



TOURISM NEWS

2018/19



TRAVEL
THE KINGDOM IN THE SKY

TOURISM INDUSTRY IN LESOTHO 2018

"He who has data has the power!" TIM OREILLY

1,2 MILLION



3.1%

M 488 MILLION



1,250,000

2018 TOP SOURCE MARKETS

1,000,000

750,000

500,000

250,000

0

South Africa

Zimbabwe

Germany

Netherlands

USA

19.8% Occupancy Rate in 2018



PROPORTION OF SKILLED EMPLOYEES IN THE ACCOMMODATION SUB-SECTOR

 **48%**

 **52%**

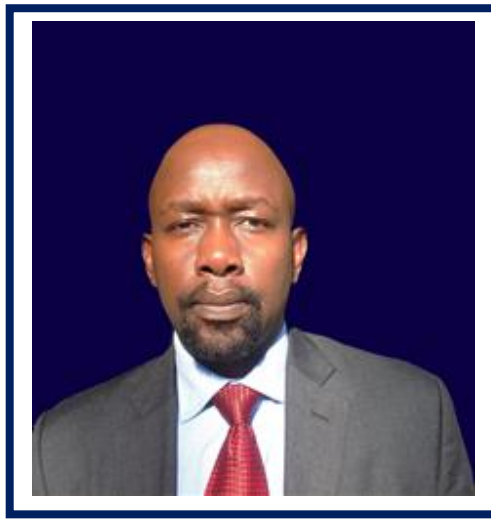
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***The Minister of Tourism, Environment and
Culture
Honourable Joang Molapo***

Majoana-Mabeli waterfall - Quthing



LTDC's CEO Mr. Mpaiphele Maqutu

FOREWORD

On behalf of the tourism industry I wish to thank the industry players' efforts in 2018/19. It's been another strong year for our Industry with continued focus on the goals to develop sustainable tourism in Lesotho including promotion of increased spending in tourism and longer duration of stay by our visitors. In marketing our country, we continued to focus our resources on the high potential markets of Germany, Netherlands and South Africa whilst we also ensured to invest in opportunities across our footprint through domestic tourism stimulation initiatives. As the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC) we remain optimistic about the industry's future although on the other hand we should not be complacent or oblivious of the challenges we face. We know from our research that Lesotho continues to be a highly desirable destination given its unique features. We do, however, face fierce competition from other destinations that are closer and cheaper for many of our key markets. Through our consumer demand research, we continue to focus on which markets are most fascinated by what Lesotho offers and are most likely to choose Lesotho for their next holiday or for any other purpose.

Through the Government, we are also working very hard to develop infrastructure at our major tourism hotspots. Worthy of mention is the construction of a visitor comfort facility that is currently under way at the 'Maletsunyane water fall. This facility is meant to be the meeting point for travellers and host communities because the idea is to have it work as a tourism hub whereat visitors will find tour operation and guiding services, accommodation services as well as other tourism related services that will be run by the communities from the greater Semonkong area.

In partnership with our hospitality sector, the QUALStar Grading Program is growing steadily. Through this program Lesotho tourism seeks to ensure that the quality of services offered to travellers resonate with those offered in the international space. It is our hope and belief that members of the hospitality sector that have not yet enrolled into the program will soon appreciate the benefits of the program and get graded as well. Still on quality services, we continued to work tirelessly to capacitate our local tour guides by way of training in the tour guiding business and we are thrilled to indicate that some of the budding tour guides and operators from a pool that has been trained by us are making remarkable progress in their businesses. We, therefore, encourage our visitors while travelling around the country to hear our stories and to use local tour operators and as they have been trained to give an accurate account of Lesotho's tourism offering.

With the 4th industrial revolution being around the corner, we have sought to embrace technology, hence we believe it is important to incorporate technological innovation in tourism marketing and development in Lesotho. To this end, we launched a tourism Mobile app dubbed "Lesotho Guider" whose main purpose is to make tourism information services and other related information easily accessible to travellers. Lesotho has a great story to tell as a destination and we are looking forward to welcoming more visitors whom we believe based on their experiences in our beautiful kingdom, will amplify our message to the world.

Finally, I wish to say thank you to the team here at LTDC and on their behalf to pass on our sincere thanks to the broader industry players for their unwavering support and commitment to drive this industry forward. We feel most privileged to partner with you.

THE LTDC'S MANAGEMENT TEAM



**MR. MPAIPHELE MAQUTU
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**



**MS. MAMELLO MOROJELE
HEAD PRODUCT
DEVELOPMENT
& INVESTMENT PROMOTION**



**MRS. MAMOLEMO MALEKE
HEAD LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE**



**MR. SEHLABAKA RAMAFIKENG
HEAD RESEARCH &
DEVELOPMENT**



**MR. TEBELLO THOOLA
HEAD STRATEGIC
MARKETING**



**MR. THETSO THAMAE
HEAD FINANCE &
ADMINISTRATION**



**MS. 'MASEABATA TAOANA
MANAGER FINANCE &
ADMINISTRATION**



**MR. NKUEBE LEROTHOLI
MANAGER STRATEGIC
MARKETING**



**MRS. 'MANCHAFALO
MOTŠOENENG
MANAGER PUBLIC RELATIONS**



**MS. 'MAKOROLOSO LEKHESA
MANAGER PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT
& INVESTMENT PROMOTION**

TO TRAVEL IS TO LIVE....

EDITOR'S NOTE

To travel is to see what is happening beyond our door step, to understand different cultures and see how society and the environment is changing. Travel opens our eyes and gives us greater insight into the world as well as into other cultures.

Lesotho is an exceptionally rich travel destination with much to offer. Travel around the country and discover the authentic and unspoiled landscapes and villages set in the heart of the Kingdom in the sky's foothills, mountains rivers and valleys. The best part of travelling is not just sight-seeing, it is the enquiries you make from the local people and the conversations you create. In this way you see and experience the cultural extension of your own world even if you happen to be a local.

The experience of the simple charms and traditional hospitality in the welcoming rural homestays, local tour guides and native Basotho men and women will leave you in awe. Enjoy the home-cooked traditional dishes and cultural stories that will stay with you forever. When you are on the road, either walking or driving, it is a motion of senses, exhilaration activated by the beautiful scenery, familiarity of strangers due to their hospitality and welcoming smiles and marvels of the snow-capped peaks if it is winter. It is freedom too as memories are set aside by the onrush of the new unknown environment.

2019 should be about rural community beneficiation through tourism/travel. Let us create a platform for the stories of Basotho to be heard and for them to showcase their culture and the places they call home, and while we are there, let us not hesitate to spend more and stay longer☺

'Manchafalo Motšoeneng
Editor, Tourism News



LESOTHO WAS PART OF THE AFRICA'S STORY-TELLING OCCASION - TRAVEL INDABA 2019

In pursuit to enhance Africa's narrative and Lesotho's individual story, a delegation comprising private tour operators, government officials and lodging and hospitality operators led by LTDC represented Lesotho in the annual Durban tourism indaba from the 2nd to 4th May 2019. This has portrayed a harmonized and sustained effort from team Lesotho tourism in promoting and marketing Lesotho as a destination of choice for travellers across the globe.

"We put a lot of work into our exhibition stall to ensure that it captures all elements of tourism in our country including altitude and snow activities, cultural heritage, water sports and a variety of adventure activities like rock climbing, abseiling, 4x4 trekking and hiking. Every year we use this platform to exhibit our tourism offerings as well as to lure investors to come and invest in tourism businesses in Lesotho so that Lesotho can reach its full potential in economic growth through tourism." The LTDC's CEO noted.



Some of Lesotho Tourism operators in attendance



Traditional performances to entertain guests



PS MTEC giving remarks to the private sector at the show



LTDC's Official assisting visitors



Visitors/buyers making enquiries at the stall

He added, "While speaking at the closing ceremony on Saturday the President of South Africa President Ramaphosa emphasised that if nurtured well, the sector would benefit not only individual countries but also its citizens. He noted that tourism is the new gold mine that our countries can come across and a sector that is thriving and has tremendous potential for further growth, and more particularly for job creation. For us in Lesotho, this therefore calls for concerted efforts from all stakeholders to ensure that we develop the most complete tourism products and experiences to the world."

The CEO further noted that, on Friday the 3rd May, while addressing the journalists the South African Tourism Minister, Minister Derek Hanekom emphasised the importance of unrestricted visa and tedious application processes which rather discourage people from travelling and therefore affect tourism negatively. "Lesotho is not an exception to this and we appeal to the relevant Government authorities to ease visa application processes including revision of visa application fees for Lesotho, which are very expensive," he concluded.

Africa Travel Indaba is a tourism expo hosted by South African Tourism and attended by tourism operators from all over the world at the International Convention Centre in Durban, South Africa. It is the third largest annual tourism expo in the world and the largest on the African continent, bringing the world to Africa every year in May. This year's (2019) edition attracted thousands of exhibitors from 65 countries across the globe. The theme for this year was "***Africa's stories, Your success***", which was simply an invitation to individual countries to telling their stories and showcasing their African successes to the world.

LTDC SENSITISES COMMUNITIES ON TOURISM TO AVERT TOURISTS' HARASSMENT AND PROMOTE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN TOURISM - *towards a safe destination Lesotho and enhanced community-based tourism in Lesotho.*

Tourism is viewed as a critical variable in development dialogues globally. Although there is an increasing community understanding of the value of tourism, there are still many who are yet to appreciate the significance of tourism, among the stakeholders and general public. Community and stakeholder support can have a significant effect on the failure and success of tourism development. This is because tourism can be perceived as a destroyer of culture, undermining social norms and economies, degrading social structures, stripping communities of individuality and as a saviour of the poor and disadvantaged, providing opportunities and economic benefits, promoting social exchange, and enhancing livelihoods.

In the spirit of creating a better understanding of tourism and its relevance to sustainable economic growth and the relevance of local community participation in tourism related initiatives, promotion of good hospitality and safety of tourists and to advocate for greater social acceptance of the concept of tourism, every year LTDC holds a series of tourism awareness activities targeted at different stakeholders across the country including students, herd boys, Police and the general public.

Sensitisation of scholars

The LTDC's team had a session with students at Ramatšelisiso High School in Qacha's Nek whereat the students were sensitised on what tourism entails, its relevance to the economy of Lesotho and ways in which the youth can take part in tourism as well as the best practices in sustainable tourism development and do's and dont's for hospitality. In her remarks Mrs Motšoeneng (on behalf of LTDC) emphasized the relevance and importance of youth participation in tourism initiatives. She also urged and encouraged students to protect their heritage

and environment because those are important elements in sustainable tourism development. "We encourage the youth to be active citizens by participating in development initiatives including tourism development initiatives" she noted.

"Besides, as future leaders in this country, the youth are entrusted with the responsibility to promote social cohesion and good hospitality, which are some of the basic ingredients in tourism development." Mrs Motsoeneng added. In her concluding remarks she pleaded to students to refrain from throwing stones at tourists and cars along the roads, begging for money and edible stuff including booing at tourists. "Such acts are classified as harassment and any form of harassment is a crime," she noted. Students and teachers were also encouraged to tap into opportunities in tourism such as establishment of small tourism related projects which are rather easy to do with small amounts of income. Production of crafts for sale to tourists who visit their respective villages, story-telling, traditional performances and others.



In a spur of the moment, to test whether the team was able to get the message across, few students were randomly nominated to make presentations on how they think what they have learned can be applied or put to practice as well how they think they can contribute in tourism development. Beautiful concepts, ideas and a rich knowledge of heritage were presented

enthusiastically by the students. While expressing a vote of thanks, one of the students expressed their gratitude to LTDC for the session which in her view was very informative. She also noted that they will use the information they have learned not only for purposes of building small business concepts but also for deciding and

choosing their careers including tourism related careers. A similar session was held for Poloko Primary School in Mohale, Maseru district. In the same spirit, young children were encouraged to be hospitable towards tourists and refrain from begging, throwing stones at tourists and vandalism of road signs.



Ramatšelis High School students during discussions on tourism

Qoutable.....

“Young people can play an active role in protecting and improving the environment. They can change their lifestyle and how it affects the environment. They can make their homes, schools and youth organizations more environmentally friendly by adopting environmentally friendly practices, recycling of different materials as well as preserving resources such as water and electricity. Engaging youth in environmental protection not only creates direct impact on changing youth behaviours and attitudes, but possibly influence their parents, relatives and families”. - Ramchandra Acharya.

Community sensitisation and mobilisation

Among a myriad of critical elements to consider in tourism development is community involvement and/or participation. Involvement of the local community is crucial for sustainable development of the tourism industry because tourists often maintain a close bond with the local communities as hosts, and it is in the community that tourism happens. It is also vital to mention that community involvement in tourism development helps to maintain balance between the needs, expectations and interest of

the residents, imbalance of which can have a negative effect on tourism.

In that context, LTDC encourages community participation in tourism related activities and businesses around the country. Thus communities across the country are regularly sensitised and encouraged to work together and collectively to promote distinctive tourism attractions available in their localities, to conserve environment and adopt best practises in tourism development, including good hospitality towards tourists.

Still at Qacha's Nek, the LTDC's team in collaboration with LMPS and LDF also held public gatherings to sensitise the communities of Makhoareng, Ramatšelisio, Ha Monyane, Ha Jakobo, Mapakising, Ramahlaela, and Ha Moshebi. Speaking on behalf of LTDC, the Public Relations Manager – Mrs 'Manchafalo Motšoeneng appealed to the community to abstain from harassment of tourists. She noted that there has been disturbing reports of harassment perpetrated by some members of the community, including children around Ramatšelisio. "Tourists leave a financial footprint in Lesotho through spending on lodging and cuisine, purchase of artifacts, payment of tour guiding services, entrance fees at attractions sites etc. By embracing hospitable behaviour, you (the community) will be encouraging repeat visits and word of mouth promotion, for this country to receive even more tourists" said Motšoeneng.

On the same occasion the Public Relations Officer- Mr Molapo Matela emphasised the importance of tourism and urged the community to tap into tourism investment opportunities to generate income for their families. "Pony trekking, botanical garden, rural home stays, traditional performances, production of crafts to mention a few are some of the businesses Basotho can consider to make a living through tourism. In that way, they will also be promoting tourism in Lesotho through product development and longer stays" Matela Noted. On behalf of LMPS, Inspector Qomatsi Pobetsi of Ramatšelisio Police post emphasized that tourists need to be given a cordial welcome because that will position Lesotho not only as a unique destination but also as a hospitable destination for tourists. Ins. Pobetsi emphasized the need for collaboration with the community through Community Policing Forum to combat criminal activities that tend to hamper tourism in Lesotho.





In one of the gatherings, Mr. Makoanyane Rathebane a member of the community was upbeat about ideas that have been shared in the gathering regarding how they can participate in tourism development. He encouraged fellow villagers to establish partnerships and set-up rural tourism projects like rural home stays, pony trekking and rejuvenation of botanical gardens. Mr. Makoanyane conveyed his utmost gratitude to LTDC for disseminating useful information which he said was an eye-opener for most of them.

A member of LDF, Private Lehlohololo Motsekinyane, who originates from Thamathu in Sehlabathebe gave a testimony of how his family benefited from the business of tour guiding and operation of rural homestays. He said his parents were able to pay their school fees and cater for most of their household needs through income generated from their rural homestay business. He encouraged the community members to embrace the idea of community participation in tourism projects so that they can be able to improve their lives. To the youth, he said interacting with tourists can also be viewed as a learning curve because upon interaction with other people from other parts of the world, one tends to learn other essential skills including communication, hospitality and appreciation for other nations.

In another occasion, LTDC collaborated the Ministry of Tourism Environment and Culture, LMPS and the Katse Tourism Development Committee to sensitise the communities of Ha Seshote and Ha Ntšeli in the Leribe district. The event was attended by traditional herdsman, herd boys, youth and community councils' representatives and a commendable participation by the youth, taking part in discussions was observed. Communities were sensitised on how best they can take part in tourism related initiatives towards successful tourism around Matsoku and Lesotho in general. While speaking on behalf of LTDC, the Public Relations Manager said every member of the community has a role to play in enhancing tourism in their locality. She further emphasised that participation of the local community in tourism is a driving force for change and a catalyst for development. "It is through your (Community) involvement in tourism activities that socioeconomic benefits of tourism can be maximised.

Mrs Motšoeneng further encouraged the community to protect and preserve the environment in order to attract potential tourists and for future generations to benefit from tourism and attractions within the area. "Our vision is to see full participation of communities around the Matsoku area in tourism development initiatives that will mature to become big tourism projects", she noted. She eloquently narrated a sample tourism model which portrays and showcases how each of the tourism elements and players (including tour guides, crafters, storytellers, historians to mention a few) can contribute to ensure that Matsoku tourism product offering attracts more visitors who stay longer in the area. In concluding she noted that tourism has been recognized as a force, which accelerates human development, social and economic inclusiveness, increased entrepreneurship and self-employment; the generation of decent work and environmental sustainability.

The Assistant Tourism Officer- Mr. Nqheku Matolo advised the community to invest in rural homestays and other tourism activities. Matolo pointed out that the communities of Ha Seshote and Ha Ntšeli are very lucky as they are strategically located en route to the renowned Katse Dam. Mr. Matolo reiterated that Lesotho is fortunate to possess prosperity of tourism resources, such as breath-taking scenery and exceptional cultural identity; features which captivate the traveller. "All that is needed is to be innovative and capitalise on these assets to create tourism products and generate income for our families" said Mr. Matolo.

On the other hand, Ms. Mantoa Moiloa - the Manager of Bokong Nature Reserve representing MTEC appealed to the community to preserve medicinal plants and the rare wild life and birds that are habitant in the area. "In recent years our indigenous plants and animal species have been gradually diminishing. We need to make sure that the indigenous plants are propagated and preserved as we continue to use them for medicinal and other purposes. In that manner, even the future generations will be able to enjoy the benefits of such plants." noted Ms. Moiloa. She concluded by informing the gathering that

Bokong Nature Reserve avails an opportunity for locals residing in the neighbourhood to send their products to be sold to tourists without any fees or charges.

On behalf of LMPS, Lance Sergeant Rankoela Tlapana also urged members of the community to refrain from any form of harassment of tourists. He further encouraged parents to sensitise their children about the importance hospitality as well as repercussions in the event of violation of the law or engagement in inhospitable behaviour. He commended the youth in attendance for their interest in participation in tourism development, which in the police perspective, may contribute to alleviation of crime in Matsoku area.

Similar sensitisation activities were held for communities of Tlhanyaku, Mateanong, Malefiloane and herdboys from Sani in Mokhotlong district and at Semonkong in Maseru district. Likewise, the communities were sensitised on hospitality, best practices in tourism development as well as on small-scale community-based tourism business opportunities.



Members of the community from Ha Ntšeli and Ha Seshote in Leribe

SENSITISATION CAMPAIGNS AT MOKHOTLONG AND MOHALE





LTDC PARTNERS WITH LMPS TO PROMOTE HOSPITALITY IN THE POLICE SERVICE – *mending Lesotho’s tourism image*

Security of tourists is essential for any destination striving to increase its popularity among visitors. Thus, the police are an important element of any destination’s image and promotion. LTDC holds a series of sensitisation workshops for Police Officers across the country, to ensure that they are aware of the critical role they play in tourism development in Lesotho. A sensitisation workshop was held at Thaba Bosiu Cultural Village for officers from the central region which covers Maseru and Thaba Tseka districts.

The event was graced by the LTDC’s CEO – Mr Mpaiphele Maqutu and the Assistant Commissioners of Police - ACP Hlalele Rampai and ACP Mpota Nthako. The LTDC’s CEO - Mpaiphele Maqutu in his remarks noted that due to technological advancements, a negative experience can be spread across the globe in real time by unhappy tourists and the country as a destination bears the repercussions, which are often not very easy to reverse. “Tourists consider security as one of the major influencing factors in their choice to visit a particular destination. This means even if we have beautiful attractions, some of which cannot be found elsewhere in the world, if Lesotho is not considered a safe destination, then we will not have visitors coming to this country. They will simply opt for safer destinations.” He also noted that already there is already stiff competition from neighbouring countries to attract tourists and therefore it is important for all of Basotho to always ensure that in our different corners where we serve the people, we portray good hospitality and refrain from corrupt behaviour such as demanding bribes, stone throwing, naming and shaming travellers, begging, etc.

Mr Maqutu concluded by pleading to the police officers to always act as tourism ambassadors more so because due to the nature of their work, which requires them to travel all over the country, they have a better knowledge of most of the touristic places as they are entrusted to assist the visitors when need be.



LTDC’s CEO also addressing the Police Officers



ACP Hlalele Rampai giving remarks



The Assistant Commissioner of Police - ACP Hlalele Rampai who is in charge of the central region did not refute the allegations alluded to above. He in fact attested to such allegations, stating that he also had a bad experience from one of the corrupt officers. Although he did not elaborate on the incident, he said on the day he was driving a vehicle with a foreign registration when the officer demanded a bribe.

ACP Rampai applauded LTDC and said he believed that the Police officers have gained vital information from the seminar and would do their best to build a reputable image for the LMPS and the country in general. "Each time officers see a foreign number plate they see an opportunity to earn quick cash. He noted however, that there are several officers who have been dismissed for demanding bribes because we are determined to root out that kind of behaviour. As Mr Maqutu pleaded, it is also important to learn about our tourism spots so that we are able to effectively assist tourists. It is through working together with LTDC that we will help boost tourism in Lesotho for the nation to realise the much needed economic benefits." ACP Rampai said.

At another occasion, two hundred and fifty three (253) police recruits were sensitised at the Police Training College some weeks before their pass out. In his opening address, the LTDC's CEO – Mr. Mpaiphele Maqutu underscored the relevance and importance of tourism development in Lesotho as it is perceived by the Government.

He noted that tourism is earmarked to create a sustainable economy for Lesotho and such, it is the responsibility of every resident to contribute positively towards the achievement of this national dream.

He made a clarion call to the recruits to perform their duties immaculately in order to leave positive footprints that will benefit future generations.

"As police officers you are entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining law and order because all of you have now become ambassadors of an efficient, professional and dignified service." Indicated Mr. Maqutu. "You must always be mindful of the fact that immense power has been bestowed upon your good selves and the state expects the best out of you and you should relentlessly offer assistance to the visitors travelling around the kingdom of Lesotho to encourage repeated visits", he added. He concluded by saying that investors and tourists are attracted to a country where law and order prevails and failure to uphold law and order taints the image of Lesotho as a preferred destination for tourism and investment.

During the event- Public Relations Manager – 'Manchafalo Motšoeneng presented the relevance of good communication, good customer service as well as best practices in tourism, which all are a function of the envisaged sustainable tourism Lesotho seeks to achieve. Motšoeneng urged the police to learn and be conversant with activities and places of interests in their neighbourhood so that they can be best suited to assist tourists when necessary.



Mr. Maqutu addressing the recruits at PTC



Police Recruits during the session

In closing, Inspector Mohau Mokobocho appealed to the recruits to avoid engaging in bribery activities as it does not only seriously dent the image of the Police Service but destination Lesotho as well. “You have an obligation and responsibility to protect the image and integrity of the Police Service through conduct that is undoubtedly designed to reflect positively on the Police Service. With this additional information you have gathered today, I am confident that

when you get to your respective duty stations you will indeed portray your ambassadorship status awarded to your good selves today by the LTDC’s CEO and I hope you will not disappoint.” Insp. Mokobocho remarked. He wrapped up his remarks by extending appreciation to LTDC, on behalf of the College and noted that he believes that was the beginning of many other meaningful initiatives between the two organisations.



LTDC ON AN INTERNATIONAL MARKETING DRIVE
– Showcasing Lesotho’s tourism products at international exhibitions

On the picture: Lesotho delegation at ITB Berlin, Germany. From left to right: Ms. Limpho Libaba - Lesotho Mission Berlin, Mr. Tieho Mamasiane - PS MTEC, Honourable Joang Malapo – Minister of Tourism, HE Masenyetse - Lesotho Ambassador Germany, Mr. Mpaiphele Maqutu - CEO Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation and Mr. Nkuebe Lerotholi – Marketing Manager, LTDC.

Trade shows and exhibitions can be an excellent way to promote a business, the products and services that a country or company offers. They are also a great way to network with other industry members, grow your customer base and become abreast with latest trends in the business. Thus Destination Marketing Organisations, tour operators, campsites and travel agencies gather at exhibitions to promote their holiday destinations and accommodations to consumers keen on traveling.

LTDC through its Marketing team has over the years been actively promoting Lesotho at international exhibitions to attract both regional and international visitors to visit Lesotho for holiday and investment. Among the European markets, statistics show that Lesotho attracts more Germans and the Dutch from the European market, thus the main focus has been to strategically direct Lesotho’s marketing efforts to those markets, and hence LTDC’s team attended this biggest international tourism exhibition in the world held at the beginning of every year in Germany. LTDC’s Head Strategic Marketing – Mr Tebello Thoola believes that Lesotho is well

placed geographically and because of her uniqueness, Lesotho has a potential to expand her tourism footprint. “Trade shows are useful for destination marketing because we as marketers are able to meet with established operators in the industry and we are able to network and build relationships with a large number of targeted potential investors and tour operators under one roof. As such, exhibitions have proved to be cost and time-effective as opposed to conducting individual country calls. One has to, however, do thorough research while planning to attend the exhibitions to make sure that the ones you attend are the best for your business.” Mr Thoola emphasised. “For Lesotho, based on our research, it is obvious that our international marketing efforts have to be directed to the German and Dutch markets since most of our long haul travellers come from those two countries. Like in many other years, most of the business operators and individual holiday makers who visited our stalls during the exhibitions were genuinely interested in our brand and tourism offerings. Last year in particular we were able to complete a deal with a television crew from Chile whom we agreed

would visit Lesotho for the shooting of one of their 13 television episodes whereat Lesotho's tourism attractions will be showcased", he added. The Vakantiebeurs, an international travel trade show held every January at Utrecht in Holland and the International Tourism Bourse

(ITB) also held annually in March at Berlin in Germany are some of the international travel and tourism events that Lesotho takes part in with a view to elevate Lesotho's tourism profile in the international tourism arena.



TOUR GUIDE TRAINING – *breaking down barriers to employment through tourism*

The tour guiding business has been described by some as the “Cinderella” of the tourism industry; it is perceived as an attractive and useful business because it has tremendous potential to create jobs for locals, yet it is often neglected. Tour guides are charged with the prime responsibility of making the tourists’ experiences the most pleasurable and to maintain the highest quality service. In the spirit of promoting good quality services within the industry, LTDC has recognised the need for requisite skills in the tour guiding business and initiated a training program for local tour guides which has been running for several years. As a case in point, an intensive two-week tour guide training was held last year for 13 local tour guides whom upon completion of the training were awarded with certificates.

Ms. Nthabiseng Tsunyane, on behalf of trainees expressed their gratitude to LTDC for affording them the invaluable opportunity to sharpen their

skills. She also thanked the corporation for entrusting them to be part of the tourism development process. She noted that with the skills they have gained from the training, they will transform the tour guiding business in Lesotho, delivering and maintaining the best service within the industry.

The trainer, Mrs. ‘Mamotebang Ntokoane was optimistic and said she is confident that the Graduates will be able to deliver the expected service, given the intensity of the training that was offered, which included theoretical and practical aspects that were aligned to international standards. “I am confident that the skills you have acquired in this training will inevitably enable you to be higher calibre tour guides in this country”, she said. She concluded by congratulating all Graduates for their achievement and urged them to always vouch for excellence in their businesses.

Ms. Paballo Thlaole, one of the Graduates who has already established a tour operation business also expressed her gratitude for the training offered and emphasised the relevance of innovation in the tour operation business. “If only we can always remember that we are the main facilitators and our work has a significant impact on the travellers’ experiences, we will be able to attract more visitors to Lesotho and realise the much needed benefits from the tourism business”, Ms. Thlaole noted. She concluded by challenging the youth to get creative and use modern technology to their advantage and to use tourism as a stepping stone for achieving their aspirations.

The tourism industry expert Mr. Tšeliso Adoro shared the same sentiments and encouraged the newly trained guides to think out of the box and come up with creative ideas. “Lesotho is endowed with abundant attractions and all that is needed is to create fascinating activities that can keep tourists engaged so that they can stay longer and spend more in our country”, Adoro noted.

Mosola Letuka - Trainer and Business Advisor lauded LTDC for the noble initiative of empowering the youth. He urged the guides to explore and learn about the majestic attractions Lesotho is endowed with and create beautiful and well-informed stories about Lesotho. “Such stories can create lifetime memories to visitors and turn them into ambassadors who would inspire other people to visit us”, he noted.

In his remarks, Mr. Molapo Matela, LTDC’s PRO emphasised that tour guiding requires dedicated and results driven individuals because tour guides are actually the face of any destination. They are responsible for the overall impressions of tourists about a destination. “As a tour guide one needs to always be on top of his/her game and this can be achieved by among other factors, thorough research on different attractions and places, good communication skills and passion for one’s job”, Matela said.



One of the 13 Graduates receiving his certificate

WHAT MAKES A TOP NOTCH TOUR GUIDE

1. Communication

A tour guide must be articulate and easy to understand, and know how to communicate with large and varying groups of people.

2. Memory and Storytelling

Sell more than just the sights and sounds; the knowledge, history, and a story. Your guide must make all of that information compelling. Know the stories like your own, they should flow naturally like role playing.

3. Humour

A sense of humour will inject some zest into your stories and make the guests feel at ease and happy and tends to cut any tensions that may arise.

4. Passion

Tour guides should have true passion for the city or activity, and convey that passion to the guests.

5. Flexibility

Be open to questions and comments, and react to them with authority and enthusiasm. Be flexible to the tour and adjust to spontaneous moments, using a unique approach for each guest.

6. Punctuality

Keeping other people waiting is incredibly unprofessional. Best tour guides are punctual, ready to accept guests and able to organize them so that there are as few delays as possible.

7. Sensitivity

Be sensitive to international differences and accommodate guests who have special needs.



3 OP REIS PROMOTES LESOTHO TOURISM ON DUTCH NATIONAL TELEVISION



Members of Dutch television crew, enroute to Semonkong for the shoot



Starring in a film or television is a sure-fire way to boost a tourism destination. In an attempt to draw the international travellers' attention to Lesotho for travel and investment, LTDC established co-operation with the Dutch National Television. The highlight of the co-operation was a production of a video footage that will show Lesotho's tourism attractions. The Dutch National Television has been busy preparing for the 13th season of their television travel program known as 3 op Reis, which will be aired in September 2019. The 3op Reis production crew visited Lesotho for the season 13's shooting. The stories covered were a mix of adventure and experiences of the presenters, beautiful shots of iconic attractions of Lesotho and inspiring encounters with the local people.

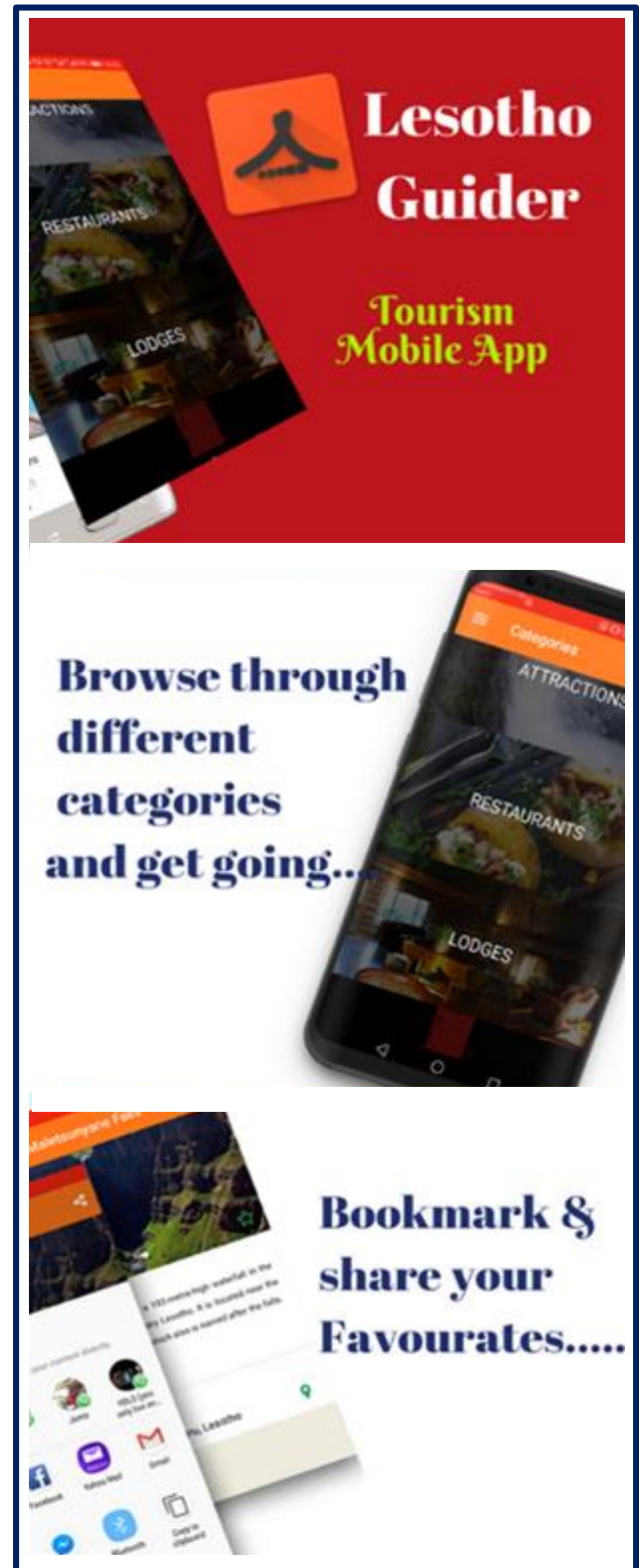
Mr Thoola, Head Strategic Marketing when asked about the idea behind this initiative said "Today, television plays an important part in inspiring and influencing people to travel. It allows people to fantasise about being at the destinations they have seen on television and also provoke them to go ahead and live that fantasy. We are therefore, trying to leverage on the influential power of television to inspire more people to visit Lesotho. We expect the Dutch people to visit Lesotho even more after having seen the different tourism spots to be portrayed on 3 op Reis television programme", the Head of Marketing said.

EMBRACING DIGITAL SOLUTIONS IN TOURISM- LTDC *encourages more travel with a new tourism mobile app, "Lesotho Guider"*

Globally, the travel and tourism industry has undergone a remarkable change as a result of the evolution of digitisation. Advances in internet, mobile technology, and social media have transformed the tourists or travellers approaches in planning a trip, clouding traditional, physical, personal and time boundaries.

It is clear therefore that online platforms should be optimised to meet the needs of tourists and travellers from flight to hotel bookings. The services should be easily accessible and user-friendly. This evolution benefits travellers in terms of easy access to travel information. On the other hand, companies are also faced with opportunities to grow. In a bid to drive the anticipated growth in sales, revenue and brand awareness, companies need to embrace the digital technologies and transform to better respond to the needs and demands of tourists and travellers who are rather more connected than ever before.

In 2018, the UNWTO has also emphasised the importance of digital transformation in tourism development. Lesotho through LTDC embraced the idea and developed the mobile app "LESOTHO GUIDER" to address the needs of travellers and enhance safety. Through this app, travellers can access tourism and essential services information on the go. The main features of this mobile app include its ability to provide information on Lesotho's tourism attractions and activities that visitors can engage in during their stay in the country, the GPS Coordinates for different tourism spots and places, accommodation facilities including rates and locations. It is also easy to identify the country of origin of people who have logged into the app. In this manner, it is evident that the app is also useful for monitoring and planning for the sector since it provides information on market trends. LTDC will be able to know where exactly to direct its marketing efforts to attract even more visitors to Lesotho.



Lesotho Guider
Tourism Mobile App

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LTDC: SEEKING TO BOOST AVENUES FOR WATER SPORTS AND DOMESTIC TOURISM

LTDC has added 4 new paddle boats at Mohale Boating, helping to kick off the festive season last December. This initiative is an addition to the existing 28-seater AC motor boat “Tosa” which has been operating for the past few years.

The LTDC’s decision to acquire these boats is an indication of Mohale Boating’s growing popularity as a tourism hot spot and water sport facility in the country. The expansion is an endeavour to make the industry even more vibrant. “With this new investment, we believe we will be able to draw more foreign visitors and boost domestic tourism. It is also a step to diversify the product offering in the area and for the industry in general”, LTDC’s Head Finance and Administration noted.

Escape the clutter and the noise of the city life by reaching a far enough point to just stop and embrace the endless blue landscape spreading in front of your eyes at Mohale dam. Situated 91.8 kilometres from the capital city –Maseru, it is approximately 1 and half hour to reach. The boating experience is one activity not to miss in your lifetime, it is even better when you do boating in the most picturesque setting such as Mohale where you are surrounded by the clear waters and wavering kingdom mountains. So yeah!! Set your mind and head to Mohale for a boating cruise.





PROMOTING DOMESTIC TOURISM THROUGH CORPORATE TOURS

Domestic tourism has a big part to play in promoting tourism and smoothing out seasonality. LTDC has embarked on promotion of domestic tourism by inspiring Basotho to spend their holidays in Lesotho and travel more around the country. This resulted in the launching of the campaign floated under the mantra ‘visit your country first’.

Most Basotho have not visited tourism attraction sites in the country owing to various reasons including lack of awareness of some attractions and facilities. To address this, LTDC invited local insurance companies to a skiing adventure at Afriski Mountain Resort. Minet and Specialized Insurance responded to a call and engaged in that adventure at AfriSki.

“Our objective is to raise local public awareness about the prospects of tourist activities around Lesotho, which in our view is the most critical issue in our journey to promote domestic tourism”, said Nkuebe Lerotholi, LTDC’s Marketing Manager. “This initiative in particular is aimed at encouraging Basotho to travel around the country. Whatever we do today is going to be documented and shared on social

media and people will get to see interesting places and later decide to travel around. Many a time, when one sees a friend or a family member having visited somewhere, they are drawn to wanting to undertake a similar trip or even a different one”, added Mr Lerotholi. He further urged locals to travel around the country and experience all tourism products and activities including the majestic panoramic views from the mountain tops and cliffs, captivating tourism outdoor activities such as abseiling, hiking, camping, donkey pub crawling, fly fishing and rock climbing to mention but a few.

Mphaphati Molapo from Minet Insurance Company was ecstatic and indicated that she was happy to be given an opportunity visit Afriski as she is now equipped with skills in skiing and bum-boarding. She applauded LTDC’s initiative in promoting the country’s natural attractions to its citizens. She, however advised the Corporation to harness the domestic tourism potential. “I am not very comfortable with my observation that most tourists visiting the Ski resort are from South Africa, we need to change that as locals”, noted Mphaphathi.



HIS MAJESTY KING LETSIE III MAKES HISTORY AT THE 13TH EDITION OF ANNUAL MOSHOESHOE WALK

It was that time of the year when the enthusiastic trekkers embarked on the unforgettable, challenging and gruelling historic walk. The thirteenth edition of Moshoeshoe Walk was on the 7th – 9th March 2019. Around 700 participants from South Africa, Botswana and Lesotho and other parts of the world took part in this momentous and historic expedition in honour of the legacy of King of Basotho, Moshoeshoe I. King Moshoeshoe I, fearlessly brought together people of different tribes to form the peaceful nation of Basotho.

The Walk is also an initiative to re-ignite the spirit of unity amongst Basotho as it is embodied in the legacy left by its founder Moshoeshoe I. As usual, the expedition started at Menkhoaneng, the birthplace of King Moshoeshoe I. Trekkers then started the walk to Thaba Bosiu where they were expected to arrive after three days. Present at the launch were Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs- Honorable Halebonoe Setšabi, Member of Parliament (MP) – Honorable Mphosi Nkhasi from Pela Tšoeu constituency, and the Chief of Menkhoaneng.

His Majesty King Letsie III was also present and launched the expedition. In His remarks, he wished everyone blessings for the torturous 3 days journey that awaited them.

“I truly appreciate the commitment of guests from different countries who have crossed our borders to partake in this historical milestone. I am grateful for solidarity and the support you demonstrate every year”, said the King.

The MP from Pele-Tsoeu – Honourable Nkhasi indicated that the proposal to have infrastructural developments at Menkhoaneng has been submitted to the Government. “It is my earnest wish that the long standing entreaty of the villagers of Menkhoaneng for this area to be developed will be heeded”, Nkhasi said.

The organizer of the event Mr. Thabo Maretlane noted with excitement that the new brand for the expedition has been launched, which depicts the great warrior - King Moshoeshoe I.



His Majesty King Letsie III with the walk

He noted that the 2019's edition was "Walk for Unity" and on 8th March the walk will be advocating women empowerment as it will be International Women's day.

Her Majesty the Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso (for the fourth time in a row) also participated in the walk. Commendable aura of excitement seen from ululations cheering from the villagers where the queen and her crew passed by was noted. His Majesty the King made history by joining the trekkers for the last 31km lap of the walk from Malimong to Thaba Bosiu. There were rapturous smiles among the trekkers seeing the king among themselves. "It was such a great honour and pride to walk with the King of Basotho. What a pleasant surprise!!" Few participants noted.

Mr. Mahlatsi Setofo who participated for the first time in the walk said "I was tempted to quit on the first day because my legs were sore due to the type of shoes I wore but kept on until the last moment. Having completed the expedition to me is such a humbling experience, given the way the expedition is so challenging." Noted Setofo. The 117km expedition signifies and honour the journey the great Moshoeshe took with his followers when he left Botha Bothe to Thaba Bosiu stronghold for sanctuary to form the Basotho Nation.

A GLANCE AT OTHER MAJOR INDUSTRY EVENTS

'Maletsunyane Braai Festival

The 3rd instalment of Maletsunyane Braai festival was even better, roughly 4000 people purchased tickets and attended the festival for a meaty experience and escape from the clutter of the city life and to unwind. The festival offered an array of genres such as traditional jazz, hip hop and famo music. To grace the event international DJ's were scouted, Mantša, Selimo Thabane, DJ boots represented the local artists. On-Site included a range of activities such as, hiking, abseiling, quad biking, pony trekking and donkey pub crawl. The revellers were ecstatic and took self-portraits and pictures against the background of the spellbinding 'Maletsunyane falls.

LETOFE

Introduced in 2005, LETOFE is a dazzling event which currently attracts thousands of music lovers from across the country. Over and above the music, supporters enjoy the event because of with hospitality of the locals, beautiful weather and stunning landscape.

The 13th edition of LETOFE saw the live performances by the likes of Apollo Ntabanyane, Tšepo Tshola, Amanda Black, Lira, Mango Groove, Tortured Soul and DJ Supernova from USA to mention a few. The enchanting performance of Mango Groove and Tortured Soul was phenomenal as their favourite melodies had the crowd whipped into a frenzy.

LETOFE AND BRAAI FEST IN FOCUS



COMMEMORATION OF THE LEGACY OF MORENA MOOROSI

Traditional and historic expeditions are customarily undertaken as a way of reviving the culture of our ancestors and also paying homage to our well esteemed heroes and heroines who played a significant role in building the Basotho nation. During the Mfecane or Lifaqane wars the Great Moshoeshe I gave sanctuary to Moorosi Chief of the Baphuthi clan (origin of Nguni clan) who later became Moshoeshe's ally. Moorosi and his people travelled and settled in the southern region of Lesotho called Quthing. At the time of Basotho Gun War, Chief Moorosi gallantly fought Cape forces. He, therefore, played a pivotal role in keeping the identity of the territory and the existence of Lesotho as a nation state today.

To celebrate the legacy of Morena Moorosi, Le Bandla Le Bapthuthi organised the 7th edition of BaPhuthi Lamentation Walk in November 2018. The walk was intended to portray the BaPhuthi's loud cry for appreciation stating the fact that their King made a very pivotal contribution in the building of the Basotho nation, hence they crave for acknowledgment of their language and culture, and for the recognition of descendants of Moorosi in Chieftainship.

Invited to grace the event were the former Minister of foreign Affairs- Hon Mohlabi Tsekoa, the then Minister of Local Government and Chieftainship, Habofanoeh Lehana and the Chief of Quthing- Hlabathe Nkuebe and Chieftainship from Matatiele and Hershel from South Africa.

Other than the walk, the event was a mix of festivities entailing traditional performance by National University of Lesotho students and Mount Moorosi community traditional group and poetry by Moqalo primary school students. During the event, the family of the late Hon. Kabelo Mafura was honoured with a trophy in appreciation for his contribution and support for the event since the first edition.





‘MANTSEBO COW FESTIVAL WAS A PERFECT OCCASION FOR CULTURAL ENTHUSIASTS

In Africa, the significance of a cow amongst other animals has managed to withstand the colonization and dilution of culture among the African nations. This is because throughout the traditional and cultural history of Africa, the cow remains one of the most important animals - from being acknowledged as a symbol of strength and masculinity to a symbol of wealth, fertility, authority and many others. Lesotho being an African state is not an exception to this phenomena. In the Kingdom in the Sky, a cow has always been a valuable creature. It is used for various traditional rituals, ceremonies, as a tool for farming and it is also transformed to cash by way of sale to mention a few. It is therefore evident that a cow remains a cultural and economic asset for Basotho as well.

The Lesotho Culture and Traditional Sports Association (LCTSA), in recognition of the significance of a cow among Basotho organized a cow festival held at the out skirts of Maseru, Ha 'Mantsebo - Qeme. In the spirit of promoting community participation in tourism development as well as diversification of tourism products in the country, LTDC supported the event by way of sponsoring with branded blankets for the winners of the most-well-kept cattle, those that have been trained to do the

most beautiful stunts as well as the most well-dressed and adorned cattle.

Villagers from the Qeme area gathered in jubilation to marvel the elaborate and colorful adornments of the cows and enjoy the melodious sounds coming from the bells hung on their necks as they race and perform beautiful stunts at the show ground, being led by experienced herd boys and owners singing the folk songs. The race was such a fascinating event for the villagers and passers-by. The event was a mix of the cow race and traditional performances by members of Qeme community including the herd boys.

President of Association Thabang Maoela expressed his gratitude on behalf of the association and the Qeme community for the unwavering support they received from both LTDC and MTEC.

The Councillor of the area Mrs. Matelang Lethapa lauded the organizers for hosting the event and encouraged the herd boys from Qeme to establish a working group whereat they will be able to develop projects with a view to generate income and to keep themselves away from engaging in criminal activities.

LESOTHO TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS DIGITISATION EFFORTS TO MARK 2018 WORLD TOURISM DAY

The World Tourism Day (WTD) is celebrated every year on the 27th September since 1980. This date was chosen to coincide with an important milestone in world tourism: the anniversary of the adoption of the UNWTO Statutes on 27 September 1970.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the purpose of WTD is to raise awareness of the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political and economic value among the international community. The event seeks to address the challenges outlined in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and to highlight the contribution of tourism towards achieving the set goals. Against this context, every year the UNWTO General Assembly derives a theme to sensitise the people about how tourism can be used and harnessed to realise the said goal and to address some of the pressing challenges of today's society.

Providing opportunities for innovation and emphasis on the relevance and importance of technology in tourism development was the centre of the World Tourism Day in 2018, hence the day was celebrated with the theme "Tourism and digital transformation". This is because harnessing technological advances provides opportunities for efficient resource management, inclusiveness and community participation and empowerment, which are part of the sustainable tourism development agenda.

LTDC highlighted its efforts and achievements in digitisation to mark the 2018 World tourism Day. Thus a variety of activities planned to mark this important day in the world tourism calendar were hovered around innovation and technology. It all started with a ceremony that launched the month of September (Tourism month) at Maseru Bridge whereat the then acting Minister of Tourism, Environment and Culture Honourable Temeki Tsolo and other dignitaries distributed flyers to visitors who were coming in to visit this country on that specific day.



Hon Temeki Tsolo issuing flyers to travellers



Minister (Acting) Hon. Temeki Tsolo addressing stakeholders and the public



Hon. Minister, CEO, Government Officials and Stakeholders during the launch ceremony



Former PS MTEC, Mr Maraka giving remarks during the main celebration of WTD 2018



LTDC's CEO Mr Maqutu addressing guest during WTD 2018



MTEC Mokhibo Group entertaining guests

The purpose of the flyers was to bring it to the attention of all members of the travelling public that Lesotho has developed a tourism mobile app “LESOTHO GUIDER” which is loaded of all tourism related information as well as with information of essential services. This was simply to promote safety of tourists and to make tourism information accessible to everyone and everywhere as long as the concerned user can access a cell phone the signal. This initiative is just an add-on to the traditional means of disseminating tourism information to visitors.

On the 27th September, which was the peak of the tourism month celebrations, LTDC launched the LESOTHO GUIDER mobile app at a ceremony held at LTDC’s offices in Maseru. The app was presented to the guests with illustrations of how it works and a presentation of its main features and the type of information it is loaded with. In his opening remarks, the LTDC’s CEO said 2018 was indeed a transformative year as the industry enjoyed the fruits of digitisation and innovation. “The mobile app is already very instrumental in streamlining information dissemination as well as safety of tourists because they are now able to access tourism information from their pockets through the mobile app”, the CEO noted. “Our push for digitising our marketing campaigns with online social media platforms improved Lesotho’s visibility, although there is still much room for improvement”, he added. He concluded by saying that LTDC is hoping to see frequent usage of the mobile app as an add-on to the traditional modes of disseminating tourism information such as print media and over the counter enquiries.

This event witnessed the presence of the then acting Minister of tourism, Hon. Temeki Tsolo, the then Principal Secretary of the Ministry and Chairperson of the LTDC’s Board of Directors, members of the Board of Directors and other Senoir Government Officials. Also present at the occasion was the LMPS band and Bo’M’e ba Mokhibo from MTEC whose main role was to regale the audience and they did not disappoint.

Lesotho QUALStar Grading Process

Enrol on the Lesotho QUALStar Grading and enjoy the benefits. Plus the criteria is now localised to suit your business

STEP 01 Enquire

Accommodation operator makes an enquiry about getting graded. By email or telephone

STEP 02 Application

Quality Assurance Officer sends an application form and the invoice of the application fee. The fee varies according to the number of rooms and type of facility

STEP 03 Payment

The Accommodation Operator makes payment of Grading Assessment fee and sends proof to LTDC

STEP 04 Get Grading Assessor

Quality Assurance Officer will allocate the Grading Assessor to work with the operator.

STEP 05 Date of assessment

Grading Assessor communicates with the accommodation operator to set the suitable date for grading assessment

STEP 06 Assessment

The grading Assessor will visit your facility for assessment.

STEP 07 Reporting

The grading assessor submits the assessment report to the Quality Assurance Officer within 48 hours. The report includes digital scoresheet, pictures and a narrative write up

STEP 08 Recommendations

Quality Assurance Officer makes recommendations to the Grading Awards Committee.

STEP 09 Grading

Grading Awards Committee grades the facility based on the recommendations made

STEP 10 Awarding

Quality Star Grading Plaque and Certificate is awarded



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WHY YOU SHOULD TRAVEL LOCALLY

1 ITS AFFORDABLE

Cutting out the airfares will save you enough to spend more days away from the city life and breath fresh air outside of town, and there is nno exchange rate to contend with

2 MORE THAN ONE FOR THE SAME AMOUNT

The price of one bid international trip (that exposes you to the pressure of a "lifetime holiday" and may not quite live up to the expectation) can be cut into many holidays locally, spread throuth the year.

3 LOCAL IS FAMILIAR

No new language, no culture shock, same food experiences. You how exactly it works in Lesotho. The only difference is, you get totally new discoveries that adds to your description of home.

4 YOU BOOST THE LOCAL ECONOMY

By spending more of your money here in Lesotho, you are increasing the flow of revenue in this country and boosting local business. Choose to spend at smaller family/community owned businesses and help improve the lives of Basotho.

5 YOU HAVE FUN AND NEW PERSPECTIVE

You can take friends/family along and get more relaxed experience all around. Seeing Lesotho from the eyes of fellow citizens will always give you a fresh perspective.

6 NO JET LAG

If you have ever suffered the effects of crossing several time zones, then you will definately agree that local travel is a major plus

7 YOU DO NOT HAVE TO GO FAR, ITS LOCA!!

Taking a break in Lesotho as a local is as simple as three hours' travel with a car. You can do it over a weekend and save your leave days and avoid manoeuvring around children's holiday.

8 YOU DO NOT NEED A PASSPORT

A lot less planning needs needs to go into local travel - No visas (well except from family). No passport control points. in fact no one is interested in the validity of your passport.

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