ASTRO TOURISM AS A CATALYST FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

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The International Council On Monuments And Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Astronomical Union (IAU) signed a MoU in 2008 demonstrating their commitment to: “improve the understanding of the astronomical heritage & merge astronomy and cultural heritage”

Important process evaluating the astronomical heritage sites that have the potential to demonstrate outstanding universal value (OUV).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROPERTY/OBJECTS</th>
<th>TANGIBLE IMMOVEABLE HERITAGE</th>
<th>TANGIBLE MOVEABLE HERITAGE</th>
<th>INTANGIBLE HERITAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, permanent constructions and structures, fixed instruments</td>
<td>Plans, moveable artefacts; moveable instruments</td>
<td>Practical/technical expertise, rules of use and maintenance; structural/architectural history of the site</td>
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<tr>
<th>RESULTS OF SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>TANGIBLE IMMOVEABLE HERITAGE</th>
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<td>Stone carvings; wall paintings; iconography, palaeography; symbolic representations</td>
<td>Records/accounts of observations; printed and digital data; sky maps; scientific publications</td>
<td>Knowledge and understanding; calculations and theories</td>
<td></td>
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<th>SOCIO-CULTURAL APPLICATIONS AND USES</th>
<th>TANGIBLE IMMOVEABLE HERITAGE</th>
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</tr>
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<td>Astronomically aligned; light-and-shadow hierophanies; urban planning and landscapes constructed using astronomy</td>
<td>Archives; drawings, maps and plans, tools or instruments using astronomical properties</td>
<td>Calendars; ideology; predictions of the future</td>
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(OCOMOS 2010)
SUSTAINABILITY OF ASTRO TOURISM

- One of astro tourism’s most unique feature is that it never needs to be fixed or developed, always available and completely unique; the sky and all its beauty (rainbows, stars, eclipse)

- The Central Karoo has been declared as an Astronomy Geographic Advantage Region which preserve and protect the area for the development of optical and radio astronomy; limit light and radio pollution

- This Act with its regulations is a key enabler for the development of astro tourism in the Central Karoo
President Infrastructure Coordinating Commission (PICC) where 18 Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs) have been approved. These SIPs are developed to support economic development and address service delivery in the poorest provinces. The SKA & MeerKAT is SIP 16 as it is a global mega-science project.

The Karoo is spatially classified as a Rural Node and identified for development by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reforms through the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme.

The proposed initiative is aligned to the National Rural Tourism Strategy (2012) and the National Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy by the National Department of Tourism.

These National strategies have prioritized the further development and promotion of potential tourism products in rural areas, in line with the objectives of achieving geographical spread and diversification of tourism initiatives especially in under-represented rural locations.

This addresses the objectives of the overarching National Tourism Sector Strategy (Revised 2017) and the Domestic Tourism Growth Strategy (2012) by the National Department of Tourism.

The proposed initiative seeks to respond to the following National Outcomes:

- Outcomes 4: Economic Development and Job Creation
- Outcomes 7: Rural Development
- Outcomes 11: Regional Integration
"The stars alone will do nothing to boost tourism. We need a bigger plan and one that makes use of all that is great in the area“ David Moore

- CATALYTIC ATTRACTIONS
  - SALT AND SKA

- ECO-TOURISM
  - PALAEONTOLOGY
    - DINOSAUR FOSSILS
  - GEO-TOURISM
  - AGRI-TOURISM

- CULTURAL AND HERITAGE
  - INDIGINEOUS ASTRONOMY

- CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
  - ASTRO-PHOTOGRAPHY
  - LITERACY (WRITERS’ HAVEN)
ASTRONOMY AND ASTRO TOURISM IN THE KAROO RURAL NODE: (3) STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

- GOVERNMENT (LOCAL, DISTRICT, PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL)
- KEY TOURISM AND ASTRONOMY STAKEHOLDERS
  - SKA SOUTH AFRICA
  - SAAO
  - NORTHERN CAPE TOURISM
- LOCAL COMMUNITIES
- LOCAL BUSINESSES
IMPACT OF ASTRO TOURISM

OBSERVED TRENDS AND PATTERNS OF ASTRO TOURISTS

- SELF DRIVE TO CARNARVON VIA SUTHERLAND
- INCREASED INTEREST AS THE TOURISTS NOW WANTS AN EDUCATIONAL AND AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE
- INCREASE IN TOURISM BUSINESSES IN SUTHERLAND: JOB CREATION, ENTERPRENEURAL OPPORTUNITIES (i.e. WILLISTON WINTER FESTIVAL)
- TOURISM BUSINESSES BUY-IN ON THE ASTRONOMICAL CONCEPT I.E SKITTERLAND, JUPITER, BLUE MOON
- APPRENTENSHIP, TRAINING PROVIDED FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES (SKA, SALT)

IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES:

- POOR ROAD CONDITIONS, LACK OF DIRECTIONAL AND INTREPRETATIVE SIGNAGE
- LACK OF INFORMATION OFFICES (PROPOSED CARNARVON SCIENCE EXPLORATORIUM)
- TRANSFORMATION IN THE TOURISM SECTOR
- OTHER ACTIVITIES UNIQUE IN THE KAROO RURAL NODE
"The astro tourism route is a creative link between our origins of life on earth and the origins of the universe" Derek Hanekom, Former Minister of the National Department of Tourism

THANK YOU

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