



## Garden Route & Klein Karoo Regional Trends

**WESGRO**  
cape town & western cape  
research

January to June 2020

An inspiring place to know

# Contents

1. Methodology
2. Participation and sample size
3. Executive Summary
4. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns
  - 4.1. Origin of visitors
  - 4.2. Top Information Sources
  - 4.3. Travel group size
  - 4.4. Mode of transport
  - 4.5. Main purpose of visit
  - 4.6. Top activities undertaken in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo
  - 4.7. Overnight Stay
  - 4.8. Accommodation Usage
  - 4.9. Average Length of stay
5. Performance of the Garden Route & Klein Karoo Attractions
6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo COVID-19 Impact Survey Results
7. Acknowledgements

# 1. Methodology

This report provides an overview of the tourism trends and patterns in the Cape Garden Route & Klein Karoo. The findings will illustrate key visitor trends obtained from the regional visitor tracking survey.

*Responses to the regional visitor tracking surveys are used as a proxy to indicate the key trends within the Western Cape and the various regions. It is important to note that absolute figures cannot be determined from these surveys, as the survey responses are a sample of the tourists into the respective tourism offices across the Western Cape, and would thus represent a sample of the visitors. Therefore, where statistically relevant absolute numbers may be given, however, a share is provided to indicate the trend. This is based on international best practice in the use of surveys within the tourism industry for determining key trends.*

**Definition:** Tourist: refers to any visitor travelling to a place other than that of his/her own environment for more than one night, but less than 12 months and for whom the main purpose of the trip is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated for from within the place visited.

In addition, the results of a COVID-19 regional impact study are included in this report. In August 2020, Wesgro undertook a survey with tourism businesses to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic at a regional level as well as the challenges experienced by the local tourism industry in the Western Cape. Survey Monkey was used as the main research tool to develop the questionnaire and electronic link for the COVID-19 impact study. With the support of the Regional Tourism Bodies in the Western Cape, a member database of tourism businesses were obtained from each region. In the event of challenges experienced in obtaining member databases, the Local Tourism Authorities (LTA's) assisted in circulating the survey on Wesgro's behalf to all their members. Furthermore, the survey was also shared on all Wesgro's social media platforms to obtain a stronger sample of respondents.

## 2. Participation and sample size

Between January and March 2020, a total of **1240** responses to the regional visitor tracking survey were received from the respective Tourism Offices in the Cape Garden Route & Klein Karoo and **1230** responses were received over the same period in 2019. The participating Tourism Offices were:

	Q1 2019	Q1 2020
Calitzdorp	53	0
George	140	268
Knysna	187	140
Oudtshoorn	519	455
Pacalsdorp	14	0
Plettenberg Bay	96	199
Uniondale	31	168
Wilderness	190	10
	<b>1230</b>	<b>1240</b>

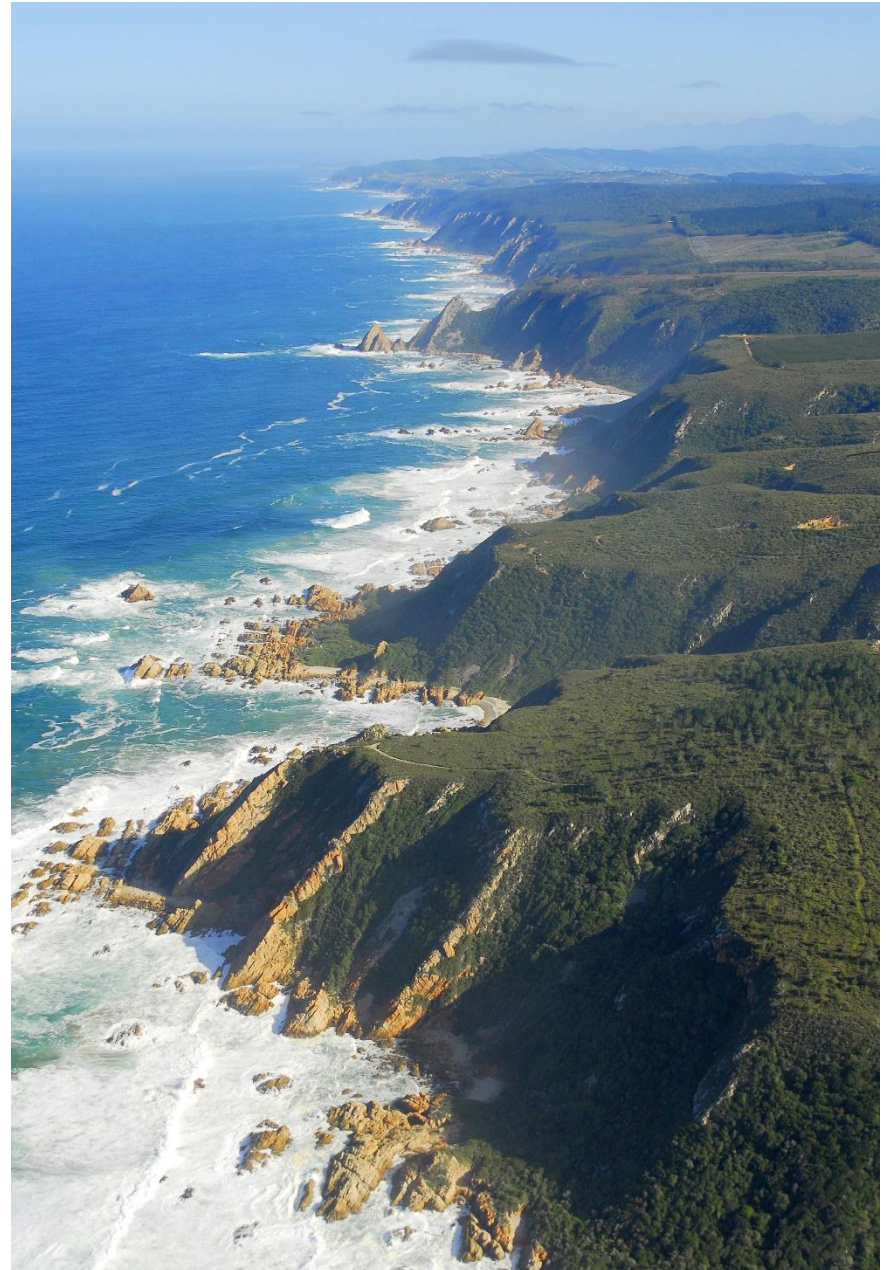


The trends related to the impact of COVID-19 on tourism businesses in this report are based on feedback from **34 respondents** who were based in the Cape Garden Route & Klein Karoo and follows the same methodology as that of the regional tracking survey.



### 3. Executive Summary

- Stretching from Witsand to Plettenberg Bay, Oudtshoorn Calitzdorp and Ladismith on the world renowned Route 62, the Garden Route and Klein Karoo is a place of immense natural beauty; offering an abundance of adventure, world class golf courses and award winning dining experience.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly had a devastating impact on the tourism economy. Countries the world over have shut their borders in an attempt to curb the spread of the virus, and it has had devastating effects on the global travel industry. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has reported a loss of 440 million international travellers and around US\$ 460 billion in export revenues from international tourism, over the January – June 2020 period (UNWTO, 2020).
- On 15 March 2020, the South African Government declared a national state of disaster in response to the coronavirus pandemic. A nationwide lockdown then came into effect on 26 March 2020, resulting in a complete standstill of all tourism activity until 31 May 2020. In line with government's risk adjusted strategy, limited tourism activity was introduced as of 1 June 2020.
- As a result, visitors to the participating Cape Garden Route and Klein Karoo attractions decreased by 47,0% going from a combined total of 329 421 visitors between January and June 2019 and to 174 490 over the same period in 2020. All attractions in the region were closed throughout quarter two of 2020 due to the nationwide lockdown, which took effect on 26 March 2020.
- Visitor numbers were on an upward trend in January (+5,4%), slowly decreasing in February (-6,3%) and finally plummeted in March (-47,7%) due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Respondents to the COVID-19 impact survey cited a lack of tourists, border closures and the impact it has on income as their top three concerns. In addition, the overall government response and irrational COVID-19 related regulations, uncertainty of what the future holds, the possible changes in purchasing behaviour of travellers and the effect crime, corruption and negative news will have on destination image were major concerns amongst respondents.
- 44,1% of responding businesses in the Cape Garden Route & Klein Karoo region experienced a complete loss of revenue as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and a further 41,2% saw their revenue decline by at least 50% due to the pandemic.

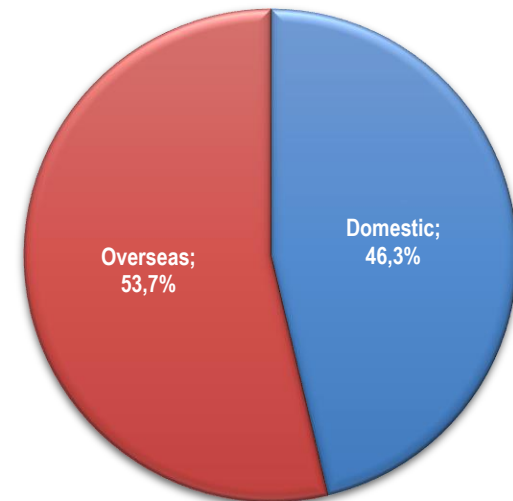


## 4. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns

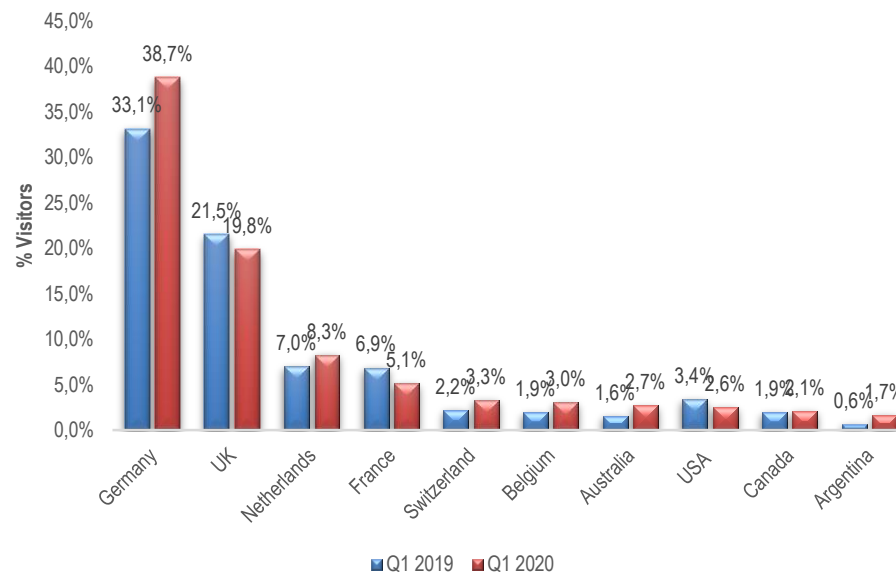
### 4.1 Origin of Visitors

- Overseas visitors made up 53,7% of travellers to the Cape Garden Route & Klein Karoo over the Jan – Mar 2020.
- Following a similar trend as Q1 2019, traditional markets such as the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Netherlands ranked as the region's top five international markets.
- Consistent with the Western Cape's international visitor trends, European travellers are the main drivers of tourism activity in the Garden Route and Klein Karoo. Over 80% of all overseas visitors to the region originated from the continent in the first quarter of both 2019 and 2020.
- Despite financial and economic constraints, trends indicate that domestic travellers continue to travel. Over the period Jan – Mar 2020, the largest share of domestic travellers to the region originated from the Western Cape, which indicates that the Cape Garden Route & Klein Karoo is a popular destination for locals in the province. Eastern Cape and Gauteng were amongst the top 3 most popular source provinces to the region.

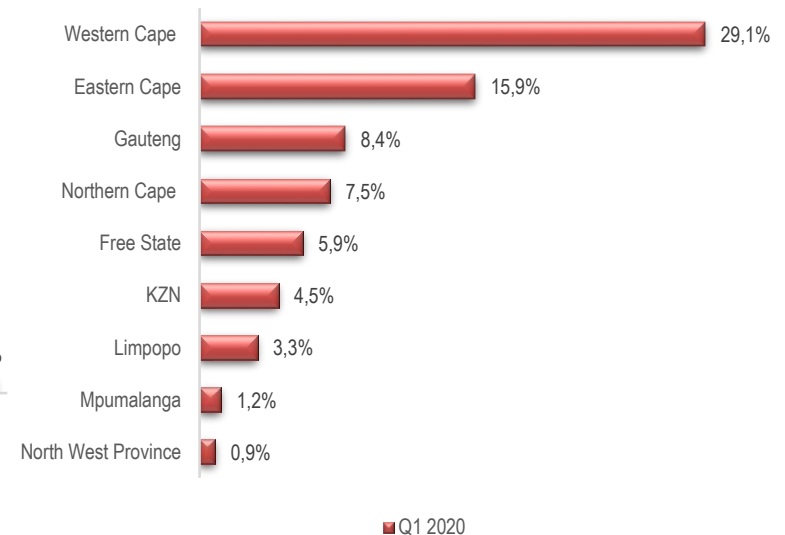
% SHARE OF OVERSEAS AND DOMESTIC VISITORS TO THE CAPE OVERBERG, JAN-JUN 2019



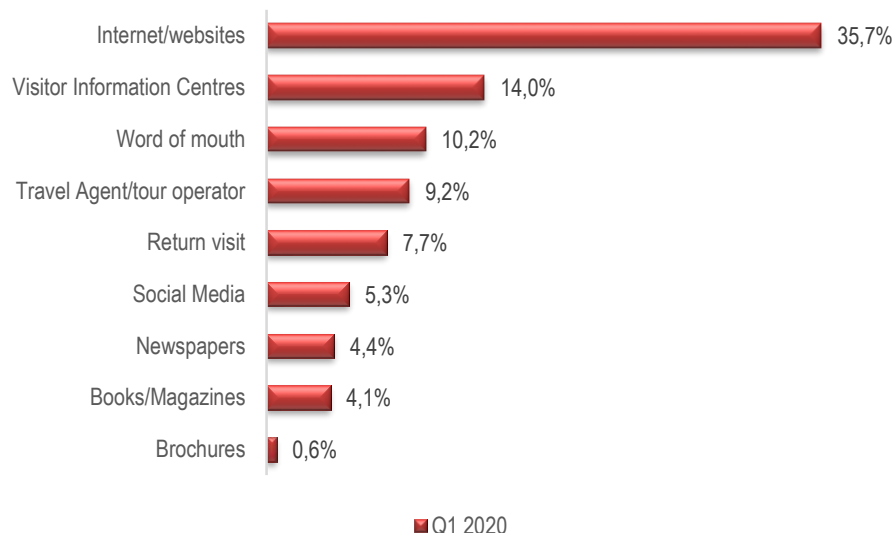
TOP INTERNATIONAL VISITORS TO THE GARDEN ROUTE & KLEIN KAROO, Q1 2019/20



% SHARE OF DOMESTIC VISITORS TO THE GARDEN ROUTE & KLEIN KAROO, Q1 2020

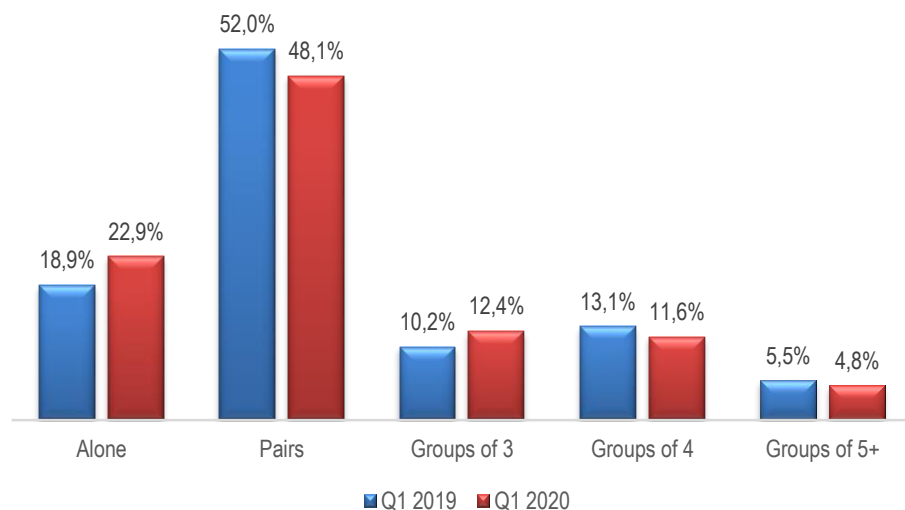


## 4.2 Top information sources

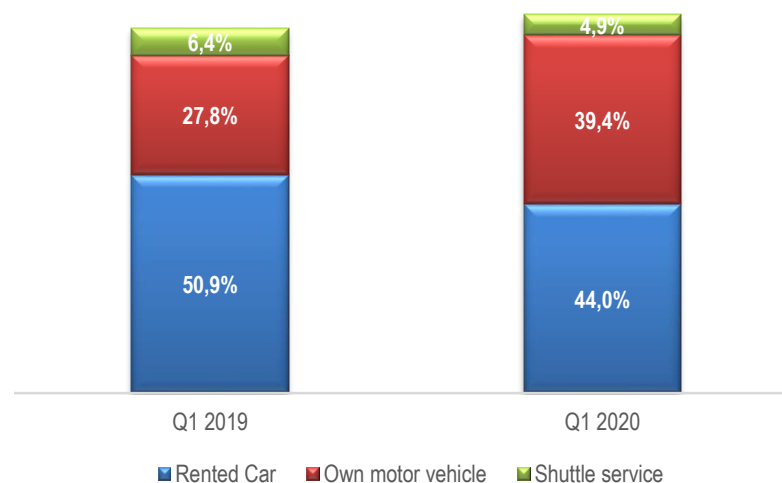


- Known for its breathtaking scenic beauty, the Garden Route and Klein Karoo is a place of dramatic oceanside cliffs, ancient forests and semi arid deserts.
- The leading sources used by visitors to gather information about the region was via Internet/websites (35,7%), Visitor Information Centres (14,0%), and word of mouth (10,2%) in Q1 2020.
- Rented cars and own motor vehicles remained the preferred mode of transport over the Jan – Mar period in 2019 and 2020. This could be as a result of the high percentage of locals making short trips to the Garden Route and Klein Karoo region.
- The Garden Route and Klein Karoo is a desirable destination which caters for all age categories. Majority of respondents travelled to the region in pairs or on their own, however, family trips are popular as well with nearly 30% travelling in groups of three or more in quarter one of both 2019 and 2020.

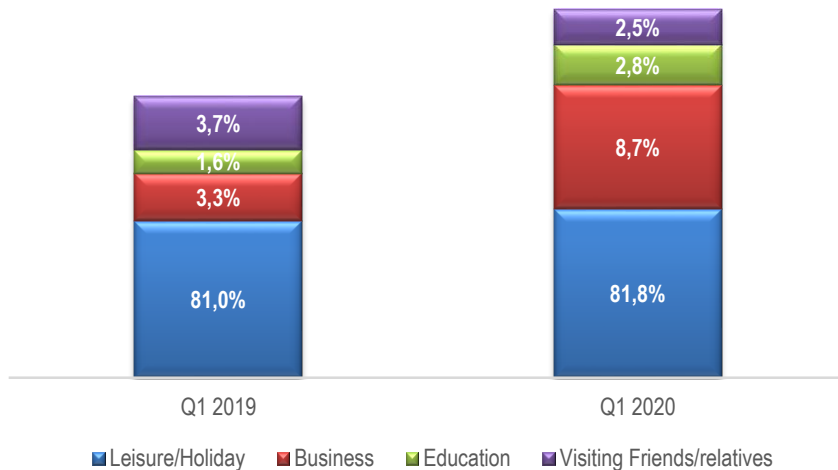
## 4.3 Group size



## 4.4 Mode of transport

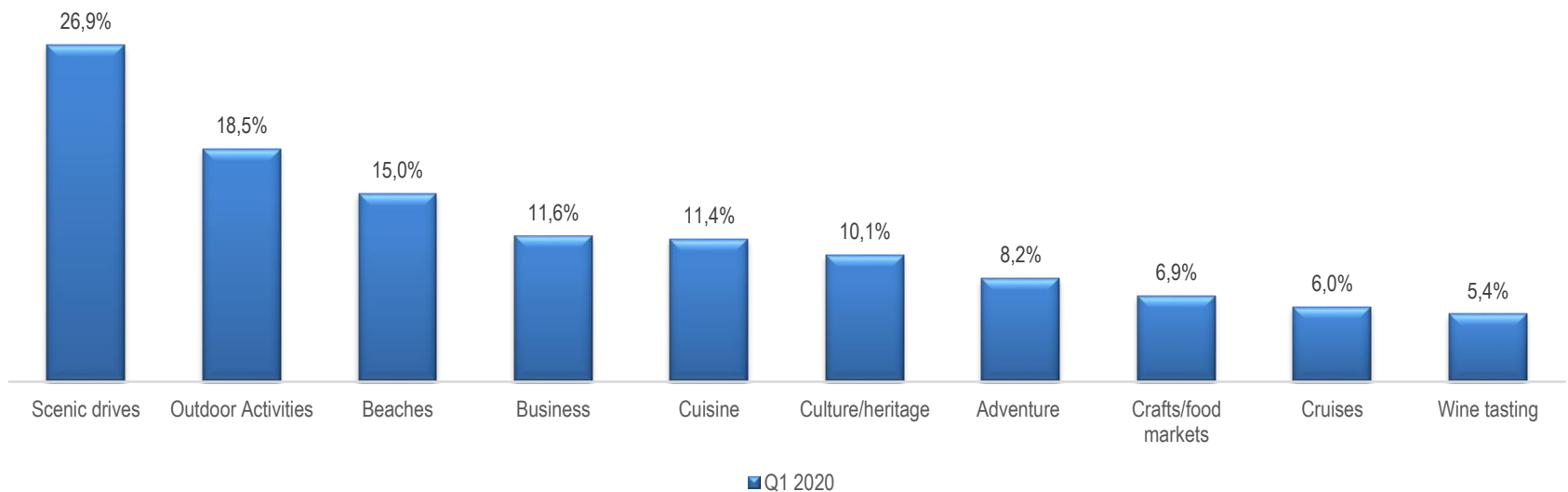


## 4.5 Purpose of visit

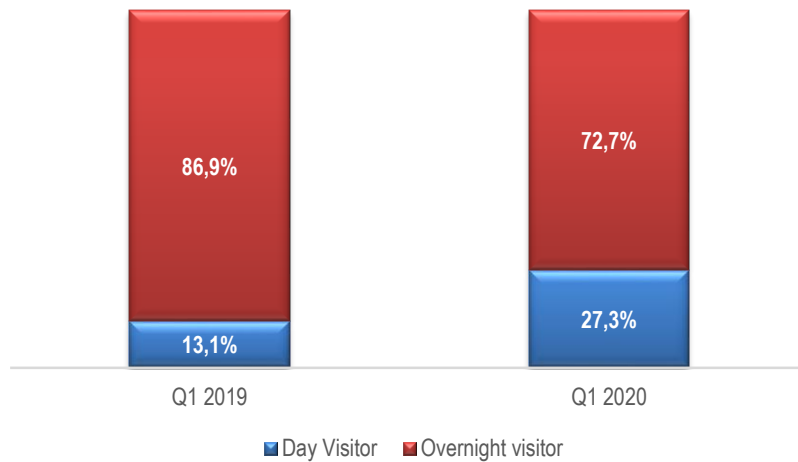


- The most prominent motivating factor for travel to the Garden Route and Klein Karoo was for the purpose of holiday/leisure in Q1 of both 2019 (81,0%) and 2020 (81,8%).
- Visiting friends/relatives as well as travelling for business and education ranked as part of the top 4 reasons for visiting the region in Q1 2020.
- Scenic drives, outdoor activities and beaches were the top three activities undertaken in the region over the Jan – Mar 2020 period.
- Other popular activities to the region include business, cuisine, culture/heritage, adventure, crafts/food markets, cruises and wine tasting.

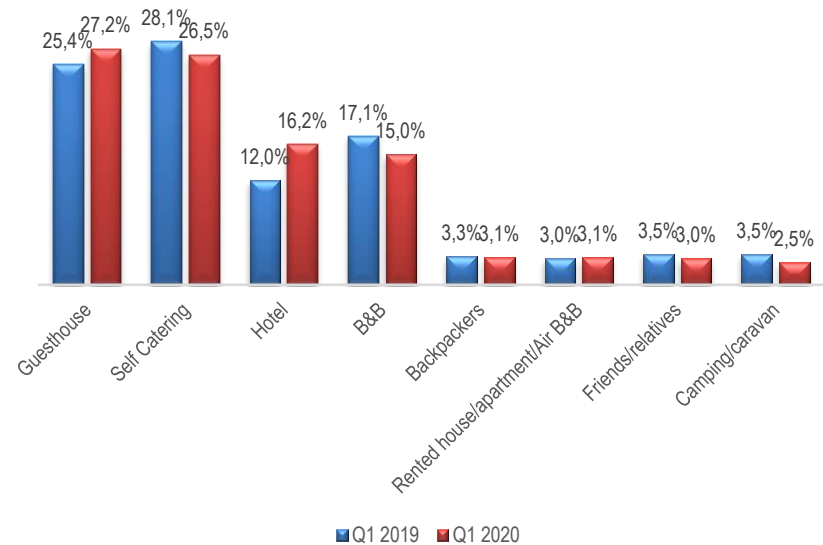
## 4.6 Top Activities Undertaken in the Cape Garden Route & Klein Karoo



#### 4.7 Overnight stay

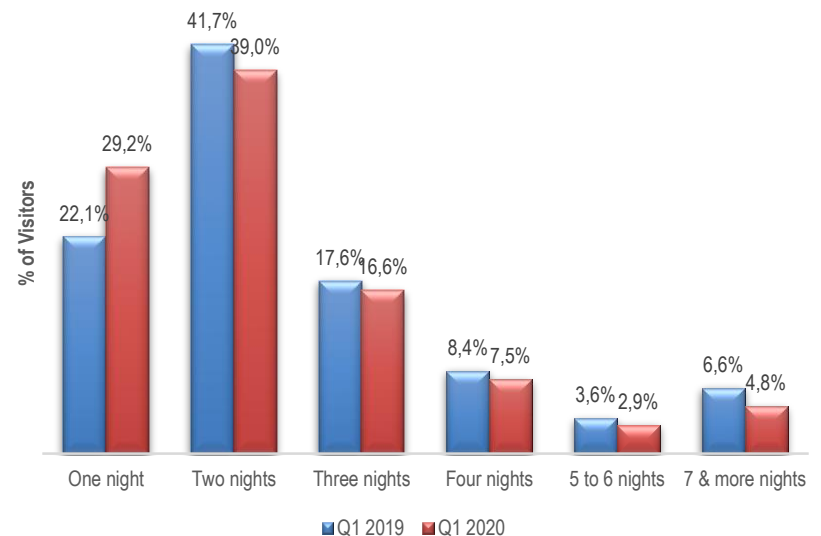


#### 4.8 Accommodation Usage



- The vast majority of respondents indicated to be overnight visitors staying on average one to three nights in the Garden Route and Klein Karoo region.
- Guesthouse, self catering, hotel and B&B were the most popular accommodation choices for overnight visitors to the region in Q1 of both 2019 and 2020.

#### 4.9 Average Length of Stay

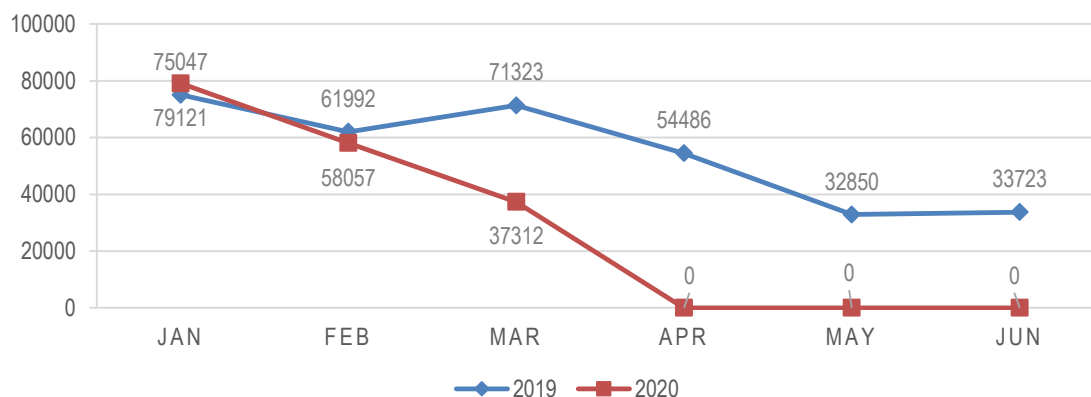




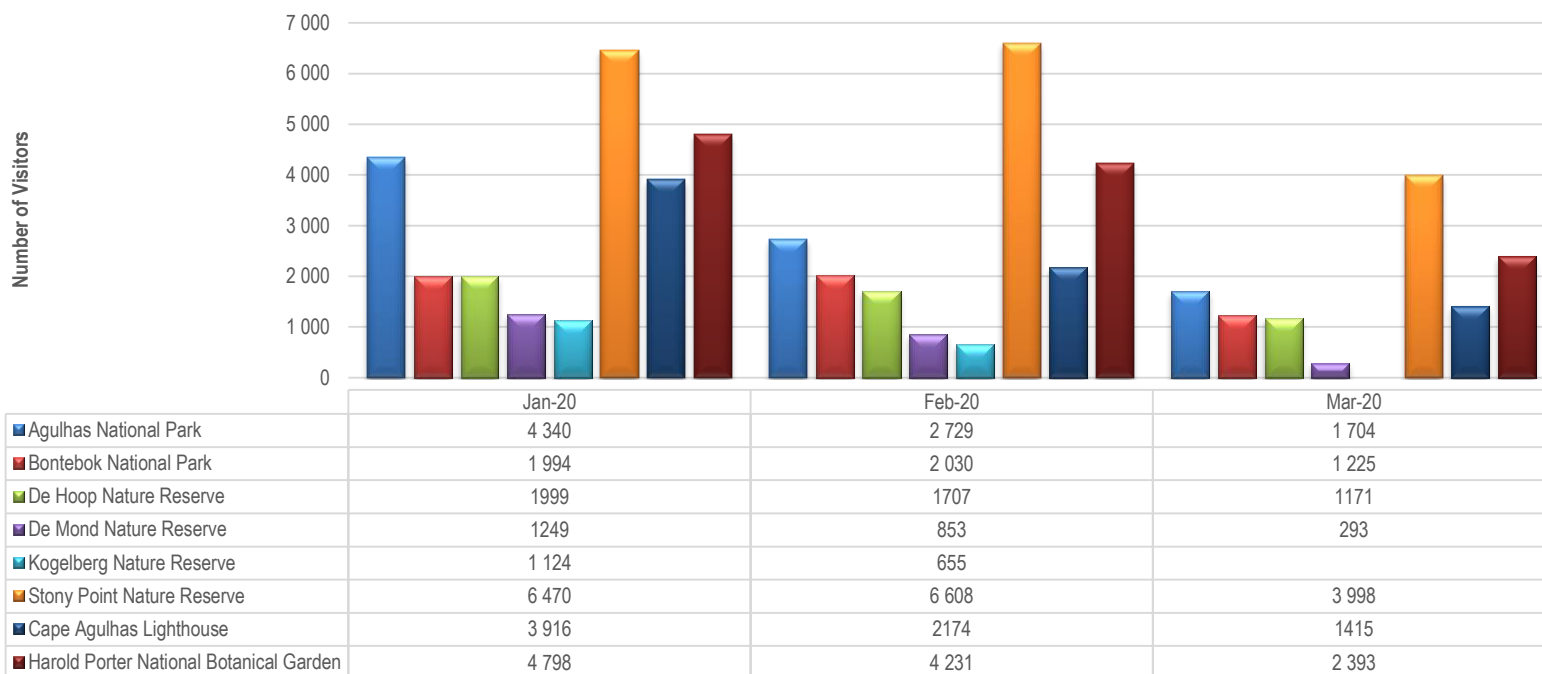
## 5. Performance of Garden Route & Klein Karoo Attractions

- The participating Garden Route and Klein Karoo attractions recorded a combined total of 329 421 visitors between January and June 2019 and decreased by 47,0% to 174 490 over the same period in 2020.
- Visitor numbers were on an upward trend in January (+5,4%), slowly decreasing in February (-6,3%) and finally plummeted in March (-47,7%) due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- All attractions in the region were closed throughout quarter two of 2020 due to the nationwide lockdown, which took effect on 26 March 2020.

**TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITORS TO THE CAPE GARDEN ROUTE & KLEIN KAROO ATTRACTIONS, JAN-JUN 2019/20**

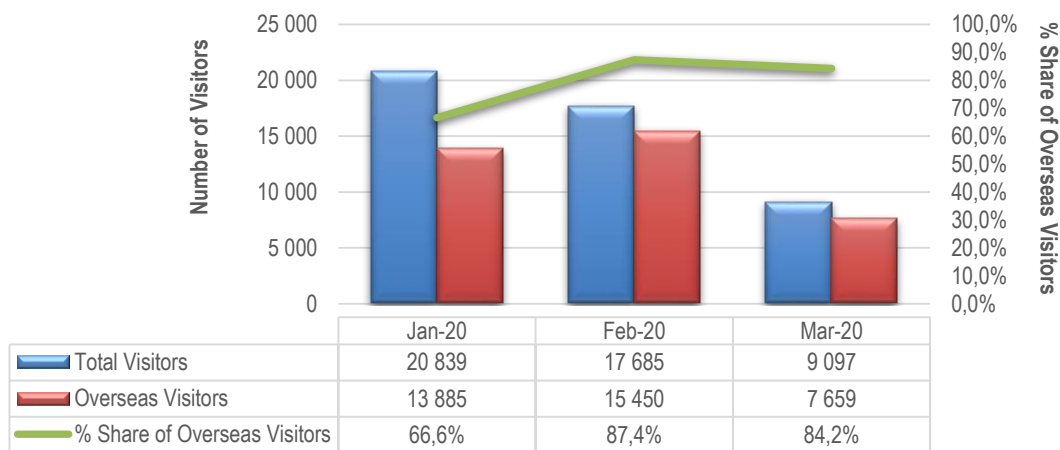


**TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITORS TO THE CAPE GARDEN ROUTE & KLEIN KAROO ATTRACTIONS, JAN - MAR 2020**



Sources: SANParks, SANBI, L'Agulhas and Hangklip/Kleinmond Tourism Offices, 2020

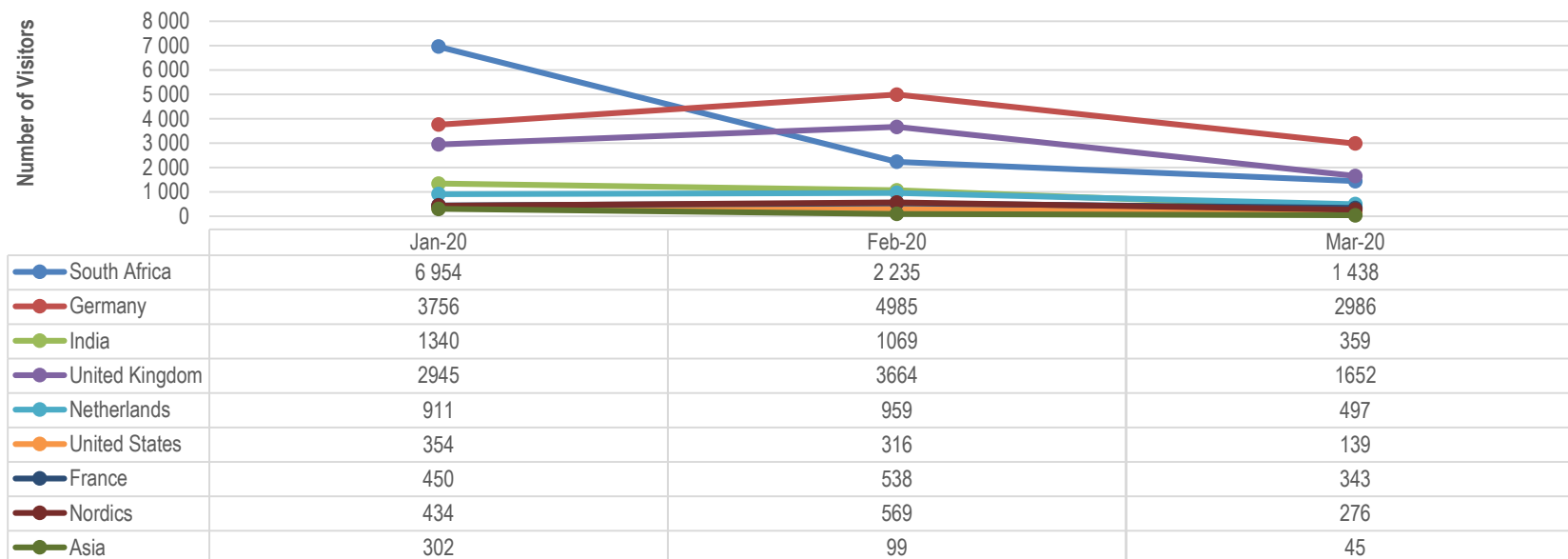
### TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITORS TO THE CANGO CAVES: JAN – MAR 2020



- The Cango Caves welcomed a total of 47 621 visitors over the period January to March 2020. The highest recorded number of visitors occurred in January with 20 839 patrons visiting the attraction.
- Overseas visitor numbers were the highest in February 2020 with 15 450 international patrons visiting the Cango Caves.
- South Africa, Germany, and India were the top 3 source markets over the period January to March 2020.
- On 15 March 2020, the South African Government declared a national state of disaster in response to the coronavirus pandemic. A nationwide lockdown then came into effect on 26 March 2020, resulting in a complete standstill of all tourism activity until 31 May 2020. In line with government's risk adjusted strategy, limited tourism activity was introduced as of 1 June 2020.

■ Total Visitors 
 ■ Overseas Visitors 
 — % Share of Overseas Visitors

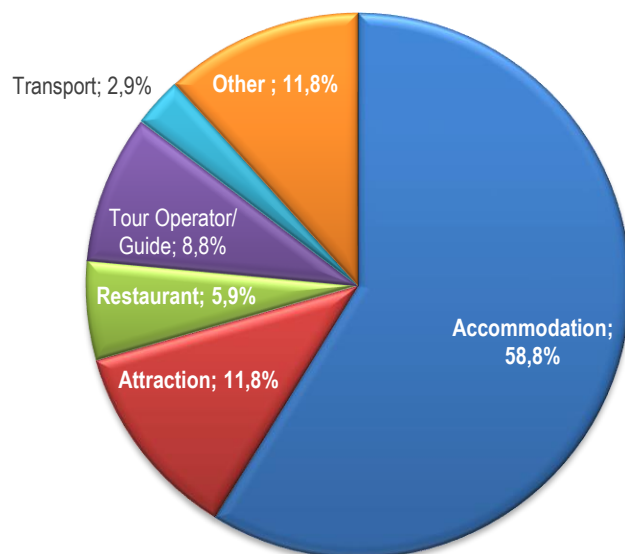
### CANGO CAVES VISITOR DISTRIBUTION BY TOP SOURCE MARKETS: JAN - MAR 2020



Source: Cango Caves 2020

## 6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo COVID-19 Impact Survey

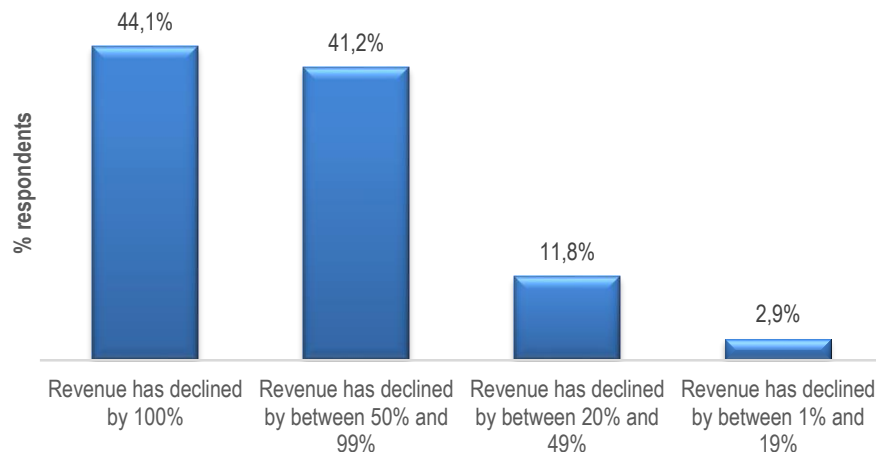
### BUSINESS CATEGORIES OF CAPE GARDEN ROUTE & KLEIN KAROO RESPONDENTS



- A total of 375 tourism businesses across the Western Cape took part in the survey and 34 respondents were based in the Cape Garden Route & Klein Karoo Region.
- Majority of Cape Garden Route & Klein Karoo respondents were in the categories of accommodation (58,8%) and attraction (11,8%). Respondents in the 'other' category included adventure, activity, and wine tasting.
- 44,1% of responding businesses in the Cape Garden Route & Klein Karoo region experienced a complete loss of revenue as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and a further 41,2% saw their revenue decline by at least 50% due to the pandemic.

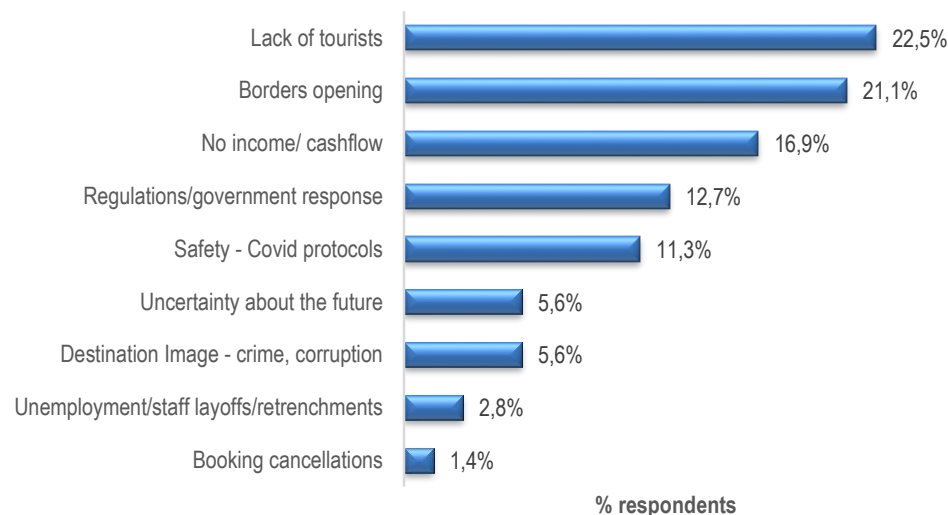
- In August 2020, a survey was conducted with tourism businesses to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic at a regional level as well as the challenges experienced by the local tourism industry.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly had a devastating impact on the tourism economy. In its most recent projections, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) predicts that the tourism industry will lose at least 98,2 million jobs with a US\$ 2 686 billion loss in GDP.
- It is imperative for public and private sector to work together towards adaptation and recovery. A 'new normal' is expected to emerge as a result of the pandemic, and it will certainly affect the way we travel and the way we do business.

### COVID-19 IMPACT ON CAPE GARDEN ROUTE & KLEIN KAROO BUSINESSES



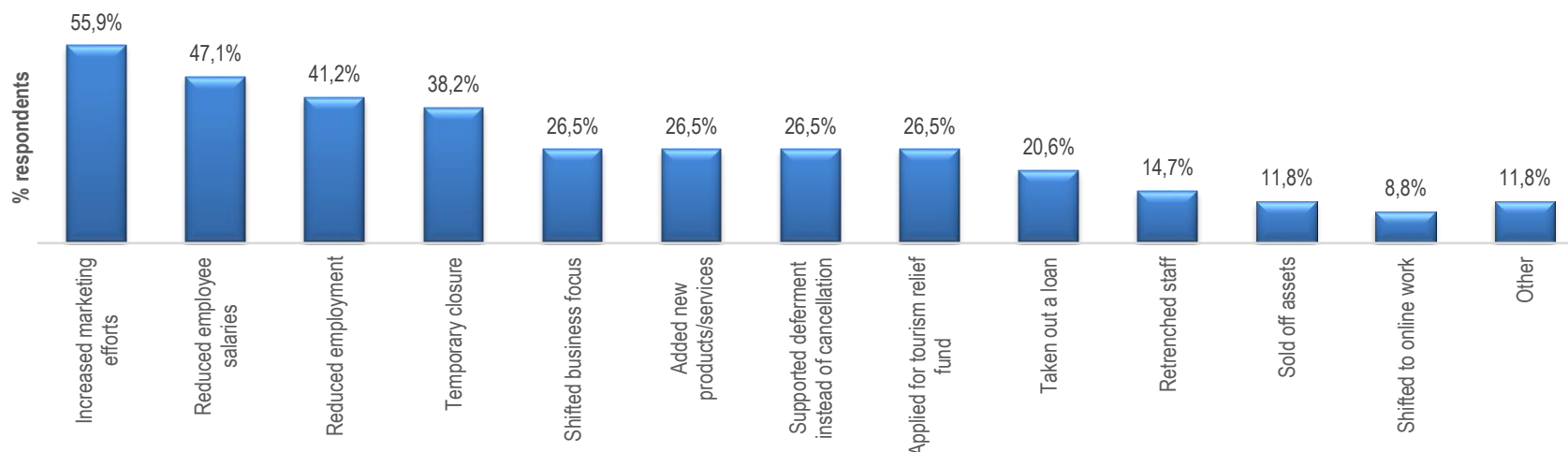
## 6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo COVID-19 Impact Survey

### TOP CONCERNS REGARDING COMPANIES AND THE TOURISM INDUSTRY



- More than half of respondents had increased their marketing efforts to cope with the financial effects of the pandemic. In addition, reducing employment (41,2%), salaries (47,1%) and temporary closure (38,2%) were the most widely used strategies to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on businesses.
- The major concerns amongst respondents were centred around the lack of tourists due to border closures and the impact it has on income. The overall government response and irrational COVID-19 related regulations were mentioned amongst 12,7% of respondents.
- Many expressed their concerns about the uncertainty of what the future holds, the possible changes in purchasing behaviour of travellers and the effect crime, corruption and negative news will have on destination image.
- Job losses, the cost of implementing additional safety measures, and the impact an influx of tourists could have on the spread of the virus were amongst respondents' top concerns .

### STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED TO COPE WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

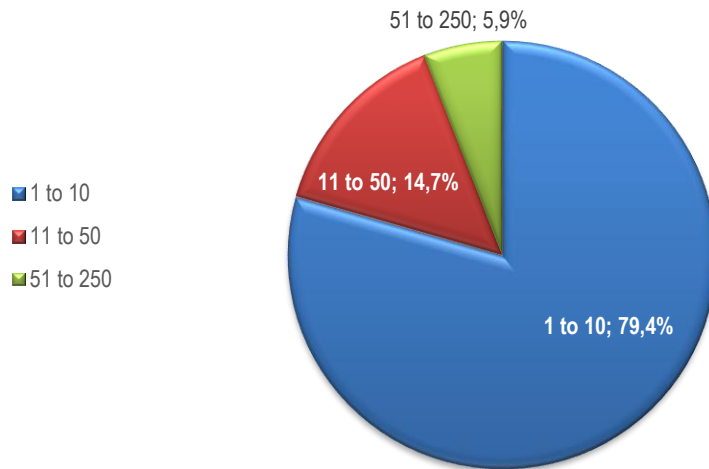


Q.3. What are your TOP THREE biggest concerns regarding your business and the tourism industry currently?

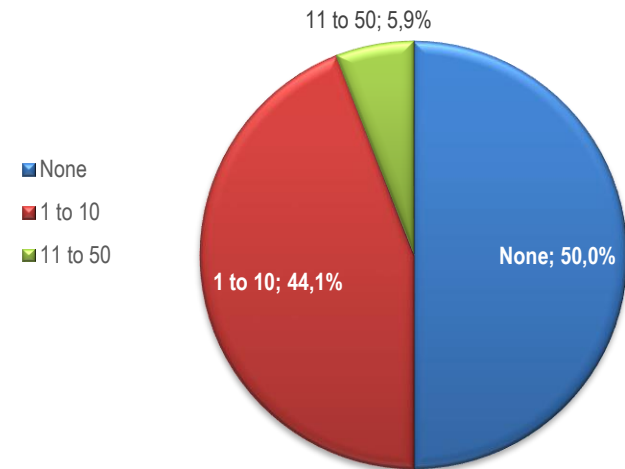
Q.5. What strategies do you have in place to cope with the current situation?

## 6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo COVID-19 Impact Survey

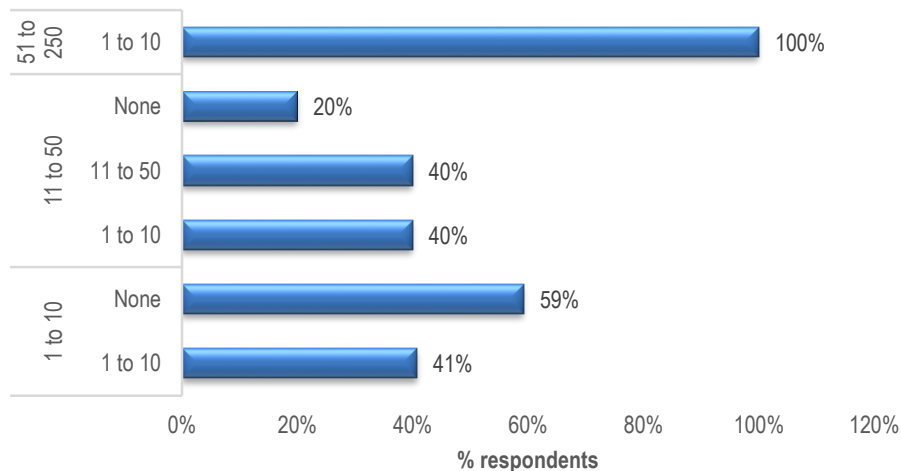
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES BEFORE COVID-19



NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES LOST DUE TO COVID-19



COMPARISON: NUMBER EMPLOYED vs. NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES LOST



- Nearly 80% of respondents had between 1 and 10 employees before COVID-19 and around 40% of those reported to have lost at least 1 employee due to the pandemic.
- 14,7% of respondents had between 11 and 50 employees prior to COVID-19 and 40% of them lost between 1 and 10 employees as a result of the pandemic. An additional 40% lost between 11 and 50 employees.
- Respondents who recorded 51 to 250 employees (5,9%) prior to COVID-19 lost between 1 and 10 employees since the pandemic.
- Overall, it is promising that half of respondents indicated that they had not lost any employees. However, 44,1% of respondents indicated to have lost between 1 and 10 employees and a further 5,9% had lost between 11 and 50 employees due to COVID-19.

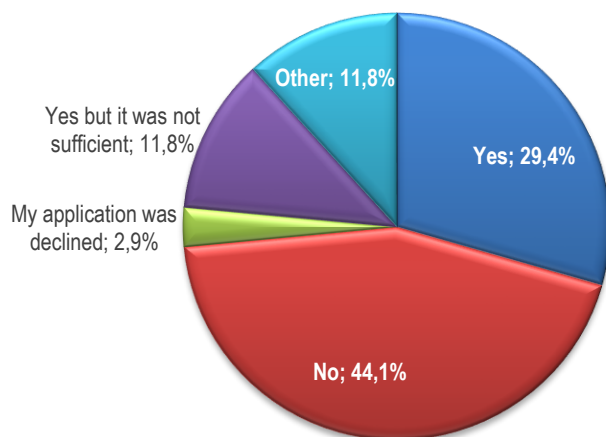
Q.8. How many employees did you have prior to COVID-19?

Q. 9. How many employees have you lost since the lockdown started on 26 March 2020?



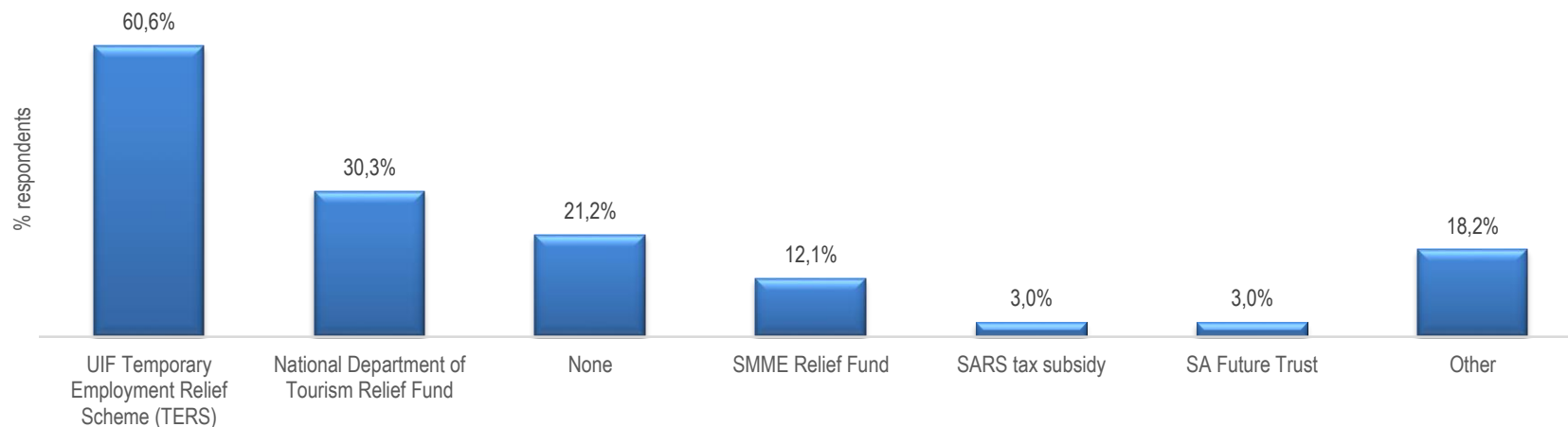
## 6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo COVID-19 Impact Survey

FINANCIAL SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENT



- A number of funds were made available by government to support struggling businesses in coping with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 44,1% of respondents did not receive any government funding however, nearly half of those who did not receive funding had not applied for any.
- 29,4% of respondents said that they received funding and 11,8% received funding which was not sufficient for their needs.
- 60,6% of respondents applied for funding from the UIF Temporary Employment Relief Scheme (TERS) and 30,3% of respondents applied to the National Department of Tourism Relief Fund.
- Overall, 21,2% of respondents in the Cape Garden Route & Klein Karoo did not apply for any government funding.

FUNDS TO WHICH GARDEN ROUTE & KLEIN KAROO TOURISM BUSINESSES APPLIED, 2020

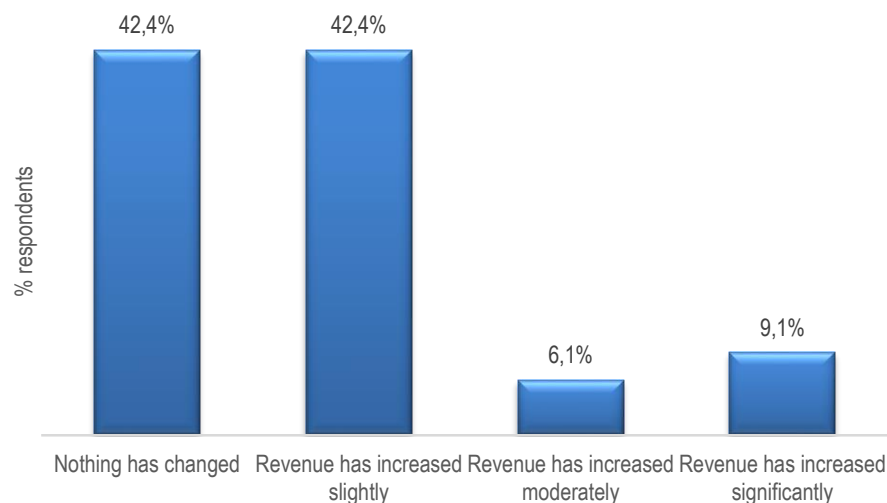


Q.6. Have you received any support from government?

Q.7. To which fund/s have you applied?

## 6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo COVID-19 Impact Survey

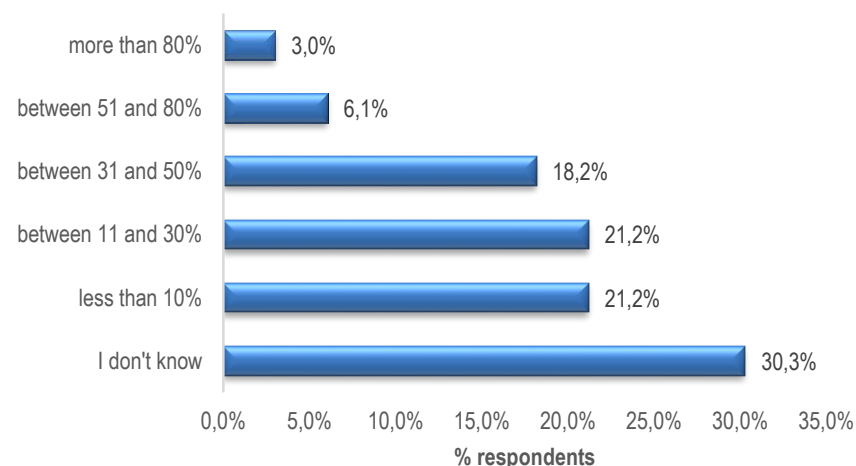
### BUSINESS TOURISM – CAPE GARDEN ROUTE & KLEIN KAROO



- As part of national government's risk adjusted strategy, a number of sub-sectors and activities were allowed to open under lockdown levels 3 and 4. Domestic travel for business purposes, in particular, was allowed from 1 June 2020.
- 57,6% of respondents said that occupancy or revenue had increased as a result of this relief measure.
- 42,4% of respondents had not experienced any change in occupancy or revenue.

- Looking ahead, respondents seem to be somewhat optimistic about bookings over the next six months.
- 18,2% of respondents said that they expect occupancy levels to be between 31 and 50% over the September 2020 to March 2021 period, and 9,1% of respondents expect more than 50% occupancy.
- 42,4% of respondents remain cautious and do not expect more than 30% occupancy over the next six months.
- 30,3% of respondents indicated that they simply do not know what to expect which highlights the uncertainty and unpredictability associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

### FORWARD BOOKINGS



Q.10. Since restrictions on business tourism has been eased, have you seen an increase in occupancy/revenue?

Q.11. Looking ahead, based on forward bookings, what is your occupancy expectation for Sep 2020 to Mar 2021?

## 7. Acknowledgements

*Acknowledgements and many thanks go to the following for supplying the data which made this publication possible and whose continued and unwavering support will sustain the forthcoming issues.*

*The participating local tourism offices in the Cape Garden Route & Klein Karoo:*

- Calitzdorp Tourism
- George Tourism
- Knysna Tourism
- Oudtshoorn Tourism
- Plettenberg Bay Tourism
- Uniondale Tourism
- Wilderness Tourism
- 

*The participating attractions in the Cape Garden Route & Klein Karoo:*

- Cango Caves
- South African National Parks
- Tsitsikamma National Park
- Wilderness National Park

*A special thanks to the participants in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo who took the time to complete the online survey.*

*Wesgro has taken every effort to ensure that the information in this publication is accurate. We provide said information without representation or warranty whatsoever, whether expressed or implied. It is the responsibility of users of this publication to satisfy themselves of the accuracy of information contained herein. Wesgro cannot be held responsible for the contents of the publication in any way.*

© Wesgro, 2020.