



Africa Wellness Initiative Briefing Paper 2017

What is the aim of your initiative?

The Africa Wellness Initiative (AWI) aims to leverage the continent's unique assets (natural environment, traditional spirituality, African medicinal plants, African therapies and African wellness professionals) by developing strategies that promote a culture of African-inspired knowledge-sharing and entrepreneurship within the global billion-dollar wellness industry.

What or who are the current “news makers” or trends in the initiative’s industry/sector?

The African “Wellness in the Wilderness” concept is a growing trend, which balances health, beauty and discovery. This concept is more than just a typical African holiday because it harnesses the traditional safari into activities that include an eco-focus, outdoor adventure, traditional healing approaches, yoga, meditation and spa treatments, which all culminate to a richer holiday experience. Wellness hotels and resort spas proposing this blended offering are forecasted to remain the most popular wellness tourism product in Africa by 2020.

Name some (high level) challenges facing your industry/sector?

1. The spa and wellness sector is not fully recognised as a development priority, resulting in limited access to business development/expansion finance locally and insufficient scale required to gain significant attention on the global wellness market.
2. Evidence-based research and global awareness of indigenous African medicinal plants, therapies, communities and traditional healing approaches is limited. This body of knowledge can add significant value to alternative approaches that enhance spiritual, mental, physical and social well-being globally.
3. The perception of spa and wellness as luxury services reserved for the wealthy is narrowing the large potential market in this sector.

Where do you see the opportunities for industry/sector?

African economies continue to enjoy economic growth above the global average. The spa and wellness industry in Sub-Saharan Africa grew by 300 percent between 2007 and 2013. This growth indicates that immense opportunities lie in leveraging Africa's wellness assets to develop distinctive

and competitive Afrocentric wellness tourism value propositions on the continent.

The rise of the African Millennial and increased mobile telephone penetration has enlarged the market as more people become connected and gain access to information and healthcare. Innovative workplace wellness solutions are increasingly required to drive productivity and employee well-being in Africa's growing middle class.

Are there any “heroes” (either companies or individuals) who stand out in your industry/sector?

Organizations have been set up to work on raising standards through training, and one of the objectives of the AWI is to collaborate the efforts of these organizations and come up with consolidated African standards that meet and align with the global standards.

In our opinion, other unsung heroes are the operators of unique African spa and wellness concepts such as “container spas” and “herbal spas” that have created huge opportunity in this industry for employment, tourism and productivity. Another aim of the AWI is to help strengthen and support these sectors as shared-value initiatives across the global wellness industry.

Is there noteworthy investment happening in your industry/sector?

Sub-Saharan Africa is the fastest growing spa market in the world, and significant investment has gone into the development of wellness hotels and resorts in this region as well as in Kenya and Seychelles. An impressive growth from \$2 billion in 2012 to \$5.07 billion by 2017 is expected in Sub-Saharan Africa alone.

Name any key accomplishments (milestones) made by your initiative?

The AWI has achieved the following milestones:

- Constitution of an AWI team with members from diverse regions of Africa and wellness leadership expertise.
- Attendance at its first initiative chair call in June
- Representation at the Indigenous Plant Use Forum (IPUF) Conference held in South Africa in June 2017.
- First round project proposal aimed to raise funds for an African Wellness “Yellow Pages” directory listing to include, amongst others, African wellness operators, African wellness therapies and African wellness professionals.

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