

# SA's top emerging tourism entrepreneurs named

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DURBAN: South Africa's top emerging tourism entrepreneurs have been selected for the 2013 Emerging Tourism Entrepreneur of the Year Awards (ETEYA) competition.



The South African Tourism and the Tourism Enterprise Partnership (TEP) made the announcement on Saturday, 11 May 2013, at the start of a four-day Tourism Indaba held in Durban.

The regional finalists are Kuhle Travel and Tours (KwaZulu-Natal), Bonang Conference Centre (North West), Citi Hopper (Western Cape), Dan's Country Lodge and Events Centre (Eastern Cape), Jo's Guest House and Hantamkraal Restaurant (Northern Cape), Makgabeng Farm Lodge (Limpopo), Ntwanano Tours & Travel (Mpumalanga), Rethabise Premium Guest Lodge (Free State) and Ubuhle Be Narha Tours (Gauteng).

"We are greatly impressed by the quality of this year's applications and would like to congratulate the nine regional finalists. Their businesses embody the vision and mission of what ETEYA entails and assists us with the goal of greater transformation of the tourism industry. The selection process was tough, as the standard of all regional finalists was very impressive and of a very high quality," said Thulani Nzima, chief executive officer of South African Tourism.

They were chosen from 27 (three per province) provincial finalists announced last month. They represent various tourism businesses that proved to the panel of judges that they significantly contributed to economic empowerment, offer a product or service which is innovative and have a sound business plan to ensure continued growth and opportunity for expansion.

ETEYA is a nationwide tourism industry competition which recognises and honours South Africa's best, most promising and most innovative emerging tourism business owners.

SA Tourism and its ETEYA partner, TEP, heartily congratulated the national finalists from each province.

As part of the ETEYA programme, the nine national finalists will each be assigned a mentor to work with them to implement

their business plans as presented at the SME workshop that was held on Saturday at the Tourism Indaba.

Each finalist will also be awarded a R10,000 grant to go towards the development of the business plan they worked on earlier in the competition. The business plan will take into account all of the elements covered during the months with the mentor and the feasibility of implementing the plan in an actual business environment.

The overall ETEYA winner, who will be announced at a national Tourism Awards ceremony in September, will receive an additional R100,000 cash grant to help grow their business. They will also get access to mentoring and invaluable marketing help and business direction from leading industry experts.

"When one considers the valuable contribution tourism makes to communities and the economy, you realise that ETEYA is not just another competition. It is a programme and platform meant to unearth and showcase the products and services we have and the emerging tourism entrepreneurs who work tirelessly to deliver excellence, authenticity and diversity to our visitors," said Nzima.

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