

# 2017 sees a hike in SA's tourism trends

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On a global level, tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors, creating major opportunities for development and expansion.



It has become one of the key drivers for many economies and, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, helps to promote job creation, poverty alleviation, environmental protection and multicultural engagement. In light of these benefits, the UN has declared 2017 as “the year of sustainable tourism development”.

## How tourism impacts on the pillars of sustainability

The head of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, Talep Rifai, has said that the sector has showed an extraordinary resilience to numerous problems all over the world, and continued to retain vigour, create new jobs and contribute to the prosperity of all people over the world.

He has also encouraged collaboration between the private and public sector to sustain growth: “Work closer together to harness the contribution of tourism to economic growth, social inclusion, cultural and environmental preservation and mutual understanding, particularly when we live in times with such a deficit of respect and tolerance.”

## Boosting inbound tourism

South Africa saw more than five million people moving through its ports of entry during the 2016/2017 festive season (December – January). For Cape Town International Airport alone, a new record was set in 2016: 10 million passengers passed through its doors during the year. The tourism industry is likely to contribute significantly to the country's GDP in 2017; this after experiencing the biggest decline in six years in 2015 due to confusing changes to VISA and immigration policies.

Annual publication *Top Performing Companies and Public Sector* celebrates those who have not only managed to stay in the race, but achieve remarkable results and thrive, in a tough economy. The publication serves as an accredited information resource and directory that profiles the top performing companies and public sector organisations across South Africa's major industries, including tourism.

Showcasing its commitment to driving a robust tourism industry this year, First Group - a company that offers a wide variety of accommodation and conferencing options for both business and leisure travellers - has come on board as the Tourism Sector Sponsor for the publication's forthcoming 16th Edition. First Group's strategic formula is focused on a complete integration of customer-centricity with operational services. It prides itself on providing the highest levels of

service excellence to property developers, hotels, resorts, and self-catering properties, as the managing agent for over 45 properties locally and internationally. What with tourism looking to surge further for South Africa in the next year, First Group's 2,300 employees are likely to be very busy indeed.

*Top Performing Companies and Public Sector* will be released this May. To feature your company in this established business showcase, one of the following criteria needs to be met:

- Leading Performer - Annual turnover of R100 million+
- Rising Performer - Annual turnover of R35 – R100 million
- Fast Track Performer - Annual turnover of R5 to R35 million

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