

NEWS RELEASE

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

The winners in the 2011 Imvelo Responsible Tourism Awards programme were announced today.

The programme is organised by the Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa (FEDHASA) in association with the National Department of Tourism and is supported by Absa, the Department of Water Affairs, Eskom, the Industrial Development Corporation and Don't Waste Services.

Imvelo, running for the tenth 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 the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company. The judges applauded the company's overall performance and sustained commitment to responsible practice.

"The company has for many years been at the forefront of environmental stewardship, having been the first business in Africa to achieve Green Globe Certification and one of the first in tourism to achieve the ISO14001 certification through the SABS.

"It operates a high-impact business in one of the world's most sensitive and iconic sites, one that is recognised as a World Heritage Site by the UNEP."

Dungan said particular attention has been given to minimising the impacts that this business has – while recognising the importance and growing international demand for access.

"This year the company has transported over 775 000 visitors to the mountain top, making it the Western Cape's single most important tourist attraction, and nationally only second to the Kruger National Park. It has been a finalist and winner in various categories of Imvelo since 2005, and in spite of its size has managed to hold its own against significant competition for recognition," said Dungan.

In the category Best social involvement programme the group winner is Sun International Zambia. The independent winner is African Impact. Other finalists in the category were the Townhouse Hotel, Avis Rent a Car, Vineyard Hotel and Spa, d'Ouwe Werf, Sun City Resort, Emzini Tours, African Impact, Kayak Africa's Mumbo Island Camp in Malawi and Awol Tours.

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 independent winner is the Backpack and African Travel Centre. Other finalists in this category are Drakensberg Sun Lifestyle Resort, Shangana Cultural

Village, Cape Town International Convention Centre, Grootbos Private Nature Reserve, Kondowe Nature Reserve in Limpopo and Motsethabo Tours in Alexandra.

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 group winner in the category Best overall environmental management system. The Nkomazi Game Reserve in Mpumalanga is highly commended in this category. Other finalists were the Riverside Lifestyle Resort at the Vaal River, the Windmill Casino and Entertainment Centre in Bloemfontein, Tourvest Destination Management, the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company, Sun International Zambia, Kayak Africa's Mumbo Island Camp, Nkomazi Game Reserve in Mpumalanga and Camp Jabulani.

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 Town Lodge Sandton in Grayston Drive. The other finalists were the Drakensberg Sun Lifestyle Resort, Avis Rent a Car, Palazzo Montecasino, Sun City Resort and the Centurion Lake Hotel.

The Drakensberg Sun Lifestyle Resort is the winner in the category Best single resource management programme - water management. The other finalists are Sun City Resort, the Windmill Casino and Entertainment Centre in Bloemfontein, Southern Sun Newlands and the Teemane Flamingo Casino in Kimberley.

In the category Best single resource management programme - waste management the group winner is the Southern Sun Waterfront Hotel in Cape Town. The independent winner in this category is the Backpack and Africa Travel Centre. The other finalists are the Drakensberg Sun Lifestyle Resort, the Garden Court Eastern Boulevard in Cape Town, the Southern Sun Grayston, Kayak Africa's Mumbo Island Camp and the Turtle Bay Beach Club in Watamu in Kenya.

In the category Most empowered tourism business the winner is Southern Sun Hotels Interests. The Table Bay Hotel in Cape Town is highly commended in this category. Other finalists are the Garden Court in Hatfield, Tsheola Dinare Tours and Transport and the Kondowe Nature Reserve.

Entrants were judged on the extent to which they addressed empowerment and contributed to a globally competitive, democratically representative tourism industry.

In the category Investor in people, the winner is the Vineyard Hotel and Spa. Motsethabo Tours is highly commended in this category. The other finalists are the Table Bay Hotel, Southern Sun Hotels, the Cape Grace Hotel, the Garden Court Hatfield and African Chapter Tours in Midrand, Gauteng.

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 Lorraine Jenks of Hotelstuff/Greenstuff for her commitment to responsible tourism practice in the hospitality industry.

"For many years Jenks struggled to instigate green procurement practices. Today Greenstuff showcases greener alternatives and encourages responsible environmental standards. She collaborates with industry experts on staff training, green certification, carbon offset schemes and waste and water management," said Dungan.

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 no less than 159 category entries were received with a total of 38 tourism businesses that made it to the finals.

"It is clear that after ten 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."

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.

For more information visit www.imveloawards.co.za

(Ends)

Released by:	Martin van Niekerk Junxion Communications Tel 012 804 8812
For:	Brett Dungan FEDHASA Tel 0861 333 628
Date:	9 November 2011
