



KRUGER LOWVELD
EHLAZENI
it's in our nature

30 September 2025

KLT Stakeholder Engagement Report

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1. Summary

The stakeholder engagement sessions were held in the month of September, Tourism Month, to get the conversation around the state of our tourism industry, and prized attractions started. Attendance was open to all who have a vested interest including stakeholders such as product owners, concerned community members and a few public sector officials. Kruger Lowveld Tourism staged these engagements in the towns of Sabie, White River, Hazyview, Malelane and Hoedspruit.

2. Introduction

Background

The engagements were conceptualised in response to the outcry that our provincial tourism body and custodian of our prized sites, is not fulfilling its mandate which is “Grow tourism and manage biodiversity to stimulate sustainable economic growth that is inclusive and creates decent employment.” The Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) have, in recent years been shrouded by controversy and unending instability. This has been to the detriment of our tourism industry and engagement in the form of countless meetings and the Tourism Legotla of 2022, have yielded very little result.

The stakeholder engagements are on the backend of a Media Tour, facilitated by Mr. Oupa Pilane on 15 July 2025. Two reports on the state of the sites along the Panorama Route were also penned by our Tourism Committee Member, Mrs. Lisa Sheard, and Mr. Pilane and widely distributed, bring to stark reality how unacceptable the sites are. A meeting with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT) MEC, Jesta Sidell, was held on 11 August 2025, where the MEC made undertakings, which included the reintroduction of the defunct multisectoral stakeholder forum, the Tourism Think Tank.

The engagements served as a means to collectively finding solutions, especially ones that can be tabled to the Tourism Think Tank by Kruger Lowveld Tourism, as a regional

representative of the sector. We have a mandate to drive change on the issues raised and to advocate on behalf of the industry on this platform.

3. Key issues raised

- Government incompetency as a custodian of the sites/attractions eg MTPA. Sites are an eyesore as they are in disrepair and below international standards. Maintenance is unsatisfactory and poses health and safety risks to visitors.
- MTPA is overstaffed with an exorbitant wage bill.
- CPA's should play a greater role in changing the narrative on how entities such as MTPA manage sites.
- A business model of concession or co-management of sites is required.
- South African Company Limited (SAFCOL) has a responsibility to develop their sites and ensure that access roads to the sites are satisfactory. A prime example is Lone Creek.
- Pilgrims Rest cannot be left to wither away and needs product development and the eradication of the illegal miners.
- Marketing efforts are uncoordinated and do not speak to our key source and niche markets. There is the stark absence of familiarization trips for the trade which is the best way to showcase our offerings. This is a low hanging fruit that we constantly fail to capitalize on. A concise targeted marketing strategy is required to ensure that Mpumalanga is a formidable contender on a global scale.
- Mpumalanga needs to be actively marketed as a film destination.
- Lack of communication or engagement by the MTPA with the private sector. Marketing activities or opportunities are often communicated to the industry at the last minute.
- Instability within the MTPA. The previous MEC advised that the forensic report was concluded and recommendations made for further steps in the report. The inaction on this pertinent issue raises serious concerns and inspires no confidence in the entity to get its house in order.
- Lack of tourism investment and development in the region. What strides are taken by DEDT to attract investment into the sector?
- Dilapidated and insufficient signage along our tourism routes.
- Missed employment opportunities for communities living along the periphery of tourism attractions in the form of sites guides.
- The Panorama Route cannot be revitalized without the involvement of the private sector and communities.
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4. Next Steps for Kruger Lowveld Tourism

Follow-up on commitments made by the MEC to form the multi-stakeholder Tourism Think Tank and to consult regularly with our constituents with regard to tourism marketing, tourism development and transformation and tourism safety.

8. Conclusion

The stakeholder engagement sessions fulfilled the objective of talking to the industry and getting the mandate to 'fight the good fight' and not let our tourism rich industry die. All our livelihoods depend on it.