Greater Tzaneen Municipality

Tourism Strategy

Final Tourism Strategy



URBAN-ECON
DEVELOPMENT ECONOMISTS

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction 1
1.1. Project Context 1
1.2. Purpose 1
1.3. Scope of Work 1
1.4. Stakeholder Engagement 2
1.5. Document Layout 2
2. Strategic Context 4
2.1. National Policies and Legislation 4
2.2. Provincial Policies and Legislation 6
2.3. District and Local Policies and Legislation 9
3. Environmental Scan 12
3.1. Spatial Overview 12
3.2. Transport and Movement Networks 14
3.3. Spatial Development Nodes 15
3.4. Environmental Features 18
3.5. Socio-Economic Profile 20
4. Tourism Status Quo 23
4.1. Tourism Demand 23
4.2. Tourism Supply 35
4.3. Tourism Opportunities and Challenges 42
4.4. Value Proposition of Tourism for Greater Tzaneen 45
5. Strategic Direction 47
5.1. Destination Accessibility 52
5.2. Destination Management 56
5.3. Product Development 60
5.4. Marketing 64
5.5. Transformation 68
6. Marketing Mix for Greater Tzaneen 71
6.1. Components of the Marketing Mix 71
6.2. Strategies for an Effective Marketing Mix 72
6.2.1. Product and Experience Development 72
6.2.2. Price Optimisation 73

6.2.3. Place and Distribution 73
6.3. Marketing Mix Implementation Strategies 74
6.4. Challenges and Key Considerations 75
6.5. Building a Brand for Greater Tzaneen 76
6.6. Brand Positioning 78
7. Institutional Arrangements 80
7.1. Identified Institutional Limitations 80
7.2. Key Partnership Network 82
7.3. Recommended Actions 86
8. Implementation Plan 87
8.1. Priority Level (timeframe) 87
8.2. Key Consideration for Implementation 87
8.3. Actions for Implementation 89
9. Financial Assessment and Funding Strategy 123
9.1. Potential Funding Sources 123
9.2. Budget Requirements 125
9.3. Budget Projections 126
10. Concluding Remarks 130
11. References 131

List of Figures

Figure 1: National policies 4
Figure 2: Provincial policies 7
Figure 3: District policies 9
Figure 4: Greater Tzaneen socio-economic profile 21
Figure 5: National tourism performance overview, 2023 24
Figure 6: Total visitor numbers; South Africa 25
Figure 7: Provincial tourism overview, 2024 27
Figure 8: Number of bed nights vs formal paid bed nights in Limpopo, 2020-2024 28
Figure 9: International tourist spends in Limpopo, 2020-2024 29
Figure 10: International purpose of visit to Limpopo, 2023 29
Figure 11: Number of domestic bed nights in Limpopo, 2024 30
Figure 12: Domestic tourist spend in Limpopo, 2020-2024 31
Figure 13: Purpose of visit for domestic tourists in Limpopo, 2024 31
Figure 14: Accommodation landscape in GTM 37
Figure 15: Six Pillars of tourism development 45
Figure 16: Strategic direction building blocks 49
Figure 17: Foundational components of the tourism sector 50
Figure 18: The loyalty continuum 76
Figure 19: Partnership network prioritisation matrix 82

List of Maps

Map 1: GTM's geographical outlook 12
Map 2: GTM's regional accessibility 14
Map 3: Spatial development areas in GTM 16
Map 4: Protected biodiversity, water and agricultural resources of GTM 19

List of Tables

Table 1-1: Document layout 2
Table 2-1: National policies 4
Table 2-2: Provincial policies 7
Table 2-3: District policies 10
Table 3-1: Summary of GTM's spatial status 12
Table 4-1: Attractions in Greater Tzaneen 38
Table 4-2: Tour guiding and travel agent services within GTM 40
Table 4-3: Transport services in GTM 41
Table 4-4: Potential economic opportunities related to Tourism 42
Table 4-5: Key challenges Identified for regional tourism 44
Table 4-6: Key stakeholder Initiatives for consideration 44
Table 5-1: Strategic objectives of the tourism strategy 48

Table 5-2: Key considerations and interventions - destination accessibility 54
Table 5-3: Key considerations and interventions - destination management 58
Table 5-4: Key considerations and interventions - product development 62
Table 5-5: Key considerations and interventions - marketing 66
Table 5-6: Key considerations and interventions - transformation 70
Table 6-1: Marketing mix implementation strategies 74
Table 7-1: Partnership network 83
Table 8-1: Implementation priority description table 87
Table 8-2: Action plan for destination accessibility 89
Table 8-3: Action plan for destination management 95
Table 8-4: Action plan for product development 101
Table 8-5: Action plan for marketing 106
Table 8-6: Action plan for transformation 114
Table 9-1: Funding options for GTM 123
Table 9-2: Municipal budget overview 125
Table 9-3: Grant funding sources for GTM 125
Table 9-4: Tourism infrastructure budget 125
Table 9-5: Operational (OPEX) planning for GTM 126
Table 9-6: Financial projections for GMT 128

List of Abbreviations

BBBEE	Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment
CATHSSETA	Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority
CBT	Community Based Tourism
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 19
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DDM	District Development Model
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
DMC	Destination Management Committee
GTM	Greater Tzaneen Municipality
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IUDF	Integrated Urban Development Framework
JVs	Joint Ventures
K2C	Kruger to Canyons Biosphere
KNP	Kruger National Park
LDP	Limpopo Development Plan
LDP	Limpopo Development Plan
LED	Local Economic Development
LGEP	Limpopo Green Economy Plan
LTO	Local Tourism Organisation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEA	Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability

MICE	Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NEF	National Empowerment Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSDF	National Spatial Development Framework
NTSS	National Tourism Sector Strategy
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
PSDF	Limpopo Provincial Spatial Development Framework
ROI	Return of Investment
SAIAE	Biennial Symposium of the South African Institute of Agricultural Engineers
SANRAL	South African National Roads Agency Limited
SDF	Spatial Development Framework
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SEFA	Small Enterprise Finance Agency
SEO	Search Engine Optimisation
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives

1. Introduction

Urban-Econ Development Economists were appointed by the **Greater Tzaneen Municipality** to develop a Tourism Strategy, which will guide the development and investment in the local tourism sector.

1.1. Project Context

The Greater Tzaneen Municipality (GTM) has recognised the need to strengthen and grow its tourism sector as part of broader local economic development goals. The municipality is rich in cultural heritage, natural landscapes, and historical assets, all of which provide opportunities to attract visitors and investment. Developing a structured approach to tourism will allow GTM to better coordinate resources, enhance infrastructure, and unlock new opportunities for product development and market growth. The context for this project reflects both the potential of tourism to contribute to economic and social development and the need for a clear path to guide sustainable growth.

1.2. Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide GTM with a clear and actionable plan for the sustainable development of its tourism sector. The strategy will describe specific measures to increase tourism's contribution to the local economy and to improve service delivery and visitor experiences. It will also identify ways to strengthen partnerships between government, local communities and the private sector. The strategy will promote responsible tourism practices that support long-term social and environmental sustainability.

1.3. Scope of Work

The scope of work outlines the key activities required to develop a comprehensive Tourism Strategy that will guide sustainable tourism development and position Greater Tzaneen as a competitive destination:

- **Situational Analysis:** Assess existing tourism assets, facilities, services, and demand-supply trends to identify gaps and opportunities.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Conduct consultations and workshops with government, communities, tourism operators, and investors to capture insights and secure collaboration.
- **Strategic Framework:** Define a clear vision, mission, objectives, and strategies focused on marketing, infrastructure, sustainability, and product development.
- **Implementation Plan:** Develop a practical action plan with timelines, responsible entities, budget estimates, and monitoring tools.
- **Marketing and Promotion:** Design a branding and marketing strategy to position Greater Tzaneen as a competitive destination and reach target markets.
- **Sustainability Integration:** Recommend eco-friendly practices and ensure alignment with environmental and regulatory requirements.
- **Funding and Financial Strategy:** Identify potential funding sources and outline financial requirements for successful implementation.

- **Final Deliverable:** Formulate and present the Tourism Strategy, including findings, frameworks, and an action plan, to municipal officials and stakeholders.

1.4. Stakeholder Engagement

The success of this tourism strategy depends on effective coordination and collaboration among all stakeholders. By working together and using resources efficiently, the implementation of programmes and projects can be optimised by generating the greatest benefits for infrastructure development and socio-economic growth. Stakeholder engagements aim to strengthen existing linkages and create new opportunities for cooperation between all role players operating within the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. The key insights gathered from stakeholders during the consultation process inform the strategic direction of the tourism strategy for GTM. The purpose of the engagement process was to gain clear understanding of the tourism landscape in the municipality, including how tourism is managed, the current limitations affecting growth, and recommendations for improvement to support and enhance tourism in the region.

1.5. Document Layout

The table below breaks down the sections included in this report and elaborates on the contents of each section.

Table 1-1: Document layout

Section	Description
1	**Introduction:** Provides an overview of the report, outlining the purpose of the study, the key objectives, deliverables, and the structure of the report.
2	**Strategic Context:** Reviews relevant national, provincial, and local policies to ensure the study aligns with the applicable regulatory frameworks.
3	**Environmental Scan:** Analyses the socio-economic landscape of the area, including a spatial assessment of Greater Tzaneen to understand its current context.
4	**Tourism Status Quo:** Evaluates the current state of tourism at national, provincial, and local levels to offer insights into the tourism performance of GTM.
5	**Strategic Direction:** This section introduces the various development areas where strategic intervention is needed. It also unpacks the key components to consider for each area.
6	**Marketing Mix for Greater Tzaneen:** This section outlines the need for a coordinated and targeted marketing and branding approach to position Greater Tzaneen as a competitive destination, increase awareness, stimulate visitor demand, and support sustainable tourism growth aligned with the area's unique characteristics.
7	**Institutional Arrangements:**

Section	Description
	This section outlines the institutional arrangements for tourism in Greater Tzaneen, highlighting coordination, budgeting, and implementation challenges and the partnerships needed to improve strategy delivery.
8	**Implementation Plan:** The implementation plan outlines priority actions to guide tourism development in Greater Tzaneen over the next ten years, with responsibilities clearly assigned to relevant stakeholders to ensure coordinated, effective, and sustainable delivery of the Tourism Strategy.
9	**Financial Assessment and Funding Strategy:** This section provides an overview of potential funding sources as well as the outline of the budget requirements and financial projections.
10	**Concluding Remarks:** This section summarises the key findings and insights presented throughout the report.

2. Strategic Context

This section outlines the key national, provincial, and local legislation, policies, and strategies relevant to economic development and tourism. These frameworks provide the foundation for responsible and sustainable tourism, with objectives aimed at not only growing the tourism sector but also supporting broader economic development and improving the quality of life for communities involved. It is therefore essential that tourism focused sector plans are aligned with these policies to ensure their effective implementation.

2.1. National Policies and Legislation

The National policy review is a comprehensive evaluation process aimed at assessing the effectiveness, relevance, and impact of existing policies, to ensure they align with current societal needs, challenges, and strategic priorities (refer to the figure and table below).

Figure 1: National policies



Table 2-1: National policies

Policy	Purpose	Key Objectives	Alignment with GTM
Tourism Sector Masterplan	The Tourism Sector Masterplan aims to unite government, industry, and labour to ensure the growth, inclusivity, and sustainability of the tourism sector. It emphasises job creation, global competitiveness,	➢ Enhance economic growth and job creation; ➢ Promote inclusive participation; ➢ Strengthen global competitiveness; ➢ Foster sustainable tourism;	The Masterplan supports GTM by encouraging local job creation, fostering youth and women participation, and enhancing destination competitiveness. Its focus on sustainability and

Policy	Purpose	Key Objectives	Alignment with GTM
	digital innovation, and the development of a skilled workforce. (Tourism D. o., Tourism Sector Masterplan, 2023).	➢ Encourage innovation and digitalisation; and ➢ Develop a skilled workforce.	innovation aligns directly with GTM's goal of positioning itself as a premier, future-ready destination.
National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2003	This Act provides a framework for conserving ecologically viable areas through sustainable use, formal registers of protected areas, and community involvement in their management. (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2003)	➢ Sustainable use of protected areas; ➢ National register of protected areas; ➢ Community participation in management.	The Act reinforces GTM's eco-tourism ambitions by protecting its natural attractions, such as reserves and scenic landscapes. It also promotes community participation in conservation, ensuring sustainable infrastructure development and strengthening GTM's reputation as a responsible destination.
National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS), 2016-2026	The NTSS guides national tourism development through effective marketing, improved accessibility, enhanced visitor experiences, and broad-based socio-economic benefits. (Tourism D. o., National Tourism Sector Strategy, 2016)	➢ Effective marketing; ➢ Facilitate ease of access; ➢ Enhance visitor experience; ➢ Destination management; and ➢ Broad-based benefits.	This strategy strengthens GTM's efforts to promote itself as a leading destination, improve infrastructure, and create memorable visitor experiences. By focusing on inclusive growth, it ensures that tourism benefits reach local communities, consistent with GTM's sustainable development objectives.
Rural Tourism Strategy, 2012	The Rural Tourism Strategy seeks to stimulate rural economies by leveraging local resources, skills, and heritage while encouraging partnerships between government, the private sector, and communities. (Tourism D. o., National Rural Tourism Strategy, 2012)	➢ Use of local resources and skills; ➢ Preserve cultural heritage; ➢ Improve infrastructure and capacity; and ➢ Partnerships between government, private sector, and communities.	For GTM, this strategy encourages development in rural areas, promotes cultural tourism, and improves livelihoods through sustainable tourism. It directly supports GTM's goal of spreading tourism benefits beyond urban centres, enhancing inclusivity and

Policy	Purpose	Key Objectives	Alignment with GTM
			infrastructure across its rural communities.
National Heritage and Cultural Strategy, 2012	This strategy focuses on integrating heritage and culture into the mainstream tourism offering, reducing fragmentation through coordinated management and planning. (Tourism D. o., National Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy, 2012)	➢ Integration of heritage into mainstream tourism; and ➢ Coordination to reduce fragmentation.	The strategy enables GTM to highlight and preserve its rich cultural heritage while promoting it as a unique tourism attraction. This strengthens GTM's identity as a destination that combines cultural authenticity with sustainable tourism growth.
National Responsible Tourism Development Guidelines, 2022	These guidelines encourage balanced, sustainable tourism practices that recognise the importance of social, cultural, and natural environments, while promoting collaboration with local communities. (Tourism D. o., National Responsible Tourism Guidelines, 2022)	➢ Recognise cultural tourism benefits; ➢ Dependence on social, cultural, and natural environment; and ➢ Strengthen community-reserve collaboration.	By embedding responsible tourism practices, these guidelines help GTM ensure environmental sustainability and equitable community benefits. They provide a strong foundation for GTM's ambition to be known as a sustainable, premier tourism destination.
National Development Plan (NDP) 2030	The NDP outlines South Africa's long-term development vision, focusing on poverty reduction, economic growth, skills development, improved infrastructure, and social equity. (National Planning Commission, 2012)	➢ Unite citizens around development; ➢ Raise economic growth and labour absorption; ➢ Focus on skills, infrastructure, institutions; ➢ Build a capable state, and ➢ Ensure decent living standards.	Within GTM, the NDP supports the use of tourism as a driver of socio-economic development. By creating jobs, building skills, and addressing inequality, tourism development aligns with the NDP's vision and reinforces GTM's strategic goal of inclusive and sustainable growth.

2.2. Provincial Policies and Legislation

A provincial policy review is a systematic evaluation of regional policies to assess their effectiveness, address local needs, and ensure they align with both provincial priorities and broader national objectives (refer to the figure and table below).

Figure 2: Provincial policies



Table 2-2: Provincial policies

Policy	Purpose	Key Objectives	Alignment with GTM
Limpopo Tourism Act, 2018	This Act provides governance and administration for the tourism sector, with a focus on strengthening organisational efficiency, human resource development, product innovation, and investment promotion. (Limpopo Provincial Legislature, 2018)	➢ Promote growth and development of tourism; ➢ Promote responsible tourism; ➢ Enhance cooperation between government spheres. ➢ Market Limpopo effectively; and ➢ Establish a provincial tourism agency.	The Act enhances institutional support for GTM's tourism projects, fosters public-private partnerships, and encourages product development in Mopani and Greater Tzaneen by strengthening its tourism offering.
Limpopo Tourism Agency Act, 2009	This Act provides governance and administration for the tourism sector, with a focus on strengthening organisational efficiency, human resource development, product innovation, and investment promotion. (Limpopo Provincial Legislature, 2009)	➢ Strengthen organisational and financial efficiency; ➢ Support HR development; ➢ Drive product development, partnerships, and investment; and ➢ Deliver quality hospitality services.	The Act enhances institutional support for GTM's tourism projects, fosters public-private partnerships, and encourages product development in Mopani and Greater Tzaneen, strengthening its tourism offering.

Policy	Purpose	Key Objectives	Alignment with GTM
Limpopo Development Plan (LDP), 2020-2025	The LDP is the province's medium-term strategy aligned with the NDP 2030, focusing on inclusive growth, rural development, job creation, and quality of life improvements. (Limpopo Provincial Government, 2020)	➢ Sustainable development; ➢ Create jobs and livelihoods; ➢ Improve quality of life; ➢ Support rural development; and ➢ Strengthen governance efficiency.	The LDP supports GTM's goals by framing tourism as a driver of rural development and job creation, while ensuring sustainable growth and alignment with national policy priorities.
Limpopo Provincial Spatial Development Framework (PSDF), 2018	The PSDF provides spatial guidance for sustainable land use, infrastructure investment, biodiversity protection, and the integration of rural and urban spaces across the province. (Limpopo Provincial Government, 2018)	➢ Promote sustainable development; ➢ Integrate rural and urban spaces; ➢ Guide infrastructure development; ➢ Protect environment and biodiversity; and ➢ Promote equitable development.	This framework identifies tourism growth zones and helps balance conservation with infrastructure development. It enables GTM to better integrate its rural attractions with urban infrastructure, supporting a cohesive visitor experience.
Limpopo Strategic Plan, 2020-20025	The Strategic Plan outlines provincial government priorities, including economic transformation, infrastructure, skills development, healthcare, and governance. (Limpopo Provincial Government, 2020)	➢ Economic transformation and jobs; ➢ Skills development; ➢ Healthcare and social protection; ➢ Infrastructure development; and ➢ Sustainability and governance.	For GTM, this plan offers a roadmap to align tourism development with provincial priorities, ensuring that tourism contributes to economic transformation, social development, and local skills training.
Limpopo Green Economy Plan (LGEP), 2012	The Green Economy Plan promotes sustainable and resource-efficient development, emphasising green jobs, climate resilience, and sustainable resource use in forests, rivers, and agricultural landscapes. It strengthens GTM's positioning as an environmentally responsible destination. (Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism: Limpopo, 2012)	➢ Green jobs and growth; ➢ Resource efficiency; ➢ Climate resilience; ➢ Sustainable infrastructure; and ➢ Public awareness of the green economy.	The plan directly supports GTM's eco-tourism and climate-smart tourism initiatives. Encouraging sustainable resource use in forests, rivers, and agricultural landscapes, it strengthens GTM's positioning as an environmentally responsible destination.

Policy	Purpose	Key Objectives	Alignment with GTM
Limpopo Tourism Growth Strategy, 2018	This strategy aims to strengthen Limpopo's position as a leading tourism destination by focusing on product development, investment, partnerships, marketing, and enhanced hospitality services. (Limpopo Provincial Government, 2018)	➢ Tourism product development; ➢ Partnerships and investment; ➢ Marketing and promotion; and ➢ Hospitality services enhancement.	The strategy influences GTM's tourism planning by positioning its natural and cultural assets within Limpopo's broader tourism brand, helping promote the area as part of a competitive regional destination.
Limpopo Environmental Management Act, 2003	The Act protects biodiversity, promotes responsible land use, prevents pollution, and ensures sustainable use of natural resources through public participation. (Limpopo Provincial Legislature, 2003)	➢ Environmental protection; ➢ Sustainable use of resources; ➢ Biodiversity conservation; ➢ Pollution prevention; and ➢ Public participation.	For GTM, this Act is crucial in managing eco-tourism and conservation areas. It ensures that natural attractions remain protected and viable as long-term tourism assets, aligning with GTM's sustainability goals.

2.3. District and Local Policies and Legislation

The following are some of the main policies that are effective in the GTM municipal area as indicated in the figure and table. These policies may support officials who operate in these spheres of government by guiding them as to how to align on a district and local level.

Figure 3: District policies



Table 2-3: District policies

Policy	Purpose	Key Objectives	Relevance to GTM
Mopani District Municipality Integrated Development Plan (IDP)	The IDP provides the strategic framework for development in the district, with a strong focus on tourism infrastructure, eco-tourism, and cultural heritage preservation. (Mopani District Municipality, 2024)	➢ Enhance tourism infrastructure; ➢ Promote eco-tourism initiatives; and ➢ Support local cultural heritage sites.	The plan supports GTM by guiding investment in sustainable tourism infrastructure, promoting eco-tourism opportunities, and elevating local cultural heritage sites, all of which reinforce GTM's positioning as a premier tourism destination.
Mopani District Spatial Development Framework (SDF)	The SDF directs spatial planning and land use across Mopani, identifying tourism corridors, designating heritage and conservation areas, and ensuring the integration of tourism into land-use planning. (Mopani District Municipality, 2018)	➢ Identify tourism corridors; ➢ Designate heritage and conservation areas; and ➢ Integrate tourism into land use planning.	This framework helps GTM to strategically plan tourism zones, balance development with conservation, and preserve its heritage assets. It enables GTM to build infrastructure in a sustainable and well-coordinated way.
Mopani District Tourism Strategy	The district's tourism strategy promotes tourism growth through initiatives such as the Gastronomy Route 71, the development of cultural and eco-tourism attractions, and enhancing the visitor experience. (Mopani District Municipality, 2018)	➢ Promote Gastronomy Route 71; ➢ Develop cultural and eco-tourism attractions; and ➢ Enhance visitor experiences	The strategy directly benefits GTM by showcasing its unique attractions as part of Route 71, promoting eco-tourism, and improving visitor services. It integrates GTM into broader district-wide tourism initiatives, increasing its visibility and appeal.
Mopani District Climate Change Adaptation Plan	This plan addresses climate change impacts on the district, assessing risks to tourism and promoting sustainable practices to enhance community and environmental resilience. (Mopani District Municipality, 2025)	➢ Assess climate risks to tourism; ➢ Implement sustainable tourism practices; and ➢ Enhance community resilience.	For GTM, the plan highlights climate-related risks to natural and cultural attractions, while encouraging the adoption of sustainable tourism practices. This strengthens GTM's long-term resilience and supports its eco-tourism objectives.

Policy	Purpose	Key Objectives	Relevance to GTM
Mopani District Annual Performance Report	The Annual Performance Report monitors development progress, assessing the performance of the tourism sector, measuring economic impact, and identifying areas for improvement. (Mopani District Municipality, 2023)	➢ Report on tourism sector performance; ➢ Assess the economic impact of tourism; and ➢ Identify areas for improvement.	The report provides valuable insights for GTM to track tourism performance, assess its contribution to local economic growth, and refine strategies for sustainable destination development.

The review of national, provincial, and district policies shows that South Africa has a comprehensive framework to guide sustainable tourism development. At the **national level,** policies emphasise responsible growth, heritage and cultural preservation, environmental protection, and broad-based economic participation. **Provincial frameworks** reinforce these priorities by focusing on tourism product development, eco-tourism, spatial planning, and alignment with broader socio-economic goals. At the **district level,** strategies and plans translate these objectives into practical initiatives, such as infrastructure development, cultural and eco-tourism promotion, climate resilience, and performance monitoring.

Overall, tourism is consistently recognised across all spheres of government as a key driver of economic growth, job creation, and community development. These policies collectively provide a strong foundation for the Greater Tzaneen Municipality to achieve its goal of building a sustainable tourism sector, strengthening infrastructure, and positioning itself as a premier destination.

3. Environmental Scan

This section provides an in-depth assessment of the critical factors, influencing the region's growth, sustainability, and governance, with a focus on the municipality's economic, social, political, and environmental contexts.

3.1. Spatial Overview

GTM is located in the Limpopo Province, and is an important regional hub shaped by agriculture, tourism, and growing residential development. Its spatial character reflects a mix of settlements, commercial centres, conservation and recreational areas, as well as extensive agricultural land. Strategic positioning along key transport routes such as the R71 and R36, together with its natural and agricultural assets, strongly influences patterns of economic activity and urban growth. Ongoing efforts in sustainable land management and development planning are central to balancing expansion with environmental protection and agricultural productivity. The map below illustrates the geographical outlook for GTM.

Map 1: GTM's geographical outlook



Source: Greater Tzaneen Spatial Development Framework, 2024-2029

The table below presents a summarised overview of the spatial status of GTM.

Table 3-1: Summary of GTM's spatial status

Aspect	Description
Location	GTM is situated in the south-western part of Mopani District. It shares the border with seven municipalities, i.e., Maruleng to the south, Lepelle-Nkumpi to the south-west, Molemole to

Aspect	Description
	the west, Greater Letaba to the north, Greater Giyani to the north-east, Ba-Phalaborwa to the east, and Polokwane to the west.
Area	The area comprises a land area of 3,242.6km², the municipality extends from Haernetzburg in the west, to Rubbervale in the east (85km), and from Modjadjiskloof in the north, to Trichardtsdal in the south (47km).
Rural-Urban Ratio	80% of GTM residents live in rural areas, whilst 20% reside in designated towns such as Tzaneen, Nkowankowa, Lenyenye, Letsitele, and Haenertsburg.
Key Economic Drivers	Besides agriculture, which is the mainstay of its economy, the municipality's relative proximity to the world-acclaimed Kruger 2 Canyon Biosphere, its unparalleled mountainous picturesque environment, and its rich cultural heritage further cement it as the region's leading tourism hub.
Topography	GTM's rugged volcanic mountains, its spectacular geographical scenery and steep terrains in the west and south, as well as its gentle slopes in the north and east, reinforce its position as the home to one of the most breathtaking landmarks and rich biodiversity areas in SA.
Climate Analysis	The south-western region is famous for regular orographic rains, whilst its south-eastern parts depend on erratic conventional rains which normally fall between October and March. Most importantly, the average annual rainfall in mountainous regions is between 400-700mm. Sadly, GTM is prone to the ripple effects of droughts, especially in the north-eastern regions due to climate change, thus rendering rainfed agriculture in these regions a risky and costly enterprise.
Regional Competitiveness	➢ **Intertwined regional economy:** GTM's economy is seamlessly intertwined with that of its neighbouring municipalities, thus presenting a compelling case for the establishment of a powerful regional trade bloc comprising mainly of municipalities with economic links to the Kruger Canyon Biosphere Corridor. ➢ **Case for collaboration:** As a core member of the Kruger Canyon Biosphere club, the vibrancy and growth of GTM's economy is clearly dependent on its ability to collaborate with its neighbours, especially on the upgrade and modernisation of cross-border network infrastructure. ➢ **Case for market integration:** Ba-Phalaborwa to the north east is endowed with abundant platinum and gold resources, whilst Maruleng to the far east is home to untapped tourism, horticulture, and citrus potential, Giyani to the north provides a safe and quicker passage to the soon-to-be-opened Kruger National Park's Shangone Gate, whilst Lepelle Nkumpi to the south possesses abundant mineral deposits which can feed future mineral beneficiation ventures.
Development Corridors	According to the SDF (2024-2029), the following Development Corridors are the heartbeat of GTM's economic development ecosystem: 1. **Eastern Escarpment Transformation Corridor,** which is backed by a key National Development Corridor via the R71- R40- R36 routes, links the National Urban Node of Tzaneen with: • Polokwane National Urban Node • Bushbuckridge Regional Development Node • Hazyview and Nelspruit National Urban Nodes • The railway line linking Nelspruit with Musina is a future Export/Import Node

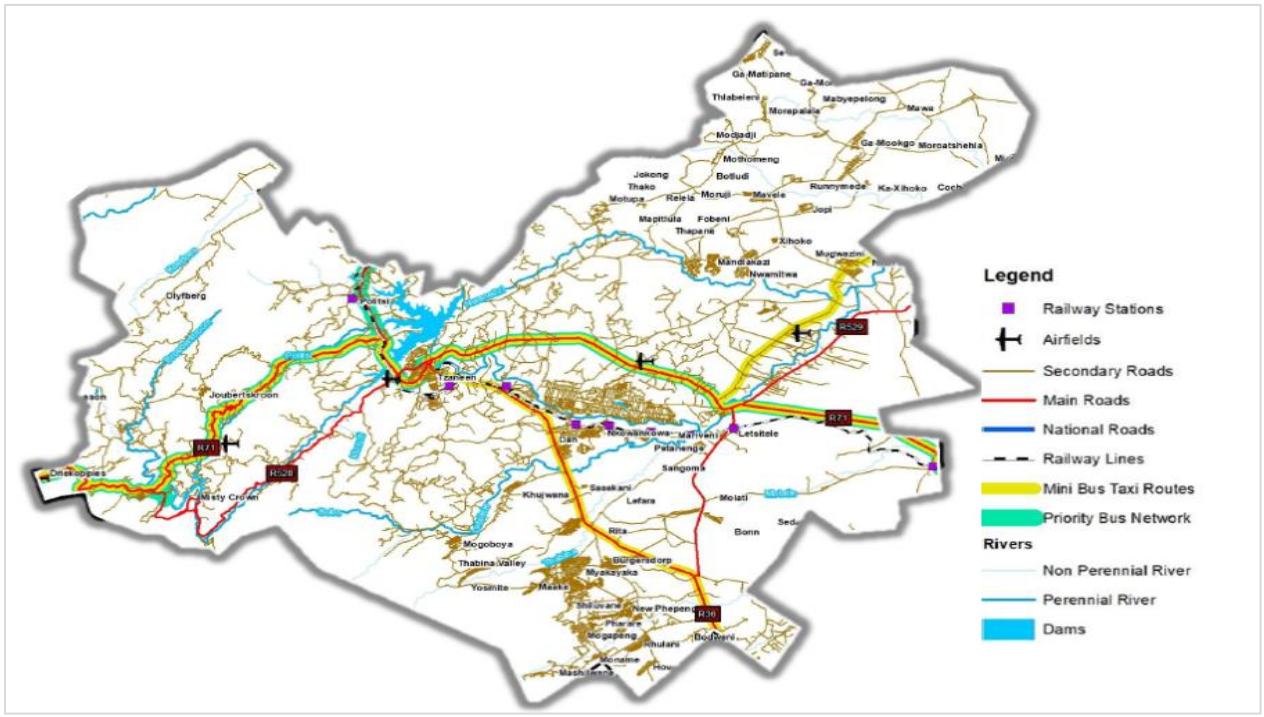
Aspect	Description
	Eskom's Limpopo East Corridor Network. ***Most importantly, each year, the corridor experiences a huge traffic flow of millions of ZCC pilgrims, especially during the Easter holidays.*** 2. **Phalaborwa Development Corridor,** which connects Tzaneen with Polokwane's N1 to the West and Phalaborwa to the north-east to form the busiest Regional Development Anchor, has all the features of a thriving logistics hub.

Source: Greater Tzaneen Municipality Reviewed Economic Development Strategy, 2025-2030

3.2. Transport and Movement Networks

Greater Tzaneen serves as the regional hub supporting the Phalaborwa Corridor, which links Polokwane with Ba-Phalaborwa. Its location within the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere enhances opportunities for tourism development. The area also benefits from its proximity to the Phalaborwa Gate, providing access to the Kruger National Park, as well as road connections to Mozambique through the Central Limpopo Transfrontier Park. The map below highlights the region's accessibility.

Map 2: GTM's regional accessibility



Source: GTM Spatial Development Framework, 2023/2024

Road Network

Greater Tzaneen is strategically connected through a well-developed road network that underpins regional accessibility. The R71 links Greater Tzaneen directly with Polokwane, while the R36 provides connections not only to Polokwane but also to Hoedspruit and, via the R40, to Nelspruit. Together, the R71, R36, and R40 form part of key national development corridors, linking the region to the N1 and N3 National Roads. However, certain limitations affect mobility. The mountainous terrain west of Tzaneen

restricts the efficiency of the R71, while the R40 with Bushbuckridge Local Municipality functions as a relatively low-mobility route. Despite these constraints, overall road accessibility within the district is relatively good. Continuous upgrading of these strategic routes remains essential to strengthen their role as a regional and national transportation corridors.

Rail Network

The rail network infrastructure within Greater Tzaneen enhances its role as a regional hub. Railway lines link Nelspruit with Phalaborwa and connect further north to the main railway line leading into Zimbabwe. This network supports both freight movement and regional integration within Southern Africa, contributing to economic growth and cross border trade opportunities.

Air Network

Air accessibility further strengthens Greater Tzaneen's regional connectivity. The Eastgate Airport, located outside Hoedspruit, provides direct scheduled flights to Johannesburg and Cape Town, playing a vital role in supporting regional tourism. In addition, smaller airports within the district enhance local accessibility, facilitating tourism, business travel, and economic development.

To maximise its role in regional development, Greater Tzaneen must prioritise the upgrading of the R71, R36, and R40 corridors. These routes form the backbone of mobility and integration, supporting tourism, trade, and access to key destinations such as Polokwane, Nelspruit, and the Kruger National Park. Ensuring the efficiency of road, rail, and air networks will consolidate Greater Tzaneen's position as a critical regional centre within the broader development corridors of Limpopo and beyond.

3.3. Spatial Development Nodes

GTM is structured around five functional spatial development focal points, each with a distinct economic role and developmental trajectory, as seen in the map below. They are briefly discussed below:

Map 3: Spatial development areas in GTM



Source: Greater Tzaneen, Spatial Development Framework, 2024

Tzaneen Urban Development Node

The Tzaneen Urban Development Node serves as GTM's administrative capital and primary commercial centre. In addition to its established role as a service and retail hub, the node is increasingly exhibiting the characteristics of an emerging industrial growth point. This is largely attributed to its strategic geographical centrality within the municipal area, rapid population growth, and superior logistical connectivity relative to surrounding settlements. These attributes position the node as a key anchor for future economic diversification and industrial expansion.

South-western Settlement Area

The South-western Settlement Area, encompassing Nkowakowa and Lenyenye along the R36 corridor, constitutes a well-established industrial ecosystem. The area hosts major industrial operations, including Peppadew International, a global competitive spice manufacturing enterprise exporting to more than 26 countries. Despite this strong industrial base, the node's growth potential is persistently constrained by recurring water supply interruptions and electricity outages. These infrastructure challenges highlight the urgent need for coordinated interventions to stabilise water provision and energy supply in order to sustain and expand industrial activity.

North-eastern Settlement Area

Located west of the R526 route, the North-eastern Settlement Area is characterised predominantly by low-density, dispersal rural settlements and villages. The area is well known for its rich agricultural potential and favourable natural endowments. Given these attributes, the node presents significant opportunities for the establishment of new townships founded on mixed-use development principles,

which could integrate residential, agricultural, and small-scale economic activities in a more sustainable spatial form.

Haenertsburg Rural Development Node

Haenertsburg functions as a specialised rural development node distinguished by its rugged mountainous landscape and extensive forestry resources, particularly exotic plantations of gum and pine trees. These natural assets position the area as a strategic incubator for timber beneficiation and downstream forestry related industries. The node also plays an important role in supporting eco-tourism and niche rural economic activities linked to the unique environmental character.

Rural Areas

The remaining rural areas of GTM are endowed with significant indigenous forestry resources and largely untapped agricultural potential. However, efforts to transition these areas into commercially viable agricultural zones are constrained by several structural challenges. These include limited farm mechanisation, shortages of appropriate skills, insufficient access to funding, and underdeveloped modern network infrastructure. Addressing these constraints is critical to unlocking the full productive capacity of the rural economy.

Tourism Linkages Beyond Municipal Boundaries

In addition to the internal spatial development nodes, the Greater Tzaneen area is functionally linked to several high-value tourism assets that are located within neighbouring municipalities. These sites collectively contribute to the broader tourism economy of the region, despite falling outside the formal jurisdiction of GTM. Key sites include:

- **Greater Letaba Local Municipality:** Westfalia Estate (the former home of Dr. Hans Merensky), the Modjadji Cycad Forest, and the Rain Queen's royal village.
- **Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality:** The Eiland Resort, Tsonga Kraal, Hans Merensky Nature Reserve, and the historic village of Leydsdorp.
- **Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality:** Lekgalameetse Nature Reserve and the Wolkberg Wilderness Area.
- **Polokwane Local Municipality:** Marloth Valley, located west of Haenertsburg near the ZCC area, noted for its extensive stands of Aloe marlothii and its concentration of villages and sites of historical, cultural, natural, and geological significance.

While these tourism destinations hold considerable potential to be more effectively packages, marketed, and integrated into the Greater Tzaneen tourism offering, they remain beyond the administrative boundaries and direct control of the municipality. This reality underscores a fundamental limitation of rigid municipal demarcations, as tourism systems are inherently spatially fluid and cannot be confined by artificial administrative boundaries. Strengthened inter-municipal collaboration is therefore essential to fully harness the regional tourism potential of the Greater Tzaneen area.

3.4. Environmental Features

Greater Tzaneen is home to some of South Africa's most diverse and ecologically important landscapes. Its biodiversity underpins both environmental sustainability and economic development, particularly through tourism. The municipality forms part of the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve, a globally recognised conservation area that combines the protection of natural resources with opportunities for community development and sustainable land use.

Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve

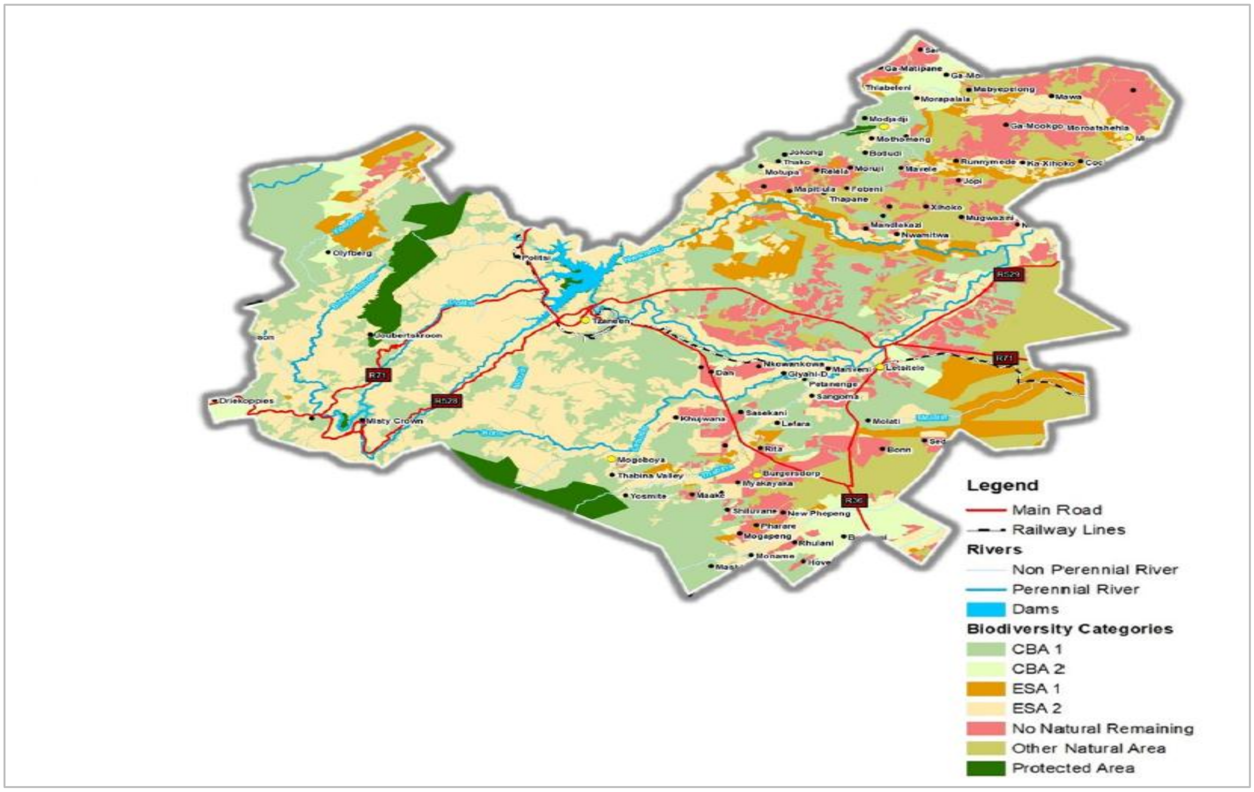
The Kruger to Canyons Biosphere (K2C) is a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) designated biosphere covering approximately 2.6 million hectares across Limpopo and Mpumalanga. It includes world-renowned protected areas such as the Kruger National Park and the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, together with communal lands, forestry areas, and agricultural landscapes. The biosphere spans three major biomes. These are savanna, Afromontane forest, and grassland. Together, they support exceptional biodiversity, including many endemic plant species and a wide range of mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians.

The K2C is also home to more than 1.5 million people whose livelihoods depend on agriculture, grazing, and the sustainable use of natural resources. Through the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region Non-Profit Company, established in 2011, significant initiatives have been implemented, such as the expansion of protected areas, rehabilitation of degraded land, clearing of invasive alien plants, creation of green jobs, and support for community-based enterprises. The biosphere, therefore, plays a vital role in conserving biodiversity while at the same time enhancing climate resilience and fostering socio-economic development across the region (Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve, 2025).

Natural Environment of Greater Tzaneen

The natural environment of Greater Tzaneen is characterised by a variety of ecosystems ranging from montane forest and riverine systems to savannah woodlands and grasslands. These habitats provide refuge for species of both national and international conservation importance. The municipality is further enriched by protected areas and reserves, including those linked to the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park and the Kruger National Park, which ensures ecological connectivity and provide important eco-tourism opportunities. The mountain rangers and river catchments in the western and southern parts of the municipality not only create striking scenic landscapes but also serve essential ecological functions such as water supply, soil protection, and climate regulation. The map below illustrates protected biodiversity and water areas, as well as agricultural resources within Greater Tzaneen.

Map 4: Protected biodiversity, water and agricultural resources of GTM



Source: GTM Spatial Development Framework 2024

The following actions are necessary to protect biodiversity, water, and agricultural resources in the area. These include safeguarding unprotected areas, critical biodiversity areas, and ecological support areas from mining, agriculture, and urban development, as well as protecting high-potential and unique agricultural land from inappropriate development. Efforts should be made to minimise conflict between agricultural activities and coal mining to ensure food security, while also reducing the consumption of scarce environmental resources such as water, fuel, building materials, minerals, electricity, and land, particularly pristine and rural land. Addressing water backlog within communities and ensuring adequate water supply for manufacturing and agricultural needs is essential. In addition, water scarcity and negative water balances within catchment areas should be managed through increased return flows from treated urban effluent, desalination, recycling, and the further development of surface and groundwater resources.

Tourism linked to these natural assets is a major contributor to the local economy, with attractions including mountain passes, waterfalls, dams, and nature reserves that draw both domestic and international visitors. Popular activities such as hiking, birdwatching, and cultural tourism further enhance the economic and social value of the environment. However, the natural environment faces growing pressures from settlement expansion, agricultural activities, and infrastructure development. Careful land use planning, environmental stewardship, and sustainable development practices are essential to safeguard biodiversity while ensuring continued economic growth and community well-being.

Sustainability and Environmental Considerations

The development and implementation of the Greater Tzaneen Tourism Strategy must be underpinned by strong sustainability and environmental principles to protect the municipality's unique natural assets while supporting long-term tourism growth. Given the ecological sensitivity of areas such as Magoebaskloof, including indigenous forests, protected grasslands, rivers, and mountain ecosystems, tourism development should prioritise **environmental conservation**, **responsible land use, and low-impact tourism practices.**

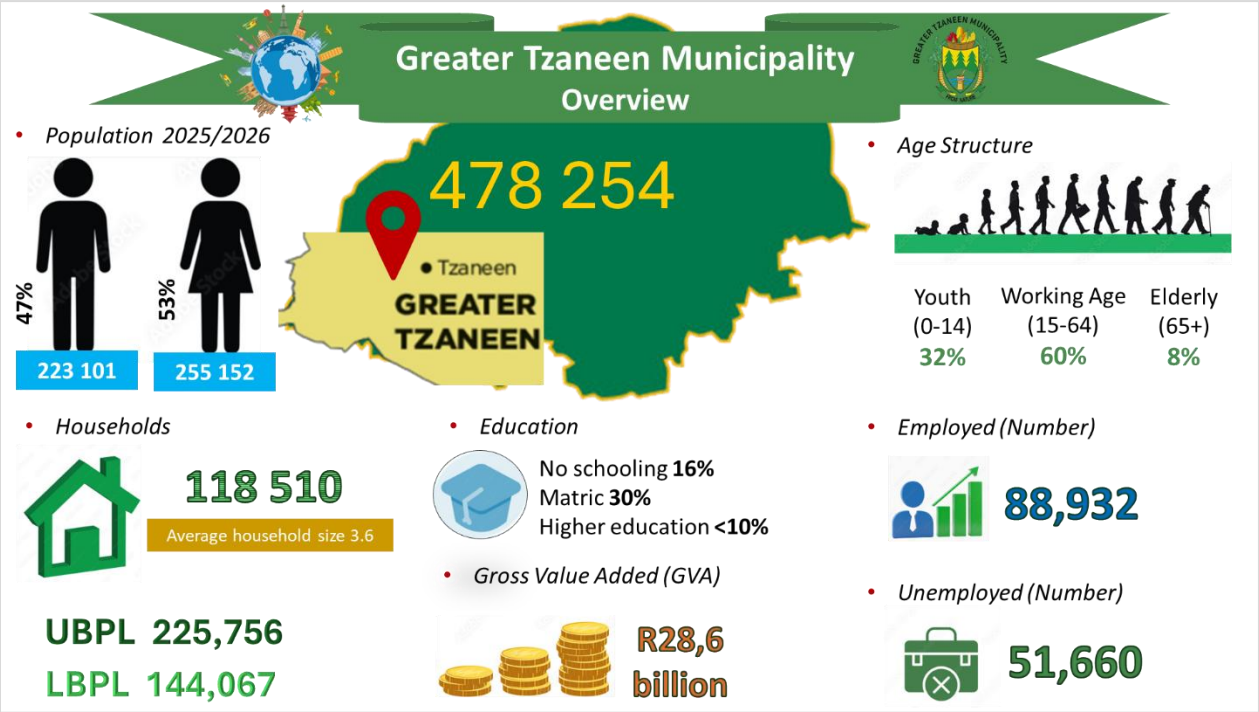
The strategy should promote **eco-friendly tourism practices,** including resource efficiency, waste management, water conservation, and energy-efficient infrastructure within tourism facilities. Tourism activities and developments must align with **national and provincial environmental legislation,** municipal spatial planning frameworks, and biodiversity conservation objectives to prevent environmental degradation and overuse of sensitive areas.

Furthermore, the strategy should encourage **nature-based and conservation-oriented tourism products** that support environmental awareness and stewardship, while ensuring that tourism growth does not exceed that **carrying capacity** of key natural attractions. Partnerships with conservation agencies, local communities, and tourism operators will be essential to balance environmental protection with economic development and to ensure that tourism contributes positively to the long-term sustainability and resilience of the Greater Tzaneen tourism economy.

3.5. Socio-Economic Profile

The figure below presents an overview of the demographic and socio-economic profile of the GTM, drawing on data as reflected in the Final Integrated Development Plan 2025/2026. It highlights key factors such as population growth and structure, levels of education, access to water, sanitation, waste management, and energy use. These statistics provide important insights into the living conditions of residents and the service delivery challenges facing the municipality, which are further detailed in the sections that follow.

Figure 4: Greater Tzaneen socio-economic profile



Source: Adapted from Quantec and GTM IDP, 2025/2026

The socio-economic profile of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality is based on data from the 2022 Census and the GTM Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2025/2026. The infographic highlights key demographic and educational realities shaping the municipality. The population has increased from 390,095 in 2011 to 478,254 in 2022, with females making up 53.4% of the population. The municipality has a youthful demographic structure, with 31.7% of residents aged between 15 and 34 years. Life expectancy remains higher for females compared to males, with fewer men reaching the age of 85. Educational levels remain a pressing concern. While around 30% of individuals aged 20 years and older have completed matric, fewer than 10% hold a higher education qualification, and approximately 16% have no schooling. This reflects a skills gap that has implications for employability and economic growth. Furthermore, information drawn from the GTM IDP indicates uneven access to basic services. About 70.4% of households have access to piped water, leaving 29.6% without a reliable supply. For sanitation, roughly one-third of households have flush toilets, while more than 60% rely on pit toilets. Positively, the number of households without access to any form of sanitation has declined significantly since 2011. In terms of waste management, around 60% of households use their own refuse dumps, while 25% benefit from weekly municipal refuse collection – the highest coverage in the Mopani District. Energy use patterns show that while 97.4% of households use electricity for lighting, only 57% rely on it for cooking. A significant share – 28% - still uses wood, making Greater Tzaneen the second lowest municipality in Mopani in terms of wood dependency for cooking.

These socio-economic conditions, as illustrated above and supplemented by IDP data, provide a snapshot of both progress and persisting challenges within the municipality. They directly influence the potential

for inclusive tourism development, particularly in terms of workflow readiness, infrastructure support, and the ability of local communities to benefit from the sector's growth.

In response to these realities, the IDP identifies three municipal priorities: *revenue enhancement, electricity provision,* and *efficient and effective administration.* The current realities of service delivery gaps, dependence on electricity for both cooking and lighting, and the need for stronger financial sustainability directly align with the municipality's priorities of revenue enhancement, electricity provision, and effective administration, showing that the priorities are indeed a true reflection of the area's needs.

4. Tourism Status Quo

The analysis of market demand will focus on national, provincial, and local tourism, with a particular focus on Tzaneen, offering a detailed overview of the trends and opportunities within the area.

4.1. Tourism Demand

Tourism demand refers to the number of people who travel, or wish to travel, and make use of tourist services and facilities away from their usual place of residence. It encompasses both actual and potential tourists, whether their travel needs are fully met, partially met, or unmet. It also includes travellers' motivations for visiting a destination, such as business, leisure, or other purposes.

Several key factors directly affect tourism demand:

- Economic conditions
- Travel costs
- Safety and security
- Natural and cultural attractions
- Demographic factors
- Technological advancements
- Environmental factors
- Political factors.

An additional major influence in recent years has been the COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease) pandemic (2019-2022). In response, South Africa implemented a Tourism Sector Recovery Plan in 2022 to rebuild and revitalise the sector. Limpopo, including the Greater Tzaneen area, has aligned provincial strategies with national recovery efforts. For example, Limpopo's Tourism Growth Strategy aims to diversify the tourism sector and to strengthen competitiveness, while recovery plans in the province include support for SMMEs, enhanced safety and quality standards, infrastructure improvements, and marketing efforts (Limpopo Provincial Government, 2018).

According to recent performance reports:

- South Africa saw a strong rebound in domestic overnight tourism trips in the fourth quarter of 2023. By that period, the number of such trips increased, and domestic tourism had shown patterns of stabilisation (Statistics South Africa, 2024).
- International tourist arrivals also recovered considerably in 2023. The 2023 annual tourism report shows a significant increase over 2022 (Statistics South Africa, 2024)
- Provinces like Limpopo are targeting growth, leveraging natural attractions and conservation tourism as key assets. The Limpopo Development Plan (2025-2030) and the Limpopo Tourism Growth Strategy emphasise developing strategic tourism clusters (which include conservation,

cultural, and nature-based tourism), enhancing infrastructure, and improving the visitor experience to sustain growth (Limpopo Provincial Government, 2020)

Given this, the outlook for tourism in South African in 2025 is cautiously optimistic. The sector is not only recovering from pandemic related losses but appears to be growing in some measures beyond pre-pandemic levels, especially in domestic travel. The key challenges remain balancing cost, safety, and delivering quality services, particularly in less urban provinces such as Limpopo.

National Tourism Performance Overview

The country's tourism sector features natural beauty, diverse outdoor activities, a sunny climate, cultural richness, and a strong reputation for offering excellent value for money. South Africa is recognised as one of the fastest-growing destinations for both leisure and business travellers worldwide.

Figure 5: National tourism performance overview, 2023



Source: South African Tourism, 2023

South Africa continues to hold a strong position in the global tourism market. This is due to its year-round appeal, rich cultural heritage, iconic landmarks, and well-known wildlife experiences. It remains a popular destination for international travellers who seek warm weather during the colder months in their home countries.

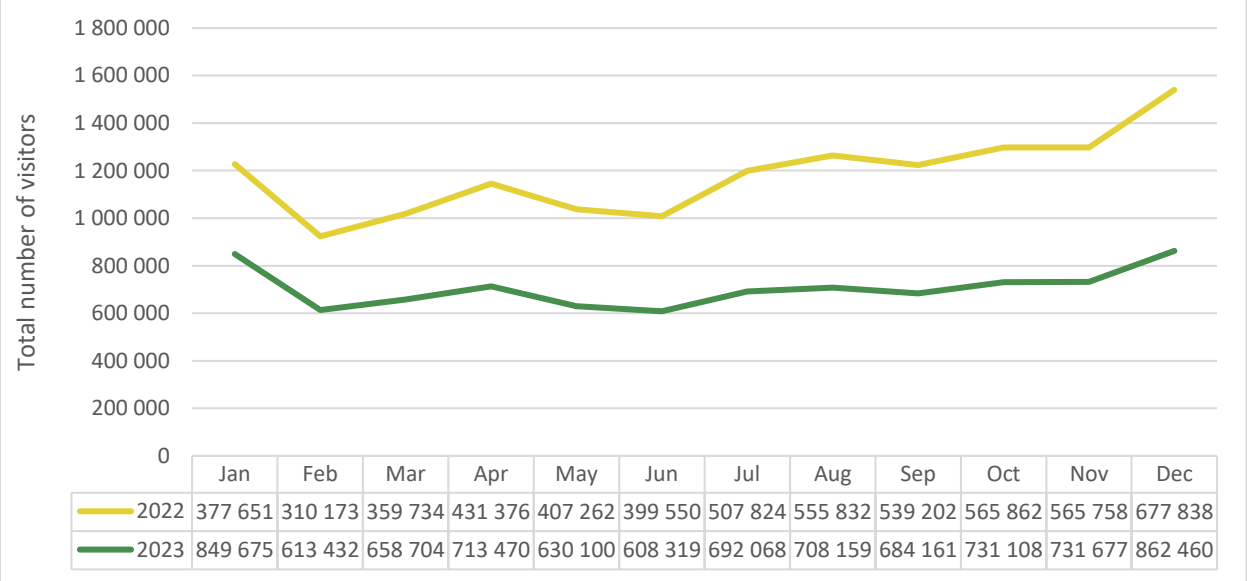
In 2023, South Africa received 8.4 million international visitors. This was an increase of 48.9% compared to 2022 and shows a strong recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leisure travel was the main driver of this growth. Business tourism also improved, with international business visitor numbers increasing from 13,300 in 2019 to 13,800 in 2023. This shows a steady return to the levels seen before the

pandemic. Domestic tourism also made a significant contribution to the recovery of the sector. More South Africans travelled within the country than before the pandemic. The number of domestic trips taken in 2023 was higher than in 2019, with travel activity exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

Spending by domestic travellers also increased by more than 80%, showing strong local demand and support for the tourism sector. This reflects a strong interest and support from local travellers.

The figure below illustrates the growth in total visitor numbers in South Africa from 2022 to 2023, showing a recovery phase with visitor numbers in 2023 surpassing those of 2022. The data below suggests that there is a notable recovery underway from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023, leisure/holiday visitor numbers recorded 84,100 reflecting an upward trend from the pandemic period. Similarly, business tourism witnesses an increase with visitor numbers climbing from 13,300 in 2019 to 13,800 in 2023, indicating a gradual return to pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 6: Total visitor numbers; South Africa



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2022	377 651	310 173	359 734	431 376	407 262	399 550	507 824	555 832	539 202	565 862	565 758	677 838
2023	849 675	613 432	658 704	713 470	630 100	608 319	692 068	708 159	684 161	731 108	731 677	862 460

Source: StatsSA, 2023

South Africa's tourism sector reached a major milestone in 2025, welcoming more than 10 million international visitors. Patricia de Lille, Minister of Tourism, announced that South Africa recorded the arrival of 10.48 million international passengers from January to December last year. This represents an increase of 17.6% compared to 2024 and is the highest figure ever recorded. (SA Good News, 2026)

De Lille said South Africa's global appeal was further strengthened when the country was named the Best Destination in Africa for 2025 by the Travel Weekly Readers' Choice Awards. She stated that this achievement reflects a deliberate policy focus, targeted implementation, and strong collaboration between the government and the private sector.

A key focus of the plan is to make travel to South Africa easier. This includes the rollout of the Electronic Travel Authorisation system in key markets such as India, China, Mexico, and Indonesia. The full implementation of the system is expected to create between 80,000 and 100,000 jobs. Tourism already

supports approximately 1.8 million direct and indirect jobs. One new job is created for every 13 international visitors As of the 2025/2026 financial year to date, South Africa has been selected to host 51 international conferences and other events, estimated to contribute nearly R900 million to the economy. (Mocke, 2026).

The national tourism performance data shows that South Africa's tourism sector is experiencing strong growth, increasing global competitiveness, and rising international demand. The record number of international arrivals, together with international recognition and improved travel facilitation measures, indicates a positive environment for regional and local tourism destinations. For the Greater Tzaneen area, these trends create important strategic opportunities. As international arrivals continue to grow, secondary destinations such as Greater Tzaneen can benefit from increased tourist movement beyond major gateways and established tourism hubs. The region's natural attractions, cultural heritage, and proximity to major destinations such as the Kruger National Park place it in a strong position to attract visitors who can seeking extended travel experiences and niche tourism offerings, including eco-tourism, cultural tourism, and rural tourism.

The rollout of the Electronic Travel Authorisation system in key source markets such as India and China is particularly relevant for Greater Tzaneen. These markets show growing interest in nature-based tourism and authentic local experiences, which align closely with what the area offers. Improved accessibility and simplified travel processes increase the likelihood that international visitors will include lesser-known destinations in their travel plans.

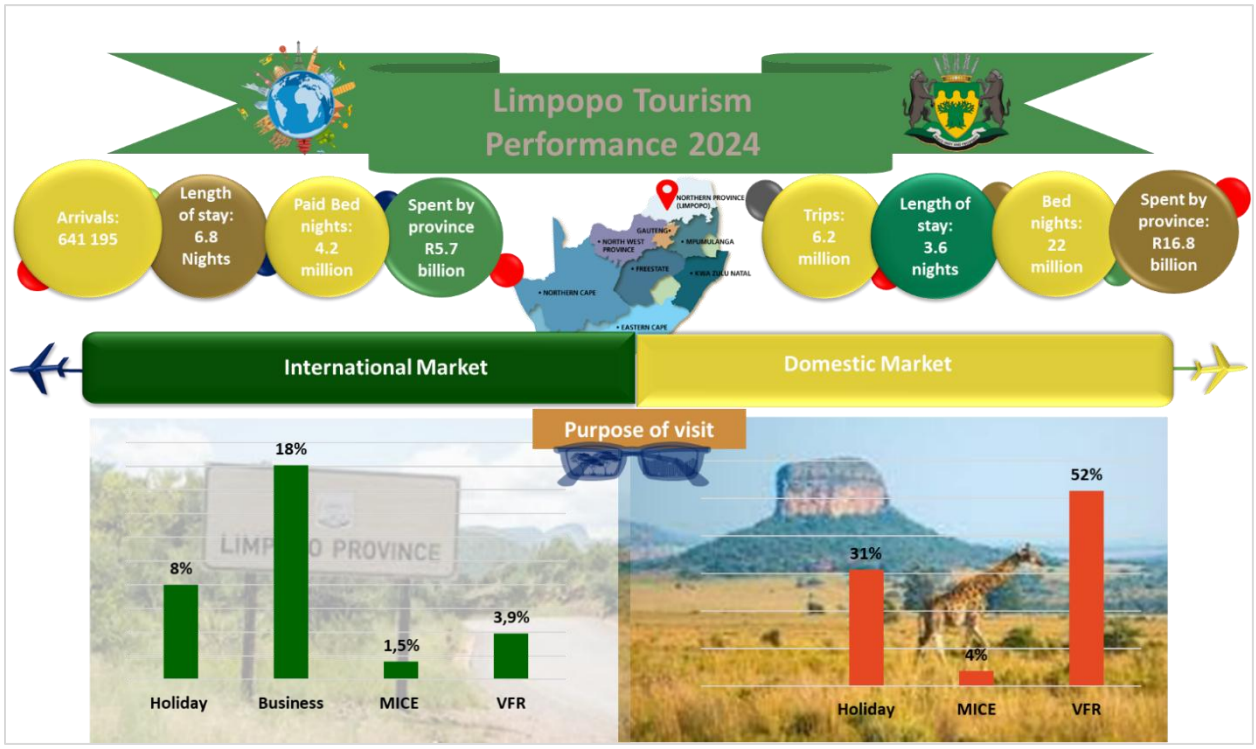
The employment impact associated with tourism growth suggests that increased visitor numbers could lead to meaningful job creation and small business development in Greater Tzaneen. This highlights the importance of aligning local tourism strategies with national tourism priorities. It also underscores the need to strengthen partnerships between the public and private sectors and to invest in destination marketing, infrastructure development, and skills training at the local level.

In conclusion, the national tourism statistics point to a positive outlook for the sector and emphasise the need for Greater Tzaneen to position itself strategically within South Africa's broader tourism growth trajectory. By leveraging national policy initiatives and global tourism trends, the municipality can improve its competitiveness, promote inclusive economic growth, and support long-term socio-economic development in the region.

Provincial Tourism Performance Overview

This section below provides a brief snapshot of the international as well as the domestic tourist performance for the Limpopo Province, by looking at the tourist arrivals, length of stay, paid bed nights, and expenditure.

Figure 7: Provincial tourism overview, 2024



Source: South African Tourism, 2024

Limpopo Province remains one of South Africa's most sought after tourism destinations, well known for its rich cultural heritage, diverse wildlife, and breathtaking natural landscapes. Home to parts of the world-famous Kruger National Park, pristine game reserves, scenic mountain ranges such as the Waterberg, and vibrant cultural villages, Limpopo continues to attract visitors seeking authentic African experiences. Its warm climate, accessibility, and strong mix of leisure, nature, and cultural offerings make it a compelling destination for both domestic and international travellers.

International Performance

The section below examines the international performance of Limpopo by analysing the purpose of visit, length of stay, paid bed nights, and expenditure.

Purpose of Visit

International tourists travel to Limpopo mainly for business and trade, but leisure, cultural connections, and event-related travel also contribute to the province's tourism mix. This balance strengthens Limpopo's position as both a commercial gateway and a unique travel destination in Southern Africa.

Length of Stay

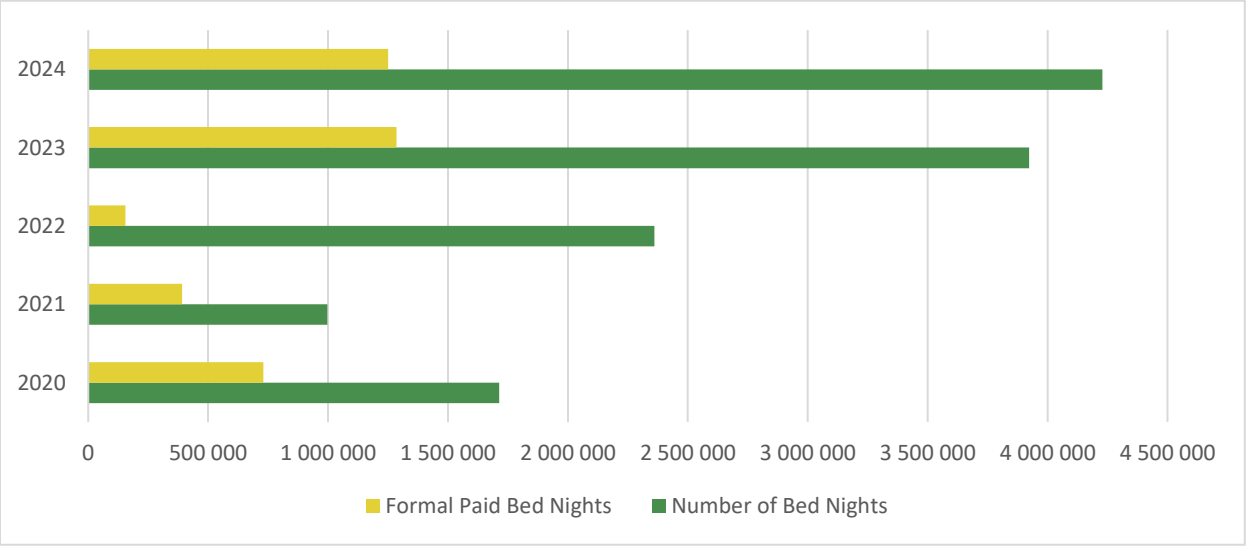
In 2024, international tourists visiting Limpopo spent an average of 6.8 nights in the province. This relatively long stay highlights Limpopo's ability to retain visitors by offering a wide variety of experiences that encourage extended travel. Many international travellers use Limpopo as a base for exploring multiple attractions, including the Kruger National Park, the Waterberg Biosphere, and the Mapungubwe

World Heritage Site, which naturally lengthens their stay. In addition, the province's proximity to neighbouring countries such as Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique often positions Limpopo as part of multi-country itineraries, further contributing to longer overnight stays.

Number of Bed Nights vs Paid Bed Nights

As shown in the figure below, the total number of bed nights consistently exceeded the number of formally paid bed nights during the 2020-2024 period. This trend aligns closely with the purpose-of-visit patterns, indicating that a notable share of international visitors travels to Limpopo primarily for short business-related trips, often staying for just a single night. Such travel behaviour reduces the proportion of paid bed nights, as many of these visits are brief and functional rather than extended leisure stays.

Figure 8: Number of bed nights vs formal paid bed nights in Limpopo, 2020-2024

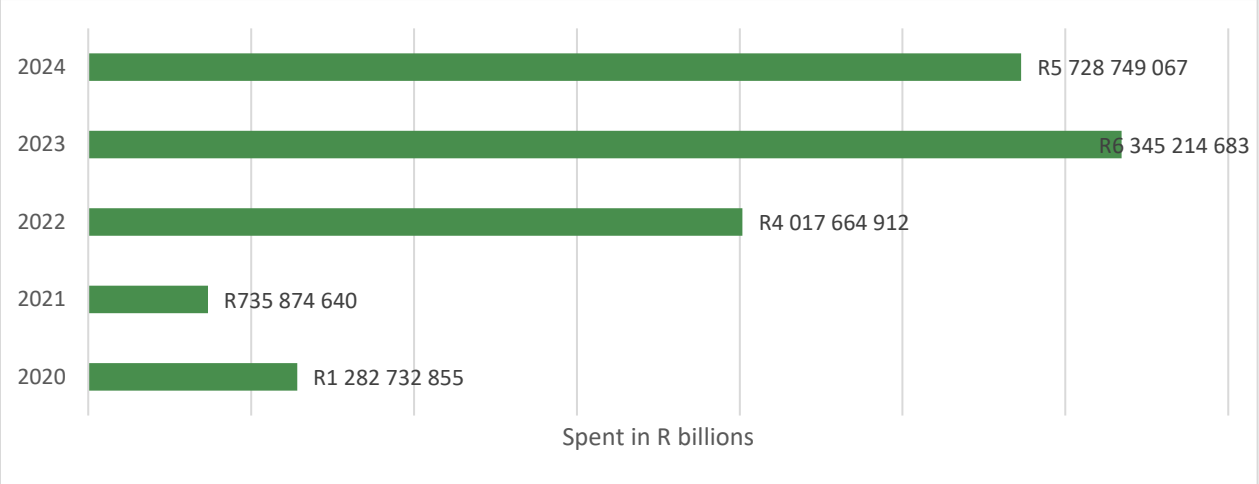


Source: South African Tourism, 2023

International Tourist Spending in Limpopo

It is evident from the figure below that 2023 was a peak year for tourist expenditure in Limpopo, totalling R6.3 billion. This indicates a clear economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 9: International tourist spends in Limpopo, 2020-2024

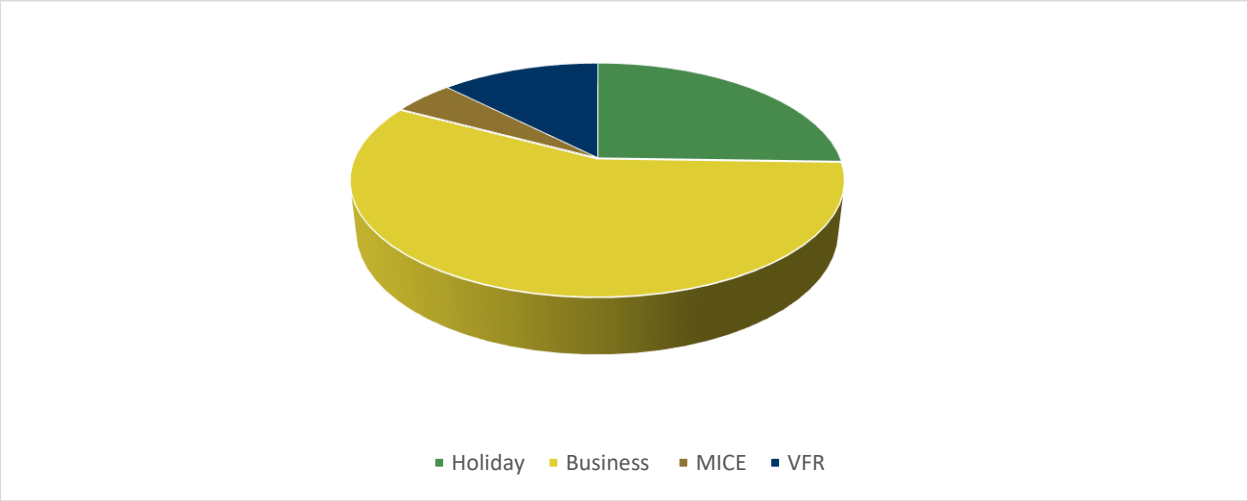


Source: South African Tourism, 2023

Purpose of Visit for International Tourists

As seen in the figure below, international tourists visited Limpopo for a variety of reasons, reflecting the province's diverse offerings and role within the broader South African economy. In 2024, the primary driver of international travel to Limpopo was business-related visits, accounting for 18% of arrivals. This highlights the province's importance as a hub for trade, cross-border commerce, and investment activities, given its strategic location as South Africa's gateway to several Southern African countries. Leisure travel also played a significant role, with holiday visits contributing 8% of international arrivals. These visitors were mainly attracted by Limpopo's world-renowned safari experiences, cultural heritage sites such as Mapungubwe, and its wide range of nature-based attractions.

Figure 10: International purpose of visit to Limpopo, 2023



Source: South African Tourism, 2023

Domestic Performance

The section below provides a short overview of the domestic performance of Limpopo by analysing the length of stay, number of bed nights, and expenditure.

Purpose of Visit

In 2024, domestic tourism in Limpopo was dominated by Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) with 52%, reflecting the province's strong family and cultural ties. Holiday travel accounted for 31%, highlighting Limpopo's appeal as a leisure destination with rich wildlife, nature, and heritage offerings. The MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) segment contributed 4%, showing a growing role for business events and conferences.

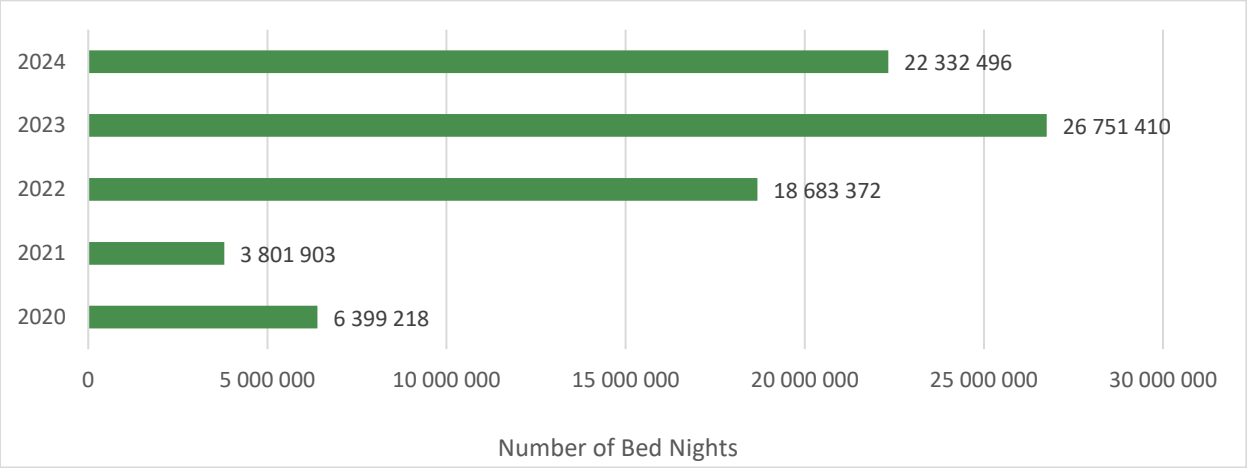
Length of Stay

In 2024, domestic tourists spent an average of 3.6 nights in Limpopo. This pattern is largely shaped by the high share of VFR trips, which are typically shorter in duration. At the same time, the figure reflects Limpopo's popularity as a short-stay leisure destination, with many South Africans opting for quick getaways to enjoy the province's wildlife, cultural experiences, and natural attractions.

Number of Bed Nights

In 2024, domestic tourists generated a total of 22 million bed nights in Limpopo. This high volume reflects the province's role as a leading destination for VFR, which forms the majority of domestic trips. VFR travel tends to produce extended overnight stays, often in private homes rather than paid accommodation, thereby contributing significantly to the overall number of bed nights.

Figure 11: Number of domestic bed nights in Limpopo, 2024



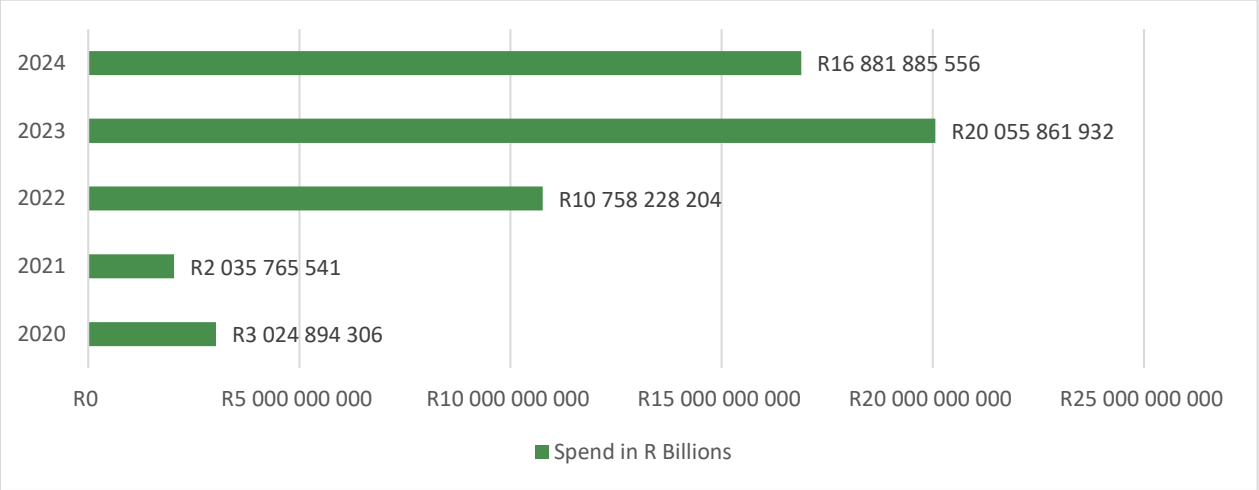
Source: South African Tourism, 2024

Domestic Tourist Spending in Limpopo

Domestic tourism continues to be the backbone of Limpopo's visitor economy, with spending levels making a significant contribution to the province's growth. Over the 2020-2024 period, 2023 stood out as the best year, when domestic tourists spent an impressive R20 billion in the province. This record performance was driven by the high volume of trips (6.2 million) and the strong appeal of Limpopo as

both a VFR and holiday destination. Although domestic spend in other years has remained substantial, 2023 highlighted the peak of Limpopo's domestic tourism strength by showcasing the sector's resilience and its crucial role in sustaining local businesses, communities, and the wider provincial economy.

Figure 12: Domestic tourist spend in Limpopo, 2020-2024

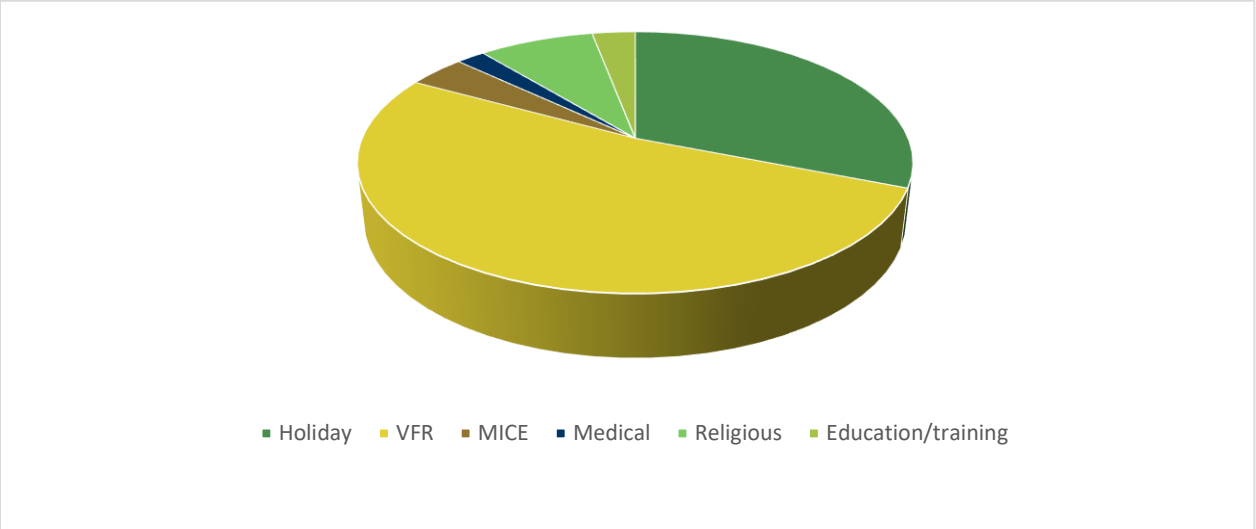


Source: South African Tourism, 2024

Purpose of Visit for Domestic Tourists

In 2024, domestic tourism in Limpopo was led by VFR, which accounted for 52% of trips. This reflects the province's strong cultural and family connections, with many South Africans travelling to Limpopo for gatherings, ceremonies, and community events. Holiday travel represented 31% of domestic visits, confirming Limpopo's continued appeal as a leisure destination known for its wildlife, natural beauty, and cultural heritage. The MICE segment contributed 4%, showing the province's growing capacity to host business and professional events.

Figure 13: Purpose of visit for domestic tourists in Limpopo, 2024



Source: South African Tourism, 2024

Overview of District Tourism Performance

Tourism is recognised as one of the key economic drivers in the Mopani District, with the municipality positioning itself as both the *food basket of Southern Africa and a tourism destination of choice.* The district is endowed with a wealth of natural, cultural, and heritage assets that provide a strong foundation for tourism growth. These include its direct connection to the Kruger National Park through the Phalaborwa and Shangoni gates, a number of private and community-owned game reserves, and extensive scenic landscapes. These attractions make Mopani a significant contributor to Limpopo's overall tourism economy (Mopani District Municipality, 2025).

The district's Integrated Development Plan (2025-2026) highlights tourism as a sector of comparative advantage, particularly in nature-based and cultural tourism. The development of tourism routes, such as the Gastronomy Route 71, seeks to link local products, food culture, and visitor experiences to broader provincial tourism flows. Similarly, initiatives to promote indigenous heritage, craft, and cultural tourism are seen as essential to diversifying the tourism offering and creating inclusive opportunities for local communities.

Performance within the tourism sector, however, varies across Mopani's local municipalities. Ba-Phalaborwa and Maruleng benefit strongly from their proximity to Kruger National Park and related wildlife tourism, while areas such as Greater Giyani and parts of Greater Tzaneen face challenges due to limited infrastructure, weaker market visibility, and underdeveloped tourism services. This uneven distribution underscores the need for targeted investment and support to unlock tourism potential across the entire district (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), 2020).

The Limpopo Tourism Agency's annual reporting reflects a steady post-pandemic recovery in visitor flows to the province, with Mopani benefiting directly as a key gateway to one of South Africa's premier attractions. Growing demand for nature, wildlife, and authentic cultural experiences aligns well with Mopani's asset base. However, to fully leverage this opportunity, the district must address challenges, including poor road infrastructure, service backlogs, and limited digital marketing capacity among small tourism operators (Limpopo Tourism Agency, 2022).

Another critical issue is the capacity and sustainability of small, medium, and micro-sized tourism enterprises (SMMEs). Research conducted in Greater Letaba within Mopani indicates that many tourism SMMEs struggle with access to finance, marketing, and skills development. Without targeted support, these businesses remain vulnerable and unable to scale up to meet the expectations of the growing tourism market (Sethwana, M.V., & Ramukumba T, 2025).

Looking ahead, the Mopani District Municipality is currently reviewing its tourism strategy as part of the 2025/2026 Growth Strategy Agenda, with a focus on aligning the sector to rapid global and provincial developments. The review places emphasis on expanding and diversifying the visitor economy, strengthening rural tourism initiatives, and improving regional tourism infrastructure. Key strategic priorities include:

- **Strengthening core tourism assets,** including access points to the Kruger National Park and surrounding wildlife tourism offerings;

- **Developing new tourism products and routes,** such as culinary and heritage experiences, to extend visitor stays and distribute economic benefits more widely;
- **Investing in infrastructure and accessibility** to support equitable tourism growth across all local municipalities;
- **Supporting local tourism SMMEs** through capacity-building initiatives, access to finance, and digital marketing tools; and
- **Promoting sustainability and community participation** to ensure tourism benefits local residents while preserving Mopani's natural and cultural assets.

Overview of Local Tourism Performance

Specific tourism performance data for the Greater Tzaneen Municipality is not readily available, as most published sources focus on national trends or broader municipal information. What is clear, however, is that Tzaneen serves as an important hub and gateway within Limpopo, drawing visitors through its natural landscapes, agriculture richness, and cultural heritage. While detailed statistics on visitor volumes, economic distribution, or attractions performance are not accessible at present, such insights would require dedicated local tourism studies or official municipal reporting.

Market Trends

Tzaneen, situated in Limpopo Province, is uniquely positioned to benefit from these tourism trends at both global and domestic levels. The area's natural beauty, agricultural richness, cultural heritage, and proximity to major travel routes make it an attractive emerging destination.

Local market opportunities include:

- **Eco- and Agri-Tourism:** With its fertile agricultural landscape and subtropical climate, Tzaneen can showcase authentic farm experiences, fresh produce, and agri-tourism initiatives aligned with the global sustainability movement.
- **Cultural Immersion:** Tzaneen and surrounding villages have strong cultural traditions that can be highlighted through storytelling, crafts, culinary tourism, and festivals. This aligns directly with the global demand for authentic and transformative travel.
- **Outdoor and Wellness Travel:** The area's scenic mountains, forests, waterfalls, and proximity to wildlife reserves provide natural assets for hiking, retreats, and wellness tourism.
- **Gateway Potential:** Tzaneen can serve as a gateway for tourists travelling to Kruger National Park, Mozambique, or Zimbabwe, encouraging longer stays and diversified itineraries.

By positioning itself as a **sustainable, authentic, and wellness-focused destination**, Tzaneen can attract diverse segments of the market from digital nomads and wellness travellers to families, cultural enthusiasts, and nature seekers. This approach will not only meet shifting traveller expectations, but also contribute to long term economic resilience, community-upliftment, and environmental stewardship.

Key Strategic Focus Areas:

- **Develop Immersive and Integrated Experiences:**

Tzaneen has the potential to differentiate itself through curated experiences that weave together its natural landscapes, agricultural richness, and cultural heritage. Tourism products could include farm-to-table culinary trails, craft, and cultural exchanges, waterfall hikes, and storytelling journeys led by local communities. By fostering deeper engagement, Tzaneen can move beyond being a stopover destination to becoming a place where visitors stay longer and connect more meaningfully.

- **Leverage Technology for Visibility and Personalisation:**
  Digital platforms are central to how modern travellers plan and book their journeys. Tzaneen must enhance its digital presence through improved websites, mobile-friendly booking systems, and engaging social media storytelling that showcases authentic experiences. Leveraging data-driven marketing will allow the destination to tailor offers to specific traveller segments, ensuring relevance in a competitive tourism market.
- **Champion Sustainability and Responsible Tourism:**
  With rising global awareness of climate change and the environmental impact of travel, Tzaneen can lead by example. Initiatives could include eco-friendly accommodation certification, conservation-focused tourism partnerships, and promotion of low-impact activities such as cycling, hiking, and agro-tourism. By embedding sustainability into its brand, Tzaneen can appeal to the growing segment of conscious travellers while protecting its natural assets for future generations.
- **Strengthen Domestic Market Appeal:**
  Domestic tourism remains the backbone of South Africa's tourism sector. Tzaneen can capitalise on this by developing affordable, accessible, and family-oriented packages that encourage South Africans to explore their own backyard. Road-trip friendly itineraries, local festivals, and seasonal campaigns will make Tzaneen a preferred choice for short breaks and getaways. This also helps build a resilient tourism base less vulnerable to global disruptions.
- **Position Tzaneen as a Wellness and Retreat Destination:**
  Wellness tourism is one of the fastest-growing global segments, and Tzaneen's natural environment with its forests, mountains, and waterfalls provides the perfect backdrop for this niche. Opportunities include yoga and meditation retreats, outdoor adventure programmes, holistic health offerings, and spiritual tourism experiences. These products not only align with international trends but also tap into the increasing domestic appetite for wellness and self-discovery.

By embracing these strategic focus areas, Tzaneen can transform itself into a **leading regional destination** that reflects **modern traveller priorities** while also delivering **meaningful benefits to its local communities.** The destination has the potential to balance economic growth, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability, ensuring tourism development that is inclusive and future oriented. In doing so, Tzaneen can move from being perceived simply as a picturesque town in Limpopo to **becoming a must-visit destination** known for its **immersive experiences,** sustainability, and transformative **appeal.**

4.2. Tourism Supply

Tourism within the Greater Tzaneen Municipality is largely **centred in the Magoebaskloof area,** with the village of **Haenertsburg** functioning as the primary **tourism hub.** This area, commonly referred to as ***"the Mountain",*** contains the **highest concentration of tourism** attractions, accommodation establishments, tourism services, and natural assets within the municipality. As a result, it represents the core of leisure and nature-based tourism activity in Greater Tzaneen. Tzaneen town itself plays a limited role as a leisure tourism destination and primarily functions as a service centre and access point for the surrounding tourism areas. While the municipality includes assets such as the Tzaneen Dam and extensive sub-tropical fruit estates, these currently **contribute only marginally** to the tourism economy. The Tzaneen Dam offers limited publicity accessible recreational and leisure facilities, while the agricultural estates have a narrow appeal to the general touring market. Previous initiatives such as pack-house tours have generally proven to be sustainable and have not developed into long-term tourism products.



In contrast, the mountainous areas of **Magoebaskloof** offer a diverse range of landscapes and natural environments that form the **foundation of the municipality's tourism supply.** These include indigenous forests, rare and endangered grasslands, rivers, streams, waterfalls, and high-altitude mountain terrain. These natural assets **support a wide variety of tourism activities** and appeal to both general leisure visitors and special interest markets, including eco-tourism, adventure tourism, hiking, trail running, mountain biking, fly-fishing, and birdwatching.



Haenertsburg is recognised for its **strong local identity and distinctive character** within Limpopo Province. The village has a long and **notable history** and contains a relatively high concentration of restaurants, tourism-related retail outlets, and small-scale accommodation establishments. It is also known for its scenic historic cemetery and its vibrant village atmosphere, which contributes to its appeal as a **leisure and lifestyle destination.** The village is surrounded by a rare and officially protected grassland ecosystem that includes a nine-kilometre hiking trail and supports a wide variety of **plant species** as well as several endemic animal species.



The **broader Magoebaskloof** area provides **additional tourism assets and experiences** that strengthen the overall tourism supply. These include hiking and mountain biking trails, fly-fishing waters, cultivated and botanical gardens, birdwatching opportunities in indigenous forests, and access to rivers and waterfalls. The area also hosts regular fairs, festivals, and sporting events, which contribute to seasonal visitor flows and repeat visitation. Several annual trail-running, marathon, and swimming events organised by the Rotary Club of Haenertsburg play an important role in attracting visitors and promoting the destination.



Institutional and **community-based organisations** contribute positively to the development and promotion of tourism in the area. The Haenertsburg Development Foundation, a non-profit organisation that has been active for more than 20 years, has supported tourism, social, and environmental initiatives through fundraising and the preparation of pre-feasibility studies for tourism-related projects. In addition, **Tourism Magoebaskloof** manages a destination website and social media platforms that **assist in marketing** the area and channel enquiries and bookings to local tourism operators. Although detailed tourism performance data is not readily available, there is clear evidence that tourism activity in the Magoebaskloof and Haenertsburg area is performing well and that visitor numbers continue to increase.

This overview of the **tourism supply** within the **Greater Tzaneen Municipality** provides a clear understanding of the **current tourism offering** and its **spatial distribution**. It identifies the **Magoebaskloof and Haenertsburg areas** as the **primary tourism focus** of the municipality. It also highlights underutilised assets in other areas. This information assists the municipality by informing **evidence-based tourism planning** and **decision making**. It enables the prioritisation of **investment infrastructure development** and **marketing initiatives.** By using this information, the **Greater Tzaneen Municipality** can strengthen its **core tourism areas** and support the **development of new tourism products.** This will contribute to **sustainable tourism growth** and **improved economic benefits** across the municipality.

Tourism Competitive Environment

This section assesses the tourism supply of the GTM by examining accommodation establishments, tourist attractions, marketing initiatives, events and business tourism, tour guiding services, and supporting

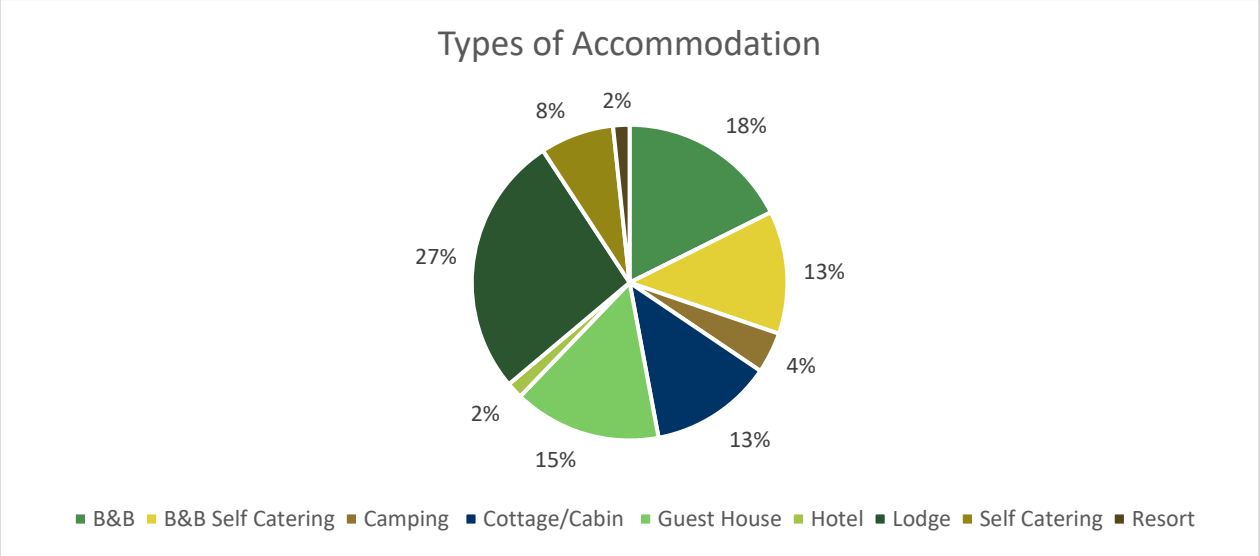
transport infrastructure. The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate the competitive and comparative strengths of the municipality's tourism offering and to identify opportunities for future development and investment.

In the tourism industry, the competitive environment is shaped by the presence of numerous destinations, each striving to attract travellers with distinctive attractions and experiences. For GTM, understanding how the region compares with key competitors is essential to assessing its current positioning and growth potential. This section will consider the strength of GTM's tourism offerings, including its accommodation base, hospitality services, and unique attractions such as cultural, natural, and outdoor experiences. By examining these elements, the analysis will provide insight into how the region can better define its target markets and tailor its tourism products, services, and infrastructure to align with visitor expectations and emerging travel trends.

Accommodation Establishments

The list of accommodation establishments presented below was sourced from GTM and provides an overview of the accommodation options currently available in and around Tzaneen.

Figure 14: Accommodation landscape in GTM



Source: Greater Tzaneen Municipality, 2025

Greater Tzaneen boasts a broad and diverse range of accommodation establishments, including B&Bs, self-catering units, guest houses, lodges, hotels, cottages and cabins, camping facilities, and resorts. This variety reflects a tourism sector that is both dynamic and adaptable, catering to different market segments from budget-conscious travellers and families to nature enthusiasts and higher-end visitors.

The notable concentration of lodges is particularly significant, underscoring the municipality's strong connection to its surrounding nature reserves and outdoor activities. This positions Greater Tzaneen as an attractive destination for leisure tourism and eco-tourism. However, the municipality's

accommodation profile reveals strategic gaps. Hotel capacity remains limited, which could constrain opportunities to attract conferences, corporate groups, and larger events.

Similarly, while self-catering and B&B options are plentiful, there is a relative shortage of high-capacity, full-service hotels that cater to business tourism or luxury segments. These gaps indicate potential areas for investment and development, particularly in conference facilities, upscaling lodging, and multi-purpose resorts.

Overall, Greater Tzaneen's accommodation mix demonstrates strong alignment with its natural and cultural assets, offering visitors both choice and authenticity. By addressing the current limitations in hotel and group accommodation capacity, the municipality could further strengthen its position as a gateway destination in line with global tourism trends.

Attractions

The following key attractions are identified in Tzaneen, Magoebaskloof, and the surrounding areas (refer to table below). Greater Tzaneen is the most visited municipality in the province.

Table 4-1: Attractions in Greater Tzaneen

Hiking and Walking Trails	
Name of attraction	**Description**
Louis Changuion Trails	A 10 km trail through the Haenertsburg Grassland Nature Reserve and indigenous forests, taking approximately three to four hours.
Swartbos Trails	A 3.8 km route starting at the Magoebaskloof Hotel and passing through indigenous forest, with an average walking time of one hour and forty-five minutes.
Magoebaskloof Hiking Trails	A network of trails in the Woodbush Reserve, ranging from one to five days in duration. The reserve is the second-largest indigenous Afromontane Forest in South Africa.
Magoebaskloof Adventures Trail	A short trail in George's Valley, typically completed within one to two hours.
Wolkberg Nature Reserve Trails	Challenging wilderness trails in a mountainous area, recommended for experienced hikers.
Rooikat Trails	An 11 km circular route beginning at Agatha State Forest Station, taking about five hours to complete.
Lekgalameetse Nature Reserve	Day and overnight trails within the Wolkberg Mountains, part of the Drakensberg range.
Birding	
David Letsoalo	Guided birding along the Capricorn–Letaba routes (R71 corridor), covering Polokwane, Haenertsburg, Tzaneen, and Gravelotte, with more than 500 recorded species.
Paul Nkhumane	Guided birding excursions in the region with a focus on local species.
Boating / Cruise	
Sunset Queen Day Cruises	Group day cruises on Ebenezer Dam for 10–27 passengers, with onboard toilet and braai facilities.
Horse Riding	

Silver Mist Resort	An Arabian horse stud farm offering horse riding experiences.
In The Company of Horses	Equine activities combine wilderness adventures, horse interaction, and leadership coaching.
Fishing	
Silver Mist Resort	Catch-and-release fishing in a countryside setting
Mountain Fly Fishing	Catch-and-release fly fishing in five well-stocked dams.
Cheerio Trout Fishing	Trout fishing on a catch-and-release basis, requiring a day permit and personal fly-fishing equipment
Haenertsburg Trout Association	Trout and bass fishing at Ebenezer Dam and nearby waters is available by prior permit.
Tzaneen Dam	Fishing from the jetty is permitted through the local municipality.
Gardens	
Cheerio Gardens	Open year-round for garden walks, it is best known for its spring flower displays and annual blossom festival. A café operates from Wednesday to Sunday.
Adventure	
Magoebaskloof Canopy Tours and Adventures	Outdoor activities include canopy tours, gecko tubing, abseiling, wall climbing, hiking, and tree-top experiences, with trips scheduled hourly for groups of two to eight.
Camping	
Magoebaskloof Camping	Eight grassed caravan and camping sites with electricity, water, lighting, and braai facilities
Coral Tree & Forest Camps	Two exclusive luxury 4x4 campsites in a forest environment, popular with birdwatchers.
Magoebaskloof Adventures Camp	Tented camp accommodation with basic facilities
Silver Mist Resort	Camping, caravan, and tented accommodation with ablution blocks, plus onsite activities such as fishing, horse riding, and quad biking.
Mountain Fly Fishing	Four private camping sites with individual ablutions, suited for 4x4 caravans, campers, and tents.
Zwakala River Retreat	Riverside campsites offering swimming, mountain biking, and walking trails, open on weekends.
Guided Tours	
Blueberry Heights Farm	Seasonal blueberry picking (December to February), open Wednesday to Sunday.
THOMAC Essential Oils	Guided tours of the distillation process of Southern Immortelle essential oil are offered daily at 11h00 and 14h00.
Zwakala Brewery	A craft brewery open Friday to Sunday, offering beer tastings, estate wines, a gift shop, and outdoor games.
Sequoia Garden Retreat	Garden walks among cherry blossoms and azaleas, available for day visitors by prior arrangement.
Cultural Tours	Guided township and village tours, including traditional food, drinks, and home visits.
Agatha Crocodile Ranch	Daily guided tours with crocodile feeding demonstrations, complemented by a curio shop and art gallery.
Mangela Animal Touch Farm & Tea Garden	A family attraction with animal encounters, feeding activities, and daily pony rides.
Tzaneen Museum	Exhibits of Tsonga and North Sotho cultural artefacts, including pottery, beadwork, masks, weapons, and sacred drums.

Wegraakbosch Organic Dairy	Educational farm tours featuring traditional cheese-making and organic farming practices.
Tzaneen Lion and Predator Park	Guided experiences such as walking with lions, predator tours, and game drives, supported by a restaurant and curio shop. (Letaba River Lodge, 2026)

MICE Type Events and Meetings in Tzaneen

Tzaneen is increasingly recognised as a destination for MICE, thanks to its blend of professional venues, natural beauty, and tourism activities. Several noteworthy events and gatherings highlight the region's capacity to host business tourism. One of the flagship events is the Explore Limpopo Tourism Market, which brings together small businesses, tourism operators, government stakeholders, and industry leaders. The event includes exhibitions, networking sessions, and knowledge-sharing workshops, and positions Tzaneen as a hub for regional tourism development. It has been hosted at the Tzaneen Country Lodge, a venue well-equipped for large gatherings.

Another example of the area's MICE potential is the Biennial Symposium of the South African Institute of Agricultural Engineers (SAIAE), which was held at the Fairview Hotel, Spa and Golf Resort. This professional conference drew experts from across the country to engage in technical discussions, share research, and explore agricultural innovations. The event also showcased Tzaneen's role in supporting agriculture-focused business tourism, with its proximity to some of Limpopo's most productive farmlands. Beyond these specific gatherings, Tzaneen continues to attract workshops, sectoral conferences, and public-private dialogue sessions. Its venues – such as the Fairview Hotel, Tzaneen Country Lodge, and Karibu Leisure Resort and Conference Centre – cater to groups ranging from small board meetings to conferences of several hundred delegates. Combined with the area's appeal for leisure and incentive travel, Tzaneen is well placed to grow as a competitive MICE destination within Limpopo.

Tour Guiding and Travel Agent Services

Greater Tzaneen offers several professional guiding and travel agency services that enhance visitor experiences by providing local knowledge, customised itineraries, and logistical support. The table below lists these services within GTM:

Table 4-2: Tour guiding and travel agent services within GTM

Service	Description
Blue Skye Tours	Based in Tzaneen, Blue Skye Tours is a locally owned guiding service. Their guides are knowledgeable about the region's natural biodiversity, cultural heritage, and outdoor attractions. They arrange day tours, nature walks, and birdwatching, and can accommodate bespoke tours depending on visitor interests.
MTW Global Travels	Located in Tzaneen at the Tzaneng Mall, MTW Global Travels is a full-service travel agency. They plan holidays, business travel, and strategy sessions, and can design customised itineraries for both domestic and international travellers. They serve as a valuable link between visitors and local experiences, especially for groups seeking tailored tours.
Matshankutu and Mahlodi Travel and Tours	This is a local holiday and travel agent that can offer holiday advice, event-oriented itineraries, and booking support. Their role is important in matching visitor preferences with local attractions, accommodation, and transport

These guiding and travel services are essential components in ensuring that visitors to Tzaneen can access curated, safe, and differentiated experiences, particularly those interested in nature, culture, or leisure tourism.

Transport Services

Transport services in Tzaneen are varied and cater to multiple needs, such as airport transfers, intercity travel, group tours, shuttle services, and private charters. These are key for accessibility, comfort, and integrating remote attractions into tourism offerings. The table below lists transport services within GTM:

Table 4-3: Transport services in GTM

Name of Transport Service	Description
Kham Avalanté Travel and Tours / Kham Shuttle Coaches	Based in Tzaneen, this operator offers several transport-related services: ➢ Charter and private transfers (cars, minibuses) ➢ Airport shuttle services ➢ Scheduled intercity routes (for example, connecting Tzaneen, Polokwane, Mokopane, Pretoria/Johannesburg, OR Tambo). ➢ Personalised tour packages and event-conveyance services
Tzaneng Shuttle Services	Provides 24/7 ground transport services in and around Tzaneen. Their offerings include airport transfers, point-to-point shuttles, chauffeur-driven vehicles, minibuses or buses for larger groups, and tailored solutions for weddings, events, and conferences. Punctuality, reliability, and quality of services are emphasised in their value proposition.
Tzaneen Coach Hire	Specialist in group transport and charter services. They operate semi-luxury to luxury coaches, handle airport transfers, private tours, and are equipped for large group travel (including special events, conferences, and school excursions). Their flexibility (night and day, cross-border travel) makes them especially useful for incentive groups and multi-day itineraries.
Vuntsi Shuttle Services	Based in the Polokwane region, they provide shuttle and tour operator services that also cover Tzaneen. Their offerings include airport transfers, scheduled shuttles, long distance trips, and group bookings – all at competitive rates with free Wi-Fi available onboard.
Beyers Busdiens	A local tour operator and bus service in Tzaneen. While less detailed info is available in public listings, they are known for handling local group transport and tours. Useful especially for short local sightseeing, rural outreach, or multi-stop itineraries.

These guiding and transport services are central to making Tzaneen accessible and attractive as a tourist destination. Key contributions include:

- **Enabling** visitors who do not drive (or prefer not to) to access remote or rural attractions like forests, trails, farms, or cultural villages.
- **Supporting** structured events (weddings, corporate retreats, MICE) with group transfers, reliable transport, and coordination.

- **Enhancing** safety and comfort via professional drivers, quality vehicles, driver training, and after-hours services.
- **Enriching** the visitor experience:
    - Guides provide interpretive content (flora/fauna/birding/cultural history)
    - Local agents ensure logistics are smooth; transport providers allow flexibility in itineraries.

4.3. Tourism Opportunities and Challenges

This section is a summarised analysis of what is considered key information for fostering a better environment for the local tourism sector to thrive.

Opportunities

The table below highlights key economic opportunities in Greater Tzaneen's tourism sector. These are areas that are currently underdeveloped or not fully leveraged, and which could provide significant economic and community benefits if strategically developed.

Table 4-4: Potential economic opportunities related to Tourism

Opportunity Identified	Consideration
Strengthen cultural and heritage tourism	Greater Tzaneen has a range of cultural assets, including traditional villages, local crafts, culinary traditions, and historical sites. These resources can be better packaged, interpreted, and promoted to attract both domestic and international visitors.
Develop strategies to attract international volunteers	The municipality's proximity to Kruger National Park and other conservation areas makes it attractive to international volunteers and interns. Targeted programmes and partnerships could maximise the economic, skills development, and community benefits associated with this market.
Improve tourism packaging for the domestic market	While numerous tourism products exist in the area, they are often marketed independently. The development of integrated tourism packages that combine activities such as farm visits, natural trails, cultural experiences, and adventure activities would enhance the attractiveness of the destination for domestic tourists.
Leverage local cultural resources in tourism marketing	The history, traditions, and artisanal products of Greater Tzaneen provide a strong foundation for destination branding. Integrating cultural narratives and experiences into marketing campaigns could strengthen the municipality's tourism identify and appeal.
Develop medical tourism initiatives	Regional medical facilities attract visitors from surrounding areas and neighbouring countries. Coordinated promotion of medical services alongside leisure and recreational activities could encourage longer stays and increased tourism expenditure.
Expand sport and adventure tourism	Existing infrastructure such as trails, dams, and sports facilities can be more effectively utilised to host sporting events, endurance races, cycling tours, and adventure tourism activities. This would diversify the tourism offering and attract new visitor segments.

Opportunity Identified	Consideration
Enhance marketing to African and international markets	Greater Tzaneen has untapped potential within African tourism markets beyond South Africa. Coordinated and targeted marketing initiatives could raise awareness of the destination and attract visitors from neighbouring countries and the broader continent.
Promote agritourism development	The municipality's agricultural base, including fruit, nut, honey, and flower production presents opportunities for farm-based tourism experiences such as guided tours, harvest events, tasting experiences, and farm stays. Agritourism remains underdeveloped and offers potential for economic diversification.
Develop gastronomy and culinary tourism	Culinary tourism can be developed along the R71 corridor through the promotion of local cuisine, farm-to-table experiences, food markets, and food festivals that highlight regional produce and cultural food traditions.
Develop cultural village, resort, and conference facilities at Mamitwa Village	A comprehensive revival and development proposal for the cultural village at Mamitwa Village has been completed. Implementation of this project could strengthen cultural tourism, support job creation, and expand the municipality's capacity for group and conference tourism.
Develop Tours Dam as a day-visitor and outdoor education destination	Tours Dam, located south-west of Tzaneen at the foot of the Wolkberg escarpment, offers potential for a small-scale day-visitor facility with limited rustic accommodation. An updated pre-feasibility study supports the development of an outdoor adventure and environmental education centre aimed at youth and learner groups.
Expand and refine township and village tourism experiences	Guided township and village tours in areas such as Nkowakowa are currently available but remain underutilised. There is potential to enhance these experiences through improved interpretation, inclusion of authentic cultural activities, and increased community awareness of tourism opportunities and benefits.
Re-establish a tourism information and interpretation facility in Tzaneen	A tourism information centre previously existed but was destroyed by fire. A new facility could make use of digital and interactive technologies to provide tourism information, resource interpretation, education, and cultural programming, rather than relying on traditional brochure-based models.
Develop low-impact recreational facilities at Commonwealth Plantation and Magoebaskloof Dam	The Commonwealth Plantation has historical significance and offers a unique forest environment. The development of a short walking trail and a small picnic facility near Magoebaskloof Dam, combined with limited canoe hire, could enhance visitor use while maintaining environmental sensitivity.
Improve public access and day-visitor facilities at Ebenezer Dam	Ebenezer Dam has high scenic value and clean water but limited public access. Subject to environmental and institutional considerations, the development of a low-impact day-visitor facility at suitable locations such as the Old Smokey site could broaden public access and tourism use.

Challenges

The following table identifies key challenges that currently hinder tourism development in Greater Tzaneen and outlines considerations for addressing them.

Table 4-5: Key challenges Identified for regional tourism

Challenge Identified	Consideration
Limited functioning local tourism information centres	While some tourism information points exist, they are often under-resourced and poorly staffed. Effective centres need well-trained personnel who can provide accurate, up-to-date information and actively promote the region's attractions. Staff should embody the "brand" of Greater Tzaneen and guide visitors to ensure a memorable experience.
Insufficient tourism support facilities	Despite the presence of travel agencies and tour operators, the region lacks adequate transport options, guided tour services, and visitor facilities. Addressing these gaps – such as reliable shuttle services, signage, and accommodation support will enhance visitor satisfaction and encourage longer stays.
Over-reliance on nearby national parks for brand recognition	While proximity to Kruger National Park and other reserves draws visitors, Greater Tzaneen must actively promote its own unique attractions – such as nature reserves, adventure trails, cultural villages, and agritourism experiences – to establish itself as a standalone destination. Regional collaboration and strategic marketing are critical to diversify its appeal.
Crime and safety concerns	Incidents of crime and occasional local unrest have a negative effect on perceptions of safety among tourists, particularly international visitors. Strengthening safety measures, community engagement, and responsive law enforcement is essential to improve the region's image and protect its growing tourism sector.

Stakeholder Involvement

To maximise the opportunities and address the challenges in Greater Tzaneen's tourism sector, regional stakeholders must work collaboratively. The following table outlines potential actions and the stakeholders best positioned to lead them:

Table 4-6: Key stakeholder Initiatives for consideration

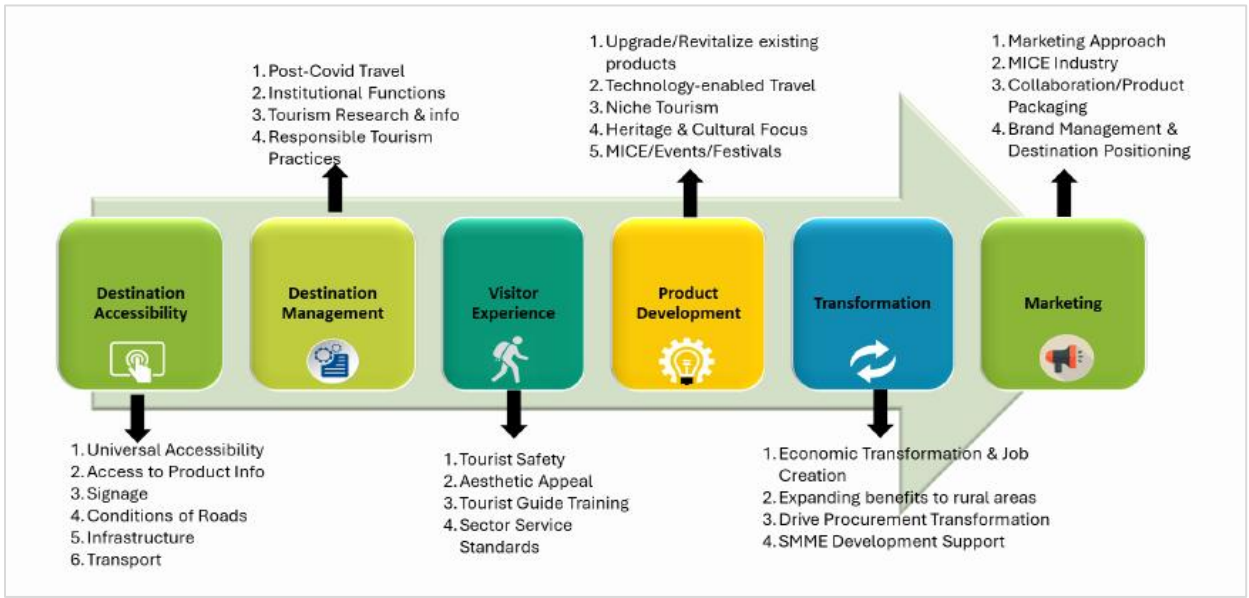
Stakeholder Initiatives	Key Stakeholder/s
Develop a **regional approach** to tourism opportunities, including the creation of collaborative entities where appropriate. All stakeholders should actively "live the brand" of Greater Tzaneen in marketing and service delivery.	➢ Greater Tzaneen Municipality ➢ Tzaneen Tourism Association ➢ Limpopo Tourism Agency ➢ Private sector tourism operators (lodges, adventure operators, travel agencies)
Promote a **welcoming and tourist-friendly culture** across the region. This includes training frontline staff and businesses to deliver exceptional visitor experiences that reflect the unique character of Greater Tzaneen.	➢ Greater Tzaneen Municipality ➢ Tzaneen Tourism Association ➢ Mpumalanga Tourism & Parks Agency (where cross-border collaborations exist)
Build capacity for tourism service provision, including staff training, tour guiding, and	➢ Greater Tzaneen Municipality ➢ Local tourism operators and travel agencies ➢ Limpopo Tourism Agency

Stakeholder Initiatives	Key Stakeholder/s
hospitality skills, to ensure benefits are shared broadly within the community.	➢ Community-based tourism initiatives
Provide **incentives and support** for private sector investment in tourism infrastructure, attractions, and services. Ensure that essential services (water, electricity, transport) are reliable to support tourism growth.	➢ Greater Tzaneen Municipality ➢ Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism ➢ Local business chambers and associations
Foster a **partnership-based approach** for tourism promotion and product development, ensuring that marketing, events, and regional attractions are coordinated to position Greater Tzaneen as a premier destination.	➢ Greater Tzaneen Municipality ➢ Tzaneen Tourism Association ➢ Private tourism operators ➢ Local conservation and nature reserve management authorities

4.4. Value Proposition of Tourism for Greater Tzaneen

In order to address the key opportunities and challenges identified for sustainable tourism growth, Greater Tzaneen's Tourism Strategy should be guided by six core pillars. These pillars will help ensure that targeted and effective interventions are identified and implemented. The following figure illustrates these six pillars for tourism development.

Figure 15: Six Pillars of tourism development



The Greater Tzaneen Tourism Development Strategy should aim to promote the region's unique tourism value proposition while addressing previously identified opportunities and challenges. Guided by the six pillars of tourism development, it is recommended that the strategy focus on the following key aspects for sustainable tourism growth:

- Adopt a **clustered tourism development approach** to ensure an even distribution of tourism activities across the region.
- **Leverage nature reserves, private game farms, and other conservation areas** as focal points for tourism growth.
- **Strategically use tourism routes and corridors to connect** attractions and facilitate seamless travel experiences.
- **Diversify tourism offerings** beyond nature-based experiences, including adventure, cultural, heritage, and agritourism.
- **Strengthen the capacity** of the local tourism sector through training, support programmes, and collaboration with local tourism organisations and travel agencies.
- **Use tourism as a driver** for regional employment and community development.
- **Promote the region's proximity** to major attractions (e.g., nearby national parks) for marketing purposes without creating over-reliance on these external destinations.

5. Strategic Direction

Tourism plays an important role in supporting inclusive local economic development in South Africa, particularly in municipalities with diverse natural, cultural, historical and agricultural assets. The Greater Tzaneen Municipality recognises the need for a coherent and actionable Tourism Strategy that guides tourism development in a sustainable and transformative manner. The tourism strategy for the Greater Tzaneen Municipality aims to establish a focused and coordinated approach for developing the local tourism sector as a key driver of economic growth and community upliftment. The strategy aligns tourism planning with municipal priorities and ensures that the needs of the tourism sector are effectively integrated into broader local development processes.

The purpose of the strategy is to provide a clear vision, define strategic objectives and outline practical actions that will strengthen the tourism sector's contribution to the local economy. This includes identifying and enhancing existing attractions, improving institutional coordination, advancing infrastructure and service delivery, and promoting community participation and benefit. This section introduces the strategic framework for tourism development in Greater Tzaneen. It outlines the strategic vision, objectives, intended outcomes and the key development pillars that guide tourism growth in the area. The strategy also responds to persistent challenges such as underdeveloped or underutilised attractions, fragmented marketing efforts and inadequate infrastructure. It proposes a framework for targeted investment, infrastructure improvement, product development and destination branding. Successful implementation of the strategy will require strong commitment and alignment across all three spheres of government, supported by active involvement from the private sector and local communities. Strengthening coordination among provincial, district, and municipal tourism stakeholders is therefore a central focus of this initiative. Priority will be given to enhancing existing tourism platforms and governance structures to support more effective and inclusive decision-making.

Vision

The tourism vision provides a clear direction for stakeholders by outlining the significance, purpose and long-term contribution of tourism to local economic growth and community wellbeing. It helps guide tourism development efforts, establish priorities and inspire coordinated sector expansion. Greater Tzaneen seeks to strengthen its local economy by harnessing its natural landscapes, cultural and historical heritage and diverse agricultural environment. These assets have strong potential to support inclusive growth and position tourism as a key driver of the local economic development strategy. Achieving this vision requires effective collaboration between the municipality and tourism stakeholders. This partnership is essential for positioning Greater Tzaneen as a leading destination in Limpopo, while ensuring that municipal planning and service delivery align with sector needs. The following strategic objectives outline the actions required to realise the tourism value for Greater Tzaneen:

- **Strengthen and maintain infrastructure** that supports safety, accessibility and environmental sustainability in order to stimulate tourism growth;

- **Develop and upgrade priority tourism assets** and supporting infrastructure to enhance visitor satisfaction and improve the overall destination experience;
- **Diversify and improve** tourism attractions, activities and services, with a strong focus on responsible and sustainable tourism practices; and
- **Increase brand visibility and recognition** through targeted marketing that promotes the region's unique tourism offerings and strengthens its competitive positioning.

Objectives

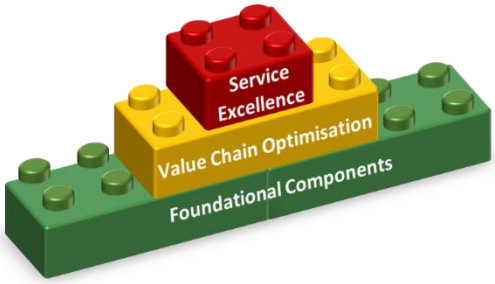
The following objectives guide the development and success of the tourism strategy:

Table 5-1: Strategic objectives of the tourism strategy

Objective	Description
Provide reliable infrastructure to support tourism growth	This objective focuses on improving and maintaining essential infrastructure, including roads, signage, utilities, and public facilities. Reliable infrastructure enhances visitor mobility, safety, and comfort while creating a supportive environment for tourism businesses to grow.
Develop tourism assets to enhance visitor satisfaction and guide destination development	This objective aims to enhance existing tourism products and explore new opportunities by upgrading facilities, improving quality, and planning long-term development to meet market needs.
Enhance and diversify tourism offerings while promoting sustainability	This objective seeks to broaden the variety of tourism offerings by developing new experiences and expanding current ones. It also promotes environmentally responsible and culturally respectful tourism practices to ensure long-term sustainability and community benefit.
Boost brand visibility through targeted marketing	This objective focuses on improving the municipality's market profile through strategic marketing, destination branding and promotional initiatives. It aims to increase awareness of Greater Tzaneen's unique selling points and attract more domestic and international visitors.

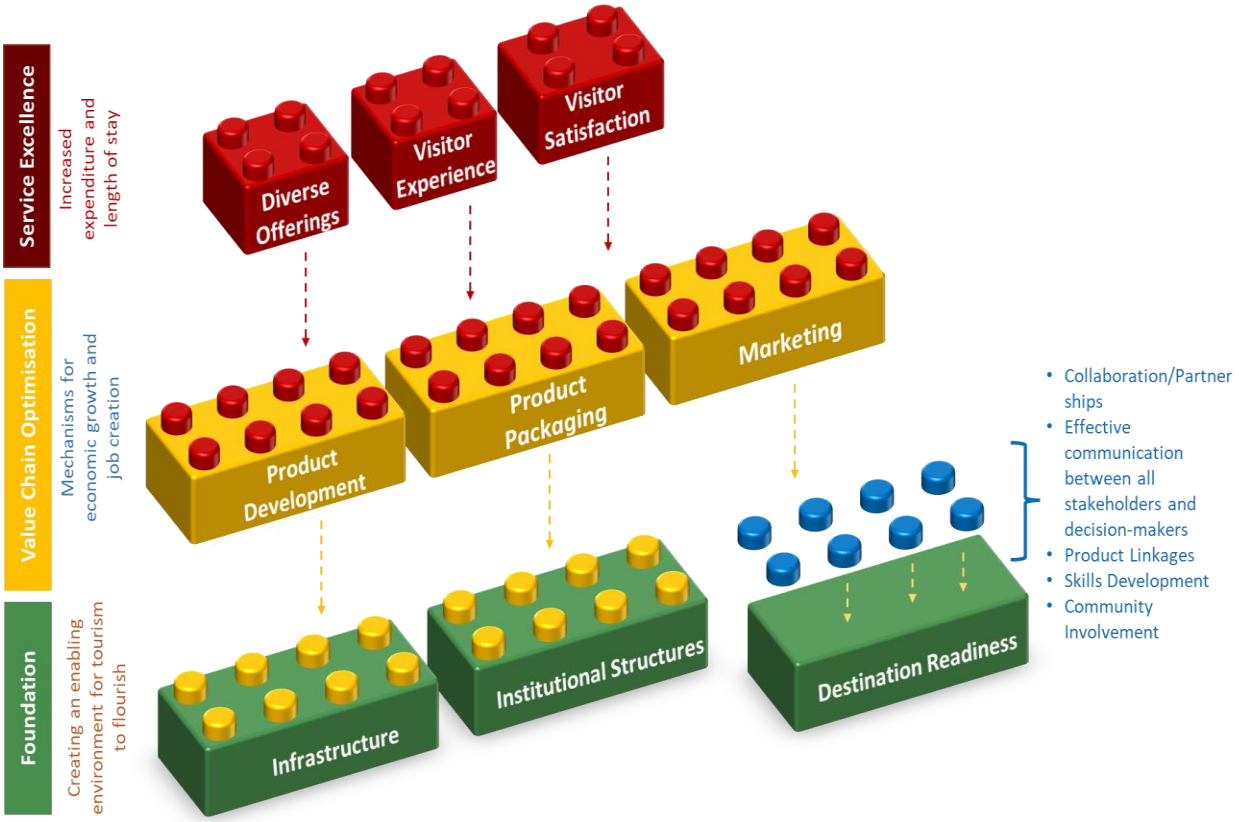
Building Blocks Approach

During the stakeholder engagement process, several recurring themes emerged across the various areas in the municipality. Stakeholders highlighted the need to strengthen the basic elements of tourism first. Many described this as *"getting the basics right", "returning to the drawing board",* and *"rebuilding the foundations of the tourism sector before introducing new developments."*



In response to this feedback, the tourism strategy aims to outline how the sector should be structured, with a strong focus on the core elements that must be in place for effective functioning. The figure below demonstrates the importance of establishing a solid foundation that will enable tourism to develop and grow sustainably.

Figure 16: Strategic direction building blocks

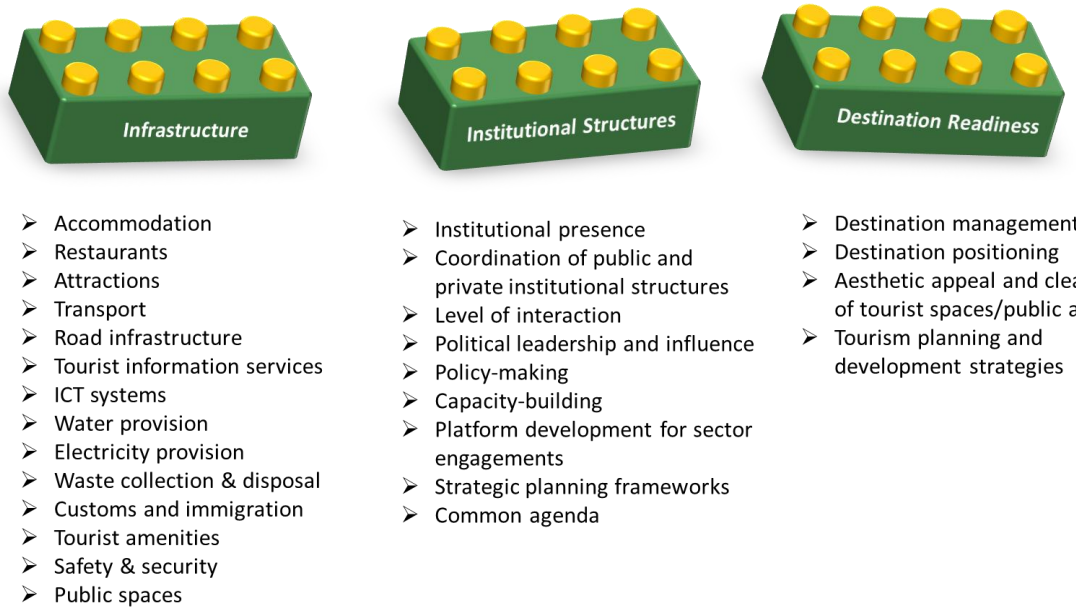


Achieving service excellence and visitor satisfaction is the main goal, as this leads to repeat visits and increased tourism spending and length of stay. However, a destination must have the right systems and processes in place before it can successfully host tourists. This is why the foundation of the tourism sector is critical for sustainable growth. The key building blocks must be established first before further development can occur. The quality and strength of this foundation will shape the position, resilience, and long-term success of the sector.

Securing the Foundation

The foundation is what supports the tourism sector and carries its weight. In the same way, the tourism foundation must be strong enough to support both supply and demand, while also withstanding uncertainty, unexpected events such as the decline in tourism during the pandemic, and other external pressures. A solid foundation helps keep the sector stable. However, there are cracks in the current tourism foundation in the local municipality. These weaknesses are affecting the stability of the sector and making it vulnerable to. The figure below highlights the main foundational categories and the key components within each that require attention.

Figure 17: Foundational components of the tourism sector



Stakeholders expressed significant concern about fundamental challenges that continue to hinder tourism growth. Throughout the engagements, the importance of *"getting the basics right"* were emphasised and the need for stronger communication among all relevant parties was highlighted. While both Limpopo and Greater Tzaneen have strong tourism supply and meaningful opportunities, it remains difficult to unlock this potential when essential systems and processes are not functioning properly.

The key components that hold the building blocks together and connect the different levels of operations within the tourism sector include the following:

- Collaboration/partnerships;
- Effective communication between all stakeholders and decision-makers;
- Product linkages;
- Skills development; and
- Community involvement.

These components should be prioritised and implemented throughout the tourism sector to guide, monitor and evaluate progress in Greater Tzaneen. The foundational building blocks of the local tourism sector to guide, monitor and evaluate progress in Greater Tzaneen. The foundational building blocks of the local tourism sector need to be reviewed and properly implemented to positively influence tourism development in the area and benefit all role players involved.

Value Chain Optimisation

For Greater Tzaneen to fully benefit from tourism growth, strong linkages between the various industries within the tourism value chain must be established. When the foundational elements are in place and relevant processes are implemented effectively, an enabling environment is created for the value chain

to function successfully. Key areas of focus include product development, packaging, and marketing. With the right structures to develop tourism products, package them to meet visitor demand, and promote them to target markets, the sector can expand and deliver greater economic benefits. Optimising the value chain will help build an inclusive tourism sector that supports market access, job creation, skills development, funding, and support for SMMEs.

Visitor Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction can be defined as the degree to which a tourist's expectations, desires, and needs are met or exceeded through their experience with a product or service during a trip. Measuring tourist satisfaction is important for several reasons:

- Satisfied tourists will stay longer and spend more and will most likely be returning visitors;
- They promote the service provider by word of mouth, on social media and online reviews – thereby contributing to business and destination competitiveness;
- They bring friends and family on their next visit; and
- Tourism is about consuming and exploring unknown products in unfamiliar surroundings and is classified as an *"export"* in economic terms.

The main goal is to provide travellers to the Greater Tzaneen region with unique, high-quality experiences through excellent product and service delivery. As highlighted above, when tourism attractions and activities deliver high levels of visitor satisfaction, they enhance Greater Tzaneen's competitiveness and help position it as a leading destination in Limpopo.

To conclude, the Strategic Direction for tourism in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality establishes a clear and practical framework by positioning tourism as a catalyst for inclusive economic growth and community upliftment. By articulating a shared vision, defined objectives and a structured building-blocks approach, the strategy emphasises the importance of strengthening foundational elements before pursuing large-scale expansion. Addressing critical challenges such as **infrastructure gaps, fragmented coordination, limited product diversification and inconsistent marketing** is essential to stabilise the sector and unlock its full potential. A strong focus on **collaboration, effective communication, skills development, community participation and value-chain optimisation** will ensure that tourism development is both resilient and sustainable.

The emphasis on **visitor satisfaction** underscores the ultimate measure of success for the strategy. By meeting and exceeding visitor expectations through quality experiences, reliable services and authentic local offerings, Greater Tzaneen can encourage longer stays, repeat visitation and positive destination advocacy. This, in turn, will enhance the municipality's competitiveness and increase the economic returns of tourism for local businesses and communities.

Building on this strategic foundation, the next section of the report introduces the Tourism Development Pillars. These pillars translate the strategic direction into focused areas of action, each supported by clear objectives, key considerations and targeted interventions. Together, they provide a practical roadmap for

implementation, guiding investment decisions, institutional coordination and programme prioritisation to ensure that tourism development in Greater Tzaneen is coherent, inclusive and aligned with broader municipal development goals.

Development Pillars

This section builds on the foundation set out for the tourism strategy that is highlighted in the previous section. It emphasised the key development pillars, along with the key objectives set out to be achieved by each of these pillars.

5.1. Destination Accessibility

This pillar focuses on addressing obstacles that limit the ability of both international and domestic tourists to travel to and within the region. Even with strong branding, marketing, a quality product, sector growth will be constrained if restrictive conditions remain the regulatory environment. Improving ease of access will support higher tourist numbers.

For Greater Tzaneen, key limitations as identified by stakeholders include the following:

- **Poor road conditions** were identified as the most significant barrier to accessibility, especially along the R525. Stakeholders reported that many roads across the municipality are in a deteriorated state, creating safety risks, hindering access to attractions, and negatively impacting the overall visitor experience.
- **Seasonal inaccessibility** of roads was highlighted as a recurring problem. During periods of heavy rainfall, certain routes become unsafe and completely inaccessible, resulting in loss of business for tourism establishments.
- **Insufficient road maintenance**, particularly in high traffic tourism areas like Magoebaskloof, limits mobility and negatively affects the attractiveness of the destination. Stakeholders further noted the need for upgrades and better upkeep on roads between Phalaborwa and Magoebaskloof.
- **Inadequate signage** at key attractions and along main routes reduces the ease with which visitors can navigate the area, affecting their ability to access tourism sites confidently and safely.
- **Limited availability of qualified tour guides** further constrains visitor mobility and access to structured tourism experiences, particularly in remote areas.
- **Unreliable electricity supply**, especially in mountainous areas, disrupts operations at establishments located along key routes and can compromise visitor safety and comfort during travel. Stakeholders emphasised that electricity challenges are mostly due to local municipal maintenance failures rather than load shedding or Eskom related issues.
- **Lack of integrated planning and coordination** among tourism stakeholders results in fragmented infrastructure development and inconsistent improvements to access routes.
- Without a **detailed profile of high-potential tourism assets**, it is difficult to make strategic investments in infrastructure that enables access to sites with strong demand or promising development prospects.

- **Public transport** was repeatedly identified as unsafe, unreliable, and a barrier for both local tourism staff who need transport to work, as well as international tourists who rely on safe mobility options.

Objectives

Destination accessibility is a critical component of a successful tourism sector, as it directly influences how easily and safely visitors can reach and move within Greater Tzaneen. Reliable transport networks, quality roads and clear signage are essential for creating a positive visitor experience and supporting tourism growth. Setting objectives for destination accessibility helps to prioritise infrastructure improvements and align tourism needs with municipal planning. The following objectives have been identified:

1. **Improving basic infrastructure conditions and related services through effective, ongoing maintenance and support.**
2. **Enhance informational and directional signage along all major routes and key tourism corridors within the region.**
3. **Ensure year-round accessibility to all priority tourist attractions, including during adverse weather conditions.**
4. **Strengthen coordination among key stakeholders to ensure integrated planning and prioritisation of access routes.**
5. **Improve safety, reliability, and resilience of essential services along key tourism routes.**
6. **Develop and implement a prioritised investment plan for upgrading key access routes to high-potential tourism assets.**

The objectives set for improving destination accessibility are mainly focused on strengthening infrastructure, enhancing route signage, ensuring year-round access to attractions, improving service reliability, and promoting coordinated planning among stakeholders.

Key Considerations and Interventions

The following should be considered when addressing destination accessibility as indicated in the table below.

Table 5-2: Key considerations and interventions - destination accessibility

Objectives	Key Considerations	Interventions
1. Improving basic infrastructure conditions and related services through effective, ongoing maintenance and support.	➢ Many access roads are in poor condition and deteriorate further during heavy rains. ➢ Limited municipal budget and competing infrastructure priorities. ➢ Maintenance backlogs across rural and tourism critical routes. ➢ Need for collaboration between municipal, provincial, and national road authorities.	➢ Conduct a comprehensive audit of road conditions and prioritise routes linked to high-potential tourism assets. ➢ Establish a joint maintenance plan with public roads, provincial roads departments, and the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL). ➢ Allocate ring fenced budget for routine and preventative road maintenance. ➢ Upgrade drainage systems on vulnerable roads to ensure durability during rainy seasons.
2. Enhance informational and directional signage along all major routes and key tourism corridors within the region.	➢ Signage is inconsistent, outdated, or missing in several areas. ➢ Visitors struggle to navigate remote attractions, resulting in reduced visitation. ➢ Branding and information standards are not uniform across the region.	➢ Implement a signage audit to identify priority areas and gaps. ➢ Design standardised tourism signage aligned with provincial and national norms. ➢ Install directional, informational, and safety signage along key routes and high-traffic attractions.
3. Ensure year-round accessibility to all priority tourist attractions, including during adverse weather conditions.	➢ Heavy rainfall causes certain roads to become inaccessible, specifically the Bacheario road. ➢ Seasonal interruptions threaten business continuity for tourism establishments. ➢ Poor stormwater infrastructure increases erosion and road damage.	➢ Upgrade gravel roads to all-weather surfaces in high-risk areas. ➢ Improve stormwater drainage, culverts, and runoff systems along vulnerable routes. ➢ Introduce seasonal rapid response maintenance teams to address weather related damage. ➢ Implement an emergency access protocol for attractions prone to weather related isolation.
4. Strengthen coordination among	➢ Fragmented planning between local municipality, provincial departments, SANRAL, and tourism bodies.	➢ Establish a multi-stakeholder Tourism Infrastructure Coordination Forum.

Objectives	Key Considerations	Interventions
key stakeholders to ensure integrated planning and prioritisation of access routes.	➢ Lack of a shared infrastructure development framework. ➢ Insufficient communication on project priorities and timelines.	➢ Develop a shared annual work plan for access route upgrades. ➢ Integrate tourism infrastructure needs into municipal IDPs and provincial strategies. ➢ Conduct quarterly progress reviews involving all road authorities and tourism stakeholders.
5. Improve safety, reliability, and resilience of essential services along key tourism routes.	➢ Frequent electricity outages affect visitor safety, especially in remote and mountainous areas. ➢ Lack of street lighting and emergency support on certain roads. ➢ Tourism establishments without backup energy sources face operational challenges.	➢ Partner with Eskom and the municipality to prioritise stability of supply in key tourism zones. ➢ Install solar-powered lighting at key intersections, parking areas, and viewpoints. ➢ Offer incentives or support programmes for establishments to adopt solar or hybrid backup power systems. ➢ Implement a rapid response protocol for outages affecting major routes.
6. Develop and implement a prioritised investment plan for upgrading key access routes to high-potential tourism assets.	➢ Lack of a detailed tourism asset profile limits targeted investment decisions. ➢ Some high potential sites are difficult to reach due to poor or unpaved roads. ➢ Funding must be directed where the highest economic return is expected.	➢ Conduct a tourism asset mapping and profiling exercise for the region. ➢ Categorise assets based on tourism potential, accessibility needs, and economic impact. ➢ Create a phased investment plan for upgrading strategic access routes. ➢ Seek co-funding or partnerships with the private sector, provincial government, and development agencies.

5.2. Destination Management

Destination management relates to the **practices, activities and relationships that help organise the tourism system**. These typically include planning; the development of standards, guidelines, and regulations; research; the definition of roles and responsibilities; and the development of structures and processes that organise information flows and relationships between the various stakeholders to optimise the destination's performance. Effective and proactive destination management is critical for competitiveness.

For Greater Tzaneen, key limitations as identified by stakeholders include the following:

- Tourism stakeholders often work in silos, resulting in fragmented planning and implementation.
- Lack of structured tourism forums reduces communication and collaboration among stakeholders.
- Conflicts between local communities and traditional authorities lead to stalled or lost support for tourism initiatives.
- Reliance on LTAs for marketing due to limited municipal budgets.
- Marketing campaigns are fragmented with insufficient unified strategy or municipal oversight.
- Limited resources restrict participation in key trade shows and tourism events.
- Overreliance on single ambassadors or entities reduces collective responsibility for destination promotion.
- Financial support for tourism projects is limited due to capacity constraints of funding institutions.
- Existing tourism support programmes are underfunded or lack continuity.
- Insufficient profiling of key attractions limits targeted investment and prioritisation.
- Shortage of trained local tourism guides for key attractions.
- Poor customer service and soft skills at tourism establishments.
- Limited awareness and implementation of grading systems for local tourism establishments.
- Absence of a dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system tracking regional tourism targets and lessons learned.
- Insufficient post-funding monitoring and supported projects, leading to unsustainable initiatives.
- Lack of a comprehensive tourism crime prevention strategy in hotspot areas, affecting visitor safety and confidence.
- Opportunities for joint niche tourism development, such as MICE, outdoor tourism, and events, are not fully exploited.
- Poor coordination with surrounding municipalities reduces regional tourism integration and shared benefits.

Objectives

Greater Tzaneen faces challenges in **coordination, resource allocation, and stakeholder collaboration** that limit the effectiveness of tourism initiatives. Clear objectives for destination management are needed to strengthen partnerships, improve planning and oversight, and ensure sustainable and well-coordinated tourism development. The following objectives have been identified:

1. **Strengthen stakeholder coordination and collaboration.**
2. **Develop and implement a unified destination marketing strategy.**
3. **Enhance investment support and financial sustainability.**
4. **Improve the quality and professionalism of tourism services.**
5. **Establish a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability framework.**
6. **Promote regional integration and collaboration in niche and speciality tourism development.**

The objectives identified for destination management focus on strengthening stakeholder coordination, enhancing marketing and investment support, improving tourism services, ensuring accountability and safety, and promoting regional integration and niche tourism development.

Key Considerations and Interventions

The following should be considered when addressing destination management.

Table 5-3: Key considerations and interventions - destination management

Objectives	Key Considerations	Interventions
1. Strengthen stakeholder coordination and collaboration	➢ Fragmented planning and siloed operations reduce effectiveness. ➢ Conflicts between communities and traditional authorities can hinder tourism development. ➢ Effective partnerships are essential for integrated regional tourism planning.	➢ Establish structured tourism forums for regular stakeholder engagement. ➢ Develop formal agreements between municipalities, communities and traditional authorities. ➢ Encourage joint planning workshops to align priorities and share responsibilities.
2. Develop and implement a unified destination marketing strategy	➢ Current marketing is fragmented, relying heavily on LTAs and limited municipal budgets. ➢ Digital platforms are underutilised in a coordinated way. ➢ Joint marketing can improve reach and attract diverse markets.	➢ Create a destination wide marketing plan with input from all stakeholders. ➢ Leverage proximity to key attractions (e.g., Kruger National Park) for campaigns. ➢ Coordinate regional campaigns with neighbouring municipalities to strengthen tourism linkages. ➢ Encourage joint branding and shared digital marketing platforms.
3. Enhance investment support and financial sustainability	➢ Tourism projects face underfunding and limited continuity. ➢ Financial institutions are not fully engaged with local tourism initiatives. ➢ Profiling of attractions is incomplete which limits targeted investment.	➢ Map and profile key tourism attractions to identify investment needs. ➢ Engage national and regional funding institutions (NDT, NEF, IDC, SEDFA) for support. ➢ Establish post-establishment support programmes to ensure sustainability of funded projects. ➢ Explore public-private partnerships for priority tourism developments.
4. Improve the quality and professionalism of tourism services	➢ Shortage of trained local tour guides. ➢ Weak customer service and soft skills impact visitor experience.	➢ Implement local training programmes for tour guides and hospitality staff. ➢ Conduct customer service and soft skills workshop for tourism personnel.

Objectives	Key Considerations	Interventions
	➢ Grading of tourism establishments is incomplete or inconsistent.	➢ Run awareness campaigns on TGCSA grading for local establishments. ➢ Establish quality standards monitoring to ensure compliance and consistency.
5. Establish a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability framework	➢ Lack of M&E limits visibility on tourism project impact. ➢ Post-funding monitoring is weak, risking unsustainable initiatives. ➢ Crime and safety issues reduce visitor confidence and hinder growth.	➢ Develop a regional M&E system tracking tourism targets, lessons, and impacts. ➢ Implement post-funding monitoring mechanisms for funded projects and SMMEs. ➢ Introduce a targeted tourism crime prevention strategy in hotspot areas. ➢ Conduct regular reporting to inform decision-making and adjust strategies.
6. Promote regional integration and collaboration in niche and speciality tourism development	➢ Niche markets (MICE, events, adventure, cultural tourism) are underdeveloped. ➢ Poor coordination with neighbouring municipalities reduces regional tourism potential. ➢ Lack of integrated tourism routes and product packaging limits visitor spend.	➢ Develop and package niche tourism products linking multiple attractions or municipalities. ➢ Encourage regional collaboration for joint events, festivals, and marketing campaigns. ➢ Integrate outdoor, adventure, and cultural heritage experiences into cohesive itineraries. ➢ Support multi-stakeholder initiatives to enhance regional tourism networks.

5.3. Product Development

Delivering experiences that are **distinctive, environmentally responsible, authentic, and rich in storytelling that are supported by excellent service** across the entire visitor experience journey, is essential for strengthening the destination's appeal. This pillar focuses on improving all aspects of the visitor experience by enhancing key touchpoints throughout the trip. It encompasses the development, maintenance, and upgrading of tourism specific infrastructure, including:

- Visitor facilities and amenities at attractions;
- Public convenience infrastructure (e.g., restrooms, picnic sites, viewpoints etc.);
- Interpretation infrastructure such as information boards, storytelling displays, and cultural signage;
- Safety infrastructure (e.g., emergency points);
- Accessibility infrastructure for diverse visitor groups;
- General destination enhancements;
- New tourism experiences;
- Infrastructure supporting unique, authentic, and nature-based experiences; and
- Digital visitor information platforms and on-site technology enhancements.

For Greater Tzaneen, key limitations as identified by stakeholders include the following:

- Underutilisation of natural and forest assets managed by government entities remain underdeveloped despite strong potential for multi-day hiking, canopy walkways, and expanded trail networks.
- Weak development of regional tourism routes due to the fact that existing tourism routes linking Greater Tzaneen with neighbouring municipalities are outdated or poorly coordinated, reducing the region's ability to benefit from regional tourism flows.
- Stakeholders noted that the current focus on nature-based tourism limits investment in other niche markets. Opportunities for expansion include military tourism, sports tourism, and other specialised segments.
- Opportunities such as elevated forest walkways, canopy walkways, and integrated trail systems have not yet been developed due to limited funding or strategic focus.
- The region lacks a year-round events and festival programme, relying heavily on neighbouring municipalities' events such as the Marula Festival.
- Underdeveloped MICE market due to the absence of a centralised, dedicated events or conference centre.
- Mountain biking and hiking routes lack formal planning, signage, infrastructure, and integration into a cohesive outdoor recreation product.
- The Modjadji Nature Reserve and related Balobedu cultural heritage experiences remain underdeveloped, limiting cultural tourism growth.
- Lack of tourism packaging and integration such as multi-day experiences that are combined with attraction packages and linked tourism activities are not fully developed or marketed, particularly in forest and cultural areas.

Objectives

Product development is critical for enhancing Greater Tzaneen's tourism appeal by **creating distinctive, authentic, and well-supported visitor experiences**. Addressing current gaps in infrastructure, underutilised natural and cultural assets, and limited niche offerings will help diversify the tourism product and improve the overall visitor journey. The following objectives have been identified for product development:

1. **Product expansion and diversification through niche development and innovative product packaging.**
2. **Utilise the events industry to improve seasonal and regional spread of tourism benefits.**
3. **Enhance and formalise adventure, outdoor, and eco-tourism offerings.**
4. **Develop cultural and heritage tourism products linked to local communities.**

The objectives set out above for product development focus on diversifying and enhancing Greater Tzaneen's tourism offerings through niche markets, innovative packaging, year-round events, adventure and eco-tourism experiences, and the promotion of cultural and heritage assets.

Key Considerations and Interventions

The following should be considered when addressing product development.

Table 5-4: Key considerations and interventions - product development

Objectives	Key Considerations	Interventions
1. Product expansion and diversification through niche development and innovative product packaging.	➢ Current tourism offerings are heavily nature-based, limiting appeal to niche markets. ➢ Emerging niche markets (sports, military tourism, agro-tourism, gastronomy) have untapped potential. ➢ Product packaging can improve visitor length of stay and spend. ➢ Collaboration with private sector and local entrepreneurs is critical for innovation.	➢ Conduct a market study to identify viable niche tourism segments. ➢ Develop new tourism products tailored to target markets. ➢ Package existing attractions into multi-day or themed itineraries. ➢ Partner with local businesses to create bundled experiences (accommodation, activity, food and culture).
2. Utilise the events industry to improve seasonal and regional spread of tourism benefits.	➢ Tourism in the region is often seasonal, resulting in uneven visitor flows. ➢ Existing events (e.g, Marula Festival in neighbouring municipalities) are successful models. ➢ Limited local capacity and infrastructure may restrict event hosting potential. ➢ Events can stimulate local economies and promote regional collaboration.	➢ Develop an annual calendar of events and festivals that attract domestic and international tourists year-round. ➢ Support event organisers with marketing, logistics, and infrastructure. ➢ Promote regional event linkages to encourage multi-municipality tourism flows. ➢ Invest in event-specific infrastructure (e.g., parking, accommodation, toilet infrastructure etc.)
3. Enhances and formalise adventure, outdoor, and eco-tourism offerings.	➢ Existing hiking, mountain-biking, and walking trails are underdeveloped and fragmented. ➢ Potential for multi-day trail networks and elevated forest walkways is high. ➢ Safety, signage, and accessibility must be considered for visitor satisfaction. ➢ Alignment with conservation and sustainability standards is essential.	➢ Formalise trail networks, including mapping, signage, and safety infrastructure. ➢ Develop elevated walkways and canopy trails in key forested areas (e.g., Woodbush Forest Reserve). ➢ Integrate adventure activities into packages tourism itineraries. ➢ Train local guides and operators to provide safe, interpretive eco-tourism experiences.

Objectives	Key Considerations	Interventions
4. Develop cultural and heritage tourism products linked to local communities.	➢ Cultural assets, such as Balobedu heritage and Modjadji Nature Reserve, are underutilised. ➢ Authentic storytelling enhances visitor experience and promotes local identity. ➢ Community participation ensures sustainable benefits are authenticity. ➢ Marketing and interpretation must respect cultural sensitivities.	➢ Develop guided cultural tours, heritage trails, and interactive experiences. ➢ Collaborate with local communities to co-create tourism products. ➢ Enhance interpretation infrastructure (information boards, museums, cultural centres). ➢ Promote cultural experiences through targeted marketing campaigns.

5.4. Marketing

Effective marketing depends on **impactful campaigns that attract tourists from priority domestic and international markets, supported by strong brand management**. Success also relies on enhanced collaboration among stakeholders, requiring better coordination between local, provincial, and national tourism bodies, as well as partnerships with natural, cultural, and heritage institutions.

For Greater Tzaneen, key limitations as identified by stakeholders include the following:

- Marketing is primarily digital, with social media and online campaigns dominating while traditional marketing channels have largely been phased out.
- The local municipality is heavily reliant on LTAs for regional marketing, yet most marketing activities are independently funded and not coordinated.
- Marketing efforts do not fully leverage the municipality's strategic location near the Kruger National Park.
- Opportunities for joint marketing campaigns with neighbouring municipalities to strengthen regional tourism linkages are underutilised.
- Participation in key tourism trade shows and events is limited by insufficient budgets that restrict exposure and promotion of local SMMEs.
- Marketing responsibilities are fragmented with no collective approach across stakeholders or shared accountability.
- Budget constraints limit promotional support for SMMEs, despite initiatives such as SEDFA funding.
- There is no unified marketing system supported by municipal LED offices and ecosystem partners, resulting in uncoordinated campaigns.
- Collaborative planning and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders are insufficient and therefore reduce the efficiency and impact of marketing initiatives.
- Post-campaign monitoring and evaluation is inadequate particularly for youth-focused or funded tourism projects which limits insights into effectiveness.
- Some associations have strong digital platforms, but these are not fully integrated into coordinated destination marketing strategy.

Objectives

Marketing is a key pillar for increasing Greater Tzaneen's **visibility, attracting visitors, and strengthening the destination's competitive positioning**. Addressing challenges such as fragmented campaigns, limited budgets, and weak stakeholder coordination is essential to promote the municipality's unique offerings effectively and support local tourism businesses. The following objectives have been identified for marketing:

1. **Develop a unified and coordinated destination marketing strategy.**
2. **Strengthen regional collaboration and joint marketing initiatives.**
3. **Improve market positioning by leveraging Greater Tzaneen's proximity to the KNP.**
4. **Increase participation in national and regional tourism trade shows and events.**
5. **Enhance digital marketing capacity and visibility.**
6. **Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of marketing campaigns.**

The objectives set out for marketing focus mainly on strengthening coordinated destination promotion, enhancing regional collaboration, improving market positioning, expanding digital and trade show visibility, and ensuring effective monitoring of marketing efforts.

Key Considerations and Interventions

The following should be considered when addressing marketing.

Table 5-5: Key considerations and interventions - marketing

Objectives	Key Considerations	Interventions
1. Develop a unified and coordinated destination marketing strategy	➢ Ensure all stakeholders agree on shared branding for the Greater Tzaneen region. ➢ Marketing roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined and distributed among all tourism stakeholders. ➢ A coordinated marketing approach requires regular communication structures and shared planning cycles. ➢ The strategy should be adaptable to budget constraints and changing market trends.	➢ Create a coordinated destination marketing committee. ➢ Develop a single destination brand and unified marketing plan. ➢ Align marketing activities with provincial and national tourism bodies. ➢ Integrate all digital platforms under one cohesive marketing approach.
2. Strengthen regional collaboration and joint marketing initiatives	➢ Partnerships must offer mutual benefits to all municipalities involved. ➢ Joint campaigns require shared budgets and agree timelines. ➢ Regional marketing should highlight complementary attractions, not duplicate efforts. ➢ Continuous communication is required for cross-border coordination.	➢ Launch joint marketing campaigns with surrounding municipalities. ➢ Develop regional tourism routes (cultural, adventure, nature-based). ➢ Host shared media trips and influencer campaigns. ➢ Form a regional marketing working group for aligned messaging.
3. Improve market positioning by leveraging Greater Tzaneen's proximity to the KNP	➢ Messaging must differentiate Tzaneen from other KNP gateway towns. ➢ Packaging with KNP experiences must be seamless and traveller friendly. ➢ International markets require consistent, high-quality content and representation. ➢ Partnerships with KNP operators should be formalised for continuity.	➢ Position Tzaneen as a "Gateway to Kruger" stopover. ➢ Develop combined itineraries with Ba-Phalaborwa and KNP tour operators. ➢ Produce marketing content emphasising accessibility and complementary experiences. ➢ Work with SAT to include Tzaneen in KNP-focused campaigns.

Objectives	Key Considerations	Interventions
4. Increase participation in national and regional tourism trade shows and events	➢ Participation must be prioritised based on market relevance and budget impact. ➢ SMMEs need support to present professionally and consistently. ➢ Trade-show participation should be aligned with the broader marketing strategy. ➢ Outcomes must be tracked to justify future investment.	➢ Secure annual budget allocation and sponsorships for key events. ➢ Provide training for SMMEs on trade show readiness. ➢ Develop a standardised Tzaneen exhibition stand and promotional materials. ➢ Implement a post event follow up and impact monitoring system.
5. Enhance digital marketing capacity and visibility	➢ Digital skills vary widely across stakeholders and require capacity building. ➢ Consistent branding and messaging must be applied across platforms. ➢ Data collection and analytics should guide decisions and budget allocation. ➢ Stakeholders need access to high-quality content to maintain professionalism.	➢ Develop a centralised destination website integrating all tourism offerings. ➢ Provide digital marketing and content creation training. ➢ Use SEO, targeted ads, and analytics to drive online marketing. ➢ Create a shared content hub for stakeholder use.
6. Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of marketing campaigns	➢ M&E must be simple, practical, and feasible for all stakeholders to implement. ➢ KPIs should reflect both quantitative and qualitative outcomes. ➢ Marketing performance data must inform future planning. ➢ Transparency builds trust and improves collaboration.	➢ Develop an M&E framework with defined KPIs. ➢ Conduct quarterly reviews of marketing performance. ➢ Strengthen monitoring of funded youth and SMME marketing projects. ➢ Publish annual marketing performance reports for accountability.

5.5. Transformation

The development and growth of the tourism industry should occur at a **grassroots level** and not exclude local communities. This could be unlocked by the sector working together and looking at priorities that present good growth opportunities that will ensure the inclusive participation of more black people, especially women and young entrepreneurs.

For Greater Tzaneen, key limitations as identified by stakeholders include the following:

- Limited involvement of local communities in tourism development processes;
- Ongoing conflicts between communities and traditional authorities that undermine tourism efforts;
- Insufficient marketing and promotional support for local SMMEs due to budget constraints;
- Tourism support programmes are underfunded and struggle to sustain long-term impact;
- Funding institutions face capacity constraints that limit financial support for emerging tourism enterprises.
- Shortage of trained local tour guides needed to support key attractions;
- Customer care and soft-skills gaps among frontline tourism staff;
- Lack of awareness and support for establishment grading to improve quality standards;
- Poor communication and strained relationships between LTOs and the local municipality;
- Stakeholders often work in silos, limiting inclusive collaboration and joint planning;
- Limited tourism packaging and integration, reducing opportunities for local crafters, cultural groups and SMMEs;
- Underdeveloped community and cultural heritage assets, restricting community participation in tourism income;
- Unsafe and reliable public transport that affects tourism workers' access to employment;
- Poor infrastructure in rural areas, limiting opportunities for community-owned tourism initiatives;
- No dedicated regional monitoring and evaluation system to track transformation progress;
- Insufficient follow-up on funded beneficiaries, reducing long-term sustainability; and
- Crime in key areas discourages participation and entry into the tourism sector.

Objectives

Transformation is a critical pillar for ensuring that tourism development in Greater Tzaneen is **inclusive and benefits local communities, particularly women, youth, and emerging entrepreneurs**. Addressing challenges such as limited community involvement, funding constraints, skills gaps, and weak stakeholder collaboration is essential to create equitable opportunities and promote sustainable, locally driven tourism growth. The following objectives have been identified for transformation:

1. **Increase meaningful participation of local communities and traditional authorities in tourism development and decision-making.**
2. **Improve skills, training and professional development opportunities for local tourism workers, guides and service staff.**
3. **Strengthen coordination, communication and collaborative governance among municipalities, LTOs, communities and tourism stakeholders.**
4. **Expand financial, marketing and operational support for tourism SMMEs to improve their inclusion in the tourism value chain.**

The objectives set out for transformation focus on increasing meaningful community participation, enhancing skills and capacity within the local tourism workforce, expanding support and opportunities for SMMEs and emerging enterprises, and strengthening governance, collaboration, and accountability among all tourism stakeholders.

Key Considerations and Interventions

The following should be considered when addressing transformation.

Table 5-6: Key considerations and interventions - transformation

Objectives	Key Considerations	Interventions
1. Increase meaningful participation of local communities and traditional authorities in tourism development and decision-making	➢ Existing conflicts or misunderstandings between communities and traditional authorities ➢ Historical marginalisation of local communities in tourism decision-making ➢ Need for clear roles, responsibilities, and benefit-sharing mechanisms ➢ Awareness levels of communities about tourism opportunities	➢ Establish clear and binding agreements between municipalities, communities, and traditional authorities ➢ Conduct regular stakeholder forums and consultation meetings ➢ Develop community tourism committees to represent local interests ➢ Provide capacity building workshops on tourism governance and participatory planning
2. Improve skills, training and professional development opportunities for local tourism workers, guides and service staff	➢ Shortage of qualified local tour guides ➢ Weak customer service and soft skills among tourism staff ➢ Lack of awareness about tourism grading and quality standards ➢ Limited training resources and access for rural workers	➢ Implement structured tour guide training programmes ➢ Provide customer service and soft-skills workshops for tourism staff ➢ Run awareness campaigns on grading and quality standards ➢ Partner with local institutions and NGOs to offer accessible courses
3. Expand financial, marketing and operational support for tourism SMMEs to improve their inclusion in the tourism value chain	➢ Limited funding for small and emerging tourism businesses ➢ Weak post-establishment support and follow-up for funded projects ➢ Limited marketing and promotional reach for local SMMEs ➢ Underdeveloped community and cultural assets limiting business opportunities	➢ Facilitate access to funding from NEF, IDC, SEDFA and other institutions ➢ Develop mentorship and post-investment support programmes ➢ Provide marketing assistance, including digital platforms and inclusion in destination campaigns ➢ Support community-based tourism product development and integration into tourism packages
4. Enhance coordination and collaboration among municipalities, LTOs, communities and tourism stakeholders	➢ Fragmented stakeholder operations and siloed practices ➢ Weak communication and strained relationships among key actors ➢ Insufficient monitoring, evaluation and accountability ➢ Limited integration of transformation objectives in planning	➢ Set up tourism forums for coordination and decision making ➢ Introduce clear communication and information-sharing channels ➢ Track transformation outcomes through monitoring and evaluation ➢ Foster joint planning and collaboration efforts

6. Marketing Mix for Greater Tzaneen

In the tourism sector, the marketing mix is a **critical tool for positioning a destination competitively and influencing travel decisions**. For Greater Tzaneen, the marketing mix provides a structured framework for aligning tourism products, pricing, distribution channels, and promotional activities with the destination's natural, cultural, and agricultural assets. An effective marketing mix supports destination awareness, stimulates visitor demand, increases tourism expenditure, and contributes to sustainable local economic development.

Tourism marketing extends beyond the promotion of individual services and must respond to visitor expectations, seasonal travel patterns, accessibility, and evolving market trends. A well-designed marketing mix emphasises the creation of integrated and memorable visitor experiences rather than isolated attractions. This approach enables Greater Tzaneen to present a cohesive destination offering that encourages longer stays and repeat visitation, particularly given its strategic location within the Limpopo tourism economy and its proximity to Kruger National Park gateway routes. (Distance Calculator, 2025)

6.1. Components of the Marketing Mix

The tourism marketing mix is commonly structured around the seven Ps. These elements are particularly important in the tourism sector because services are largely intangible, and visitor perceptions are strongly influenced by the quality of experiences and the effectiveness of service delivery. (Hospitality Labs, 2026).



- **Product:** Refers to the full tourism offering of Greater Tzaneen including accommodation, attractions, cultural and heritage experiences, nature-based activities, events, and the overall destination experience. This includes scenic landscapes, agricultural tourism, cultural villages, outdoor recreation, and local food and craft experiences.
- **Price:** Involves the development of competitive and value-based pricing strategies that consider seasonality, affordability, and perceived value. Examples include off-peak discounts, bundled packages, and tiered pricing for different market segments.
- **Place:** Relates to the distribution channels through which visitors access tourism products, such as destination websites, online booking platforms, travel agents, and tour operators. Easy access to information and booking options is essential for destination competitiveness.
- **Promotion:** All communication activities used to market Greater Tzaneen, such as advertising, public relations, digital marketing, social media, events, and media engagement.

- **People:** Refers to tourism staff, guides, hosts, and service providers who directly influence visitor satisfaction. Friendly, knowledgeable, and professional service delivery plays a key role in shaping visitor perceptions of the destination.
- **Process:** Includes the systems and procedures that support the visitor journey, from trip planning and booking to arrival, service delivery, and post-visit engagement. Efficient and reliable processes contribute to a positive visitor experience.
- **Physical Evidence:** Includes tangible elements that support the tourism experience, such as signage, visitor centres, accommodation facilities, marketing materials, websites, and the general cleanliness and presentation of tourism spaces.

6.2. Strategies for an Effective Marketing Mix

An effective marketing mix for Greater Tzaneen should focus on **strengthening product differentiation, improving market access, and ensuring consistent destination marketing aligned with provincial and national tourism strategies**. Greater Tzaneen is already one of the most visited municipalities in Limpopo and benefits from strong natural and agricultural assets, including the Magoebaskloof escarpment, Debengeni Falls, Modjadji, Tzaneen Dam, and established agro-tourism activities. (Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality, 2025).

The destination's location within close driving distance of major tourism corridors and Kruger National Park gateways positions it well as a complementary and add-on destination for both domestic self-drive travellers and international safari visitors (Distance Calculator, 2025). The recovery of domestic tourism and the implementation of Limpopo Tourism Agency campaigns, including seasonal initiatives such as winter travel promotions, present opportunities to increase off-peak visitation and spread demand more evenly throughout the year (Go Limpopo, 2023/2024).

6.2.1. Product and Experience Development



Tourism product development in Greater Tzaneen should **prioritise immersive and experience driven offerings** that reflect the destination's subtropical climate, agricultural heritage, and outdoor lifestyle.

Nature-based experiences linked to forests, waterfalls, rivers, dams, and mountain landscapes should form a core part of the destination offering. Activities such as guided hiking, mountain biking, birdwatching, canopy tours, and water-based recreation should be supported by clear signage, safety information, and visitor infrastructure.

Cultural and heritage experiences should focus on authentic engagement with local communities, including visits to Modjadji, heritage sites, museums, cultural villages, and traditional craft initiatives. Collaboration with local communities is essential to ensure that experiences are respectful, inclusive, and economically beneficial.

Agri-tourism represents a key differentiation for Greater Tzaneen and should be developed into structured and marketable experiences. Farm visits, fruit-picking activities, tea and fruit estate tours, and farm-to-table dining experiences highlight the region's agricultural identity and support local producers.

Culinary tourism initiatives, including tasting experiences and seasonal food events further strengthen the connection between agriculture, culture, and tourism.

To encourage longer stays, **products should be packaged into short-stay itineraries and themed micro-experiences,** particularly for travellers visiting Kruger National Park. Two-day forest and waterfall extensions, agri-tourism trails, and half-day birding or cultural tours provide tangible incentives to remain overnight rather than pass through the area (SANPARKS, 2025). Over the medium term, themed tourism routes and small-scale events such as food festivals, birding weeks, and outdoor sporting events can reduce seasonality and enhance destination visibility.

Regular engagement with tourism operators and feedback mechanisms should inform the ongoing development and refinement of these experiences to meet visitor expectations and maintain high quality standards.

6.2.2. Price Optimisation

Pricing strategies for Greater Tzaneen should reflect **market demand, affordability, and the value of authentic, experience-based tourism**. **Competitive pricing** is essential for positioning the destination as a short break and add-on option within Limpopo. **Bundled pricing** that combines accommodation, activities, and dining experiences can increase perceived value while encouraging longer stays.

Seasonal pricing should align with provincial tourism campaigns, including winter travel initiatives that promote Greater Tzaneen as a mild-climate escape**. Discounted off-peak packages** targeted at domestic families, couples, and wellness travellers can support year-round occupancy. **Tiered pricing** should cater for different market segments, including domestic self-drive travellers, international safari visitors, and special interest markets such as birders and hikers.

Clear communication of value is essential, with pricing positioned around quality experiences, natural settings, and authentic cultural engagement rather than cost alone.

6.2.3. Place and Distribution

Distribution strategies should ensure that Greater Tzaneen's tourism products are visible, accessible, and easy to book. A **central, mobile-optimised destination website** should provide clear itineraries, themed trails, and direct booking links. Search engine optimisation using destination specific keywords can improve visibility during the trip planning stage.



Partnerships with online travel agencies and experience platforms such as Booking.com, Expedia, and Viator extend market reach and simplify booking for domestic and international travellers (Expedia, 2025).

Inclusion on South African Tourism and Limpopo Tourism Agency platforms further enhances destination credibility and exposure.

Tour operator partnerships are particularly important for positioning Greater Tzaneen as a one- to two-night extension for Kruger National Park visitors. Referral arrangements with lodges, transfer operators, and guides operating through Phalaborwa and surrounding gateways can integrate the destination into established travel routes (SANPARKS, 2025). Visitor centres and information points remain important for on-the-ground support.

6.3. Marketing Mix Implementation Strategies

To effectively promote Greater Tzaneen as a competitive and leading tourism destination, a range of targeted marketing strategies must be implemented across multiple channels. The table below summarises key components of the marketing mix, highlighting how digital, traditional, networking, and customised product initiatives support visitor engagement, brand growth, and sustainable destination development.

Table 6-1: Marketing mix implementation strategies

Marketing Component	Description / Strategy	Objective / Benefit	Target Audience / Channel
Digital Marketing	➢ Dedicated website with up-to-date information ➢ Integration with booking platforms ➢ Seasonal content	➢ Improve visibility ➢ Trip planning and conversion ➢ Adapt to changing travel behaviour	➢ Domestic and regional travellers ➢ Online planners
Social Media	➢ Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn ➢ Visual storytelling ➢ Visitor-generated content ➢ Consistent posting	➢ Engage audiences ➢ Promote experiences ➢ Increase reach ➢ Monitor performance	➢ Younger and tech-savvy travellers ➢ Niche markets
Websites and Online Booking	➢ Mobile optimised website ➢ Links to accommodation and activity booking	➢ Enhance accessibility and visibility ➢ Informed decision-making	➢ All visitor segments
Traditional Marketing	➢ Brochures at visitor centres, events, and accommodation ➢ Print advertising in regional and national publications	➢ Increase awareness, credibility, and inspiration for travel	➢ Domestic and regional travellers, event-goers
Referral Networks	➢ Partnerships with travel agents, tour operators, event organisers ➢ Word-of-mouth promotion	➢ Expand market reach and increase bookings	➢ Tourists seeking specific travel packages or guided experiences
Networking	➢ Participation in trade events, exhibitions, and industry platforms	➢ Strengthen partnerships	➢ Tourism operators ➢ Industry partners

Marketing Component	Description / Strategy	Objective / Benefit	Target Audience / Channel
	➢ Stakeholder engagement	➢ Increase market access ➢ Coordinate promotion	➢ Municipal stakeholders
Customised Product and Services Packages	➢ Integrated packages combining accommodation, activities, cultural experiences, wellness, and food trails	➢ Encourage longer stays ➢ Increase visitor spending ➢ Support local economy	➢ Niche markets: adventure, cultural, wellness, family, and culinary tourism

6.4. Challenges and Key Considerations

The effective implementation of a tourism marketing strategy for Greater Tzaneen requires careful consideration of a number of contextual challenges and strategic focus. These considerations are critical to ensuring that marketing interventions are inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to both local realities and evolving market trends.

Cultural sensitivity and authentic representation are central to destination marketing in Greater Tzaneen, given the area's rich cultural diversity and strong community presence. Marketing content must be developed with respect for local traditions, values and identities to ensure that the destination is portrayed accurately and inclusively. Ongoing engagement with local communities, tourism operators and cultural stakeholders is therefore essential, both to inform destination branding and to ensure that marketing narratives reflect lived experiences rather than generic or externally imposed imagery. Authentic representation strengthens destination credibility, enhances visitor experiences, and supports community pride and ownership of the tourism offering.

Digital transformation presents both opportunities and challenges for the destination's marketing mix. Advances in digital platforms, data analytics and online marketing tools offer significant potential to improve market segmentation, target priority visitor markets and tailor messaging to visitor preferences. Emerging tools such as virtual tours, interactive content and digital storytelling can enhance destination visibility and influence travel decision-making during the planning phase. However, limited digital capacity among smaller tourism operators may restrict their ability to participate fully in digital marketing initiatives. Addressing this challenge will require targeted investment in digital skills development, training programmes and the promotion of accessible, user-friendly technology solutions to ensure broad-based participation across the tourism value chain.

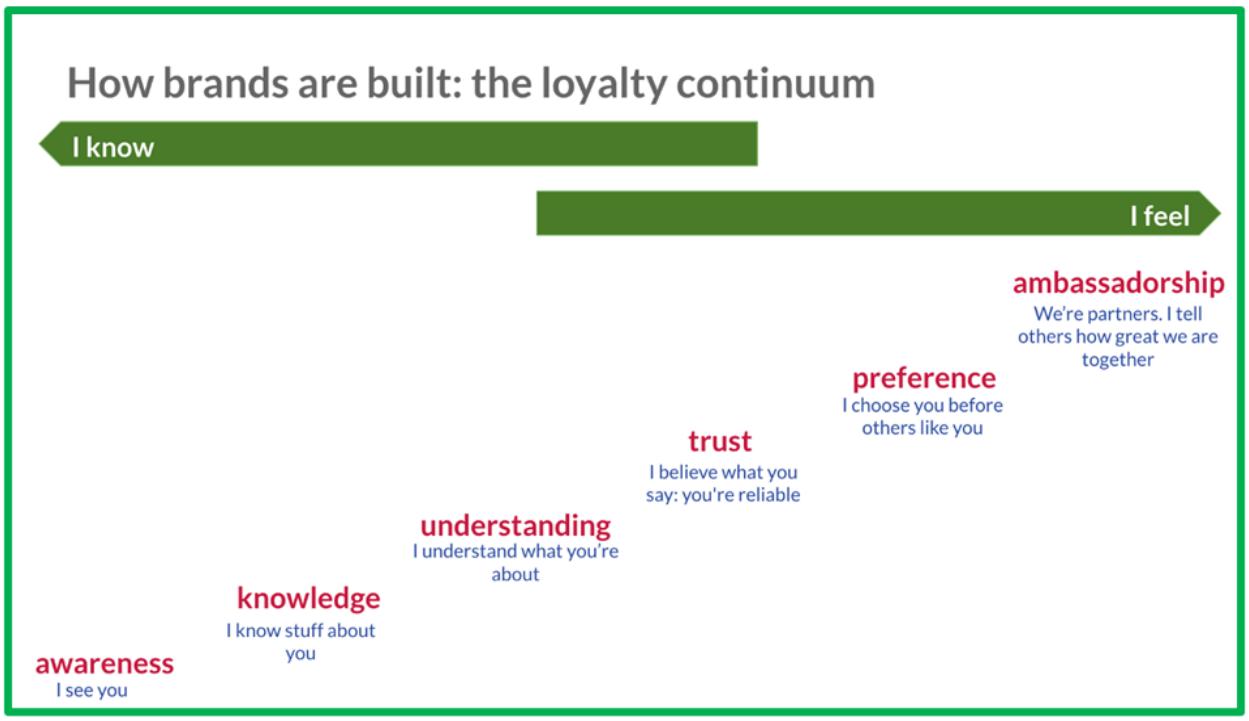
Sustainability is a key consideration that must be embedded across all elements of the marketing mix. Marketing initiatives should actively promote responsible tourism behaviour, environmentally conscious practices and respect for local communities. Highlighting eco-friendly accommodation, conservation initiatives, local sourcing and community-based tourism experiences can strengthen Greater Tzaneen's sustainability profile while responding to growing market demand for responsible and ethical travel.

Integrating sustainability messaging into destination marketing not only supports environmental protection and social inclusion but also contributes to the long-term economic resilience and competitiveness of the destination.

6.5. Building a Brand for Greater Tzaneen

The loyalty continuum in the graphic below illustrates how brands are built through increasing levels of awareness, trust, loyalty, and commitment among consumers. It demonstrates the progression from initial awareness to deeper emotional attachment and ultimately to brand advocacy. Brand loyalty does not develop immediately. It requires sustained investment in a process that begins with awareness and gradually develops into knowledge, understanding, trust, and long-term commitment. (SeoZooom, 2026)

Figure 18: The loyalty continuum



For Greater Tzaneen, building a **strong destination brand will be a gradual process** that starts with *awareness* and evolves into *loyalty* and *advocacy*. While not all visitors will form deep emotional connections with the destination, targeted branding efforts can foster stronger loyalty among key market segments such as nature enthusiasts, cultural travellers, families, and adventure seekers. These groups are more likely to engage meaningfully with the destination and become repeat visitors.

Effective destination branding depends on **consistent marketing**, a **clear visual identity**, and **compelling storytelling** across all communication platforms. As awareness increases, marketing initiatives should focus on deepening visitor understanding of what Greater Tzaneen offers and what distinguishes it from other destinations in the region. Positive and memorable visitor experiences will support repeat visitation and encourage word of mouth promotion over time.

Audience segmentation is essential to ensure that marketing communication remains **relevant and impactful.** Broad destination marketing should establish general awareness, while targeted communication should address specific interests such as adventure tourism, cultural tourism, agri tourism, culinary tourism, and event-based travel. This layered approach strengthens brand recognition and supports the development of long-term loyalty.

Destination Brand Positioning Options for Greater Tzaneen

Building a strong destination brand for Greater Tzaneen requires a **clear and consistent positioning that reflects its natural assets, cultural richness, and overall visitor experience**. A unified brand message will help differentiate the destination from competitors and provide a shared identity to guide all marketing efforts. The following positioning options are proposed to support the development of a recognisable and credible destination brand:

Option 1:



This positioning **emphasises** Greater Tzaneen' rich **natural environment, including forests, waterfalls, landscapes, and biodiversity.** It presents the destination as a place where nature is both preserved and actively experienced. The phrase *"Where Nature Lives"* conveys vitality, immersion, and authenticity. It appeals strongly to nature enthusiasts, families, and travellers **seeking outdoor and restorative experiences.**

This positioning **supports experiential tourism** by highlighting activities such as hiking, scenic routes, nature-based attractions, and environmentally responsible accommodation. It provides a flexible brand platform that can be expressed through storytelling, imagery, and curated visitor experiences. Consistent use of this positioning can help establish Greater Tzaneen as a destination associated with high quality nature-based experiences and encourage repeat visitation and positive word of mouth.

Option 2:



"The Green Heart of Limpopo" positions Greater Tzaneen as a distinctive and central destination within the province. The word green reflects the area's lush landscapes, agricultural richness, and environmental assets. The word heart suggests connection, warmth, and a strong sense of place. This positioning differentiates Greater Tzaneen by **reinforcing its environmental character** and its importance within the regional tourism landscape.

This brand direction supports sustainability messaging, responsible tourism, and community-based experiences. It enables marketing narratives that link nature, culture, and local livelihoods while highlighting environmental stewardship and inclusive tourism development. As a **long-term brand identity,** *"The Green Heart of Limpopo"* can establish Greater Tzaneen as a recognisable and trusted destination that responds to growing demand for **authentic and sustainable travel experiences.**

6.6. Brand Positioning

A clear and well-defined brand position is essential for Greater Tzaneen to **compete effectively** within Limpopo's tourism market and against neighbouring destinations such as gateway towns to the Kruger National Park and established safari hubs. Greater Tzaneen should be positioned as a lush and culturally rich destination that offers immersive nature based and agriculture-based experiences within a relaxed rural setting.

Unlike high volume wildlife destinations, Greater Tzaneen offers **slower paced and experience driven tourism centred on landscapes, local communities, and everyday rural life.** The brand should emphasise opportunities for visitors to connect with nature, culture, and agricultural traditions in meaningful ways. Key themes should include the subtropical climate, indigenous forests, rivers, and mountains, as well as the region's farming heritage and local food culture.

Outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling, trail running, birdwatching, and river-based recreation should be presented as accessible and environmentally responsible experiences. These offerings appeal particularly to domestic travellers seeking wellness, escape, and authentic engagement.

Consistency in destination representation is critical to reinforcing this position. Marketing platforms should use recognisable local landscapes, people, and real experiences rather than generic tourism imagery. Visual identity and messaging should reflect green landscapes, rural authenticity, and cultural diversity. Storytelling should foreground local voices, farming traditions, cultural heritage, and conservation efforts to ensure that the brand narrative is rooted in genuine experiences available within Greater Tzaneen.

Brand positioning must also be supported by service quality and visitor experience delivery. The destination brand promise should align with standards of cleanliness, safety, accessibility, and hospitality across accommodation, attractions, and public spaces. Collaboration between the municipality, tourism associations, and private operators is essential to ensure that visitor experiences consistently reflect the brand values of authenticity, quality, and sustainability.

A destination level marketing plan should translate the brand position into clear market priorities and communication strategies. Priority markets should include domestic travellers, weekend and short break visitors, outdoor and adventure enthusiasts, cultural and agri tourism visitors, and small group experiential travellers. Digital platforms should communicate detailed trip ideas, itineraries, and themed experiences that reflect the brand positioning. Ongoing content development, social media engagement, and visitor storytelling will reinforce Greater Tzaneen's identity and support long term destination loyalty and advocacy.

Greater Tzaneen can build a strong and competitive destination brand through a gradual process that moves from awareness to loyalty and advocacy. A clear positioning rooted in nature cultural and agricultural heritage will differentiate the destination within Limpopo and attract targeted visitor segments. Consistent messaging authentic storytelling and high-quality visitor experiences will be essential to building long term brand trust and repeat visitation.

7. Institutional Arrangements

Unlocking the full potential of tourism in Greater Tzaneen relies on **strong financial and logistical backing** from national, provincial, and local governments, as well as **active participation from the private sector and local communities**. With this coordinated support, the tourism sector will be better positioned to deliver the competitive advantage and economic benefits envisioned for the Greater Tzaneen region.

7.1. Identified Institutional Limitations

The following main challenges have been identified for the local municipality related to stakeholder cohesion and collaboration.

Coordination Issues

- Collaboration between government, tourism associations, the private sector, communities, and traditional authorities is weak, resulting in fragmented and uncoordinated development.
- Institutions responsible for funding tourism projects face capacity limitations, which reduces their ability to support and coordinate development effectively.
- Communication among municipalities, communities, government departments, and other tourism stakeholders in inconsistent, leading to gaps in planning and implementation.
- There is no shared or centralised dataset identifying priority tourism areas, making coordinated decision-making difficult.
- Infrastructure responsibilities are spread across multiple government entities, creating confusion and delays in addressing road maintenance, electricity issues, and site management.
- Maintenance of key tourism assets such as trails and natural attractions relies heavily on volunteers because there are no formalised maintenance partnerships or coordinated support mechanisms.
- Marketing efforts are not well aligned across local, district, and provincial structures, resulting in inconsistent branding and limited collaborative campaigns.
- Tourism product development initiatives currently lack coordinated support, which has resulted in delays in implementing high-potential projects such as the Engowe Tourism Project and the proposed canopy walkway. Strengthening coordination and institutional support is necessary to ensure that these projects progress efficiently and reach their full potential.
- Safety and visitor management are not coordinated across responsible authorities, which affects trail safety, road safety, and the management of key sites like the Modjadji Nature Reserve.

Tourism Budgeting Issues

- The municipality and tourism stakeholders face limited budget availability, which restricts their ability to effectively promote and market the region.
- Funding institutions such as SEFA experience capacity constraints, resulting in insufficient financial support for tourism projects and product development.

- Several tourism initiatives such as the Engowe Tourism Project and other community based, or nature-based ventures lack the necessary funding to realise their full potential.
- There is inadequate investment in infrastructure, including roads, electricity supply and maintenance of attractions such as trails and the Modjadji Nature Reserve due to budget shortfalls across responsible government entities.
- Post-funding support for tourism SMMEs is often missing because budgets do not cover ongoing monitoring, evaluation, or mentorship, resulting in once-off funding with limited long-term impact.
- Marketing budgets are limited, meaning stakeholders must rely heavily on partnerships and low-cost digital platforms, rather than comprehensive or large-scale campaigns.
- Budget constraints also contribute of a lack of skills development and training, particularly for service providers, hospitality workers, and tourism product owners.
- Underfunding affects the availability of qualified tour guides and adequate informational signage, limiting the region's ability to enhance visitor experience.

Tourism Implementation Issues

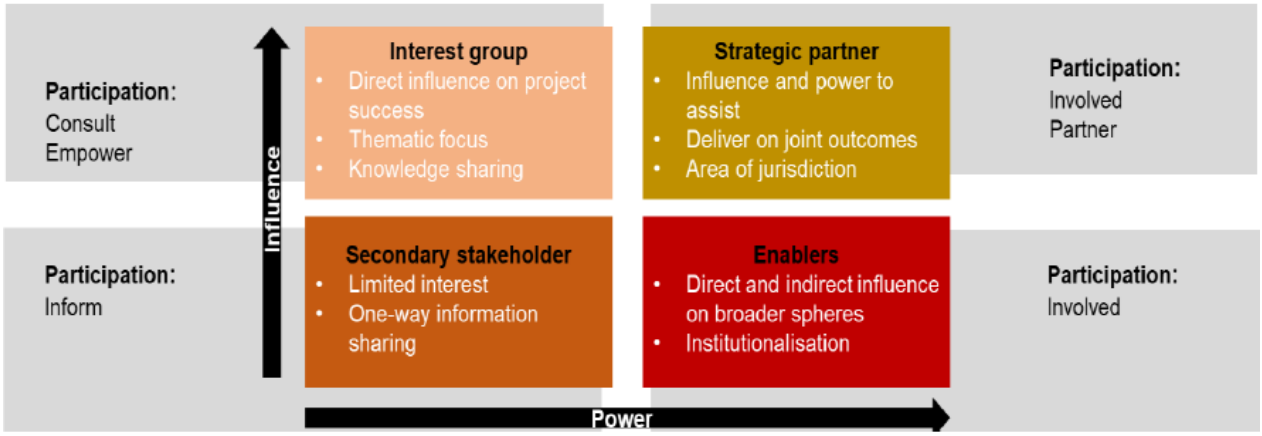
- Implementation of tourism projects is slowed down by poor road and infrastructure conditions, which fall under multiple departments, making coordinated action difficult.
- Key attractions such as the Modjadji Nature Reserve and Magoebaskloof trails suffer from inadequate maintenance, limiting the ability to implement tourism experiences consistently.
- Tourism development projects cannot progress effectively because of insufficient funding and limited capacity within funding institutions to support implementation.
- Many promising projects, including the Engowe Tourism Project and potential new products like the canopy walkway, remain underdeveloped due to delays in securing investment and coordinated support.
- Tourism implementation in hindered by fragmented stakeholder collaboration, resulting in uncoordinated and inconsistent actions across government, communities, and tourism bodies.
- Safety improvements such as road safety and trail safety are difficult to implement because they require multi-departmental coordination which is currently weak.
- The tourism sector struggles with limited staff capacity, training gaps, and shortages of qualified guides, making it difficult to implement high-quality visitor services.
- Post-funding gaps mean that tourism SMMEs lack ongoing mentorship and monitoring, reducing the effectiveness of implemented projects and limiting long-term impact.
- The region's marketing activities are implemented inconsistently because of small budgets and reliance on isolated digital platforms or single entities, leading to uneven visibility.
- Rural accessibility challenges make it difficult to implement a seamless visitor experience, as some routes and transport systems remain underdeveloped or poorly maintained.

The **challenges identified** across budgeting, coordination, and implementation clearly demonstrate that while Greater Tzaneen **holds significant tourism potential,** progress is constrained by fragmented stakeholder efforts, limited financial resources, and inadequate infrastructure and maintenance systems. These issues collectively weaken the region's ability to deliver quality tourism experiences and to fully leverage its natural and cultural assets. Addressing them requires a **unified and well-resourced approach** that strengthens collaboration, improves institutional capacity, and ensures consistent investment in priority projects. The **Tourism Strategy for Greater Tzaneen** therefore provides a **crucial roadmap** for **overcoming the barriers,** guiding stakeholders toward coordinated action, sustainable development, and the **successful realisation of the region's tourism vision.**

7.2. Key Partnership Network

To overcome the limitations outlined above, a strong and dependable partnership network is essential. This section of the report serves as a stakeholder prioritisation exercise aimed at improving coordination and strengthening linkages across all stakeholder groups. The four primary stakeholder categories, ranked from highest to lowest priority, are as follows:

Figure 19: Partnership network prioritisation matrix



The table below highlights the strategic partners directly involved in the prioritisation, marketing, and implementation of tourism initiatives in Greater Tzaneen. It offers detailed insights into each entity's challenges and perspectives, outlines the assumptions necessary to meet expectations, defines their roles in advancing local tourism, and identifies the key communication platforms for fostering strong relationships with these partners.

Table 7-1: Partnership network

Entity/Platform	Challenge/Perception	Assumption to Achieve Expectations	Expected Role in Tourism Strategy	Communication Platform
Greater Tzaneen Municipality	➢ Disproportionate investment in other economic sectors vs tourism ➢ Tourism department under-resourced and lacking capacity ➢ Challenges with funding tourism development	➢ Balanced resource mobilisation between tourism and other sectors ➢ Full buy-in to operationalise tourism resources ➢ Strengthen internal capacity for tourism development	➢ Lead coordination and implementation of local tourism initiatives ➢ Align spatial and economic planning with tourism ➢ Mobilise local resources and partnerships	➢ Tourism Department ➢ Spatial Development Department ➢ Policy and Planning Units
National Department of Tourism (NDT)	➢ Limited cross-sectoral collaboration and weak intergovernmental coordination ➢ Duplication of resources and efforts	➢ Commitment to integrated, cross-government tourism approaches ➢ Prioritise responsible tourism including biodiversity stewardship	➢ Align local initiatives with the National Development Plan ➢ Facilitate intergovernmental communication and coordination ➢ Provide technical and funding support	➢ Transformation Unit ➢ Destination Management Unit
Local Tourism Organisations (LTOs)	➢ Underfunded and understaffed, struggling to support local tourism development ➢ Lack of organisational capacity	➢ Enhanced coordination with private and public sectors ➢ Access to funding to effectively perform roles	➢ Coordinate projects within tourism clusters ➢ Facilitate monitoring and evaluation of local tourism initiatives ➢ Advocate for community and business interests	➢ Cluster platforms ➢ Local tourism association meetings ➢ Digital communication channels (websites, social media)
Limpopo Provincial Government	➢ Insufficient coordination with local municipalities	➢ Strong partnership with municipalities and private sector	➢ Provide strategic support and provincial-level marketing	➢ Provincial Tourism Forums ➢ Economic Development Forums

Entity/Platform	Challenge/Perception	Assumption to Achieve Expectations	Expected Role in Tourism Strategy	Communication Platform
(Tourism and Economic Development Units)	➢ Limited capacity to deliver on tourism priorities	➢ Adequate funding and resource allocation	➢ Facilitate infrastructure development and tourism product growth	
Mopani District Municipality (Tourism Unit)	➢ Resource constraints and coordination challenges among local municipalities	➢ Improved alignment with Greater Tzaneen and provincial strategies ➢ Efficient resource sharing and support	➢ Coordinate district-wide tourism development and marketing ➢ Support capacity building and stakeholder engagement	➢ District Tourism Meetings ➢ Inter-municipal communication platforms
SEFA (Small Enterprise Finance Agency)	➢ Capacity limitations restricting funding and support to local SMMEs	➢ Increased institutional capacity and collaboration with other agencies	➢ Provide financial support to tourism SMMEs and community projects ➢ Facilitate enterprise development and transformation	➢ EFA Regional Offices ➢ Partnership platforms with municipalities and business associations
Provincial Roads Department	➢ Inadequate maintenance of critical tourism access routes	➢ Prioritisation of tourism corridors within road maintenance plans	➢ Maintain and improve road infrastructure critical for tourism access	➢ Provincial Infrastructure Coordination Forums ➢ Direct liaison with local municipalities
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)	➢ Underutilisation and poor maintenance of natural attractions like Modjadji Nature Reserve	➢ Commitment to conservation aligned with tourism development ➢ Enhanced visitor management capacity	➢ Manage and maintain protected areas and forested tourism sites ➢ Support eco-tourism and heritage interpretation	➢ Environmental Management Forums ➢ Coordination with local tourism associations
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)	➢ Underutilisation and poor maintenance of natural attractions like Modjadji Nature Reserve	➢ Commitment to conservation aligned with tourism development ➢ Enhanced visitor management capacity	➢ Manage and maintain protected areas and forested tourism sites ➢ Support eco-tourism and heritage interpretation	➢ Environmental Management Forums ➢ Coordination with local tourism associations

Entity/Platform	Challenge/Perception	Assumption to Achieve Expectations	Expected Role in Tourism Strategy	Communication Platform
Tourism Product Owners/Operators (e.g., Lodges, Tour Guides)	➢ Shortage of qualified staff and training opportunities ➢ Limited marketing reach	➢ Access to capacity-building and marketing support ➢ Inclusion in coordinated tourism product development	➢ Deliver quality visitor experiences ➢ Participate in joint marketing and product packaging initiatives	➢ Tourism Association Platforms ➢ Training and certification programmes
Community-Based Tourism Projects	➢ Limited access to funding and markets ➢ Insufficient skills and institutional support	➢ Improved linkages with funding bodies and tourism networks ➢ Capacity building for sustainable management	➢ Develop community-led tourism products ➢ Preserve cultural heritage and promote inclusive tourism benefits	➢ Community Forums ➢ NGO and government partnership platforms

7.3. Recommended Actions

To enhance cooperation among key stakeholders and ensure effective implementation of the Greater Tzaneen Tourism Strategy, the following actions are recommended:

- Establish clear accountability mechanisms at both district and local levels to guarantee that assigned tourism responsibilities are fulfilled;
- Prioritise the institutionalisation of accountability to ensure sustained commitment and follow-through;
- Recruit and empower dedicated tourism champions within the local municipality who are passionate and capable of driving the tourism agenda forward;
- Review and enhance the functionality of local tourism forums and associations to ensure they operate effectively;
- Provide adequate support and resources from the public sector to strengthen these local tourism structures;
- Promote integrated strategy development and collaborative planning, accompanied by joint monitoring of implementation progress;
- Embrace a bottom-up approach to tourism planning, recognising that sustainable outcomes rely on active involvement from communities and local stakeholders rather than solely top-down directives;
- Create collaborative forums across regions to address common challenges such as tour guide training, accreditation, and visitor safety, enabling coordinated solutions;
- Ensure that all relevant stakeholders have access to government strategic meeting or their minutes, facilitating transparency, alignment, and informed participation in sector initiatives;
- Share information on regional and local capacity, opportunities, and gaps to attract private sector investment in strategically viable locations with demonstrated demand;
- Foster communication and collaboration on unified platforms to support transformation efforts, community inclusion, and empowerment through meaningful participation;
- Build and maintain multi-agency partnerships that support tourism development programmes and initiatives;
- Develop specialised working groups within different tourism clusters to jointly plan and manage specific initiatives, with their outcomes feeding into broader tourism forums; and
- Actively involve traditional authorities in tourism-related discussions to secure their input and buy-in for key projects and programmes, ensuring culturally sensitive and inclusive development.

These coordinated efforts will strengthen Greater Tzaneen's ability to implement its tourism strategy effectively, unlocking the region's full tourism potential for sustainable economic and community benefit.

8. Implementation Plan

The action plan is the key tool guiding tourism development across Greater Tzaneen over the next ten years. It outlines the specific measures required to achieve the objectives of the Greater Tzaneen Tourism Strategy. With an effective institutional framework that actively supports and implements these priority actions, the region's tourism vision can be realised through sustainable growth and enhanced community benefits.

8.1. Priority Level (timeframe)

The priority level involves priority assignment to every action of process; the priorities are ranked in terms of importance. Factors that influence priority ranking include urgency, value, timeframe, cost, marketing, and other operational and developmental challenges. Priority assignment is evaluated on the following level of importance/urgency:

Table 8-1: Implementation priority description table

Priority Level	
High	Processes/actions with the highest priorities are carried out first. They are labelled as *"currently critical".* These actions operate within a priority basis of high business impact. This should be implemented within the next two financial years **(1-2 years).**
Medium	These actions have equal priorities and are carried out on a first-come-first-served basis. They are *"potentially critical"* and are subject to the availability of resources. These actions operate within medium business impact. This should be implemented in **3-5 years.**
Low	These actions are recommended and necessary, however, it does not have an immediate impact on the quality, performance, or functionality of the tourism sector. This includes cases of general requests that are not tied to a specific mission milestone and has the least business impact. These actions are usually dependent on other processes to be in place first before they can be addressed/implemented. This should be implemented in **6-10 years.**

Establishing priority levels provides a structured roadmap for action, ensuring that critical initiatives receive timely attention while less urgent tasks are scheduled appropriately. By understanding the urgency, business impact, and resource requirements of each action, stakeholders can make informed decisions on sequencing and resource allocation. This prioritisation naturally leads into identifying the key considerations that will guide effective implementation, ensuring that each action is not only scheduled but also executed successfully.

8.2. Key Consideration for Implementation

Ongoing evaluation of the strategies and the progress of actions across all tourism priority areas will be essential for the long-term revitalisation of Greater Tzaneen's tourism sector. The purpose of the action plan is to provide a clear framework that identifies each implementation action, the relevant stakeholders, and the level of importance and urgency associated with it. It is important to recognise that government departments and organisations can only operate within their respective mandates. For each action

outlined in the plan, the roles and responsibilities of the identified stakeholders should be clearly defined. For instance, while the government is not responsible for directly developing tourism products, it plays a critical role in creating an enabling environment and facilitating key processes to support product development. The performance and growth of Greater Tzaneen's tourism sector depend on regular review and reflection, underpinned by a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. Tracking and evaluating the progress of identified projects ensures that implementation is on track. Effective monitoring involves maintaining comprehensive records of project planning, development phases, and ongoing progress. This approach allows all stakeholders to learn from experience, build on expertise, and continuously improve tourism initiatives. With clearly established roles and responsibilities, each organisation, department, or individual can be held accountable for their contributions, ensuring coordinated action and sustainable outcomes for Greater Tzaneen's tourism sector.



Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of a strategy such as the Tourism Strategy hold the following benefits:

- Indicates whether the strategy and associated action plans are being implemented successfully;
- Ensures that all tourism initiatives are progressing in alignment with the objectives outlined in the strategy;
- Enables accountability to stakeholders by reporting on the status and progress of the strategy and related projects;
- Provides opportunities to learn from challenges or mistakes, improving future planning and implementation;
- Allows leadership and management to take corrective actions promptly, preventing small issues from escalating;
- Build commitment and support among stakeholders, partners, and the community;
- Generates measurable data that can demonstrate tourism's contribution to local economic development, including poverty alleviation; and
- Strengthens local knowledge and information systems, enhancing decision-making for tourism planning and development.

A lack of effective monitoring and evaluation can have serious consequences for tourism initiatives in Greater Tzaneen including:

- Financial losses due to inefficient resource allocation;
- Deterioration of tourism facilities, infrastructure, and equipment;
- Uncoordinated or uncontrolled actions by staff and stakeholders; and
- Non-adherence to budgets and planned expenditure.

Greater Tzaneen Municipality, together with tourism departments and stakeholders, should establish a monitoring and evaluation framework that integrates all tourism actions into municipal planning. Aligning this framework with the Limpopo Provincial Tourism Master Plan will ensure that indicators and targets are tracked effectively, enabling coordinated management, accountability, and continuous improvement of tourism development across the region.

8.3. Actions for Implementation

The tables that follow present a structured overview of the specific actions to be undertaken across the key development pillars of the tourism sector. Each table is organised according to a development pillar, which includes **Destination Accessibility, Destination Management, Product Development, Marketing,** and **Transformation.** Each table also highlights the key focus areas associated with its respective pillar. This approach ensures that all actions are clearly aligned with strategic objectives and allows stakeholders to understand the priorities, interdependencies, and expected impact of initiatives within each pillar. Together, these tables provide a comprehensive roadmap for coordinated and effective sector development.

Destination Accessibility

Table 8-2: Action plan for destination accessibility

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Areas
1. **Improving basic infrastructure conditions and related services through effective, ongoing maintenance and support**	Road and transport infrastructure	➢ Regular maintenance of roads leading to tourist sites ➢ Upgrading key access routes to meet safety and comfort standards ➢ Installing signage and directional information	**High**	➢ Department of Transport ➢ Local Government Authorities ➢ Road maintenance companies	➢ Primary roads to main tourist sites such as the R71 and R36 ➢ Rural or remote access roads such as the Agatha Road (R36 turnoff) that leads to historic hotels as well as roads towards Modjadji that lead to the cycad forest and cultural sites of the Lobedu people
	Public transport accessibility	➢ Enhance public transport connections to destinations ➢ Introduce shuttle services from major hubs	**Medium**	➢ Tourism boards ➢ Public transport operators	➢ Main tourist hubs and regional centres such as the Heanertsburg and Magoebaskloof area
	Accessibility services	➢ Provide facilities for persons with disabilities ➢ Regular inspection and upkeep of facilities	**High**	➢ Local municipalities ➢ Tourism associations	➢ Key tourist attractions ➢ Accommodation areas

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Areas
				➢ Disability advocacy group	
	Information and signage	➢ Install clear signage and maps ➢ Develop digital information platforms for travellers	**Medium**	➢ Local government ➢ Tourism boards ➢ Tech partners	➢ Tourist routes (R71 and R36 as well as the roads that branch off them) ➢ Visitor centres
	Monitoring and evaluation	➢ Establish routine maintenance schedules ➢ Conduct satisfaction surveys for travellers on infrastructure conditions	**Low**	➢ Ministry of Tourism ➢ Local authorities ➢ Tourism operators	➢ All high-traffic destinations
2. **Enhance informational and directional signage along all major routes and key tourism corridors within the region**	Road signage	➢ Audit existing signage along major routes ➢ Install new directional and informational signs at strategic locations	**High**	➢ Department of Transport ➢ Local municipalities ➢ Tourism boards	➢ Major roads to tourist hubs ➢ Key tourism corridors
	Digital information systems	➢ Develop digital maps and mobile applications for tourists ➢ Integrate QR codes at key locations linking to route and attraction info	**Medium**	➢ Tourism boards ➢ Tech partners ➢ Local government	➢ Main tourist corridors ➢ Visitor centres
	Maintenance of signage	➢ Implement routine inspections and maintenance schedules for physical signage ➢ Replace damaged or outdated signs	**High**	➢ Local municipalities ➢ Road maintenance teams	➢ High-traffic tourist routes ➢ Entry points to attractions

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Areas
	Awareness and promotion	➢ Inform tourists about new signage through brochures, websites, and social media ➢ Provide multilingual information	**Medium**	➢ Tourism boards ➢ Travel agencies ➢ Local communities	➢ Tourist information centres ➢ Key visitor hubs
	Monitoring and evaluation	➢ Conduct surveys to check usability and effectiveness of signage ➢ Adjust placement or design based on visitor feedback	**Low**	➢ Department of Tourism ➢ Local government ➢ Tourism operators	➢ All tourism routes and corridors
3. **Ensure year-round accessibility to all priority tourist attractions, including during adverse weather conditions**	Road and transport infrastructure	➢ Upgrade and reinforce roads prone to flooding, landslides, or snow blockages ➢ Construct drainage systems and protective structures on vulnerable routes	**High**	➢ Department of Transport ➢ Local government authorities ➢ Civil engineering contractors	➢ Roads to priority attractions ➢ High-risk weather zones
	Public transport reliability	➢ Ensure buses/shuttles operate year-round with contingency plans ➢ Provide alternative routes in case of blocked roads	**Medium**	➢ Public transport operators ➢ Tourism boards ➢ Local municipalities	➢ Tourist hubs with seasonal accessibility issues
	Safety measures	➢ Install weather warning systems, road alerts, and signage ➢ Provide shelters or rest points along long or risky routes	**High**	➢ Local authorities ➢ Emergency services ➢ Tourism boards	➢ High-risk sections along tourist routes

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Areas
	Infrastructure monitoring and maintenance	➢ Conduct routine checks before and after adverse weather ➢ Implement rapid repair teams for damaged access points	**Medium**	➢ Local municipalities ➢ Road maintenance teams	➢ All priority tourist routes
	Visitor information and communication	➢ Provide real-time updates via apps, websites, and social media ➢ Educate tourists about seasonal risks and alternative routes	**Low**	➢ Tourism boards ➢ Local authorities ➢ Travel agencies	➢ All priority tourist attractions
4. Strengthen coordination among key stakeholders to ensure integrated planning and prioritisation of access routes	Governance and coordination	➢ Establish a multi-stakeholder coordination committee for tourism infrastructure planning ➢ Schedule regular meetings and joint planning sessions	**High**	➢ NDT ➢ Department of Transport ➢ Local governments ➢ Tourism boards	➢ All priority tourist routes
	Strategic planning	➢ Develop a unified regional access plan with prioritisation of routes based on tourism demand and risk assessment ➢ Align local infrastructure projects with national tourism strategies	**Medium**	➢ Regional planning authorities ➢ Tourism boards ➢ Local municipalities	➢ High-traffic corridors and priority attractions
	Information sharing and reporting	➢ Implement a shared data platform for route conditions, maintenance schedules, and accessibility updates	**High**	➢ Coordination committee ➢ Local authorities	➢ Key access routes to priority attractions

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Areas
		➢ Regular reporting on progress and challenges		➢ Tourism operators	
	Capacity building	➢ Train local authorities and stakeholders on integrated planning and prioritisation processes ➢ Promote best practices in infrastructure coordination	**Medium**	➢ Tourism boards ➢ Local municipalities ➢ Professional training providers	➢ All regions with significant tourism activity
	Monitoring and evaluation	➢ Track effectiveness of coordination efforts ➢ Adjust policies and stakeholder responsibilities as needed	**Low**	➢ NDT ➢ Coordination committee ➢ Local governments	➢ All priority routes and destinations
5. Improve safety, reliability, and resilience of essential services along key tourism routes	Emergency services	➢ Ensure availability of medical, fire, and rescue services along key routes ➢ Equip emergency units with necessary resources and vehicles	**High**	➢ Department of Health ➢ Local emergency services ➢ Tourism boards	➢ High-traffic tourism routes ➢ Remote or high-risk areas
	Utilities and communication	➢ Strengthen power, water, and telecommunications services along key routes ➢ Provide backup systems for critical utilities in case of failure	**Medium**	➢ Utility providers ➢ Local government ➢ Telecom operators	➢ Priority tourist corridors and hubs
	Road safety measures	➢ Install guardrails, reflective markings, and warning signs in hazardous sections ➢ Conduct periodic road safety audits	**High**	➢ Department of Transport ➢ Road safety authorities ➢ Local municipalities	➢ Accident-prone sections ➢ Routes to priority attractions

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Areas
	Resilience planning	➢ Develop contingency plans for service disruptions due to natural disasters or adverse weather ➢ Train staff on emergency response and recovery procedures	**Medium**	➢ Local authorities ➢ Tourism boards ➢ Emergency services	➢ All priority tourist routes
	Monitoring and evaluation	➢ Track incidents and service performance along routes ➢ Adjust infrastructure or processes based on lessons learned	**Low**	➢ NDT ➢ Local municipalities ➢ Tourism operators	➢ Key tourist routes and essential service points
6. Develop and implement a prioritised investment plan for upgrading key access routes to high-potential tourism assets	Investment planning	➢ Conduct feasibility studies and cost-benefit analyses for key access routes ➢ Identify high-potential tourism assets requiring improved access	**High**	➢ NDT Department of Transport Planning authorities	➢ Routes to emerging and high-potential tourist attractions
	Funding and resource mobilisation	➢ Secure funding from government, private investors, or development partners ➢ Allocate budget according to prioritisation plan	**Medium**	➢ Department of Finance ➢ Investment agencies ➢ Private sector partners	➢ Priority access routes to high-potential assets
	Route upgrading and construction	➢ Route upgrading & construction ➢ Ensure construction meets safety, quality, and environmental standards	**Medium**	➢ Road construction contractors ➢ Local government authorities ➢ Tourism boards	➢ Key routes leading to top-priority tourist destinations

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Areas
	Monitoring and evaluation	➢ Track progress of investment implementation ➢ Adjust plan based on performance, feedback, and emerging priorities	**Low**	➢ NDT ➢ Planning authorities ➢ Local governments	➢ All upgraded routes and investment projects
	Stakeholder engagement	➢ Involve local communities and tourism operators in planning and prioritisation ➢ Maintain communication on project timelines and impacts	**High**	➢ Local municipalities ➢ Tourism associations ➢ Community groups	➢ High-impact routes and areas with community dependence

Destination Management

Table 8-3: Action plan for destination management

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
1. **Strengthen stakeholder coordination and collaboration**	Governance and coordination	➢ Establish a multi-stakeholder Destination Management Committee (DMC) ➢ Schedule regular coordination meetings for planning, decision-making, and information sharing	**High**	➢ NDT ➢ Local governments ➢ Tourism boards ➢ Private sector operators	➢ National and regional tourism governance structures
	Policy alignment	➢ Align local, regional, and national tourism policies for integrated planning	**Medium**	➢ Policy makers ➢ Regional tourism authorities	➢ Regions with high tourism potential

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Develop standard operating procedures for stakeholder engagement		➢ Tourism associations	
	Communication and information sharing	➢ Implement a shared digital platform for reporting and updates ➢ Disseminate meeting outcomes, plans, and progress reports to all stakeholders	**High**	➢ Destination Management Committee ➢ Local authorities ➢ Tourism operators	➢ All priority destinations and tourism hubs
	Capacity building	➢ Conduct training workshops for local authorities and tourism operators on collaborative planning and best practices ➢ Promote knowledge exchange among stakeholders	**Medium**	➢ Tourism boards ➢ Professional training providers ➢ Local governments	➢ Regions with emerging tourism products
	Monitoring and evaluation	➢ Track effectiveness of coordination and collaboration ➢ Adjust stakeholder roles and responsibilities as needed	Low	➢ NDT ➢ Destination Management Committee ➢ Local authorities	➢ All destinations under management oversight
2. Develop and implement a unified destination marketing strategy	Branding and positioning	➢ Develop a regional brand identity and messaging that reflects the destination's unique value proposition ➢ Create brand guidelines for consistent use across all materials	**High**	➢ Tourism boards ➢ NDT ➢ Marketing agencies	➢ All primary tourism regions
3. Enhance investment support and financial sustainability	Investment facilitation	➢ Establish an investment support framework for tourism projects	**High**	➢ NDT ➢ Ministry of Finance	➢ High-potential tourism zones

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Provide guidance, approvals, and fast-track services for strategic tourism investments		➢ Investment promotion agencies	
	Financial incentives	➢ Develop incentive packages such as tax breaks, grants, and low-interest loans for tourism development ➢ Encourage PPPs to fund major tourism infrastructure	**Medium**	➢ Department of Finance ➢ Development finance institutions ➢ Private sector partners	➢ Priority infrastructure and tourism clusters
	Revenue generation	➢ Introduce or refine revenue models such as park fees, concession fees, permits, and tourism levies ➢ Create systems to reinvest tourism revenue back into destination management	**High**	➢ NDT ➢ Local municipalities ➢ Tourism authorities	➢ Protected areas, heritage sites, key attractions
	Capacity building	➢ Train local authorities and businesses on financial management, investment readiness, and sustainable budgeting practices	**Medium**	➢ Training providers ➢ Tourism boards ➢ Local development agencies	➢ Regions with emerging tourism enterprises
	Monitoring and sustainability assessment	➢ Evaluate long-term financial sustainability of tourism investments ➢ Assess return on investment (ROI), economic impact, and effectiveness of incentive programmes	**Low**	➢ NDT ➢ Financial analysts ➢ Destination Management Committee	➢ All regions implementing investment projects

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
4. Improve the quality and professionalism of tourism services	Skills development and training	➢ Develop and implement training programmes for hospitality, tour guiding, customer service, and visitor experience delivery ➢ Partner with training institutions to deliver accredited tourism courses	**High**	➢ Tourism boards ➢ Training and education institutions ➢ Tourism operators	➢ Major tourism towns and service hubs
	Standards and certification	➢ Establish or update service quality standards for accommodations, guides, restaurants, and tours ➢ Introduce certification programmes for tourism businesses and professionals	**Medium**	➢ NDT ➢ Quality assurance bodies ➢ Tourism associations	➢ Key tourism service providers and operators
	Service excellence culture	➢ Launch awareness campaigns promoting service excellence across the tourism value chain ➢ Recognise and reward businesses that demonstrate exceptional service	**High**	➢ Tourism boards ➢ Local municipalities ➢ Private sector partners	➢ All tourism-facing service providers
	Business support and mentorship	➢ Provide mentorship programmes for small tourism enterprises to improve operations, customer handling, and business management ➢ Facilitate peer-learning exchange forums across regions	**Medium**	➢ SMME development agencies ➢ Local tourism associations ➢ Business consultants	➢ Emerging tourism enterprises and rural tourism operators
	Monitoring and continuous improvement	➢ Conduct regular service quality audits ➢ Adjust standards and training programmes based on changing	**Low**	➢ NDT ➢ Quality assurance bodies	➢ All accredited and certified service providers

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		visitor expectations and feedback		➢ Destination Management Committee	
5. Establish a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability framework	MEA system development	➢ Develop a standardised MEA framework covering tourism performance indicators, governance, service quality, infrastructure, and investment impact ➢ Create templates, reporting guidelines, and data collection tools	**High**	➢ NDT ➢ Destination Management Committee ➢ Data & research units	➢ All priority destinations and tourism sectors
	Digital monitoring, evaluation and accountability (MEA) tools	➢ Implement digital dashboards and databases for real-time monitoring of tourism performance and project progress ➢ Integrate GIS mapping for tracking infrastructure and route accessibility	**Medium**	➢ IT partners ➢ Tourism boards ➢ National statistics agencies	➢ Regions with high tourism activity
	Capacity building	➢ Train tourism officials, local government staff, and operators on MEA processes, evidence-based reporting, and performance tracking	**High**	➢ Training institutions ➢ NDT ➢ Local municipalities	➢ All regions participating in destination management
	Accountability mechanisms	➢ Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and performance obligations for all stakeholders	**Medium**	➢ NDT ➢ Local government authorities ➢ Private sector partners	➢ All major tourism clusters

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Introduce annual performance reviews and public reporting requirements			
	Evaluation and continuous improvement	➢ Conduct periodic evaluations of tourism programmes, projects, and service standards ➢ Adjust policies and strategies based on MEA findings to ensure continuous improvement	**Low**	➢ Destination Management Committee ➢ Policy analysts ➢ Tourism research institutions	➢ All destinations under ongoing evaluation
6. Promote regional integration and collaboration in niche and speciality tourism development	Regional partnerships	➢ Establish regional collaboration forums for niche tourism (e.g., cultural tourism, adventure tourism, eco-tourism, heritage tourism) ➢ Facilitate joint planning sessions and cross-border tourism development initiatives	**High**	➢ NDT ➢ Regional tourism bodies ➢ Cross-border tourism agencies	➢ Regions sharing cultural, natural, or heritage linkages
	Joint product development	➢ Develop themed tourism routes that span multiple regions (e.g., heritage routes, wildlife corridors, culinary trails) ➢ Harmonise standards for niche tourism products	**Medium**	➢ Tourism boards ➢ Local municipalities ➢ Niche tourism associations	➢ High-potential multi-regional tourism corridors
	Marketing collaboration	➢ Implement joint marketing campaigns promoting regional niche tourism experiences ➢ Participate in shared regional tourism expos, roadshows, and trade events	**Medium**	➢ Regional tourism organisations ➢ Marketing agencies ➢ Private tourism operators	➢ Domestic and international niche tourism markets

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
	Capacity building and knowledge sharing	➢ Establish regional training programmes and workshops on niche tourism development ➢ Facilitate exchange visits for operators and community-based tourism enterprises	**High**	➢ Training institutions ➢ Tourism boards ➢ Community tourism organisations	➢ Regions with emerging niche tourism products
	Evaluation and sustainability	➢ Assess the impact of regional niche tourism initiatives ➢ Review regional collaboration models and refine based on best practices	**Low**	➢ NDT ➢ Destination Management Committee ➢ Research partners	➢ Multi-regional niche tourism destinations

Product Development

Table 8-4: Action plan for product development

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
1. **Product expansion and diversification through niche development and innovative product packaging**	Niche tourism development	➢ Identify and prioritise niche tourism opportunities (e.g., cultural tourism, adventure, wellness, eco-tourism, agri-tourism) ➢ Conduct feasibility studies for new niche products	**High**	➢ NDT ➢ Tourism boards ➢ Tourism researchers	➢ Regions with high natural or cultural value
	Product packaging and bundling	➢ Develop themed and multi-experience packages (e.g., culture & gastronomy, wildlife & adventure)	**Medium**	➢ Tour operators ➢ Local tourism associations	➢ Tourism corridors and high-potential clusters

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Partner with operators to create tailored packages for different markets		➢ Private sector partners	
	Community-based tourism (CBT)	➢ Support communities to develop authentic, locally owned niche experiences ➢ Provide training and funding for community product development	**High**	➢ Local municipalities ➢ Community tourism groups ➢ NGOs	➢ Rural villages, cultural landscapes, heritage areas
	Product enhancement	➢ Upgrade existing attractions to include innovative features such as interactive experiences, digital storytelling, and guided thematic routes	**Medium**	➢ Tourism boards ➢ Attraction managers ➢ Tech partners	➢ Existing attractions needing revitalisation
	Monitoring and innovation review	➢ Track visitor interest and performance of niche products ➢ Review and refine niche offerings based on market demand and feedback	**Low**	➢ Department of Tourism ➢ Tourism researchers ➢ Destination Management Committee	➢ All niche tourism products developed
2. **Utilise the events industry to improve seasonal and regional spread of tourism benefits**	Event development and diversification	➢ Identify and develop signature events for low and shoulder seasons ➢ Expand regional festivals, cultural celebrations, sports events, and niche gatherings	**High**	➢ NDT ➢ Municipal event offices ➢ Event organisers	➢ Regions with low seasonal demand
	Regional event support	➢ Provide grants, logistical support, and marketing assistance for community-led events	**Medium**	➢ Local municipalities ➢ Tourism boards	➢ Underserved and rural areas

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Promote cross-regional event collaboration (e.g., regional festival circuits)		➢ Community organisations	
	Event packaging	➢ Create bundled tourism packages linked to events (e.g., event & accommodation & activities) ➢ Partner with tour operators to offer themed event travel packages	**Medium**	➢ Tour operators ➢ Accommodation providers ➢ Marketing agencies	➢ Major events hubs and surrounding regions
	Infrastructure and capacity building	➢ Train event organisers in event management, safety, marketing, and sustainability ➢ Improve event infrastructure such as venues, signage, and transport for high-potential regions	**High**	➢ Training institutions ➢ Tourism boards ➢ Local governments	➢ Regions hosting major or emerging events
	Monitoring and performance review	➢ Track event attendance, visitor spending, and regional distribution ➢ Assess the contribution of events to reducing seasonality and improving spread	**Low**	➢ NDT ➢ Statistics agencies ➢ Destination Management Committee	➢ All event-hosting regions
3. Enhances and formalise adventure, outdoor, and eco-tourism offerings	Standards and regulation	➢ Develop and formalise safety, environmental, and operational standards for adventure and eco-tourism activities ➢ Establish accreditation and licensing requirements for operators	**High**	➢ NDT ➢ Environmental authorities ➢ Adventure tourism associations	➢ Adventure sites, protected areas, national parks

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
	Product development	➢ Expand guided trails, adventure circuits, eco-routes, and outdoor activity zones (e.g., hiking, cycling, kayaking) ➢ Improve signage, safety infrastructure, and information at activity sites	**Medium**	➢ Local municipalities ➢ Park management agencies ➢ Outdoor clubs	➢ Nature reserves, mountains, waterways, cultural landscape
	Product enhancement and infrastructure	➢ Upgrade heritage sites, signage, interpretation centres, and cultural facilities ➢ Integrate digital storytelling tools, AR/VR elements, and interactive visitor experiences	**Medium**	➢ Tourism boards ➢ Heritage authorities ➢ Tech partners	➢ Historic districts, museums, cultural routes
	Operator training and compliance	➢ Train operators on safety protocols, environmental management, risk assessments, and responsible tourism principles ➢ Support operators to meet certification standards	**High**	➢ Training institutions ➢ Tourism boards ➢ Adventure industry specialists	➢ Existing and emerging adventure operators
	Community participation	➢ Support local communities to develop eco-tourism and outdoor cultural experiences (e.g., nature guiding, craft markets, homestays) ➢ Provide funding and mentorship for community-led eco-initiatives	**Medium**	➢ Community tourism groups ➢ Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) ➢ Local development agencies	➢ Rural and conservation adjacent communities
	Monitoring and environmental impact review	➢ Evaluate environmental impacts of adventure and eco-tourism activities	**Low**	➢ Environmental agencies	➢ All eco-tourism and adventure activity zones

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Adjust visitor management plans and operational guidelines as needed		➢ Research institutions ➢ Destination management committee	
4. Develop cultural and heritage tourism products linked to local communities	Cultural asset identification	➢ Map and document cultural, historical and heritage assets (e.g., sites, traditions, crafts, stories) ➢ Assess readiness and development potential of identified assets	**High**	➢ NDT ➢ Heritage councils ➢ Local municipalities	➢ Communities with strong cultural heritage and historical assets
	Community led product development	➢ Support communities to create cultural experiences such as guided heritage walks, storytelling evenings, craft markets, cultural festivals, and homestays ➢ Provide training in product development, hosting, and cultural interpretation	**High**	➢ Community tourism groups ➢ NGOs ➢ Local development agencies	➢ Rural villages, heritage towns, cultural clusters
	Product enhancement and infrastructure	➢ Upgrade heritage sites, signage, interpretation centres, and cultural facilities ➢ Integrate digital storytelling tools, AR/VR elements, and interactive visitor experiences	**Medium**	➢ Tourism boards ➢ Heritage authorities ➢ Tech partners	➢ Historic districts, museums, cultural routes
	Market positioning and branding	➢ Develop marketing materials highlighting cultural and heritage products	**Medium**	➢ Marketing agencies ➢ Tourism boards	➢ Cultural corridors and heritage-rich regions

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Promote cultural routes, festivals, and community-based tourism (CBT) offerings in domestic and international markets		➢ Community organisations	
	Monitoring, authenticity and preservation	➢ Monitor visitor impacts on cultural traditions, heritage sites, and local lifestyles ➢ Work with communities to ensure authenticity and safeguard cultural heritage for future generations	**Low**	➢ Heritage councils ➢ Community leaders ➢ Destination management committee	➢ All cultural and heritage tourism sites

Marketing

Table 8-5: Action plan for marketing

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
1. **Develop a unified and coordinated destination marketing strategy**	Brand positioning and messaging	➢ Develop a consistent destination brand identity (logo, tagline, visual toolkit) ➢ Create brand guidelines to ensure uniform messaging across all partners	**High**	➢ DMO ➢ Local Councils ➢ Tourism Operators ➢ Marketing Agencies	Strategic marketing
	Digital Presence and Content Strategy	➢ Build or enhance the official destination website ➢ Develop a content calendar focusing on hero experiences, key events, and seasonal highlights	**High**	➢ DMO ➢ Digital ➢ Agencies ➢ Tourism ➢ Operators ➢ Content creators	Digital marketing

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Coordinate social media campaigns across platforms.			
	Collaborative marketing and partnerships	➢ Establish cooperative marketing programs for tourism businesses ➢ Develop joint campaigns with regional/state tourism bodies ➢ Form partnerships with travel trade, media, and influencers	**High**	➢ DMO ➢ Regional Tourism Organisations ➢ Industry Partners ➢ Media Outlets	Industry collaboration
	Visitor data and insights	➢ Implement tools to collect visitor data (surveys, digital analytics, mobile tracking) ➢ Conduct market segmentation and audience profiling ➢ Use insights to refine campaigns and product development	**Medium-High**	➢ DMO ➢ Local government ➢ Research firms ➢ Tourism operators	Research and insights
	Marketing infrastructure and capability building	➢ Provide marketing training and resources for tourism operators ➢ Develop a shared asset library (photos, videos, story templates) ➢ Improve cross-sector communication and information sharing	**Medium**	➢ DMO ➢ Operator groups ➢ Chambers of commerce ➢ Educational providers	Capacity building
	Event and experience promotion	➢ Create promotional campaigns for flagship events and new visitor experiences ➢ Coordinate event-focused itineraries and digital storytelling	**Medium**	➢ Event organisers ➢ Local councils ➢ Tourism operators	Experience development
2. Strengthen regional collaboration and joint marketing initiatives	Regional marketing coordination	➢ Establish joint marketing committees with neighbouring municipalities and regional tourism bodies	**High**	➢ DMO ➢ Regional Tourism Boards ➢ Local Councils	Industry collaboration

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Develop shared annual marketing plans and calendars ➢ Coordinate regional campaigns highlighting cross-destination itineraries		➢ Tourism Operators	
	Collaborative campaigns	➢ Partner with regional tour operators, travel agencies, and trade associations to promote multi-destination packages ➢ Launch joint promotional campaigns targeting domestic and international markets	**High**	➢ Regional Tourism Associations ➢ Travel Trade Partners ➢ Media and Influencers	Joint marketing initiatives
	Knowledge sharing and capacity building	➢ Hold regional workshops for marketing teams across municipalities ➢ Share digital content, marketing assets, and best practices for destination promotion ➢ Establish communication channels for ongoing collaboration	**Medium**	➢ DMOs ➢ Operator Groups ➢ Chambers of Commerce ➢ Educational and training providers	Capacity building
	Regional visitor insights	➢ Collect and share regional visitor data across municipalities ➢ Conduct joint market research to identify emerging trends ➢ Use insights to align marketing campaigns and optimize product offerings	**Medium**	➢ DMOs ➢ Local government ➢ Research firms ➢ Tourism operators	Research and insights
	Event and experience alignment	➢ Coordinate cross-municipality events to attract regional and international tourists	**Medium**	➢ Event organisers ➢ Local councils ➢ Tourism operators	Experience development

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Develop itineraries combining experiences from multiple destinations ➢ Promote events collaboratively through regional channels			
3. Improve market positioning by leveraging Greater Tzaneen's proximity to the KNP	Destination positioning	➢ Highlight Greater Tzaneen as a strategic stopover for Kruger National Park (KNP) visitors in all marketing materials ➢ Integrate messaging around unique experiences in the region (mountains, forests, agritourism, cultural heritage) ➢ Develop itineraries linking Tzaneen with KNP travel routes	**High**	➢ DMO ➢ Tourism operators ➢ Local councils ➢ Travel agencies	Brand positioning and messaging
	Collaborative promotion	➢ Partner with KNP tour operators, travel agencies, and booking platforms to feature Tzaneen as a recommended stopover ➢ Co-market with regional tourism boards to target domestic and international tourists	**High**	➢ Regional tourism boards ➢ Travel trade partners ➢ DMOs	Industry collaboration
	Digital marketing and content	➢ Develop digital campaigns targeting KNP visitors, showcasing Greater Tzaneen's experiences ➢ Produce high-quality content (videos, blogs, social media posts) highlighting convenient access to Tzaneen from KNP	**Medium**	➢ DMOs ➢ Digital agencies ➢ Content creators ➢ Tourism operators	Digital marketing

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Optimise website and social media platforms for search queries related to KNP travel			
	Market research and insights	➢ Conduct surveys and collect visitor data to understand KNP travellers' preferences ➢ Analyse market trends to refine messaging and product offerings ➢ Use insights to develop packages and experiences attractive to stopover tourists	**Medium**	➢ DMOs ➢ Research firms ➢ Tourism operators	Research and insights
	Experience development	➢ Create packages combining Tzaneen attractions with KNP itineraries ➢ Promote cultural, agritourism, and adventure experiences to encourage longer stays ➢ Develop event-based promotions timed with peak KNP visitation periods	**Medium**	➢ Event organisers ➢ Tourism operators ➢ Local councils	Experience development
4. **Increase participation in national and regional tourism trade shows and events.**	Trade show participation	➢ Identify key national and regional tourism trade shows relevant to Greater Tzaneen ➢ Allocate budget and resources for participation by DMO and tourism operators ➢ Plan joint exhibition spaces for local tourism stakeholders	**High**	➢ DMO ➢ Tourism operators ➢ Local councils ➢ Event organisers	Industry collaboration
	Marketing and promotion	➢ Develop pre-event and post-event marketing campaigns highlighting Tzaneen's offerings	**High**	➢ DMOs ➢ Digital agencies	Brand positioning and messaging

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Create promotional materials tailored for trade show audiences (brochures, videos, digital content) ➢ Use trade shows to generate leads and partnerships with travel agencies and tour operators.		➢ Tourism operators ➢ Media outlets	
	Capacity building	➢ Train tourism operators on effective exhibition and networking skills ➢ Provide workshops on trade show best practices, lead generation, and follow-up strategies	**Medium**	➢ DMOs ➢ Educational providers ➢ Tourism associations	Capacity building
	Collaboration and partnerships	➢ Coordinate participation with neighbouring municipalities and regional tourism bodies ➢ Establish joint promotions to maximise visibility and reduce cost ➢ Engage travel trade, influencers, and media partners during events.	**Medium**	➢ Regional tourism boards ➢ DMOs ➢ Tourism operators ➢ Media and Influencers	Industry collaboration
	Monitoring and evaluation	➢ Track leads, visitor interactions, and partnerships generated from trade shows ➢ Evaluate ROI and effectiveness of participation to inform future events	**Medium**	➢ DMOs ➢ Local councils ➢ Tourism operators	Research and insights
5. Enhance digital marketing capacity and visibility	Digital capability development	➢ Strengthen digital marketing skills among tourism operators through training and workshops ➢ Provide support for operators to improve their online presence (websites, social media, listings)	**High**	➢ DMO ➢ Tourism operators ➢ Digital agencies ➢ Educational providers	Capacity building

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Develop a shared regional digital asset library for consistent branding			
	Digital content creation	➢ Produce high-quality digital content showcasing Tzaneen's attractions, events, and experiences ➢ Implement a coordinated content calendar across platforms ➢ Expand use of short-form video and storytelling formats	**High**	➢ DMO ➢ Content creators ➢ Tourism operators	Digital marketing
	Online visibility and optimisation	➢ Enhance search engine optimisation (SEO) for the destination website and partner platforms ➢ Expand presence on major travel platforms (Google Travel, TripAdvisor, Booking.com, etc.) ➢ Improve online listings accuracy for key attractions and businesses	**Medium-High**	➢ DMO ➢ Digital Agencies ➢ Tourism operators	Digital marketing
	Social media presence	➢ Strengthen multi-platform social media campaigns targeting priority markets ➢ Encourage user-generated content through hashtags, competitions, and influencer partnerships ➢ Monitor and respond to online reviews to boost digital reputation	**High**	➢ DMO ➢ Influencers ➢ Tourism operators ➢ Media partners	Strategic marketing
	Monitoring and analytics	➢ Implement digital analytics tools to track engagement, reach, and campaign effectiveness	**Medium**	➢ DMO ➢ Research firms ➢ Digital agencies	Research and insights

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Collect insights to optimise future campaigns and identify high-performing content ➢ Produce quarterly digital performance reports to guide strategy adjustments			
6. Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of marketing campaigns	Performance measurement	➢ Develop a standardised M&E framework for all marketing activities ➢ Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) for digital, trade show, and collaborative campaigns ➢ Collect monthly data on reach, engagement, conversions, and visitor enquiries	**High**	➢ DMO ➢ Local government ➢ Tourism operators ➢ Research firms	Research and insights
	Data collection and reporting	➢ Implement tools for tracking marketing performance such as analytics dashboards ➢ Produce quarterly marketing performance reports for stakeholders ➢ Share insights with tourism partners to improve campaign alignment	**Medium-High**	➢ DMO ➢ Digital agencies ➢ Tourism associations	Research and insights
	Continuous improvement	➢ Use performance insights to refine future marketing strategies ➢ Identify ineffective campaigns and redirect resources accordingly ➢ Conduct annual reviews of marketing approaches to ensure relevance	**Medium**	➢ DMO ➢ Local councils ➢ Tourism operators	Strategic marketing

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
	Capacity building for M&E	➢ Train marketing teams and operators on basic analytics, evaluation methods, and reporting ➢ Develop easy-to-use M&E templates and tools for smaller operators	**Medium**	➢ DMO ➢ Educational providers ➢ Tourism associations	Capacity building
	Integration and coordination	➢ Align M&E processes across regional partners to enable data sharing ➢ Coordinate evaluations of joint marketing activities with neighbouring municipalities	**Medium**	➢ Regional tourism boards ➢ DMO ➢ Local government	Industry collaboration

Transformation

Table 8-6: Action plan for transformation

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
1. Increase meaningful participation of local communities and traditional authorities in tourism development and decision-making	Inclusive governance structures	➢ Establish formal tourism participation frameworks involving communities and Traditional Authorities (TAs) ➢ Create clear roles and responsibilities for all parties in tourism decision-making ➢ Facilitate regular engagement platforms	**High**	➢ Local municipality ➢ Traditional authorities ➢ Community representatives ➢ DMO	Governance and transformation

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		between municipalities, communities, and TAs			
	Community empowerment	➢ Conduct awareness campaigns on tourism opportunities and community benefits ➢ Provide training on tourism governance, rights, and responsibilities ➢ Support community representation on tourism forums and development committees	**High**	➢ Community organisations ➢ LED offices ➢ Training providers	Capacity building
	Conflict resolution and collaboration mechanisms	➢ Develop conflict-resolution protocols between communities and TAs ➢ Facilitate mediation sessions where disputes hinder tourism development ➢ Promote collaborative agreements for shared decision-making and project ownership	**Medium**	➢ Municipality ➢ Traditional authorities ➢ Community leaders	➢ Institutional strengthening
	Benefit-sharing models	➢ Create transparent benefit-sharing guidelines for tourism projects	**Medium**	➢ Private sector investors ➢ Traditional authorities ➢ Community trusts	➢ Economic transformation

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Promote community-owned tourism enterprises within TA-controlled land ➢ Support joint ventures between private operators and communities			
	Communication and information sharing	➢ Establish routine information-sharing processes for tourism opportunities, funding, and project updates ➢ Develop accessible communication channels (meetings, SMS alerts, WhatsApp groups, noticeboards) ➢ Ensure that decisions taken at forums are communicated back to communities	**Medium**	➢ Municipality ➢ Community forums ➢ TAs ➢ DMO	➢ Stakeholder engagement
2. Improve skills, training and professional development opportunities for local tourism workers, guides and service staff.	Tourism skills development	➢ Conduct a skills audit to identify gaps in tourism services, guiding, hospitality, and customer care ➢ Develop targeted training programmes for guides, front-line staff, and operators	**High**	➢ Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) ➢ Training providers ➢ Local municipality ➢ Tourism operators	➢ Capacity building

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Partner with SETAs and training institutions to expand accredited training opportunities			
	Professional guide training and accreditation	➢ Establish local guide training programmes focusing on cultural, heritage, adventure and nature guiding ➢ Support emerging guides to obtain accreditation and operating permits ➢ Create a local database of qualified guides to support tourism activities	**High**	➢ Accredited training bodies ➢ Local guides association ➢ DMO	➢ Skills development
	Customer service excellence	➢ Provide customer care and soft-skills training for hospitality and tourism staff ➢ Implement service quality workshops supported by the Tourism Grading Council ➢ Encourage establishments to align with service standards required for grading	**Medium-High**	➢ TGCSA ➢ Tourism operators ➢ Hospitality associations	➢ Service quality improvement
	Youth development and mentorship	➢ Create internships, learnerships, and mentorship programmes	**Medium**	➢ Youth agencies ➢ Local tourism operators ➢ LED offices	➢ Youth empowerment

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		for youth interested in tourism careers ➢ Facilitate workplace placements with local tourism businesses ➢ Develop youth-focused initiatives to improve digital and entrepreneurial skills			
	Access to training resources	➢ Develop an online and physical resource hub for training materials and opportunities ➢ Offer regular information sessions on bursaries, SETA programmes, and government-funded training ➢ Improve communication on training calendars and upskilling opportunities	**Medium**	➢ Municipality ➢ SETAs ➢ Training organisations	➢ Information access
3. Expand financial marketing and operational support of tourism SMMEs to improve their inclusion in the tourism value chain	Access to finance	➢ Identify and profile SMMEs requiring financial support ➢ Strengthen linkages with funding institutions (NEF, IDC, SEFA, SEDA) ➢ Facilitate business plan support and funding application workshops	**High**	➢ National Empowerment Fund (NEF) ➢ Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) ➢ Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA)/Smal Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA)	➢ SMME development

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Advocate for increased funding for existing tourism support programmes		➢ Municipality ➢ LED Offices	
	Business development and operational support	➢ Provide mentorship and coaching for small tourism enterprises ➢ Establish business support clinics for financial management, compliance, and operational efficiency ➢ Assist SMMEs in transitioning to formal operations (registration, tax, permits)	**High**	➢ Business support agencies ➢ LED offices ➢ DMO ➢ Chambers of commerce	➢ Enterprise support
	Marketing support for SMMEs	➢ Develop joint marketing initiatives that include SMMEs in promotional activities ➢ Provide training on digital marketing, branding, and content creation ➢ Include SMMEs in trade shows and regional marketing campaigns	**Medium-High**	➢ DMO ➢ Digital agencies ➢ Tourism associations	➢ Market access
	Inclusion in the tourism value chain	➢ Promote partnerships between SMMEs and established tourism operators	**Medium**	➢ Tour operators ➢ DMO ➢ Local tourism forums	➢ Value chain integration

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		➢ Support the packaging of SMME products into multi-day or thematic experiences ➢ Improve linkages with tour operators, travel agents, and regional tourism routes			
	Information access and awareness	➢ Create an information hub for SMME opportunities, funding calls, training, and marketing initiatives ➢ Improve communication channels to ensure SMMEs stay informed and participate actively	**Medium**	➢ Municipality ➢ LED offices ➢ SMME support agencies	➢ Information access
4. Strengthen coordination, communication and collaborative governance among municipalities, LTOs, communities and tourism stakeholders	Governance structures	➢ Clarify roles and mandates of municipalities, LTOs, communities and Traditional Authorities in tourism development ➢ Establish a formalised tourism governance framework ➢ Reinforce accountability mechanisms across stakeholder groups	**High**	➢ Municipality ➢ LTOs ➢ Traditional authorities ➢ Community representatives	➢ Governance and collaboration
	Multi-stakeholder forums	➢ Re-establish or strengthen tourism	**High**	➢ Municipality ➢ DMO	➢ Stakeholder engagement

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
		forums for regular engagement ➢ Ensure representation from all tourism value chain stakeholders ➢ Facilitate quarterly coordination meetings to align plans and activities		➢ LTOs ➢ Tourism operators	
	Communication systems	➢ Introduce shared communication platforms (WhatsApp groups, newsletters, information bulletins) ➢ Improve flow of information from municipality to LTOs and communities ➢ Provide clear guidelines for communication during project planning and implementation	**Medium–High**	➢ Municipality ➢ Community forums ➢ LTOs	➢ Communication improvement
	Collaboration on tourism development projects	➢ Develop joint work plans among tourism stakeholders ➢ Encourage partnerships between private sector, communities and TAs on tourism projects ➢ Promote co-planning for regional and local tourism initiatives	**Medium**	➢ Private sector ➢ Communities ➢ Traditional authorities ➢ LTOs	➢ Project coordination

Linked Objective	Focus Area	Actions	Timeframe Priority	Key Stakeholders	Identified Priority Area
	Conflict resolution mechanisms	➢ Establish protocols to mediate disputes between communities, TAs and tourism stakeholders ➢ Facilitate neutral mediation where tourism development is delayed due to conflict ➢ Introduce agreements for joint decision-making on priority projects	**Medium**	➢ Municipality ➢ Traditional authorities ➢ Community leaders	➢ Institutional strengthening

9. Financial Assessment and Funding Strategy

This section presents a financial assessment and funding strategy for the Tourism Strategy of Greater Tzaneen and outlines potential funding sources as well as the budget requirements and budget projections necessary to support its implementation.

9.1. Potential Funding Sources

This section explores potential funding sources for the Greater Tzaneen Tourism Strategy, including funding approaches, specific sources and associated budget requirements.

Funding Approach

The implementation of the Greater Tzaneen Tourism Strategy will reply on a **combination of public sector funding, private sector investment, and development finance**. The proposed interventions will include i**nfrastructure development, destination marketing, product development, and community-based tourism initiatives**. No single funding source will be sufficient to cover all interventions. A blended funding approach will be adopted, using different mechanisms that are aligned to the scale, risk, and public benefit of each intervention.

Funding Sources

The implementation of the Greater Tzaneen Tourism Strategy requires a combination of funding mechanisms to support various interventions. These interventions range from infrastructure development and destination marketing to product development and community-based tourism initiatives. Different funding mechanisms are suited to different types of interventions. The table below indicates the possible funding options for the Greater Tzaneen Municipality to implement the Tourism Strategy along with their adaptability and potential sources.

Table 9-1: Funding options for GTM

Funding Option	Description	Applicability to GTM Strategy	Potential Sources
Public Sector Funding and Grants	Funding provided by government to support foundational investments that may not generate immediate commercial returns.	Suitable for infrastructure development, public amenities, signage, access roads, and destination marketing.	➢ Municipal budgets (LED and infrastructure); ➢ Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism; and ➢ National Department of Tourism,

Funding Option	Description	Applicability to GTM Strategy	Potential Sources
Development Finance and Funding Applications	Loan funding, concessional finance, or blended finance for projects with strong development impact and financial viability.	Supports catalytic projects such as destination infrastructure, bulk services, and large-scale tourism facilities that create employment.	➢ Industrial Development Corporation (IDC); and ➢ Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA).
Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)	Collaboration between public and private sectors to finance, develop, and operate tourism assets with shared risks and returns.	Suitable for development or revitalisation of tourism assets on public land, including resorts, conference facilities, cultural attractions, and nature-based tourism sites.	➢ Concession agreements; ➢ Long-term lease arrangements; and ➢ Joint infrastructure investment.
Joint Ventures (JVs)	Co-investment by municipalities, communities, and private investors with shared ownership, risks, and returns.	Appropriate for community-owned land and tourism assets, enabling communities to participate in tourism value chains.	➢ Community-private sector lodge development; ➢ Cultural and heritage tourism projects; and ➢ Eco-tourism initiatives.
Private Sector Investment	Investment by commercial entities into tourism products with market-driven potential returns.	Suitable for accommodation, attractions, tour services, and hospitality facilities.	➢ Tourism operators; ➢ Property developers; and ➢ Local businesses
Community-Based and SMME Funding	Targeted funding and support mechanisms for small businesses and community enterprises.	Appropriate for small-scale tourism products, informal operators, and community-linked cultural, heritage, or nature-based tourism.	➢ Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA); ➢ Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA); and ➢ Cooperative or community trust funding models.
Marketing and Promotion Partnerships	Co-funding of destination marketing, events, and promotional campaigns through partnerships.	Supports branding, marketing campaigns, and tourism events.	➢ Tourism businesses; ➢ Regional tourism authorities; and ➢ Event sponsors.

The selection of funding mechanisms and sources is informed by the nature, scale, and readiness of each proposed intervention. The **Greater Tzaneen Municipality** plays a **coordinating and facilitative role** in **packaging priority projects**, aligning stakeholders, and **supporting funding applications** to relevant institutions, including development finance institutions and government departments.

9.2. Budget Requirements

The section to follow outlines the budgetary landscape within which the Greater Tzaneen Tourism Strategy will be implemented. It highlights key elements of the municipality's financial framework from the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and recent budget allocations, to ensure realistic and sustainable budgeting for tourism infrastructure investment.

Municipal Budget Overview

Greater Tzaneen Municipality operates within a medium-sized annual budget, which supports all basic services and infrastructure development across the municipal area. (GTM, 2025/2026) For the 2025/26 financial year, the budget was structured as follows (indicative figures based on the approved IDP):

Table 9-2: Municipal budget overview

Budget Component	Amount (R)
Total Revenue	R2.188 billion
Total Operating Expenditure (OPEX)	R1.990 billion
Total Capital Expenditure (CAPEX)	R252 million

Source: Greater Tzaneen IDP, 2025/26

Grant Funding Sources

Municipal service delivery and infrastructure programmes in GTM are supported by **intergovernmental transfers and grants.** Key grant allocations for 2025/26 include:

Table 9-3: Grant funding sources for GTM

Grant Type	Allocation (R)
Equitable Share	R555 million
Municipal Infrastructure Grant	R122 million
Finance Management Grant	R2 million
Expanded Public Works Programme	R4.8 million
Integrated National Electrification Programme	R10.5 million

Source: Greater Tzaneen IDP, 2025/26

Application to Tourism Infrastructure Budgeting

When estimating budgets for tourism infrastructure and services under the Greater Tzaneen Tourism Strategy, the following principles based on the IDP and municipal budgeting practices apply:

a) Expectation of Scale

Table 9-4: Tourism infrastructure budget

Category	Indicative Budget Range
Road upgrades and major access improvements	R20m – R100m+ (project-level CAPEX)
Tourism-oriented signage, digital platforms	R2m – R10m (CAPEX)
Emergency infrastructure and vehicles	R2m – R10m (CAPEX)

Category	Indicative Budget Range
Accessibility improvements (disability access)	R0.5m – R5m (CAPEX)

Source: Greater Tzaneen IDP, 2025/26

**CAPEX ranges reflect municipal grant-supported work and are consistent with IDP allocation for infrastructure projects.*

b) Operational (OPEX) Planning

Table 9-5: Operational (OPEX) planning for GTM

Recurring Budget Item	Indicative Annual Cost
Routine road maintenance	R10m – R60m
Public transport/shuttle support	R1m – R4m
Tourism signage upkeep and information services	R0.5m – R3m
Monitoring and coordination functions	R0.5m – R2m

Source: Greater Tzaneen IDP, 2025/26

**OPEX estimates align with typical municipal operational budgets and service delivery scales, as reflected in the GTM IDP and annual budget allocations.*

Greater Tzaneen Municipality 2025/26 budget demonstrates a balanced approach, with the bulk of resources allocated to essential operations (OPEX) while targeted capital expenditure (CAPEX) supports infrastructure development, including tourism-related projects. Grant funding plays a significant role in enabling both service delivery and strategic infrastructure upgrades. Tourism infrastructure planning reflects realistic municipal funding scales with national costs and recurring operational expenses carefully aligned to the municipality's overall financial capacity.

9.3. Budget Projections

The following budget principles for the Tourism Strategy have been established to ensure alignment with the Greater Tzaneen IDP and municipal planning frameworks. These principles will guide the development of the budget projections.

Alignment with Municipal Capacity

All tourism infrastructure costs should be scoped to fit within the **existing capital and operational budget** frameworks of Greater Tzaneen Municipality, including projected allocations and grant support.

Programme Based Budgeting

Budgets must be linked to specific tourism development programmes and outcomes, not ad hoc line items. This approach mirrors the municipality's budgeting practice where capital funding (CAPEX) is associated with specific capital projects, and operational funding (OPEX) with service delivery and maintenance.

Leverage Intergovernmental Funding

Where possible, tourism infrastructure projects should be designed to **attract or align with external funding streams.** This reduces pressure on core municipal revenue and supports sustainable investment.

Multi-year Perspective

Given the scale of certain infrastructure needs (e.g., access roads), budgeting should be considered over the **medium-term expenditure framework** period (e.g., three-year budget cycles reflected in the IDP). This enables phased implementation and improved coordination with municipal planning cycles.

By incorporating the municipal budget realities from the Greater Tzaneen IDP ensures that the tourism strategy's financial planning is:

- **Realistic:** grounded in actual revenue and expenditure capacities.
- **Aligned:** with grant frameworks and IDP priority areas.
- **Sustainable:** by budgeting both CAPEX and OPEX over realistic periods.
- **Integrated:** with existing municipal investment plans for roads, public transport, and essential services.

Financial Projections

This section outlines the estimated costs associated with key tourism development focus areas over the short, medium, and long term. The projections reflect **planned investments in governance, skills development, SMME support, infrastructure improvement, and digital route management**. Cost estimates are aligned with targeted activities and implementation timelines to support inclusive growth, improved accessibility, and sustainable tourism development. The proposed investment priorities reflect a strategic balance between operational and capital expenditures, as guided by the Greater Tzaneen IDP for 2025/26.

Governance and transformation initiatives are essential to ensure meaningful participation of communities and traditional authorities in tourism decision-making. The allocation of R1.2 million for formal frameworks, awareness campaigns, and benefit-sharing models is realistic within the municipal operational budget and supports long-term sustainability by empowering local stakeholders to contribute to, and benefit from, tourism development.

Skills development and capacity building has been prioritised with an estimated R2.5 million, aligned with the IDPs operational expenditure ranges. This funding supports targeted training for guides, front-line staff, and youth mentorship programmes, directly improving service quality and visitor experiences while enhancing employability in tourism-related roles.

SMME support and market access initiatives, with a budget of R2.2 million, are designed to strengthen small business participation in the tourism value chain. The allocation enables business profiling, mentorship clinics, and joint marketing campaigns, consistent with the municipality's operational planning and the strategic goal of driving local economic transformation.

Infrastructure and accessibility investments command the largest share of resources (R34 million), reflecting the IDPs capital expenditure guidance for road upgrades, signage, and site accessibility improvements. This ensures safe, reliable, and inclusive access to tourism attractions, enhancing overall visitor satisfaction while laying the foundation for increased tourism revenue.

Finally, **route management and digital integration**, allocated R1.5 million per year, leveraging municipal operational funding to coordinate tourism corridors, implement digital mapping tools, and facilitate stakeholder engagement. These activities ensure that investment in physical infrastructure translates into a coherent and easily navigable visitor experience, while promoting Greater Tzaneen's diverse natural, cultural, and heritage assets.

Table 9-6: Financial projections for GMT

Focus Area	Key Actions and Targets	Estimated Costs (R)	Term	Key Stakeholders
Governance and Transformation	Establish formal tourism participation frameworks with communities and traditional authorities	R1.2 million	Short-medium	Municipality, traditional authorities, communities, DMO
	Conduct awareness campaigns (3 per year)			
	Develop benefit-sharing models, support 5 community enterprises			
Skills Development and Capacity Building	Conduct skills audit, train 50 tourist guides and service staff	R2.5 million	Short-medium	CATHSSETA, Training providers, tourism operators, youth agencies
	Establish guide accreditation and database (30 guides)			
	Create youth mentorship programmes (20 youth)			
SMME Support and Market Access	Profile 50 SMMEs, conduct 3 funding workshops	R2.2 million	Short-medium	NEF, IDC, SEFA, GTM, LED offices, DMO
	Provide 5 business support clinics, mentor 30 SMMEs			
	Deliver 3 joint marketing campaigns, train 40 SMMEs			
Infrastructure and Accessibility	Improve 15 km of gravel roads	R34 million	Medium-long	DPW, District Municipality, Local government, private sector
	Upgrade accessibility at 5 tourism sites			
	Install 20 directional signs, 3 visitor hubs with QR codes			
Route Management and Digital integration	Establish route coordination unit	R1.5 million / year	Short-ongoing	LEDET, LTA, municipality, private sector, tech developers
	Hold biannual stakeholder forums, produce annual reports			

Focus Area	Key Actions and Targets	Estimated Costs (R)	Term	Key Stakeholders
	Develop digital maps with 15 QR touchpoints			

10. Concluding Remarks

Greater Tzaneen is known for its **natural beauty, agricultural landscape, cultural heritage, and nature-based experiences**. The municipality offers mountainous terrain, lush scenery and a wide range of accommodation that attracts both domestic and international visitors seeking outdoor, cultural and agri-tourism experiences. The Greater Tzaneen Tourism Strategy was developed in line with national and provincial policy frameworks and informed by market analysis and stakeholder engagement. This approach provides a strong evidence base and ensures alignment with tourism, economic development and spatial planning priorities.

The region has strong potential to expand its **cultural, heritage and agri-tourism offerings**. N**ature-based tourism** remains the main driver of visitation. **Product diversification** is however essential to attract new markets, extend visitor stays and improve competitiveness within the Limpopo tourism landscape. The municipality's location as a **gateway and stopover** for travellers to the Kruger National Park creates further opportunities to increase visitor engagement and spending.

Community participation is essential to sustainable tourism development in Greater Tzaneen. The strategy priorities inclusive governance, skills development and support for small, medium and micro enterprises. This ensures that local communities and entrepreneurs benefit directly from tourism growth. **Destination marketing and branding** are also prioritised to strengthen awareness and clearly communicate the municipality's unique value proposition. The strategy is structured around five tourism development pillars. These are **destination accessibility, destination management, product development, marketing and transformation**. Together they provide a practical framework for focused and implementable interventions that respond to identified opportunities and challenges while remaining aligned with local development priorities.

Implementation is guided by realistic and phased financial planning aligned with the 2025/26 Integrated Development Plan. The financial framework balances operational expenditure with capital investment focused on infrastructure and accessibility improvements. A blended funding approach will combine municipal resources with grants, development finance, private sector investment and partnerships. The Greater Tzaneen Municipality will play a coordinating role in prioritising projects, mobilising resources and aligning stakeholders.

Overall, the Greater Tzaneen Tourism Strategy presents a clear and practical roadmap for tourism-led economic growth. Its phased and partnership-based approach supports inclusive development, community empowerment, improved destination competitiveness and long-term resilience. Tourism is positioned as a meaningful contributor to the municipality's socio-economic development goals.

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