

NEWS RELEASE

IMVELO RESPONSIBLE TOURISM AWARDS – WINNERS ANNOUNCED ON WORLD RESPONSIBLE TOURISM DAY

The winners in the 2009 Imvelo Responsible Tourism Awards programme have been announced.

The programme is organised by the Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa (FEDHASA) in partnership with Absa, the Department of Tourism, the Tourism Empowerment Council of South Africa and the Industrial Development Corporation.

Imvelo, running for the eighth year, awards tourism businesses that demonstrate sustained responsible practice in their operations in terms of their natural, social and economic environments.

Brett Dungan, Chief Executive Officer of FEDHASA said the overall winner, selected from the six category winners, is Sun International Zambia - The Falls Resort. The judges applauded the property's outstanding understanding of the interdependence of all aspects of an effective environmental management system and its excellent social involvement and economic programmes.

In the category Best social involvement programme the group winner is Sun International Zambia - The Falls Resort and the independent winner is Ulusaba Private Game Reserve. Other finalists in this category were African Impact, a tour operator in Sun Valley near Cape Town, Forever Resorts South Africa, Sabi-Sabi Private Game Reserve and Simunye Zulu Lodge, a natural heritage site in Zululand. Entrants were judged on examples of corporate and social responsibility like community investment initiatives, local outsourcing, community health, welfare and education activities, promotion of local SMME enterprises as well as local HIV/Aids and other social programmes

In the category Best practice - economic impact the group winner is Sun International Zambia - The Falls Resort and the independent winner is Zulu Mpophameni Tourism Experience, a community tourism organisation in Howick. Other finalists in this category are Abang Africa Travel and Trust, a tour operator in the Bo-Kaap, The Table Bay Hotel and the Vineyard Hotel and Spa. Entrants were judged on local purchasing and economic practices, employment equity, Black Economic Empowerment, employee training and development of and adherence to general and industry-specific legislation.

The Drakensberg Sun Lifestyle Resort walked away as the winner in the category Best overall environmental management system. Other finalists were Nkomazi Game Reserve near Badplaas, Sabi-Sabi Private Game Reserve, Shamwari Private Game Reserve and Windmill Casino and Entertainment Centre in Bloemfontein. Entries were judged on combined environmental issues including management systems and procedures,

conservation activities, social and economic initiatives, communication systems and overall awareness creation.

In the category Best single resource management programme - energy management the winner is the Drakensberg Sun Lifestyle Resort. The ATKV Klein Kariba near Bela-Bela earned a special mention. The other finalists were Stay Easy Emalahleni, Sun City Resort and the Windmill Casino and Entertainment Centre.

Sun City Resort is the winner in the category Best single resource management programme - water management. The other finalists are Avis Rent a Car, the Drakensberg Sun Lifestyle Resort, the Wild Coast Sun Resort and the Windmill Casino and Entertainment Centre.

In the category Best single resource management programme - waste management the winner is the Wild Coast Sun Resort. The other finalists are the Drakensberg Sun Lifestyle Resort, Southern Sun - Newlands, Sun City Resort and Sun International Zambia – The Falls Resort.

In the new category Most empowered tourism business the Winner is the Wild Coast Sun Resort. Other finalists are Emzini Tours, a township tour operator in Knysna and The Peninsula All Suite Hotel. Entrants were judged on the extent to which they addressed empowerment and contributed to a globally competitive, democratically representative tourism industry.

In the other new category, Investor in people, the winner is !Khwa ttu San Culture and Education Centre at Yzerfontein. The other finalists are Forever Resorts South Africa, Garden Court - Hatfield, Le Franschhoek Hotel and the Sheraton Pretoria Hotel. Entrants were judged on the practical development of human resources, determined by national minimum standards or guidelines.

The FEDHASA Chairman's Award was made to Fair Trade in Tourism for its sustained commitment to fair trade criteria like fair wages and working conditions, fair purchasing, fair operations, equitable distribution of benefits and respect of human rights, culture and the environment.

The charity arm of Ulusaba's Private Game Reserve, Pride 'n Purpose, received a special chairman's mention. The programme, set up by members of the Ulusaba family in 2003, provides disadvantaged communities living adjacent to the reserve with basic needs such as access to food, water and health services.

The Chairman's Award is independent of the other awards and may be made to any organisation or individual making a meaningful contribution to responsible tourism.

Dungan said this year's entries were of a very high standard and that a record number of 183 category entries were received, compared to 134 last year. A total of 26 tourism businesses made it to the finals.

“It is clear that after eight years, Imvelo is certainly making a huge impact on tourism in South Africa, creating significant awareness of environmental management issues in the industry. With tourism being South Africa’s new gold, Imvelo will continue to create awareness of the potential - but also the responsibility – of sustainable tourism.”

Stewart Lumka, General Manager: National Government at Absa Corporate and Business Bank and FEDHASA Deputy Chairman, said both FEDHASA and Absa are committed to building sustainable growth, prosperity and true empowerment.

“Absa is proud to be associated with the Imvelo awards, not only because it acknowledges excellence in one of our fastest growing industries, but because the entrepreneurs running these businesses are making a real and sustainable contribution to our economy.

“I believe that our partnership with FEDHASA in awarding excellence and environmental responsibility in tourism is making a significant impact on the industry. This year’s finalists are truly the cream of the crop.”

Imvelo – which means ‘nature’ in South Africa’s Nguni languages - forms part of an ongoing hospitality industry campaign to encourage industry members to accept voluntary guidelines promoting responsible tourism. The awards are in line with the responsible tourism guidelines for the South African hospitality industry and the UN World Tourism Organisation’s code of ethics, and are supported by the Heritage Environmental Rating Programme.

A special Imvelo 2009 magazine with profiles of the finalists and winners was produced for FEDHASA by Design Magazine.

For more information visit www.imveloawards.co.za

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Date:	11 November 2009
