

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF THE  
MPUMALANGA ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION AND  
RECOVERY PLAN PRESENTED TO THE PROVINCIAL  
LEGISLATURE BY THE MEC FOR FINANCE, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, MR PV MKHATSHWA, MPL**

1. Madam Speaker; as the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, we have started to **intervene in resuscitating the economy** of the Province.
  2. In this regard, we are busy putting the final touches to the **Mpumalanga Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (MERRP)**, which will serve as a blueprint towards full economic recovery.
  3. Although this Plan has not been finalised, we are already implementing parts of Plan through the provision of **financial and non-financial support to small businesses** (SMMEs and Cooperatives).
  4. We continue to **partner with sister Departments at national, like the Department of Small Business Development**, to provide financial relief to our small businesses through its State-owned Enterprise, SEFA (Small Enterprise Finance Agency).
  5. Through our Public Entity, MEGA, we have provided **repayment Holiday** to our small businesses.
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6. We are also negotiating with municipalities, through our LED (Local Economy Development) unit, to **provide repayment holiday for rates and taxes.**
7. Working in partnership with the tourism private sector, we have developed the **Provincial Tourism Recovery Plan**, with a view to strategically respond to the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
8. Our aim, through the Plan, is to: **Protect and Rejuvenate Supply; Re-ignite Demand; and Strengthen Enabling Capability.** We are, thus, proposing **measures to enable the re-opening and re-positioning of Mpumalanga** to compete in the national and global markets, post the COVID-19 pandemic.
9. We have already started providing **Relief Funding** to tourism businesses, including to SMMEs in distress due to the pandemic. As a start, we have **resourced the first phase of the implementation of the Plan to the tune of R10 million.**
10. So far, 91 tourism businesses have benefitted from the Fund by receiving funding ranging R7 000 up to maximum of R50 000 per beneficiary. This **totals to 329 tourism businesses**, which have already benefitted from both the national and provincial Tourism Relief Fund, given that **238 tourism businesses from our Province have also benefitted to the tune of 11 million,**

**900 thousand Rands (R11, 900.000)** from the National Tourism Relief Fund.

11. Our second focus area, in relation to implementing the Recovery Plan, would involve the **public sector tourism products/infrastructure upgrade and Marketing** of the Province.
12. In this regard, we have prioritised **Manyeleti, Blyde Canyon, Andover, Songimvelo and SS Skosana Nature Reserves**, which are run and managed by the MTPA.
13. Funding has been made available, in this regard, including for marketing purposes, albeit it not being adequate.
14. ***Let's grow Mpumalanga together*** through tourism!
15. I thank you.