector to stop complaining from the sidelines and to get talking with SAT around issues that we care about - TOMSA is our mouthpiece to do just that", Heckscher continued.

Now in its tenth year, the Tourism Marketing Levy South Africa (TOMSA) was set up in 1998, by the tourism private sector to provide additional marketing funding for SAT in its endeavour to promote destination South Africa globally. The TOMSA funds are obtained through a voluntary levy on tourism services rendered to tourists and are collected on a monthly basis by the TBCSA. The agreed levy is charged onto the visitor and not taken from the tourism business, unless specified.

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Over the years, TOMSA has grown, starting with 50 collectors in 1999 to well over 600 collectors in 2009. “The fund has also seen a growth in collector funds largely boosted by the growth in visitor numbers into the country. Given the current economic slump, it has become even more important to grow not only the visitor numbers but the levy collector base as well, says Marobe”. “Although the number of levy collectors has grown in the past 10 years, TOMSA remains with the major challenge of having only 650 levy collectors out of the estimated 10,000 product owners who are potential levy collectors”.

The other challenge for TOMSA’s growth especially in these difficult times is for levy collectors to withhold the levy collections by not paying it over to TBCSA. The levy collection system operates on a voluntary basis. It is peer pressure and the integrity of the individual levy collector to stick to their contractual undertaking to collect and pay the collected funds. “We need to ensure that more businesses in the industry see the value of contributing to TOMSA and understand that their contribution is not in vain, but critical to the continued promotion and marketing of South Africa to enable us to receive increased tourists. “The TBCSA and SA Tourism teams’ take time to travel the country ever year to host these feedback sessions - it’s our way of coming face to face with the levy collectors and to provide them with a platform to ask questions on any aspect of TOMSA and most importantly on how the levies are utilised”, continued Marobe.

TBCSA has also recognised the importance of strengthening its relationship with SAT as another way of creating value for the levy collectors. To this effect, a Memorandum of Understanding with SAT has been concluded in which specific deliverables are stipulated as well as benefits for the levy collectors outlined. The feedback sessions will also be used to provide more details about the MOU. SAT will be represented at these sessions and in a first for TOMSA, levy collectors they will have an opportunity to give input into the SAT five-year Strategic Plan, the organisational business plan as well as the budgets.

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The TOMSA sessions will be held as follows:

Kwa-Zulu Natal: Durban – 09 September 2009 at the Riverside Hotel from 17h30 to 19h00

Western Cape : Cape Town – 10 September 2009 at the Harbour Bridge Hotel from 17:30 to 19h00

Gauteng: Johannesburg – 22 September 2000 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Rosebank from 18:00 to 19:00

“Minister of Tourism, Martinus van Schalkwyk and his department are more open to the needs of the industry than government has ever been before. If we do not get involved on the various platforms open to us then I am sure we will find less open ears in years to come. I urge industry to support the TOMSA team and attend the sessions in large numbers”, Nils Heckscher concluded.

To confirm attendance, contact Ms. Boitumelo Moleleki by telephone on (012) 654 7525 or via e-mail on tumi@tbcsa.travel

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Editors Note:

The Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) is the official umbrella body for organised business in the South African travel and tourism industry and administrators of TOMSA. TOMSA (Tourism Marketing Levy South Africa) is a voluntary levy on tourism services rendered set up to provide additional funding the marketing of destination South Africa locally and internationally.