

Sustainable tourism in SA

 By [Marion Marais](#), issued by [Boomtown](#)

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Travel is the most shared experience on social media and with close to 13 million active Facebook users in South Africa, there is great potential for destination marketers to promote sustainability projects through storytelling online.

Creating a positive and lasting impact on the environment and community has become an increasingly important factor when visitors plan holidays. As one of the fastest growing industries in the world, and with South Africa being such a diverse melting pot of cultures, heritage sites, tourist attractions and adventure activities, our focus should be towards sharing the stories of change and preservation.

By offering visitors free wifi at or near attractions and within hotels, destinations can encourage content creation, resulting in a mass of curated content available at the end of click. Learning is one of the top five criteria used to book holidays¹. This is the perfect opportunity for those offering volunteerism activities, or educational tours to encourage visits and curate content.

South Africa is home to a large number of sustainable tourism service providers belonging to organisations such as Fair Trade, Green Tourism Active and Responsible Tourism South Africa.

Storms river Adventures in the Tsitsikamma is one such company: one of the first to offer canopy tours in the country, and one of the first to be Fair Trade Tourism certified over a decade ago. In addition to offering visitors a beautiful adventure in a forest of Yellowwood trees, visitors also contribute to community projects by investing time and money into the company's activities. The eco adventure company is the largest new job creator in their sector along the Garden Route region and has funded the training of guides from the community, as well as support for community projects including HIV / Aids awareness and clothing distribution.

¹ E-Tourism Africa Summit (eTAS) 2015

ABOUT MARION MARAIS

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