



AFRICA
COASTAL MARINE
MARITIME TOURISM
TRADE MARKET

POST EVENT REPORT

AFRICA COASTAL MARINE AND MARITIME TOURISM TRADE MARKET 2026 REPORT

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Prepared by: Itumeleng Magongoa



VOTE OF THANKS

Mr Lusanda Fibi

Chairperson: Africa Coastal Marine and Maritime Tourism Alliance

Distinguished guests, partners, stakeholders, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Africa Coastal Marine and Maritime Tourism Alliance, it is my honour to extend our sincere appreciation to each and every one of you for contributing to the success of the Africa Coastal Marine and Maritime Tourism Trade Market 2026.

We wish to thank our host, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, our government partners, industry stakeholders, academia, exhibitors, and delegates for your commitment to advancing the coastal, marine, and inland waterways tourism sector.

A special word of appreciation goes to our strategic partners, including SAIMI, Nelson Mandela University, and the Department of Basic Education, for their role in delivering a meaningful and impactful programme, particularly the successful Career Day which has strengthened our focus on youth development.

As we look ahead, the Oceans Economy Master Plan remains a critical framework guiding our collective efforts. It is through this plan that we are able to unlock opportunities, drive investment, and ensure inclusive participation in this growing sector.

We therefore encourage all stakeholders to actively align and participate in the Trade Market 2027, as we continue to build a stronger, more inclusive, and globally competitive coastal and marine tourism industry.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to welcoming you again in 2027.

I thank you.



Mr Itumeleng Magongoa

CEO: Africa Coastal Marine and Maritime Tourism Alliance

On behalf of the Africa Coastal Marine and Maritime Tourism Alliance, I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all of you for making the Africa Coastal Marine and Maritime Tourism Trade Market 2026 a success.

This second edition has demonstrated strong growth, increased participation, and a growing economic impact, reaffirming the importance of tourism within the coastal, marine, and maritime sectors.

We are particularly proud of the introduction of the Career Day, strengthening youth participation. Building on this momentum, we look forward to hosting the Youth in Marine and Tourism event in East London in June 2026, in partnership with the Deputy Minister of Tourism's Office.

We will also continue driving sector growth through initiatives such as the Inland Waterways and Coastal Tourism Investment Summit. A special thank you to Sho't Left for their support and presence.

As we look ahead, we will be expanding this platform by inviting African counterparts to participate in 2027, further positioning this Trade Market as a continental platform.

Thank you all, and we look forward to welcoming you again next year.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Africa Coastal Marine and Maritime Tourism Trade Market 2026, held from 18–20 March 2026 at the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium, marked the successful second edition of Africa’s leading platform dedicated to coastal, marine, maritime, cruise, and inland waterways tourism.

Building on its inception in 2025, the Trade Market continues to position itself as Africa’s biggest coastal and marine tourism event, driving investment, trade, skills development, and sector transformation within the oceans economy.

The 2026 edition recorded strong growth, with attendance increasing from 300 to 700 delegates over three days, alongside a 51% increase in exhibitors, demonstrating rising industry confidence and relevance.

The event delivered an estimated direct economic spend of R1.75 million, contributing to the local economy of Nelson Mandela Bay and supporting tourism value chains including accommodation, catering, transport, and event services.

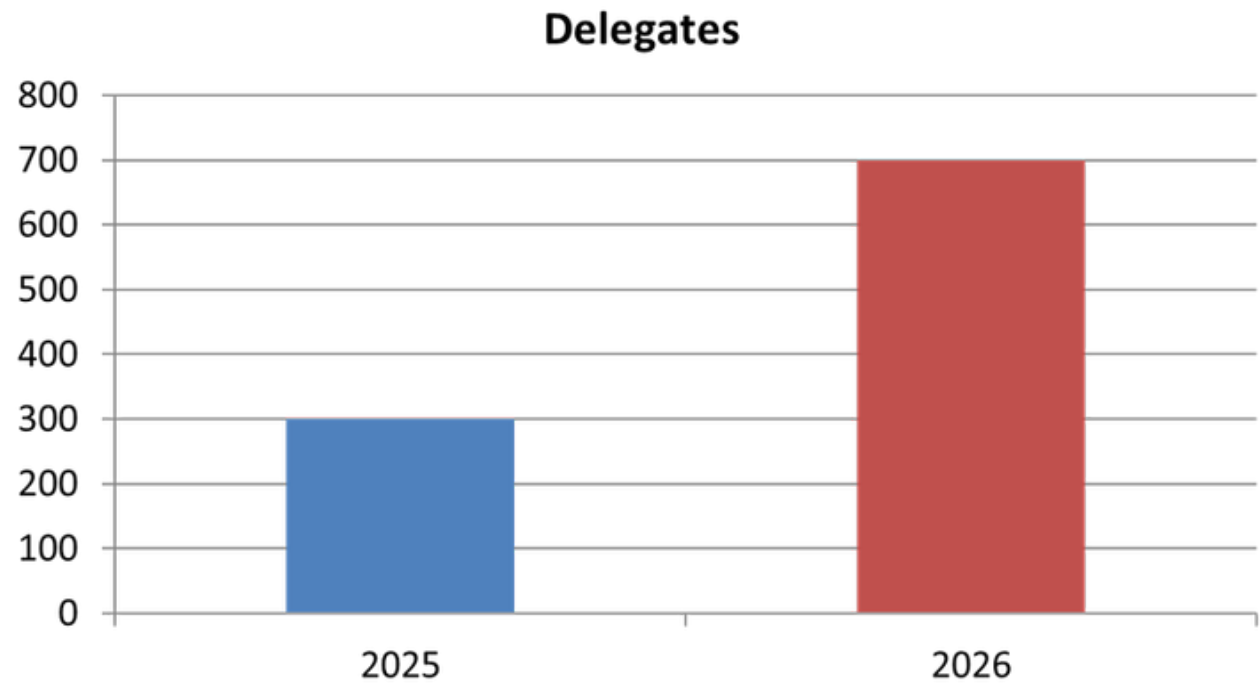
2. EVENT PURPOSE AND VISION

The Trade Market is designed as a strategic pan-African platform to:

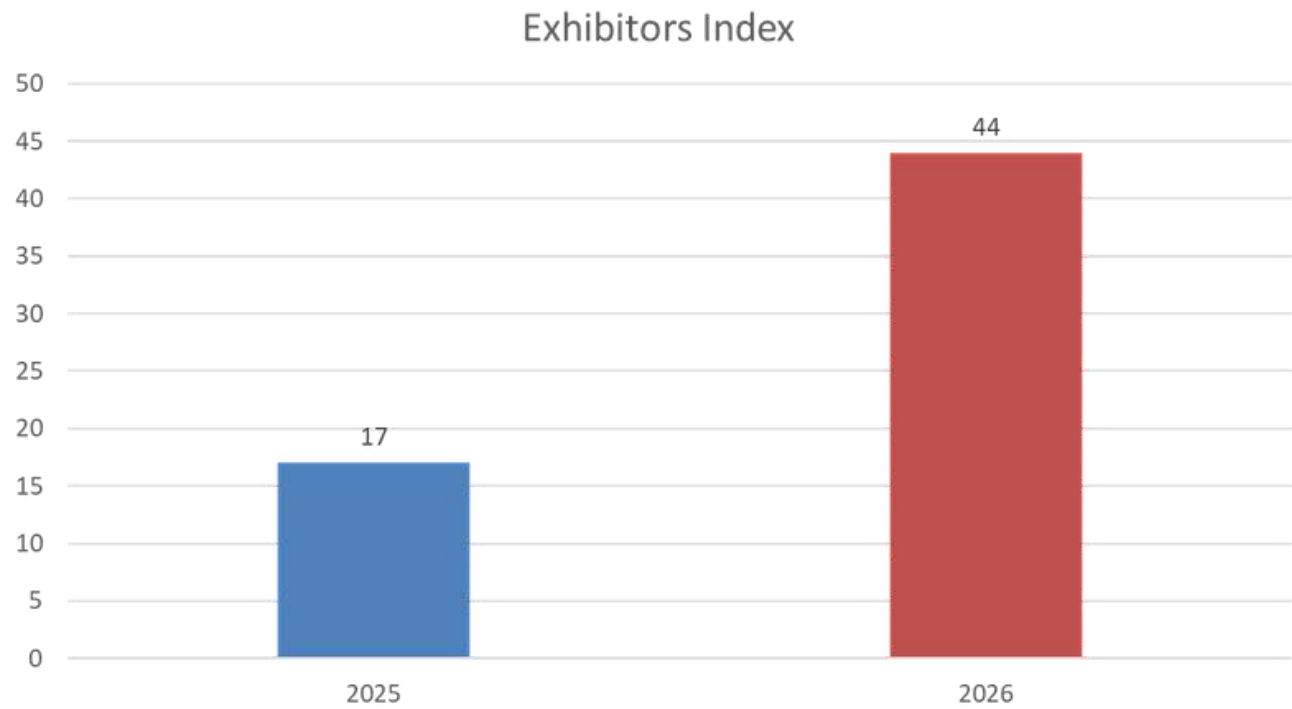
- Advance coastal and marine tourism development
- Unlock opportunities within the oceans economy (Operation Phakisa)
- Promote investment and enterprise development
- Support SMMEs and inclusive growth
- Drive skills development and youth participation

The 2026 focus was to strengthen the event format and deepen stakeholder partnerships, ensuring long-term sustainability and impact.

3. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION



4. EXHIBITOR GROWTH (+51%)



5. QUALITY OF EXHIBITORS

The 2026 Trade Market attracted a diverse and high-quality exhibitor base, including:

- Government departments and agencies
- Tourism authorities
- Private sector operators
- SMMEs and emerging enterprises
- Academic and research institutions

The improved quality of exhibitors contributed to meaningful engagement, strong networking outcomes, and investment discussions.

6. ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT DISTRIBUTION (R1.75M)

The Trade Market contributed significantly to the local and regional economy:

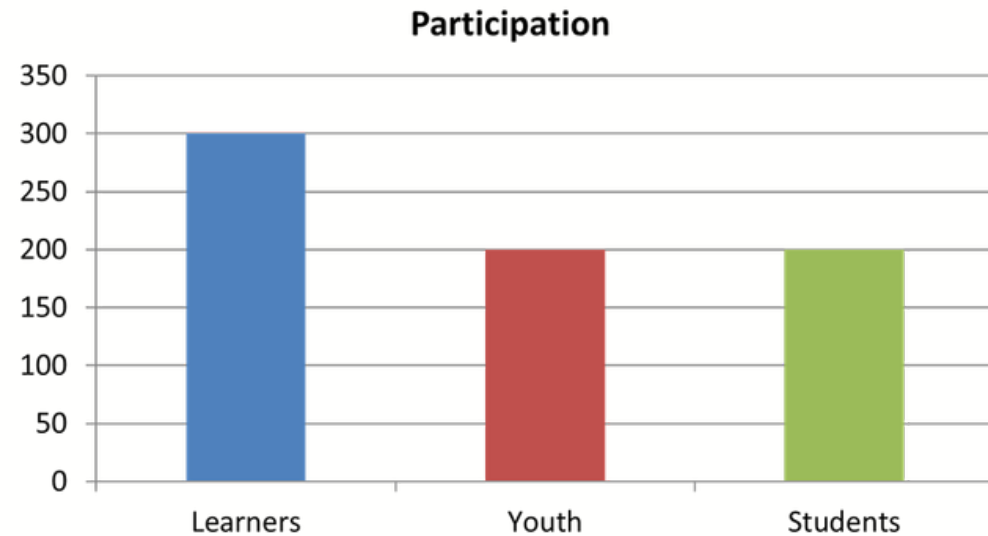
- Direct Spend: Estimated at R1.75 million
- Increased demand for hospitality, transport, catering, and local services
- Enhanced destination marketing and tourism visibility for Nelson Mandela Bay

The event further created indirect economic opportunities through business deals, partnerships, and future investments.





7. CAREER DAY PARTICIPATION



8. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality

Acknowledged for the hosting partnership and strategic support in delivering the event.

Eastern Cape Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism

Led by MEC Ms Nonkqubela Pieters, who highlighted that:
“The province has committed over R95 million towards cruise tourism development, demonstrating the economic potential of the oceans economy.”

National Department of Tourism
Acknowledged through the Deputy Minister’s Office, with Mr Sibonelo Nzimande emphasising:
“The need for technology-driven innovation and stronger inclusion of SMMEs in the oceans economy.”

SAIMI & Nelson Mandela University
Played a critical role in programme facilitation and content curation, ensuring a high-quality and well-coordinated programme.

Nelson Mandela University

- 20 student volunteers supported event operations
- Strengthened academia-industry collaboration

Department of Basic Education
Played a vital role in mobilising schools, particularly those offering marine and tourism studies, ensuring strong participation during Career Day.



9. SPECIAL ACTIVATIONS

Global Trade Partnership

A successful networking engagement hosted 200 delegates at the harbour at Black Impala Restaurant, enhancing industry interaction and relationship building.

Career Day (20 March 2026)

A standout success of the Trade Market:

- Hosted learners from high schools across Nelson Mandela Bay
- Included unemployed youth and students
- Showcased career opportunities within tourism and maritime sectors

10. INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Coastal and marine tourism continues to grow globally and locally:

- Contributes significantly to global tourism GDP
- Forms a key pillar of South Africa's Oceans Economy Master Plan
- Expected to see continued growth towards 2030, driven by cruise tourism, coastal destinations, and water-based experiences

As highlighted by Bronwen Auret:

"Quality standards and compliance are critical in ensuring sustainable growth and competitiveness within the tourism sector."

11. OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Venue

The move from Tramways to Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium proved to be a strategic success:

- Improved accessibility
- Adequate parking
- Enhanced overall delegate experience
- Strong operational support from stadium management

Programme

- Successfully coordinated by SAIMI and Nelson Mandela University
- Improved structure and delivery
- High-quality content and engagement

13. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Increased financial and investment support from the host partner
- Catering coordination challenges – need for a clear catering strategy and supplier briefing
- Operational alignment across service providers

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Move the networking event to the second evening to maximise participation
- Strengthen youth-focused programming within marine and tourism sectors
- Expand inclusion to:
 - High school learners studying tourism
 - TVET colleges and vocational institutions
- Develop a comprehensive catering and logistics strategy
- Increase investment partnerships and sponsorship support
- Enhance programme planning and stakeholder coordination

15. GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES (2027–2030)

- Expand to continental participation (African countries as exhibitors and speakers)
- Increase delegate and exhibitor numbers
- Position the event as a global platform for marine tourism investment
- Strengthen youth and skills development programmes
- Grow academic and research collaborations
- Enhance investment and trade outcomes

13. CONCLUSION

- The Africa Coastal Marine and Maritime Tourism Trade Market 2026 was a resounding success, demonstrating strong growth, meaningful partnerships, and increasing industry relevance.
- The event continues to evolve as a flagship platform for the oceans economy, driving tourism growth, investment, and inclusive participation across South Africa and the African continent.

14. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our sincere appreciation to:

- Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (Host Partner)
- Eastern Cape Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism
- National Department of Tourism
- SAIMI
- Nelson Mandela University
- Department of Basic Education
- All exhibitors, partners, and stakeholders
- South African Tourism - Cruise Desk

Your support and collaboration made this event a success.

THANK YOU!

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