

TOYOTA KALAHARI BOTSWANA 1000 DESERT RACE LAUNCH

December 12th, Selebi Phikwe, Botswana

Official announcement of the new home of the Toyota 1000 Desert Race, which will take place in the Selebi Phikwe area for the next three years, subject to renewal.

Botswana has been home to the Toyota 1000 Desert Race since 1991 traversing thousands of kilometres in several areas including Gaborone, Mantshwabisi, Lentsweletau, Hatsalatladi and Kumakwane with last stop being Jwaneng.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) requires the race area to be changed every five years, which necessitates the need to look for alternative areas. The relocation of the host venue also provides continued interest in the event and new challenging terrain for competitors which is in line with building a sustainable future for the race, attracting new entrants and retaining the loyal competitors.

Various areas which could potentially host from 2019 onwards were assessed. The Selebi-Phikwe region was selected as the most suitable, as it offers the most relevant race requirements and infrastructure required for the success of this marathon event. The choice for Phikwe was further influenced by a bid from SPEDU and the Selebi-Phikwe Town Council to host the event, which satisfied the requirements of all the host partners.

The project area has been determined and the preliminary route identified will be finalized in due course.

Today a memorandum of agreement that guides the role of the various parties responsible for the event was signed charting the way forward in terms of the roles played by each member of the organising team.

This event attracts a large number of spectators from all over Botswana, as well as a growing number from Southern African countries and abroad, therefore, most hotels in host towns and surrounding villages usually report a substantial increase in business during the race. This benefit extends to other sectors of the economy as well, such as, fuel stations and the wide spectrum of the retail sector.

A special arrangement for issuing of temporary permits to local vendors is always done to ensure local communities benefit from the race. This is done at selected points at which spectators are expected to gather. Activities that stand to benefit from the event include: Fuel Stations, Food Outlets, Accommodation facilities, Street Vendors, The Transport sector; and Retailers.

Botswana Tourism and the Police always undertakes awareness campaigns to inform the public planning to follow the race and those with settlements along the route, about the necessary safety tips that need to be observed for their own safety and the safety of their property. In the event of unforeseen circumstances where damage may have been caused to property, reports should be submitted to the nearest police station, where the assessment process will start resulting in compensation where appropriate.

The Toyota 1000 Desert Race is the largest Cross Country event in Southern Africa and forms round three of the South African Cross Country Championship.

"Toyota has a long and proud history with the "Desert", as it has become known, and we are delighted that this relationship will continue," said Greg Higgins, SACCS Event Director. "We welcome the move to Selebi Phikwe which offers teams and spectators an array of commercial facilities and new racing terrain in yet another scenic region of Botswana."

"SACCS has always enjoyed a solid working relationship with the Botswana Government, BTO, BPS, Land Boards and BMS and we will be working closely with our counterparts to ensure the future growth and sustainability of the event", Higgins added.

We are happy to once again be associated with this annual sports tourism event, which we have seen grow every year. The choice of Selebi-Phikwe gives the Toyota 1000 Desert Race a different flair, which can only enhance the joy of the event. I wish to encourage our local sports enthusiasts to attend in numbers as we host international visitors and share in the joy of responsible spectating. Acting Chief Executive Officer - Botswana Tourism, Mr. Zibanani Hubona,

As the host town we are happy to have been selected as the host venue for the Toyota 1000 Desert Race. We are ready to host the event and happy the event together with other planned activities will highlight the possibilities that exist in this town. Town Clerk, Selebi-Phikwe Town Council - Mr. Godimo Garegae,

We could not pass an opportunity such as this to bring joy to this town. As we continue looking for economic opportunities, such events come in handy as they bring highlight to the town which we envisage will lead to more sustained long term economic benefits. Chief Executive Officer SPEDU, Dr Mokubung Mokubung

End.

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