

Wesgro, Satsa partner to showcase that the Western Cape is travel ready

Satsa and Wesgro, the Western Cape Tourism, Trade and Investment Promotion Agency, recently joined forces to coordinate the Overberg and Garden Route Mega Fam which took place from 20-25 October.



Image Supplied/ Knysna - Garden Route, South Africa

The event saw 32 tour operators and DMCs (destination marketing companies) from around the country participate in what was likely the year's first in-person familiarisation trip, and the largest tour group travelling in South Africa since April.

Tim Harris, CEO of Wesgro says of the event: "The Garden Route is a region with an abundance of nature, a delightful climate and spectacular scenic attractions set amidst wide-open spaces. This follows the inaugural Garden Route Mega Fam in 2018 and last year's initiative, which was hailed a ground-breaking and resounding success. With the new addition of the Cape Overberg region, this year was packed with some of the best experiences that our world-class province has to offer."

"Wesgro welcomes the continued collaboration and strong public-private partnership with Satsa that has brought together this amazing group of tourism stakeholders from all along the value chain," says Harris. "Together with Satsa, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the over 90 Overberg and Garden Route suppliers for their generosity and warm hospitality during what we know is a difficult time for many."

The power of collaboration

The collaboration was a prevalent thread throughout the event. Suppliers came together in the mutual aim of sharing not only their own products but the compelling value proposition of each region—from Elgin to Hermanus, and the Garden Route stretching from Mossel Bay to Tsitsikamma and up to Oudtshoorn.

"What really stood out was the strong sense of community within these regions. The organisers of each of the five unique itineraries are active in their local tourism bodies, as well as Satsa, and their passion was palpable," says Peter Dros, Satsa Garden Route chapter chair.

"The participants could not have received a more authentic glimpse into these places and the feedback has been outstanding."

"Since the pandemic hit South Africa, Satsa has been dedicated to sustaining interest and market access to tourism products," says Hannelie du Toit, COO of Satsa.

"So, under the tighter constraints of Covid-19, we reimagined the familiarisation structure to be run virtually with a focus on authentic engagement and crisp content. We have run five virtual fams with great success and have two more in the pipeline—all focussing on different regions and providing a platform of accessibility and inclusivity."

"While SATSA has managed to pivot like so many in the tourism industry, the Overberg and Garden Route Mega Fam is a return to some form of normalcy, with an enthusiastic group of individuals once again experiencing the many tourism offerings in-person."

"It will go down as the fam of our lifetime because not only was it superbly executed, but it has provided much-needed hope for both trade and suppliers and a much deeper sense of the need to work together," concludes du Toit.



Government revises list of high-risk countries

20 Oct 2020



This event also serves as a crucial test of the robust set of Covid-19 protocols for tourism industry operations that have been drawn up by the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) and implemented across the country—please visit <https://travelsafeeatsafe.co.za/> for more information. Adherence to these health and hygiene protocols and the safe running of this event are further proof that South Africa is travel ready.

TBCSA and Satsa are calling for the government to scrap the list of high-risk countries that are restricted from entering South Africa for leisure purposes. These associations, which have a direct line to what is happening on the ground, contend that the Covid-19 protocols and the requirement of a negative Covid-19 PCR test result before arrival should allow for travel to be opened safely to all source markets without delay.

In the meantime, initiatives and partnerships such as the Overberg and Garden Route Mega Fam serve as a testament to the South African tourism industry's ability to adapt, persevere and collaborate in times of Covid-19 and beyond.

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