

New online tool to promote local tourism

Roundbob.com, an online platform, has been formed to promote local tourism through online marketing.



David Gonahasa, Roundbob.com managing director, said while many Ugandans would be interested in touring their country, they lack information on key sites and regard tourism a preserve for the rich.

Today, there are 8.5 million internet users in Uganda, according to Uganda Communication Commission and more than half of those use social media.

"There is no question that online marketing is currently the leading way of getting domestic tourists and those from abroad," Gonahasa said.

In the 2013/14 financial year, tourism overtook coffee and diaspora remittances as the biggest foreign exchange earner, according to Bank of Uganda. With more marketing, a lot of money can be earned through the sector, analysts say. Gonahasa said tourism agencies in Europe, America and Asia are moving quickly ahead of their African counterparts.

"They are now marketing through social media such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook as a new channel to get clients quickly around the globe and also people intending to tour plan earlier by saving in installments," Gonahasa said.

The platform has an option for a "travel wallet", where users can put funds aside specifically for travel. A user will make deposits through the bank; direct debits, standing orders, counter deposits (currently available at Stanbic bank), mobile money, Visa, Payway and more, Gonahasa said.

"These funds can be used to pay for air tickets, hotels or packages on Roundbob.com and will soon be able to purchase travel from travel agents around Uganda."

Recently, Roundbob.com was named among the 30 most innovative startups in Africa.

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