



Municipality of Walvis Bay



2022 Walvis Bay Tourism **Forum Report**

Department of Economic
Development

INVITATION



Invitation

TOURISM FORUM MEETING

**OPEN TO ALL IN THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM
INDUSTRY IN WALVIS BAY**

Theme- Destination Walvis Bay: Building a resilient Brand for Walvis Bay.

19 October 2022 | 08h30 - 12h30
Atlantic Hotel, Sam Nujoma Avenue

Registration & RSVP at tourism@walvisbaycc.org.na before 14 October 2022.
Queries: 064 201 3357 / 064 201 3367

 **Municipality of Walvis Bay**

PROGRAM

Date: Wednesday, 19 October 2022 <i>Time: 08H30-12H15</i> Venue: Atlantic Hotel, Walvis Bay	
Programme facilitator Mr Kenneth Nependa, Vice Chairperson, FENATA and Ms Gwenn LaViolette, U.S. Peace Corps Response Volunteer	
08H30	Arrival and Registration
08H50	Welcoming Remarks His Worship Cllr Trevino Forbes, Mayor of Walvis Bay
08H55	The status of tourism in Namibia Ministry of Environment Tourism and Forestry
08H55-09H05	Explanation of procedures for remainder of the program by the Facilitator**
09H05-09H10	Topic 1: Applying lessons learned during the pandemic for tourism in Walvis Bay - Mr Kenneth Nependa
09H10-09H30	Discussion of strategies addressing Topic 1 in small groups
09H30-09H40	Spokesperson from each group reports top 3 ideas
09H40-09H45	Questions and comments about proposed strategies for Topic 1
09H45-09H50	Topic 2: Establishing a resilient brand for Walvis Bay - Ms Constance Lyners Mendes <i>Independent Business Consultant</i>
09H50-10H10	Discussion of strategies addressing Topic 2 in small groups
10H10-10H20	Spokesperson from each group reports top 3 ideas
10H20-10H25	Questions and comments about proposed strategies for Topic 2
10H25-10H35	Break
10H35-10H40	Topic 3: Establishing a functional tourism advisory board - Mr Carlo van der Merwe, <i>Current Chairperson, Walvis Bay Tourism Forum & Mrs Gwenn LaViolette, U.S. Peace Corps Response Volunteer</i>
10H40-11H00	Discussion of strategies addressing Topic 3 in small groups
11H00-11H10	Spokesperson from each group reports top 3 ideas
11H10-11H15	Questions and comments about proposed strategies for Topic 3
11H15-11H40	Vote on strategies and Tea Break
11H40-11H50	Report on topic discussion findings
11H50-12H00	Set date for next gathering
12H00	Vote of thanks; Mr Agostinho Victor, General Manager: Community and Economic Development
12H10	Meeting adjourned
Forum Procedure: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Facilitator introduces a topic with pertinent facts and issues. 2) Breakout discussions in small groups (consisting of individuals from different sectors; no more than 10-12 people each) who propose strategies for action. 3) Each group selects a spokesperson and reports top 3 ideas. 4) Ideas are written and displayed on wall for all to see and consider. 5) Participants vote using color-coded dots for their top three choices per topic by placing dots next to strategy proposal written on wall. 6) A report of results will be written and serve as a platform for stakeholders and government to work together to address the issues. 	

EXCERPTS OF THE OPENING REMARKS BY THE MAYOR OF WALVIS BAY, CLLR TREVINO FOR BE SAT THE OCCASION OF THE WALVIS BAY TOURISM FORUM

We have all head of the saying “Tourism is Everybody’s Business”, well in Walvis Bay, tourism is literally everybody’s business because it is one of the largest contributors of employment in our town. We must therefore guard and treat it like the precious, rough diamond that it is. To make a meaningful contribution, tourism requires all of us to work together and collaborate in transforming Walvis Bay into the number one destination in Namibia and the most renowned in Southern Africa. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to call upon each of us to join hands in coming up with meaningful contributions and strategies on how we are going to turn Walvis Bay into a world class tourism destination...

Walvis Bay has indirectly and undesirably established itself as a single day site-seeing or single day activity town. This is one of the identities the Walvis Bay Tourism Forum needs to work toward changing. It will not change next year or in the next two years, but we need to make a concerted effort at promoting destination Walvis Bay and Building a Resilient Brand for Walvis Bay. This requires us to come up with good marketing strategies for our town, to agree on incentives that we will use to entice aspiring visitors and to augment the current tourism products to ensure that visitors have an unforgettable experience. We want visitors to Walvis Bay to feel inclined to come back and refer friends and families.

BACKGROUND TO THE FORUM

The Municipality of Walvis Bay's Department of Economic Development hosted the Walvis Bay Tourism Forum in February 2020 with wide-spread participation from community stakeholders. Given that the larger forum could only meet on an annual basis, efforts were made to create a Tourism Advisory Steering Committee from this initiative. The committee would serve in an advisory capacity to the Municipality and as a link between local government and tourism-related businesses. A number of individuals were then elected to serve on this committee and tasked with creating a framework for themselves.

Unfortunately, due to a variety of obstacles including the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the steering committee found it difficult to meet and was unable to develop a framework to govern its existence. Several members then requested the committee be disbanded. The larger forum was also unable to meet during the COVID pandemic but the desire for maintaining a link between the wider tourism community and the local government remained strong.



19 OCTOBER 2022 WALVIS BAY TOURISM FORUM



With the fading of the danger from the pandemic, the Walvis Bay Department of Economic Development revived the Tourism Forum. On 19 October 2022, 54 members of the community, government officials, and media attended at the Atlantic Hotel in Walvis Bay. While the forum began with a traditional welcome from the town's Mayor, Cllr Trevino Forbes (see excerpts of his speech on previous page), the remainder of the forum's program consisted of an interactive format wherein a presenter introduced a topic for discussion. Topics were selected at the behest of the larger tourism community who had expressed a desire to see

these issues addressed.

Topics were as follows:

- 1. Applying lessons learned during the pandemic to Walvis Bay tourism;**
- 2. Establishing a resilient brand for Walvis Bay.**
- 3. Establishing a functional tourism advisory board.**



The first topic was selected as a natural consequence of the experiences acquired during the two years of pandemic conditions the industry endured. It was thought that sharing stories and strategies would be helpful for dealing with future times of crisis. The second topic aligns with the desire to make Walvis Bay more than a one stop, one activity town and develop a campaign aimed at establishing Walvis Bay as the countries number one tourist destination. The branding of the town in a manner that transcends its current image was thought to be important to making Walvis Bay the number one tourist destination in Namibia. The third topic was chosen so as to capture stakeholder input regarding the development of a framework governing the tourism advisory board. The larger assembly was then divided into six different groups of

stakeholders who proposed strategies to address the issues raised by each topic. A spokesperson from each group then presented the findings from their discussions to the entire assembly. A record of these strategies was made on flip chart paper and posted for all to see. Once all three topics were discussed, the stakeholders used coloured dots to vote on the three strategies per topic which they favoured. The results of the vote are indicated below:

TOP RATED STRATEGY PROPOSALS

Topic 1-- Applying lessons learned during the pandemic to Walvis Bay tourism

- Build up cash reserves/contingency funds for unexpected occurrences
- Encourage domestic tourism
- Develop partnerships among tourism-related businesses that will enable cooperation during crises
- Establish a one-stop tourism center

Topic 2-- Establishing a resilient brand for Walvis Bay

- Establish a Tourism Information Centre
- Refresh and install signage/billboards advertising Walvis Bay from the airport into town; within the town install signage touting RAMSAR status of lagoon area; create and install informational signage for flora and fauna of area along the waterfront; rebrand and market town's attractions at entry and exit points
- NTB & HAN should inspect service delivery and inspect to assure that products advertised are provided. NTB should conduct surveys of tourism businesses
- Assure the safety and security of visiting tourists
- Create a database for all local establishments

Topic 3-- Establishing a functional tourism advisory board

- Advisory board members should be experts in their field
- The ideal number of advisory board members should be 9 and members should be nominated for the position
- Selected members should possess good leadership skills and have a passion for tourism
- There should be a means of communication between the board and the Council-- either via a representative like a tourism officer who reports back to the council or a sitting councillor.

CONCLUSION

With the conclusion of the WB Tourism Forum, the Walvis Bay Department of Economic Development met its objective of conducting an exercise in working together—stakeholders and government officials alike—to identify tourism-related issues, strategize ways to solve them and prioritize solutions. The experience also provided a format for future exchanges.

Furthermore, the municipality is committed to creating a framework for the Tourism Advisory Board taking into consideration the input provided by stakeholders during the recent forum. The municipality aims to put that framework into place and establish a functioning board at the next Tourism Forum which it anticipates hosting in late February or early March 2023.

