

# Green Africa at Meetings Africa

Meetings Africa 2011, which runs 21-23 February 2011 at the Sandton Convention Centre, is encouraging the meetings, incentives, conference and events/exhibitions (MICE) industry to include greening as part of its mandate, as the show itself demonstrates. Supporting this trend is the newly opened Dinokeng Project in Gauteng.

The project is run by the Gauteng Department of Economic Development, a multiuse project committed to uplifting local communities in the area and promoting economic development through conservation.



## Green credits

The expo is setting the trend by being eco-audited by an independent sustainability consultancy, Icologie, bringing it in line with globally developed greening and sustainability standards. Through South African Tourism (SAT), it is purchasing renewable energy from GreenX Energy to power the show, which will make its electrical consumption virtually carbon-neutral.

"Sustainability in the tourism industry - particularly in terms of the eco-footprint that the industry places on the environment - is critically important in terms of ensuring that the very natural resources that create our wonderful destination are maintained for future generations," says Nomasonto Ndlovu, global manager for business tourism at SAT.

SA Tourism has announced Meetings Africa's alignment with Event Greening Forum (EGF), an organisation that promotes and embraces sustainable and ethical business principles within the events industry in South Africa, with an initial focus on MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conference, and Exhibitions). This partnership will assist with the development of MICE events in South Africa so they can compete at an international level of eco-friendly standards.

'Greening' offers social advantages to the local communities and, particularly for business tourism activities, cost benefits.

"Conferences, events and exhibitions can consume massive quantities of energy and produce equally massive quantities of waste. Auditing of Meetings Africa will not only suggest a more socially aware way forward but it will also give us pointers on how to reduce some of the costs," continues Ndlovu.

## Greening seminar

As part of the Greening programme for Meetings Africa 2011, there will be an educational session on the topic with the South African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI). Amongst the speakers at this session will be Joyce Di Marco from the Walkley Foundation in Australia. She will discuss how Australia put sustainability at the centre of its marketing for business events. Simon Gear, a climatologist known for presenting the weather on SABC news, will speak about climate change and its effects.



This move towards greening Meetings Africa comes at a significant time for South Africa, as the country prepares to host the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP17/CMP7) in Durban later this year.

## Dinokeng encourages community participation

The Dinokeng area, scheduled to become a complete conservation area, offers African bushveld, an array of conference and hotel venues, adventure activities, fine dining and a rich and diverse history.

Fana Jiyane, CEO Dinokeng Project, says, "The MICE industry is a significant and growing market and we see the benefit



for economic development and job growth in Dinokeng if we can take advantage of this industry."

Sustainable development is one of Dinokeng's core principles, offering delegates the opportunity to help paint a local school, plant a veggie patch or volunteer at a local children's home

"While you are in Dinokeng, you can participate in fun activities while also benefiting local communities and thereby supporting sustainable economic development," concludes Jiyane.

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