



NAMIBIA

TRAVEL & TOURISM FORUM

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PRESS RELEASE

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WORLD'S FIRST EVER WHATSAPP INFOBOT FOR DESTINATION MARKETING IN TOURISM LAUNCHED

Namibia Travel And Tourism Forum (NTTF) today launched one of the first ever tourism InfoBot on WhatsApp. The InfoBot focuses on marketing Namibia as a destination and provides tourists, on-demand information about the country, various regulations, flight schedules and even allows them to search from a directory of registered Namibian tourism companies. The InfoBot was first announced at the Youth In Tourism Africa event held in Windhoek on 26th-29th of July 2022 on a testing basis, and is now open for public use.

To start interacting with the InfoBot, simply send any message on WhatsApp to the number +26485NAMIBIA (+264856264242), and you can then interact to receive all the needed tourism information immediately.

While many companies globally use chatbots on messengers, like WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook and Instagram, to interact with their clients and send out updates, what makes this InfoBot the first in the world of tourism, as it is solely focused promoting Namibia as a tourist destination. Another unique feature is that it provides information at the fingertips without having to download any app or costing the tourists any money.

NTTF signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Ministry of Environment, Forestry And Tourism Of Namibia in September 2021, to introduce a new range of initiatives. Among this is digitalization towards Namibian tourism, an industry on which over 130,000 Namibians depend for their livelihood, directly or indirectly. And as part of this initiative, NTTF has continuously contributed to enabling open discussions, creating new platforms, and unique ways to get Namibian tourism industry to stand above the rest on the continent, and globally. NTTF page on Facebook, @namibiantourism, is also one of the most followed tourism pages in Africa as of July 2022, which is a big milestone considering it was only established in early 2021.

A major concern for the industry has always been outdated and inaccurate information, which is why NTTF has engaged with the relevant stakeholders, like MEFT, NWR, NHC and ETEA, and has provided them a channel to manage and update their own information on the database.

This WhatsApp InfoBot, along with soon to be released iOS and Android apps, will be an interactive and invaluable source of information for visitors and Namibians alike. The platform, www.travel.na, which will make up the open-source database for everyone to retrieve information from, is part of NTTF and MEFT's tourism revival strategy and part of the efforts to boost tourism within Namibia.

The mobile app is in the approval phase and will soon also be available to download from Apple and Google Play, for free.

There is information on over 5600 registered Namibian tourism companies, things to do, shopping, local cuisine, activities, and it will be the first app to list Namibian tour guides, souvenir shops and restaurants.

Some of the information that is already available via the InfoBot:

Travel Information

- Visa and arrival regulations
- Covid regulations and testing facilities
- International and domestic flight schedule
- Road borders information
- Health and safety, along with emergency numbers across Namibia
- Weather overview
- Driving and road distances
- Filming and drone usage information and permit forms

Tourism Information

- National Parks and entrance fees
- Namibia Wildlife Resorts sites and facilities
- Heritage sites
- Cultural information, people and cuisine of Namibia
- Museum data
- Arts and crafts information

The InfoBot also has verification features, as users can search for companies by name or NTB numbers, to verify a company.

As of today, there is no other country using WhatsApp to provide tourism information for tourists and the NTTF are proud and excited for Namibia to take the first step towards digitalization in tourism industry. This innovation paves the way many new firsts for not only Namibia, but global tourism in general.

For further information please contact:

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Logo, for media use, available on : <https://go.travel.na/logo>