



**REPORT ON THE THENSA-THEA  
INTERNATIONAL TOURISM EDUCATION,  
RESEARCH AND TRAINING CLUSTER**

**HELD IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ATLANTIC TECHNOLOGICAL  
UNIVERSITY (ATU), IRELAND**

**FROM TUESDAY, 31 MAY – THURSDAY, 2 JUNE 2022**

**VENUE: ATLANTIC TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY (ATU), GALWAY  
(IRELAND)**



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Technology Higher Education Network of South Africa (THENSA) was awarded a grant by the Irish Embassy in South Africa to establish six Research and Training Clusters, including the Tourism Research and Training cluster. Tourism Research and Training is an important offering by THENSA member institutions, and the training programme/qualifications curricula and work integrated learning component is designed with input from the tourism industry.

The grant, which focuses on research and training, comes at a time when the tourism sector is facing severe strain due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. To address the current crisis and to rebuild this important economic sector will require a strategic partnership between educational institutions and industry to explore new directions and innovative solutions.

As a starting point, THENSA conducted a national environmental scan of its member institutions training programmes/qualifications to identify any gaps in research, skills/training, and capacity requirements to address the immediate and longer-term needs of this severely shaken industry. A virtual meeting was held in March 2021 with Technological Higher Education Association (THEA Ireland), THENSA's affiliated partners, THENSA's strategic partner, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the SA National Department of Tourism, to discuss the findings of the SA Environmental Scan Study and to understand the role and value of the Irish Tourism Education Gateway (TEG) Platform which serves both the tourism industry and academic sectors.

### **The findings of the study pointed to the need to:**

- i. review our training programmes to better meet industry needs.
- ii. address the challenges presented by the 4IR.
- iii. find innovative ways to deal with these challenges; and
- iv. to provide and promote entrepreneurial skills for students embarking on careers in Tourism, especially post pandemic economic recovery, and renewal period.

A presentation by Ms. Cait Noone from ATU (Galway, Ireland) at a meeting held in November 2021 on the establishment of the innovative TEG Platform was very informative to the South African delegates. The TEG Platform is one of multiple turnaround strategies that Ireland embarked on to secure its socio-economic development and to address the upskilling and reskilling requirements for business and Industry post COVID. Ms. Noone highlighted the need to support business/industry partners, as they are critical partners, future employers, and support for student training.

The second phase of the grant project included a study visit to Ireland in May/June 2022 by the Heads of higher education academic departments of Tourism at THENSA's member institutions in South Africa, the CEO of SAQA, representatives of SA National Department of Tourism, and business/industry representatives (**See attached list of participants – Annexure A**).

## **2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

The tourism sector is considered to be a key contributor to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of several nations, including South Africa and Ireland. More importantly, it is considered a key job creator that promotes social cohesion, international cooperation and a national brand that interfaces with the world. At the same time, it requires specialised skills and training to meet the rapidly changing needs of this industry. The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) identified two key forces, **globalisation, and technology**, that are transforming the tourism sector into a dynamic economic force that has never been possible before.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significantly adverse impact on this industry. Apart from the pandemic and the challenges it presented, there are other key challenges facing the sector. Much work still needs to be accomplished within this sector in terms of training and research as well as incorporating new technologies and innovations in order to capitalize on technology to create sustainable relationships with selected customer segments. To do this will require the brokering of strategic partnerships with international training and research organisations and institutions to identify best practice models and key lessons learned for adaptation and application to a specific country context. Additional important considerations include the management of the integrity of the value chain, the generation of innovative and sustainable business practices, and the active promotion of the financial markets to invest in this sector.

Few economic sectors have suffered more from the COVID-19 pandemic than the tourism and hospitality sector and there are many lessons to learn from this. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, the tourism and the hospitality sector were considered globally, as one of the fastest growing economic sectors and the backbone of the service industry. The disruption caused by the global pandemic has severely affected the tourism and hospitality sector. It has reinforced the importance of the sector's socio-economic value and highlighted the under-preparedness of the sector to deal with such disruptions. The seismic changes that the world has experienced as a result of COVID-19, by both training institutions and the industry as a whole, has challenged both sectors to re-position themselves to act, think, plan, and adjust differently and innovatively to this crisis, as well as to proactively prepare for any future crises that we might be faced with.

The health and economic impacts of the pandemic have irrevocably changed the supply-demand balance of the global hospitality and tourism industry, requiring it to re-evaluate its current business model and set a new agenda to enhance competitiveness. This may be a blessing in disguise. Even before the pandemic, the hotel/accommodation sector was facing fundamental challenges, with increasing pressure to become more customer-centric, digital, agile, and sustainable (particularly responding to the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution opportunities). This crisis may be the catalyst that is needed for the tourism and hospitality sector to become more robust and adaptable and develop the agility to embrace new approaches to teaching, learning and innovation.

The severe and dire impact of the pandemic on the tourism and hospitality sector, presents both the higher education and training sector and the industry with a pivotal opportunity to re-evaluate its practices, training and use evidence-based research to support and review teaching, learning, and training strategies and practices. Similar arguments were raised as early as 2014, well before the pandemic, by Ruetzler et al. (2014). The authors maintained that the expansion of the tourism and hospitality education requires wide variations in programme structures, curricular offerings, course content, essential competencies and industry needs to inform programmatic restructuring.

Research studies have shown that the tourism and hospitality sector is highly resilient and has unlocked the potential to further contribute to socio-economic development in many contexts. Research and policy challenges have also highlighted several areas that the sector needs to address with urgency:

- i. The inadequacy of training and capacity development initiatives in relation to the number of persons being trained as well as the types of training received.
- ii. The urgent need for curriculum review within the education sector to meet the current and future needs of countries.
- iii. The importance of building a critical mass of qualified lecturers, trainers, researchers, and innovators in this sector.
- iv. The need to consider the impacts of technological advancements (the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution) on the sector in relation to challenges and opportunities.
- v. To examine and address the environmental and health-related impacts (which have become more acute in the contexts of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change issues).
- vi. The needs of different components of the tourism and hospitality sector, including different types of tourism activities; and
- vii. Addressing leadership and management issues in both the private and public sectors.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT**

Against the background and context outlined, and in response to the challenges presented above, a select group of THENSA and THEA member institutions met virtually in November 2021 to discuss and map a way forward. The group recommended the establishment of a Collaborative Training and Research Cluster between THEA and THENSA member institutions to achieve the following objectives for Ireland and South Africa:

- i. To develop and provide bespoke training programmes and capacity support for staff at the teaching/ training institutions and for industry.
- ii. To identify and undertake research in key areas identified by industry and the relevant stakeholders.
- iii. To engage in curriculum review in both countries to ensure relevance and work ready graduates in this sector.
- iv. To build on industry-education partnerships through the replication and standardisation of the Tourism Education Gateway Platform in partnership with the South African Department of Tourism.
- v. To develop Communities of Practice and strategic partnerships among partnering institutions; and
- vi. To support and advise stakeholders on matters listed above.

#### **4. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

THENSA/ THEA believe that this project will enable industry practitioners, policy stakeholders and education institutions:

- i. To build a critical mass of staff to drive the industry and the academic sector where students train.
- ii. To undertake reviews of the curricula and explore new and innovative teaching methodologies for the sector.
- iii. To contribute to restoring the economies of both countries through upskilling and reskilling staff from the industry and academic institutions.
- iv. To establish a TEG Platform in South African modelled on the Irish TEG and in partnership with Tourism SA and SA Department of Tourism.
- v. To conduct research to assist in the revitalisation of the industry; and
- vi. To build mutually beneficial international partnerships for training, research, and development.

#### **5. SEMINAR SERIES AND WORKSHOP ON CHALLENGES, SOLUTIONS AND WAY FORWARD FOR THE ACADEMIC AND BUSINESS TOURISM SECTOR IN SA AND IRELAND**

THENSA met with the SA Embassy in Dublin, Ireland on the 28 May 2022 to provide a briefing and update on the various projects currently underway with Irish partners across Ireland. The Embassy was also alerted to the difficulties and challenges faced regarding travel between South Africa and Ireland. The delegates spent up to 30 hours on travel time. Given that several Irish Businesses, namely the Kerry Group, has invested in SA and that academic partnerships and exchanges between the two countries are on the rise, there is a need for the Embassy to address the issue of future direct flights between South Africa and Ireland. THENSA proposed that this be urgently discussed with the SA Department of International Relations, as this would have a positive impact on its internationalisation policy and practice.

##### **5.1 THE INTERNATIONAL TOURISM EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND TRAINING FORUM PROJECT**

**(See programme attached - annexure B)**

**TUESDAY, 31 MAY 2022**

##### **A. Opening Welcome**

Ms Cáit Noone, Head of the Galway International Hotel School and Vice President International Engagement Atlantic Technological University, Galway and Mayo (ATU) and Dr Anshu Padayachee, Chief Executive Officer, Technological Higher Education Network South Africa (THENSA) welcomed all delegates to the event and outlined the aims and objectives of the project Dr Padayachee pointed out that Universities of Technology played a critical role in ensuring the sustainability of the sector and industry by providing the relevancy and necessary skills and training to the people who work in this important economic sector. Universities must therefore ensure that the curricula are relevant and that their staff meet the industry requirements for training in terms of knowledge, skills sets, competencies, and attributes. Both Dr Padayachee and Ms Noone highlighted the importance of preparing work ready graduates at this challenging time across the globe.

## **B. Opening Address**

The opening address was delivered by Dr Michael Hannon, Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar of Atlantic Technological University (ATU). He shared the history of the Irish Universities of Technology and the reasoning behind the name change from the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology to the ATU. Dr Hannon explained the route the institution had followed to revive the tourism sector in Ireland and wished the South African delegation fruitful discussions going forward. In addition, having supervised quality assurance, he hoped that the week would provide an opportunity to identify synergies with regards to international standards of quality assurance, given the presence of the CEO of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

## **C. Tourism Education Gateway (TEG)**

Ms Cáit Noone introduced the Tourism Education Gateway (TEG) Platform. This online Platform will offer accredited learning programmes for tourism industry professionals at all job levels (including operations, supervisor, managers, owners) and across all related sectors (hospitality, tourism, food, heritage & culture, event management etc).

The Platform is aimed at people who are currently in the tourism industry and does not target prospective people who intend to join the industry.

**The key points of Ms Noone's presentation are summarised as follows:**

- i. The TEG Platform will serve to promote lifelong learning through online learning and will link to CPD points.
- ii. The learning programmes offered recognises different levels of people in the industry and seeks to upskill different tourism levels, beginning at the bottom; the retention of staff is an important consideration.
- iii. The ATU will assist and support the development of a customised South African TEG Platform in partnership with THENSA, Department of Tourism, SAQA, Business and Industry. The South African TEG should contribute to the professionalisation of the tourism and hospitality industry in South Africa.
- iv. It can serve as "a learning passport" for lifelong learning, allowing learners to earn credits when they have the time and opportunity.
- v. It is important for the sector to demonstrate that tourism and hospitality can offer job longevity, career development and social mobility.

## **D. Q&A Moderated by Dr Julie Reddy, CEO of SAQA**

Following the presentation by Ms Cait Noone, the Q&A session was moderated by Dr Julie Reddy of SAQA. Some of the ideas, recommendations and suggestions that emerged from the session were as follows:

- i. A South African TEG needs to draw on resources that are available, accessible, and free.
- ii. In order for the South African TEG to succeed, there needs to be a balance between generic and niche skills provisioning.



- iii. The SA tourism and hospitality industry needs to make itself attractive to graduates. The COVID-19 pandemic has made people leery of entering an industry where job security is unstable.
- iv. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for access and credits is critical for those who have skills that may not be curriculated or formally recognised.
- v. The localisation of the South African TEG is vital to ensuring that the contributions from the township and rural economies are prioritised.
- vi. Universities must conduct research and strategic intervention to show the Government that they are contributing to the sector.
- vii. A link and alignment of schooling to TVET to HE programmes so that there is a continuum of registered qualifications and other learning programmes to address the skills and capacity needs and the various career pathways of the sector.
- viii. In the responses received from the South African participants, it was emphasised that the SA Platform needs to include a data repository and information source.
- ix. It was suggested that a joint proposal from THENSA and ATU be developed and submitted to the South African National Department of Tourism and to international funders for support.

**E. Audit of Tourism and Hospitality-related Qualifications at Affiliated THENSA Member Institutions and Research in South Africa**

Professor Urmilla Bob, Dean of Research, University of KwaZulu-Natal, presented the outcomes of the Audit Research Study that was done in 2021 relating to Tourism and Hospitality related qualifications within the THENSA member institutions. The key points of her presentation and discussions were as follows:

- i. Institutions need to review their curriculum based on the outcome of the study.
- ii. Requests should be sent to HE institutions and the related government departments should determine this, and not only the representative on the tourism cluster.
- iii. Major concerns were raised in the audit about the quality of HE qualifications. There are many registered qualifications on the NQF, yet their relevance and specificity are questionable. Are HEIs able to meet and match demands and needs of South Africa?
- iv. There is a need for further analysis on what Industry requires with ATU and an expansion of existing data and statistics.
- v. The partnership between THENSA, Dept of Tourism, SAQA, Council of Higher Education (CHE) must be strengthened.
- vi. Curriculum Workshop/s must be arranged to which the Dept of tourism, DHET, SAQA and CHE will be invited to participate. Tourism Lecturers must look into how they can review/revise the curriculum up to the 50% threshold, to accommodate the needs of industry.
- vii. Other key stakeholders, namely CHE and the DHET/Universities Branch must also be invited to the proposed curriculum workshop.
- viii. It must be noted that 4IR has changed the nature of tourism, and that virtual tours exist for those who cannot afford to travel.
- ix. Academics struggle to communicate and engage with Industries. The South African TEG could provide a viable platform for exchange of ideas and innovations between Universities and Industries.

- x. A SciVAL analysis of the audit data revealed consistent growth in research at Universities of Technology. A bibliometric scan using SciVAL, will assist with future research.
- xi. It is important for HE programmes to be multidisciplinary and specialised.
- xii. The dominance of "low skills" in the sector is an impediment to economic growth, upward mobility, and prosperity; and
- xiii. There is an increasing role for Work-Integrated Learning and Competence-Based Learning to encourage internships and volunteering.

**F. Research and human resource training for tourism recovery: The South African experience**

Mr Siphon Ngomane, Chief Director, Tourism Sector Human Resource Development and Dr Kholadi Tlabela, Director, Research, National Department of Tourism, SA presented the country's National Road to Recovery Programme. Dr Tlabela began by stating that the Department of Tourism has been conducting research and frameworks to implement policy and decision-making since its inception. Over the last decade, the Department has worked alongside universities to develop these frameworks. Recently, the Department submitted a recovery-driven call to Universities to assist with research on the challenges and issues emerging from COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr Tlabela added that following a rigorous process, six institutions were appointed to lead the recovery of the tourism industry: UKZN, NWU, UNIVEN, UJ, CSIR and UP. However, these institutions were not particularly responsive to the call despite the many invitations issued for submissions. Going forward, she hoped the Department could work alongside THENSA to respond to issues within the tourism and hospitality sector. She also emphasised the Department's intention to continue to pilot its frameworks for implementation, conduct workshops to capacitate stakeholders, issue calls for research proposals from institutions, implement its plans to fund students for study and work, and host forums to share its research findings.

Mr Siphon Ngomane discussed the South African Tourism Sector Recovery Plan, which is focused on the youth, namely 18 to 35 years old. The Department has a list of programmes to capacitate the youth with skills to run tourism-centred businesses that strive for best practice. He acknowledged that although these programmes are limited in scope, they prioritise skills relevant to the industry. He added that Experiential Tourism is an area that the Department is looking to explore in the future. The Department is also working on an Executive Development Programme for Women in tourism, to identify who can become key players within the sector. In terms of HE, he felt that current educators are not specialists within the subject matter that they teach and that they needed to be capacitated with the ability to teach from the syllabus.

Mr Ngomane also mentioned that the Department hosts a National Tourism Career Expo Programme (NTCE), which provides a platform for the sector to promote awareness of tourism as a career, profession, and business.

In closing, he indicated that the Department is looking to establish a WIL component in their programmes, particularly for learners in the TVET sector, and also working on an initiative with the Department of Labour and the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) to create greater employability prospects for tourism and hospitality graduates.



## **G. SDGs in Tourism – embedding SDGs in the curriculum.**

Ms Jacinta Dalton, Head of the Department Culinary Arts and The Service Industries, Galway International Hotel School, ATU presented on the importance of embedding SDGs within tourism and hospitality education at ATU. She provided a summary of the tourism sector in Ireland where consumer confidence in the country's domestic product has dropped. Due to labour shortages, inflation and rising costs of living, Irish citizens have opted for tourism products in other parts of Europe as opposed to domestic ones. She also spoke about the difficulties of retaining talent in the industry and added that educators were not responsive enough to the challenges and issues within the sector. According to Dr Dalton, quality assurance processes are long, rigorous, and slow. In her view, educators have to be dynamic and take the lead, instead of looking to industry for answers and solutions. She emphasised the critical importance of ongoing upskilling, reskilling, and retraining. She acknowledged that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a new but important area in Ireland, which needs to be prioritised within the context of tourism education.

## **H. Workshop: Implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Tourism Education**

Dr Carina Ginty, the ATU Teaching, and Learning Manager presented an interactive workshop explaining the development of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and the tools developed by the ATU to expand this resource. In order to provide advanced standing access or non-standard admissions to educational pathways, ATU developed a platform called "My Career Path". The platform offers five "bootcamps" which fit the profiles of people who are at varying stages of their careers or have varying degrees of education. It has become an excellent resource to implement RPL and encourage lifelong learning. According to Dr Ginty, the ATU has recognised the commercial value and potential of this platform. The institution has also designed an Employer Engagement Workshop to offer services to employers who want learning to have an entertainment factor.

### **WEDNESDAY, 1 JUNE 2022**

## **A. Current Challenges in South Africa in the Conferencing and Hospitality Industry**

Ms Pravina Coombs, Executive Director, Thought FIRE Consulting and Events Management described the impact of COVID-19 on the conferencing and hospitality sector in South Africa. In her expert opinion, virtual events had not been as effective and impactful as live events. While it was easy to do housekeeping in terms of numbers, virtual events were expensive, with equipment and operating costs reaching high price points due to demand. She added that it was difficult to assess whether virtual attendees remained engaged throughout the event, as they could switch off their cameras and put themselves on mute. There was also another pandemic in the form of "screen fatigue"!

**Ms Coombs presented a combination of her observations of the tourism and hospitality industry as well as her research findings from LinkedIn:**

- i. The quality of staff had declined owing to staff shortages. Shift work was no longer sustainable.
- ii. Many staff had left the industry to pursue new opportunities because of how unstable and unpredictable the sector had become.
- iii. There was a widespread and deep decline of jobs within the hotel industry and operating at a low capacity created even more losses. Car hire companies have also taken a hit.
- iv. The prospect of retraining limited staff was unappealing to employers.
- v. Post-Covid, clients are asking venues to drop pricing. Even venues which were considered elitist in the past, were now being compelled to become flexible and accommodating.
- vi. Attendance of live events is low, but the quality of visitors is high.
- vii. She proposed the return of “little luxuries” in order to lure more customers and clientele.
- viii. Virtual events/hybrid events will gain frequency since live events meet our human needs for connection.
- ix. The cascading effects of global warming, climate change and war and terror will have an even greater impact on live conferencing; and
- x. Clients still prefer face-to-face interaction so the shift to 4IR/online programmes / QR codes must be effectively managed. She proposed 36% in person and 22% virtually and was optimistic that the conferencing industry will bounce back in 2023 and 2024.

**B. Current challenges in South Africa – ICT challenges in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry**

Ms Nokuthula Ndlovu, Managing Director, Projectized and Representative of the Black Business Council South Africa, shared the following:

- i. An introduction to the Auction Spectrum, which offers an opportunity for the township and rural economies to benefit from coverage.
- ii. In terms of Technology and AI, South Africa isn't investing in backup data technology. Big Data technology creates opportunities for the travel and tourism industry to grow and invent new business models by analysing said data and spotting market opportunities.
- iii. Research in SA is sitting on different platforms and spaces. We don't own our research. There is a need to package and individualise our research and integrated databases of Governments and Industry.
- iv. Ownership of platforms is a key consideration which needs to be taken forward; and
- v. It was proposed that Dr Vathi Papu-Zamxaka, from TUT, lead a task team to take forward the issue of ownership of databases.

**C. Culture and Tourism – an International Arts Festival Perspective.**

John Crumlish, Fellow of ATU and the Chief Executive Officer of the Galway International Arts Festival. ([Galway International Arts Festival | Ireland | Galway International Arts Festival \(giaf.ie\)](https://www.giaf.ie/)) provided an informative report on how this festival began and grew into an internationally recognised event that not only showcases the arts in Ireland but provides jobs and opportunities for young people embarking on Cultural Tourism training. He shared examples of local arts practitioners who gained notoriety abroad through their involvement in the annual Galway International Arts Festival. He mentioned that there are currently a number of local music festivals, which either target affluent young professionals or university

students or older and established working professionals, and that this is a rich niche area for South Africa to explore further.

THENSA is considering a National Arts and Cultural Festival in partnership with TUT. All THENSA partners, including the Dept of tourism and Dept of Arts and Culture to showcase the indigenous arts and culture of SA. This discussion is ongoing, and John Crumlish has agreed to assist TUT, as the host institution leading this initiative.

#### **D. Work Integrated Learning (WIL) in Tourism – Post Covid**

Representatives from the SA institutions gave input on how their institution managed WIL in Tourism during Covid. They indicated the challenges experienced in online teaching and learning due to poor broadband support and access for their students. The Irish Institution's also shared their experiences of managing WIL in Tourism during COVID-19. What emerged from this session was a need for the professionalisation of WIL Coordinators and other Practitioners. According to representatives from member institutions, the roles and responsibilities between WIL Coordinators and Academic Staff required more clarification as there was confusion with regard to who is responsible for assessment. By making the roles, responsibilities, and accountability structures clearer, the communication between WIL Coordinators, Academic Staff and even students would improve for the benefit of all.

#### ***The status of WIL during the COVID-19 pandemic at THENSA member universities (presented by the university representatives in Ireland)***

- I. University of Mpumalanga (UMP)** There were a number of challenges that were brought on by COVID, but UMP was fortunate to have a hotel school which housed simulations and provided the WIL training. This facility gave students the opportunity to practice their skills in the absence of other workplace experience during the pandemic. The establishment of an in-house travel agency also assisted in opening up experiential learning opportunities for students.
- II. Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)** Developed a business plan to present to industry. TUT conducted interviews with potential employers and aided students to start their own business enterprises. Funding of the WIL component also covered the cost of students receiving the individual training /mentorship during their work training.
- III. Walter Sisulu University (WSU)** Established a strong relationship with industry stakeholders and persuaded them to give students experience in the workplace. WSU offered WIL for a period of four months, which was then extended to five to six months to ensure that students completed the requisite number of hours. WSU is exploring the possibility of the University becoming entrepreneurial, and thus circumventing WIL challenges, by establishing its own travel agency and hotel school. COVID-19 encouraged WSU to be solution-driven. Industry showed a reluctance to employ students during COVID-19, and this also affected the duration of internships. Prior to COVID-19, students were paid a stipend, but this was withdrawn and sadly students were dependent on this little income. To address a decline in quality, provision was made for students to take on extra assignment to boost marks or competencies.

iv. **Durban University of Technology (DUT)** WIL is for students studying for a Diploma. Whilst some students had opportunities for WIL at COVID-19 Centres and UShaka Marine World and Hotel, other students did back-office work which did not require face to face contact. Due to the number of students requiring WIL, project-based learning opportunities were created. This allowed industry to conduct visiting lectures. DUT also used YouTube channels to share presentations from industry. No funding was received from employers which did not help students but some funding for students were provided by the university to help them complete their studies.

DUT also launched a business centre in 2021 where some students worked after the country Level 4 lockdown. Modalities of WIL like field trips (not during covid) and also project-based learning, especially in Ecotourism were done. A part of the campus was also used as a site to do interpretative learning and included the planting of fruit trees around campus so that students could subsidise income, get trade and be able to survive the challenges of the pandemic. In cases, where students couldn't complete the six months of WIL, project-based learning was implemented.

v. **Central University of Technology (CUT)** CUT engages with industry to ensure that the students get placement for WIL. During COVID-19, WIL had to be reduced to four months due to the challenges. Students were required to sign a contract for the four months and undertook other forms of learning for the remaining two months before graduation. Where students could not find WIL placement, they were recruited to collect data for staff's PhDs.

vi. **University of Venda (UNIVEN)** Qualifications does not require a WIL component, but students are placed in the workplaces informally. UNIVEN is in the process of developing WIL competencies and bringing traditional academics into this terrain.

vii. **Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST)** Tourism Management offered at NUST has two components which posed a problem. The campus has 20-room hotel, two restaurants, and two kitchens (one commercial and one for training). For culinary and hospitality related qualifications, students receive WIL training at campus hotel and in industry. The university has managed to place some students in industry whilst others worked at the hotel. Offering reduced prices at the hotel, allowed people to stay more easily and the retirement community funded the hotel throughout the pandemic. Tour companies with a reduced workforce welcomed students to address their capacity needs, with some going to industry, and others to projects. NUST also established a travel agency. In terms of the travel component of WIL, students trained on simulation for experiential learning.

viii. **Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)** For CPUT, collaboration with partners was necessary for it to survive the pandemic. Whilst 50% of students were placed in industry for WIL, other students were exposed to project-based, mentorship programmes. Students were exposed to virtual events and virtual master class was designed to help students and exposed them to the experts in the related industries. These virtual platforms enabled students to complete their WIL training requirements in the absence of physical workplace learning.

ix. **Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT)** For WIL in Nature Conservation, it is important for students to interact with tourism and to conduct themselves well in nature-protected areas. MUT has partnered the National SANParks during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students were sent to the

botanical gardens and undertook community projects such as the restoration work in rivers as and promoted waste management ambassadors by collecting waste for sale.

- x. **Vaal University of Technology (VUT)** offers qualifications in Food Service Management, Tourism Management and Ecotourism Management. WIL has been a challenge as Tourism industry was on shutdown. Some WIL placement had to be cancelled, which was a serious problem for the university and the students. During the COVID19 pandemic, students could not be placed in most industries and those whom their contracts were terminated had to look for placements somewhere else to complete their WIL. In terms of Food Service most hotels were closed especially Tsogo sun where students are normally placed. Tourism and Ecotourism students were also challenged. Industries placing students were closed during national lockdown, including nature reserves. The Tourism Programme offered project-based modality as WIL. Virtual monitoring of students in WIL was undertaken during the pandemic lockdown.

**E. Guided Walking Tour of Galway**

This was organised by ATU and provided the SA delegates with first-hand experience of how such tours and training are done and can be replicated or adapted for SA.

**F. Dinner hosted by ATU**

THENSA would like to thank the ATU for hosting the delegates for dinner at the Hyde Hotel, Eyre Square, Galway. This was attended by several Irish partners as well as Counsellor Mr. Willem Geerlings from the SA Embassy in Ireland. The dinner provided a wonderful opportunity for networking.

**G. The future of Tourism Education (including establishment of the Gateway Education Platform for SA) Panel discussion**

Dr Padayachee gave a short overview of the discussions and called for recommendations going forward into Phase Three of this Project.

**Moderator: Ms Cait Noone**

The following panellists provided input to inform the discussions:

- i. **Dr Joe Ryan – CEO, Technological Higher Education Association (THEA):** He reported that THEA won a €40 million grant to do work on student engagement, decision-making and institutional policy. He advised that educators should be flexible, to address displacement challenges and the movement of people, and proposed that funding for tourism education must support them for the rest of their lives. His closing comment was that educators need to be advocates in order to influence public policy.

ii. **Professor Urmilla Bob – Dean of Research, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa:**

She stated that modalities in HE is outdated, and yet they are still being used. The sector is not up to date, which is what pushes young people out of formal education. It is important for tourism and hospitality educators and practitioners to create their own formal Communities of Practice (CoPs). She added that only 10% of people with doctoral degrees are in academia, while many get absorbed elsewhere.

The question she posed is how do we train our graduates? Because expertise doesn't always lie in academia. It is about bringing in people with a variety of skills and qualifications. She also stated that the sustainable development goals are anything but sustainable because it has diluted human dignity, jobs, and secure livelihood. She proposed that the South African TEG include a data repository and information gateway, because we live in a resource-scarce environment.

iii. **Mr Diarmuid ÓConghaile – Head of Heritage and Tourism, Languages and Humanities ATU.** He

shared his experiences and learning around community tourism in Ireland, which as a small country mostly practices community tourism. Demand hasn't been a problem, even in the last two years. However, there are pressure points where some areas get more attention than others. He talked about a research project which list 43 indicators to show the impact of tourism on communities. Mr Ó Conghaile's work looks at the economic and cultural impact of tourism, general tourism, and pressure on services in terms of waste, water and climate change. He is of the view that there is rich data that can be mined to empower communities to tackle some of the issues they face. He shared an example of an island with 300 people who hosted 3000 visitors, and required water to be shipped in. These challenges make communities resentful and angry, even if tourism is seen to benefit them. The study is ongoing, and the intent is to use the findings to build a better understanding between tourists and the people who are native to the island. He added that the island often mirrors issues/challenges that are experienced on the mainland and that the dominance of English-speaking tourists pose a threat to regions where Irish is still the language of instruction and communication.

iv. **Dr Julie Reddy, CEO of South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)** She stressed the Importance

of reviewing, and if required, to re--curriculate and regulate all qualifications offered in the Tourism and Hospitality space. It is also Important to have a combination of generic and niche skills on SA's TEG, in order to ensure that the training we provide to students and people in the industry and the services we provide are relevant and value-adding. and we must develop 'relational agencies' to cross practice boundaries to achieve common goals and to avoid working in silos and duplicating work.

v. **Dr Vathi Papu-Zamxaka, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Innovation and Engagement, Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)** She emphasised the need to produce future-ready graduates. The

challenges facing the sector presents an opportunity for us to define a "different " future, before we decide who this future-ready graduate is. She cautioned that graduates don't just develop at the university but take their form elsewhere. We need to introduce 4IR technologies to our children from a young /early age. Also, we need to consider what type of learner we are producing and how we can upskill and reskill the current workforce. Rural and township economies need to be prioritised and with it the resource, infrastructure, data and professionalisation needs must be addressed.



- vi. **Mr Sipho Ngomane, Chief Director, Tourism Sector Human Resource Development), National Department of Tourism, SA** He argued that the Department needs to take back tourism from the private sector. So far, the private sector has dictated the standards, tastes and pay that has become a norm within the industry. If it continues to take a backseat, it will find itself struggling to be relevant or to offer the necessary intervention when disasters like the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The Department also needs to have cross-collaboration with universities and industry to ensure that a cohesive and holistic strategy is applied to matters of job creation, unemployment, the climate crisis, the 4IR and the need for upskilling and reskilling in the sector.

## 5.2 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. THENSA to conduct a situational needs assessment study of the Tourism Industry in SA to ascertain firstly, interest in an online upskilling/ reskilling programme for South Africa that is modelled on the Irish TEG, as well as identify the programmes that would be required for this said purpose. Dr Reddy pointed out that up to 2021 there were 234 Tourism qualifications registered on the SA NQF and that approximately 55 of those qualifications were being offered by UOTs in SA.
- ii. THENSA to conduct regional training programmes in partnership with its THEA partners (ATU) for staff at the respective regionally based SA institutions to upskill and reskill them in respect of the new curricula and innovations in Teaching and learning post covid and in preparation for any other pandemic or disaster that may affect teaching and learning programmes.
- iii. To set up a TEG in South Africa in partnership with the Dept of Tourism.
- iv. To explore staff and student exchange and research programmes between South African and Irish Institutions; and
- v. To explore the possibility of a Cultural Arts Festival in South Africa under the leadership and support of The Cultural Arts Organisation in Ireland in 2023/24

## 5.3 Closing Remarks by Counsellor Willem Geerlings, South African Embassy in Ireland

Counsellor Geerlings expressed his delight with the outcomes of the Bilateral Forum and thanked the Irish Embassy for supporting this much needed project. He also acknowledged the excellent role played by the CEO of THENSA, Dr Anshu Padayachee in building a strong relationship with our Irish partners and leading and channelling this Project to achieve its outcomes.

## Annexures

### Annexure A: List of Participants

DELEGATES: TOURISM EDUCATION AND RESEARCH FORUM					
		TITLE	NAME AND SURNAME	E-MAIL ADDRESS	POSITION
1	MUT	Ms	Sithembile Nkosi	<a href="mailto:sithembile@mut.ac.za">sithembile@mut.ac.za</a>	Lecturer and Diploma Programme Co-ordinator
2	DUT	Dr	Dumsile Cynthia (Hlengwa) Gumede	<a href="mailto:dumisileh@dut.ac.za">dumisileh@dut.ac.za</a>	Associate Professor in the Department of Ecotourism
3		Mr	Krishna Naidoo	<a href="mailto:naidookm@dut.ac.za">naidookm@dut.ac.za</a>	Director, HOD for various Tourism and Hospitality programmes, research supervisor and lecturer
4	VUT	Dr	Limpho Lekaota	<a href="mailto:limphol@vut.ac.za">limphol@vut.ac.za</a>	Senior Lecturer
5	WSU	Dr	Siyabonga Mxunyelwa	<a href="mailto:smxunyelwa@wsu.ac.za">smxunyelwa@wsu.ac.za</a>	Senior Lecturer
6		Professor	Dinesh Vallabh	<a href="mailto:dvallabh@wsu.ac.za">dvallabh@wsu.ac.za</a>	Senior researcher in Tourism and also lecturer to the Advanced Diploma students of Tourism Management
7	CPUT	Ms	Esti Venske	<a href="mailto:VenskeE@cput.ac.za">VenskeE@cput.ac.za</a>	Senior Lecturer and Lead Curriculum Officer: Tourism and Event Management
8	TUT	Professor	Ndivhuwo Tshipala	<a href="mailto:tshipalann@tut.ac.za">tshipalann@tut.ac.za</a>	Associate Professor & Head of Department in the Department of Tourism Management
9	NUST	Dr	Paschalia Muhoho-Minni	<a href="mailto:wmuhoho@nust.na">wmuhoho@nust.na</a>	Senior lecturer in tourism management, Coordinator Tourism management curricular review, Coordinator – Work integrated learning for tourism management students
10	CUT	Ms	Bianca Nolwandle Mkhize-Simelane	<a href="mailto:bmkhize@cut.ac.za">bmkhize@cut.ac.za</a>	Lecturer
11	UNIVEN	Ms	Tondani Nethengwe	<a href="mailto:Tondani.nethengwe@univen.ac.za">Tondani.nethengwe@univen.ac.za</a>	HOD

12	UMP	Dr	Oswald Mhlanga	<a href="mailto:oswald.mhlanga@ump.ac.za">oswald.mhlanga@ump.ac.za</a>	Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader of Hospitality Management
13	TUT	Dr	Vathiswa Belinda Papu-Zamxaka	<a href="mailto:PapuVB@tut.ac.za">PapuVB@tut.ac.za</a>	DVC
				<a href="mailto:MarapeMV@tut.ac.za">MarapeMV@tut.ac.za</a>	
14	Department of Tourism of South Africa	Mr	Sipho Ngomane	<a href="mailto:SNgomane@tourism.gov.za">SNgomane@tourism.gov.za</a>	Chief Director: Tourism Sector Human Resource Development
15	Department of Tourism of South Africa	Dr	Kholadi Tlabela	<a href="mailto:ktlabela@tourism.gov.za">ktlabela@tourism.gov.za</a>	Director: Research at the Department of Tourism of South Africa
16	SAQA	Dr	Julie Reddy	<a href="mailto:JReddy@saga.co.za">JReddy@saga.co.za</a>	CEO at SAQA
				<a href="mailto:RRampersad@saga.co.za">RRampersad@saga.co.za</a>	
17	BBCSA	Mrs	Nokuthula 'Nokky' Ndlovu	<a href="mailto:Nokky@projectized.co.za">Nokky@projectized.co.za</a>	
18	ThoughtFire	Mrs	Pravina Coombs	<a href="mailto:pravina@thoughtfire.co.za">pravina@thoughtfire.co.za</a>	Executive Director of ThoughtFire
19	UKZN	Professor	Urmilla Bob	<a href="mailto:urmillabob@gmail.com">urmillabob@gmail.com</a>	Consultant
20	THENSA	Dr	Anshumali Padayachee	<a href="mailto:anshu@thensa.co.za">anshu@thensa.co.za</a>	CEO
21		Mrs	Christelle Venter	<a href="mailto:christelle@thensa.co.za">christelle@thensa.co.za</a>	Operations Manager
22		Mr	Buntu Nondumo	<a href="mailto:info3@thensa.co.za">info3@thensa.co.za</a>	Media
23		Ms	Bakhanyisele Khanya Mtshali	<a href="mailto:info5@thensa.co.za">info5@thensa.co.za</a>	Media Liaison
24		Ms	Sandi Mzolo	<a href="mailto:admin@thensa.co.za">admin@thensa.co.za</a>	Assistant

## Annexure B: Programme



### INTERNATIONAL TOURISM EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND TRAINING FORUM

ATLANTIC TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY (ATU), IRELAND.

(PREVIOUSLY GALWAY-MAYO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, IRELAND.)

TUESDAY, 31 MAY – THURSDAY, 2 JUNE 2022

## PROGRAMME

### TUESDAY, 31 MAY 2022

09:30 – 09:45

Arrival & Welcome

*Ms Cait Noone, Vice President International Engagement Atlantic Technological University, Galway and Mayo*

*Dr Anshu Padayachee, Chief Executive Officer, Technological Higher Education Network South Africa (THENSA)*

09:45 – 10:00

Opening Address

*Dr Michael Hannon, Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar Atlantic Technological University Galway and Mayo.*

10:00 – 11:00

Introducing the Tourism Education Gateway – The TEG.

Proposal to develop an online platform offering accredited learning for Tourism industry professionals at all levels (operations, supervisor, managers, owners) and across all sectors (hospitality, tourism, food, heritage & culture, event management etc).

Moderator:

Dr Julie Reddy

*Ms Cait Noone, Vice President International Engagement Atlantic Technological University*

Q&A

11:00 – 11:30

Comfort break - Refreshments will be available in the room.

<p><b>11:30 – 13:00</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> <b>Dr Anshu Padayachee</b></p>	<p>An audit of tourism and hospitality-related qualifications in affiliated Technological Higher Education Network South Africa (THENSA) institutions and research in South Africa <i><b>Prof Urmilla Bob, Dean of Research, University of KwaZulu-Natal.</b></i></p> <p>Research and human resource training for tourism recovery: The South African experience <i><b>Dr Kholadi Tlabela, Director, Research, National Department of Tourism, SA</b></i></p> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
<p><b>13:00– 14:00</b></p>	<p><b>Lunch</b></p>
<p><b>14:00 – 15:00</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> <b>Dr Anshu Padayachee</b></p>	<p>SDGs in Tourism – embedding SDGs in the curriculum. <i><b>Jacinta Dalton, Head of Department Culinary Arts and The Service Industries, Galway International Hotel School, Atlantic Technological University Galway and Mayo</b></i></p> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
<p><b>15:00 – 16:00</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> <b>Ms Nokuthula Ndlovu</b></p>	<p><b>Workshop: Implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Tourism education</b></p> <p>An interactive workshop explaining the development of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and the tools developed by the ATU to expand this resource. <i><b>Dr Carina Ginty, ATU Galway and Mayo TL Manager</b></i> <i><b>Ms Bridie Killoran, Careers and RPL Manager, ATU Higher Education 4.0 Project.</b></i></p> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
<p><b>16:00</b></p>	<p>Finish Day</p>
<p><b>18:00</b></p>	<p>Dinner at leisure</p>

WEDNESDAY, 1 JUNE 2022	
09:00 – 10:00	<p>Current challenges in South Africa in the Conferencing and Hospitality Industry</p> <p><b><i>Ms Pravina Coombs, Executive Director, ThoughtFIRE</i></b></p> <p>Current challenges in South Africa – ICT challenges in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry</p> <p><b><i>Ms Nokuthula Ndlovu, Managing Director, Projectized</i></b></p> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
10:00 – 11:00	<p>Culture and Tourism – an International Arts Festival perspective.</p> <p><b><i>John Crumlish, Fellow of ATU Galway and Mayo and Chief Executive Officer of the Galway International Arts Festival.</i></b></p> <p>(<a href="#">Galway International Arts Festival   Ireland   Galway International Arts Festival (giaf.ie)</a>)</p> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
	Refreshments will be available in the room
11:00 – 12:00	<p>Entrepreneurs driving Hospitality and Tourism (<i>session did not take place due to speaker not being well</i>)</p> <p><b><i>Dr James Hanrahan Atlantic Technological University Sligo.</i></b></p> <p>(<a href="#">2) James Hanrahan (researchgate.net)</a>)</p> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch
13:00 – 14:00	<p><b>Work Integrated Learning (WIL) in Tourism – post Covid</b></p> <p>Representatives from SA institutions to give 5-minute input on how their institution managed WIL in Tourism during Covid.</p> <p>Irish Institution’s perspective on managing WIL in Tourism during Covid</p> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
15:00 – 16:30	Walking tour of Galway City – compulsory (hosted by THENSA)
19:00	<p><b>Dinner to be hosted by ATU in Galway City.</b></p> <p>Drinks at 7pm at JEKELL at the HYDE HOTEL. Galway City. Location can be found at <a href="#">Hotel Location   HYDE Hotel Galway</a></p> <p>Guest of Honour HE Ambassador Yolisa Maya, South African Ambassador to Ireland (represented by Mr W Geerlings, Counsellor (Political)).</p>



**THURSDAY, 2 JUNE 2022**

<b>10:00 – 12:15</b>	<b>The future of Tourism Education (including establishment of the Gateway Education Platform for SA)– round panel discussion</b>  Dr Joe Ryan – CEO, Technological Higher Education Association THEA  Professor Urmilla Bob – Dean of Research, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.  Mr Diarmuid ÓConghaile – Head of Heritage and Tourism, Languages and Humanities ATU.  Mr Niall Roachford – Managing Director Ashford Castle, Red Carnation Hotels (South African company)  Dr Julie Reddy, CEO of South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)  Dr Vathi Papu-Zamxaka, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Innovation and Engagement, Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)  Mr Sipho Ngomane, Chief Director, Tourism Sector Human Resource Development), National Department of Tourism, SA
<b>12:15 – 12:30</b>	Closing Remarks by Ambassador Maya, South African Ambassador to Ireland (delivered by Mr W Geerlings, Counsellor (Political))
<b>12:30</b>	Light Lunch  END
<b>18:00</b>	Dinner at Leisure