Tourism Impact Assessment South Africa
BRIEFING - On-site consultations

The assessment in a nutshell:

We are conducting a **Tourism Impact Assessment** in South Africa to evaluate the **social impacts of tourism** in the key regions: Cape Town, Johannesburg, and the Greater Kruger areas.We focus on the **human rights risks and social impacts** within the tourism supply chain. The goal is to develop **actionable recommendations** for the tourism industry to ensure ethical practices are upheld. It is not intended as an audit or evaluation but as an open conversation to share insights and foster collaboration.

The **on-site assessment** is scheduled for **19–29 January 2025**.

Identified focus areas of concern are:

1. **Fair Wages**
2. **Workers' Safety**
3. **Forced Labour**
4. **Child Labour**
5. **Environmental Risks**
6. **Security Forces**
7. **Discrimination**

Cultural context:

South Africa is a diverse nation with a rich blend of cultural traditions, and this diversity is reflected in its business and stakeholder engagement practices. Successful consultations depend on cultural sensitivity, open communication, and mutual respect.

- **Cultural Diversity:** South Africa has a vast variety of cultures, languages, and ethnic groups. Be mindful of this diversity, as different groups may have distinct customs, communication styles, and decision-making approaches.

- **Respect for Hierarchies:** South African workplaces often value hierarchies. Senior figures in an organisation or community may wield significant influence. Be aware of this structure and ensure that interactions are respectful toward those in leadership roles.

- **Relational Approach:** Building trust and personal relationships is a crucial part of South African business culture (warm-up culture). Stakeholders may prefer to establish rapport before diving into the details of a discussion. Taking the time to

listen and connect on a human level will facilitate more productive consultations. This also means to always start a conversation with what is considered "small talk" in Germany, like "How are you" and ongoing questions.

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Show respect for cultural customs and avoid assumptions. For instance, be aware of differences in time perceptions. While punctuality is valued in business settings, some communities may have a more relaxed attitude toward time management.

- **Environment of Equality:** South Africa's history of apartheid has left lasting sensitivities around issues of race, inequality, and representation. Demonstrating an awareness of these dynamics and fostering an inclusive atmosphere is crucial during consultations.

Key Considerations for Preparation of Consultations

The following bullet points are a summarised list of the instructions from our blue-print on conducting a HRIA. You can find all the templates and briefings here on our website. ***We saved the most relevant templates and info for the assessment in South Africa in our shared folder.***

Preparation

1. Respectful Communication

- Dress and act appropriately for the local culture and professional setting.

- Be transparent about the purpose of the consultation to manage expectations effectively. Clearly explain the scope and limitations of the assessment to avoid misunderstandings.

- Confidentiality Assurance: Highlight that the information shared will be treated confidentially and handled anonymously upon request and the results will be shared as soon as the are finalised, adhering to South Africa's Protection of Personal Information Act.

- Be prepared for your interview partner (check the website before…). Have adequate knowledge of the (cultural, political, personal…) context. Try to learn/get knowledge about the stakeholders you will meet, including their cultural background, organisational structure, and the community they represent.

- Recognise that women and men may have different perspectives and impacts from tourism activities.

2. Safe and Comfortable Setting

- Select a location where stakeholders feel safe and comfortable speaking openly.
- Ensure participants feel the session is a "safe space" without fear of negative repercussions. If talking to line staff, try to send management / supervisors away (if possible).
- Avoid jargon and high-level English. Encourage open dialogue, but be patient, as some participants may initially be reserved in expressing their views.

On-Site Consultation Guidance

1. Building Trust

- Begin with polite small talk and an explanation of the objectives of the consultation.
- Stress that there are no wrong or right answers and that it is NOT an audit etc. We are here to listen and learn. The goal is to find effective measures for European tour operators – in collaboration with South African partners.
- Share how the information gathered will be used and ensure anonymity. Reassure participants that their contributions will not be directly attributed to them.
    - We will not note names, if people do not allow us to.
    - We only collect relevant personal data for the project (position or level of employment, gender)
    - We will not name any person in the summary, reports or presentations afterwards.
- Respect cultural norms while fostering open and honest communication.
- Avoid exacerbating tensions by understanding local power dynamics and histories of conflict.

2. Conducting Interviews

- Introduce yourself and explain the project.
- Explain the format of the interview and indicate how long the interview will likely take (usually around one hour).
- Emphasize the rules of confidentiality.
- Provide the participant with a business card so s/he can get in touch after the consultation without fearing repercussions.

The moderator plays a crucial role in obtaining the desired information and should therefore:

- Be non-judgmental and remain as neutral about participants' responses, as possible.
- Show patience and flexibility, and be sensitive to the participants' needs.
- Ask one question at a time and to ensure that the wording is clear and easy to understand.
- If interviewing a group, limit the size to 5–10 participants to ensure meaningful interaction.
- Use open-ended questions to encourage dialogue and gather detailed insights. Be prepared for indirect or non-linear conversations. South Africans may prefer storytelling or anecdotes to communicate points (*estimation Lisa/ Rachel*).
- Be aware of body language, gestures and eye contact. South Africans may use more expressive or indirect forms of nonverbal communication (*estimation Lisa/ Rachel*).
- Summarize discussions at the end to confirm understanding and agreement.

Questionaire:

The provided questionnaire is only intended as a rough guide. Not all questions need to be asked, nor does the wording or order needs to be retained. It is much more important to listen carefully and never pass judgement - think of yourself more as a neutral moderator.

Be responsive to the other person's answers and allow the conversation to flow naturally. Be prepared to depart from the interview plan if other interesting topics arise.

Apart from the given answers, it is important to capture interviewees' non-verbal behaviour patterns such as body language or emotions.

Please note your findings, the key answers in the template that you find in the shared folder. Please always save it as a new file, with the interview date and your name added in the doc-name.

Reflection Questions after the consultation

You can go through these questions after the meeting, and also bring in these reflections in the summary / results that you write in the template.

- Was each person given an opportunity to speak?
- Were participants able to share their thoughts freely without feeling constrained by the presence of others (e.g., superiors)?
- Did you notice any moments where cultural norms or practices influenced the discussion?
- Were there signs of discomfort, such as avoidance of certain topics or shifts in body language?
- Did the discussion feel dominated by a specific group or individual?
- Was the setting conducive to open dialogue? (e.g., private, comfortable, free from distractions)
- Could language barriers have hindered communication?
- Did participants seem to trust you and feel comfortable sharing their perspectives?
- Were key decision-makers present? If not, how might this impact the outcomes of the consultation?