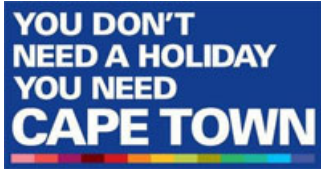


Cape Town Tourism, Wesgro represent at ITB 2013

As in previous years, Cape Town Tourism and Wesgro are representing the region's tourism industry at ITB. Staying relevant by keeping up with future trends is a key focus at this year's ITB tourism trade show in Berlin, set to draw some 170,000 visitors between 6 and 10 March 2013.



As part of ITB's strong focus on etravel, Cape Town Tourism, CEO, Mariette du Toit-Helmbold is presenting a talk titled How tourism boards work with social media, local citizens and travel bloggers to tell the story of a destination, on 9 March.

The talk follows a year in which Cape Town Tourism caught the attention of global tourism trend watchers through its #LoveCapeTown social media campaign. The campaign included an iambassador campaign that saw the DMO bringing respected international bloggers to Cape Town to experience the destination first hand. The key factor that differentiated the campaign is that Cape Town's Twitter community felt a swelling of pride about their town and engaged heavily with the visiting e-journos about what to do and see during their stay.

The #loveCapeTown programme has since been included in a white paper on travel blogging and used as an example internationally on how DMOs can work with travel bloggers. Plans are afoot to continue the #loveCapeTown campaign during 2013, together with South African Tourism and a group of international and local bloggers. Most importantly the tag is now part of the social media lingua franca when referring to Cape Town.

Co-partner of ITB's Responsible Tourism programme

In addition to the strong focus on social media and digital marketing, Cape Town Tourism is (together with Blue Yonder, India) a co-partner of ITB's Responsible Tourism programme and will feature as part of their CSR day programme on 7 March. Up for discussion will be the need for tourist interactions with local communities and problems surrounding water shortages and rising energy costs.

Councillor, Grant Pascoe, mayoral committee member for tourism, events and marketing at the City of Cape Town says, "The City of Cape Town is driving responsible tourism with the support of industry players like Cape Town Tourism. The aim is to move from pockets of excellence to a whole destination approach. This means the adaption of RT principles as a core way of doing business - not only by a selected group of responsible operators but by the entire tourism industry. The

Responsible Tourism Pilot Project is an example of how the responsible tourism principles have been adopted on wide scale by the industry."

Speaking on the broader objectives of their visit to ITB, Du Toit-Helmbold said: "Our key challenge in the industry is to stimulate jobs and investment by eliminating barriers to travel such as visa restrictions, taxation, and outmoded infrastructure systems. I am confident that these issues will be addressed at Europe's premier travel trade fair - ITB Berlin. It is the key place to learn about new trends, market developments, and to deepen existing business relations."

Travel & tourism accounts for 258 million jobs globally. At US\$6 trillion (9.1% of GDP) the sector is a key driver for investment and economic growth and at a global level. It is larger than the automotive industry at 8% GDP, and just smaller than banking at 11%.

For further information, go to www.capetown.travel.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>