



Signature Experiences Program

Application guide:
Eligibility Criteria, Application Process
and Pre-qualifying quiz



Jambo!

Travellers want to live meaningful experiences, and Kenya is just the right place for this. Your participation, as tourism operator, is key to assure that promise.

In order to identify and display the best travel experiences aligned with Kenya's tourism brand Unique Selling Proposition (USP), KTB benchmarked with leading destinations in the world and has created the Magical Kenya Signature Experiences (MKSE) program.

MKSE is a free of charge program. You do not have to pay to apply or remain in the program. It does require effort on your side to demonstrate that the activities you provide deserve being a Signature Experience.

In this guide, you will find relevant information about the program, eligibility criteria and the application process. Please fill in the MKSE pre-qualifying quiz to see if you meet the basic program eligibility criteria. If the answer is YES to all the questions in the quiz, please sign and send it to signatureexperiences@ktb.go.ke . We will then send you the application form to get you started in this process.

We will be thrilled to receive your application(s)!

Kenya Tourism Board

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1. Introduction to the Magical Kenya Signature Experiences (MKSE) Program

1.1 What is the MKSE Program?

The MKSE is a compilation of traveler experiences that are best aligned to Magical Kenya's brand promise. It is a market development and brand alignment program whose aim is to:

- Help change international visitors' perspective of Kenya and create experiences prepared for the exportation to satisfy the interest of the visitors, as defined in the Kenya's Marketing Strategy.
- Improve the profile of the width and depth of the quality experiences of the visitors in our country and increase international sales to Kenya tourism businesses.
- Raise the bar by inspiring the development of innovative products and packaging. In addition, improve the number of SMEs (small and medium businesses) that sell in international markets and through travel trade.

Align KTB marketing strategy with Kenya tourism businesses by selling directly to the completely independent traveler (FIT), and/or through travel trade for packaged independent or group travel market. The Signature Experiences comprises large and small companies, as well as remote, urban and rural experiences that are offered to niche and mass markets.

The program is not a credential program nor a marketing campaign. Nevertheless, Magical Kenya Signature Experiences are part of the annual programs undertaken by the Kenya Tourism Board in our destination marketing efforts. The program does not promote the whole range of products, packages of tourist operators or self-discovery activities of a particular company (for example, tracks, round courses). The signature experiences are planned to promote Kenya as a whole.

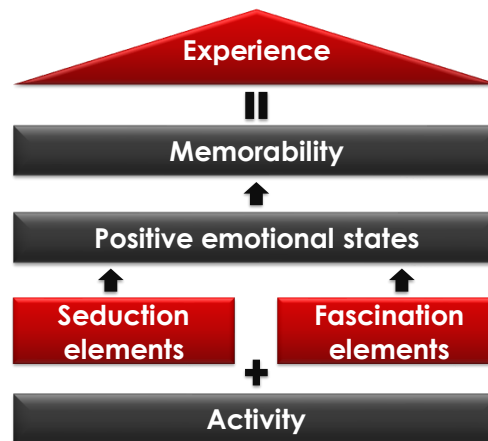
1.2 What is a Magical Kenya Signature Experience?

Magical Kenya Signature Experiences are export-ready visitor experiences that respond to travellers' desires to expose themselves beyond the mainstream tourist activities.

These experiences are activities, based on a Kenya's key resources and attractions (i.e. natural park), to which deliberately, elements of seduction and fascination are added. These elements of seduction and fascination can be the story behind the attraction, learning about a subject of interest, the activation of human senses through music, lights, scents, with travellers being involved in an activity, and the exclusivity of getting access to premises that are not available to everyone, among others.

When you apply these seduction and fascination elements to an activity, travellers get immersed in a positive emotional state of mind, that will claim a place in their memory and to which they will keep on coming back time after time.

Figure 1. The components of an experience

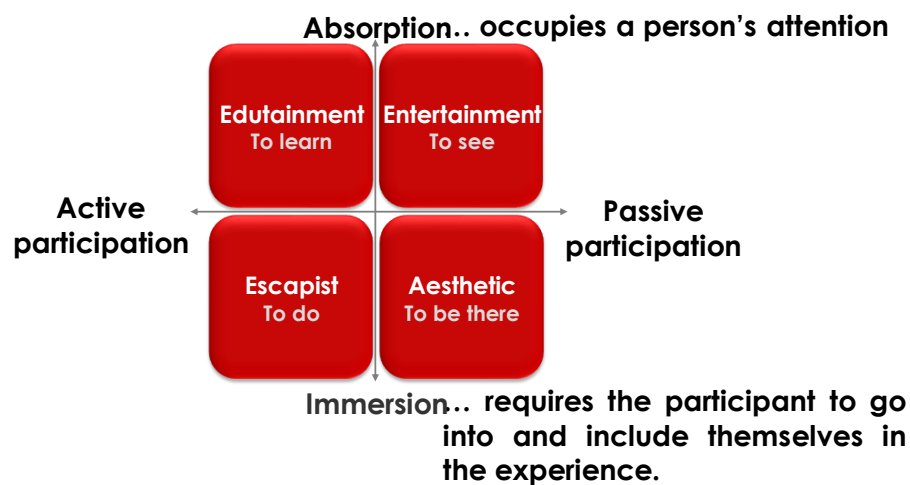


Source: THR

The four types of Magical Kenya Signature Experiences

There are four types of experiences in this program, depending on whether the traveller is active or passive, and whether their mind is absorbed, or they are physically or mentally immersed.

Figure 2. Two dimensions for four realms of experience



Source: THR

Edutainment Experiences

These experiences increase the customer's skills and enhance his/her knowledge through active participation. The following are some examples:

- Learn about mammals or any other specific species
- Learn how to cook a truly Swahili meal
- Learn about the history and life of communities
- Learning how to kitesurf at the Kenya Coast
- Learn how to weave a basket(kiondoo) etc

Entertainment Experiences

These experiences entail watching the activities and/or performances of others. The customer is not actively involved in the creation of the entertainment, but the mind is actively engaged during the appreciation of the event. The following are some examples:

- Attend the Turkana Festival, Lamu Festival, etc.
- All the flavour and authenticity of a typical Sunday market
- Enjoy the best cinema al fresco under the stars
- Watching a show at a nightclub in Nairobi or Mombasa, etc.

Escapist Experiences

These experiences require that the customer actively participates in the events whether physically present or in a virtual environment. The customer shapes or contributes to the experience, which offers them a way of taking on a new persona. The following are some examples:

- Climbing Mount Kenya
- Fishing on the Kenya coast
- Practising water sports on the Kenya coast
- Running in the wilderness, etc.

Aesthetic Experiences

These experiences entail customer enjoyment of an enriched, unique physical design. The customer enjoys passively appreciating or "just being in a setting". The following are some examples:

- Watching the sunset / sunrise in the savannah
- Being in paradisiac beaches
- Enjoying a hot air balloon safari
- Admiring breath-taking landscapes, etc.

1.3 What is Kenya's Unique Selling Proposition?

The selected Signature Experiences will have to represent at least one of the following components of Kenya's Unique Selling Proposition.

Figure 3. The seven components of Kenya's Unique Selling Proposition



1.4 Which are Kenya's priority markets and segments?

The Kenya Tourism Board is focusing its marketing efforts on six international markets USA, UK, Germany, Italy, China and India.

Besides geographical segmentation, KTB has identified six segments of international travellers based on their attitudes towards travel. Segments falling within the show off and authenticity motivations are Kenya's priority targets. Standout Adventurers show the highest affinity for Kenya and short-term intention to take a holiday involving a safari.

Figure 4. Kenya's four priority segments of international travellers

Show-off		Authenticity		Relax	
Standout Adventurer	Glamorous Traveler	Culture Lover	Carefree Adventurer	Family Relaxers	
How is their personality?					
I like feeling unique, special and ahead of the pack	I need to be the best, praised for the success I have achieved	I like to test my boundaries, explore and achieve independence	I like to enjoy myself without worrying about the consequences	I need to know my peers accept me for what I am, feeling welcomed	I have to feel relaxed, tranquil and safe
What do they expect from their travel?					
I'm looking for an active, energetic and adventurous trip, without forgetting the need to gain social recognition	I'm looking for a glamorous organized trip to get away from it all, only the very best will do to impress my peers	I'm looking for a trip where I can engage with new cultures and with locals in sheer beautiful nature	In a trip I like to do adventurous activities (hiking/trekking) and discover new places and cultures in intriguing foreign countries to get away and disconnect	I'm looking for a relaxing trip, to be on the beach, in nature or in a peaceful countryside with my family	I'm looking for a relaxing trip that allows me to experience new things but with comfort

1.3 Benefits of being part of the MKSE program

The key benefits MKSE program affiliates can expect include:

- Display of the business and its signature experiences in a sub-site under the destination website www.magicalkenya.com
- Marketing of signature experiences by KTB in communication campaigns and promotional events in international source markets
- Media exposure through participation in press trips
- Sales growth because of increased exposure, channels and perception of quality by international travel trade and consumers
- Increased packaging or cross-promotional opportunities with other MKSE affiliates.
- Invitation to networking and skill building events
- Market reliability and prestige, as well as peer acknowledgment

2. MKSE Program criteria

2.1 Who should apply?

Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) encourages companies that are selling unique travel experiences in Kenya and are already working with international clients to register in the Magical Kenya Signature Experiences (MKSE) Program.

The KTB's goal is to identify a selection of unique Kenyan travel experiences that will enable the traveler to get involved in the rich culture of the Kenyan people, its multiple landscapes, its amazing wildlife, its vast geography, and its multi-experiential coastline in a real and genuine way.

To differentiate Kenya from its regional and global competitors, the main goal will be to commercialize real experiences. Its program affiliates will have a business profile and experience displayed in the official destination website and will be identified as a certified Signature Experience. Travelers will be redirected to the website of the operator to receive further information and/or booking.

2.2 Which is the MKSE program eligibility criteria?

To be eligible for the MKSE program, a company must:

- **Deliver a travel experience that meets the definition of an authentic Magical Kenya Signature Experience:** Travellers nowadays want to be engaged in activities that touch them emotionally, enable them to learn, and ultimately gets them closer to the best version of themselves. MKSE should involve travellers with Kenya's nature and culture in an authentic and enriching way. To be part of the MKSE program, these activities must incorporate components of fascination and seduction, as well as a minimum of two of the following elements: edutainment, entertainment, escapism and aesthetics. By adding those "ingredients", an activity will become an experience that will connect with the traveller at different levels. Moreover, MKSE will have to be developed around any of Kenya's Unique Selling Propositions.
- **Receive international travellers, although candidates can additionally work with the domestic market:** Although MKSE Program is mainly oriented to identify experiences for the international markets; this is in no conflict with a business that also develops and offers experiences to the Kenyan market.
- **Have the required licenses for operation in Kenya with a minimum of 2 years delivering experiences:** Business must have their company registration certificate/ license number and in case of providing adventure experiences, the specific license that demonstrates that it complies with international safety standards for that experience.
- **Be the provider, deliverer of the experience and the point of sale for the customer:** Companies applying to the MKSE Program must not be agents on commission / distributors of the experiences provided by others. The Kenya Tourism Board is looking for companies that fully control its supply chain and are not just "product packagers". An application submitted jointly, by no more than two collaborating businesses, may be regarded as eligible. In those cases, collaborating companies must certify that they co-own, co-manage and /or co-deliver the Signature Experience described in the application.

- **Have experience in working with international tour operators of any of KTBs key source markets and comply with commonly accepted “export-ready” criteria:** Companies must be used to offering their products through tour operators in international source markets. If two partnering companies present the candidature together, at least one of them must be export-ready.
- **Have a website with content (image, text and video) that inspires travellers and describes the experiences provided, and that allows travellers to make a booking.** The experience must have a description and a price, and travellers must be able to book directly on the website.
- **Provide rights free, high-resolution multi-media material that KTB can use to market the experience.** In terms of images, the required minimum resolution will be of 300 dots per inch (dpi) and for video content, 1920x1080 pixels (1080p also known as Full HD). This will be required once your experience has been certified as a signature experience.
- **Deliver experiences that are environmentally responsible and benefit the local community.** The Kenya Tourism Board will not promote any experience that will result in future damage of Kenya's nature and wildlife or that can harm in anyway its locals. Experiences that involve the local community in an authentic way and from which the community benefits will be especially interesting for the Program.

If you have read the eligibility criteria and think that you meet the requirements, please fill in the Pre-Qualifying Quiz to find out if you qualify to be a candidate for the MKSE Program.

2.3 Export ready criteria

The following is the required criteria to be considered an export ready business:

Proven Track Record & Safety

- The supplier must have been in business for a minimum of two (2) years, with no incidences from a company and product standpoint.
- When the firm introduces a new product, it will have to offer that product for a minimum of three (3) years, in order to have time enough to market it properly.
- All the providers of an experience must have the public liability insurance.
- All Health and Safety Regulations must be complied with by all providers.
- The provider's business and requested operating licenses must be updated.

Inquiries and Reservations

- The customer must be able to inquire and book by mail, email, website or telephone throughout the year.
- Customers will receive an answer to their query and/or confirmation within 24 hours.

Marketing

- Suppliers must have a marketing plan that includes international travel trade and a budget to execute it.
- Companies must provide KTB with quality images/videos as well as written information for the designated experiences.
- Suppliers must support KTB familiarization trips (through reduced and complimentary rates) for international media and travel trade familiarization tours.

- The firm must have a website with detailed information on the experience, including rates, payment methods, booking and cancellation policy, and any kind of services like pre-trip considerations, transport, specialized customer service, spoken languages, etc.

Contracting and payments

- The supplier must respect the net rates negotiated with international tour operators during the duration of the agreement.
- Detailed pricing and program information must be supplied by the provider at least 12-18 months before the sales season.
- Invoicing agreements must be negotiated and agreed to in writing when selling to international markets through the travel trade.
- Client vouchers must be accepted by the providers as confirmation of payment for the bookings.
- Payments by cheque, wire transfer or by credit card from oversea clients must be accepted by the provider.
- Purchase options and cancellation policies must be established by the provided for their products and services. This must include penalties that may apply as per industry standards.

3. MKSE Application process

3.1 How to apply to the program?

Before starting an application

Before applying, you must fill in the MKSE pre-qualifying test and be able to respond, undoubtedly, "YES" to all the questions made. Be sure you also have reviewed "Introduction to the Magical Kenya Signature Experience Program" and "MKSE Program Standards" sections of this document; they are the best way to get prepared before you dedicate effort and time to complete the application form.

How to apply

Step 1: The first point of contact is to communicate your interest to join the Magical Kenya Signature Experiences (MKSE) Program to the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) through this email address: signatureexperiences@ktb.go.ke

Step 2: Fill out the pre-qualification quiz and send a signed copy to KTB. This will be subjected to an evaluation process

Step 3: Once your pre-qualification quiz submission is approved, KTB will send you a copy of the Magical Kenya Signature Experience Application Form which you will be required to fill and submit through the email address: signatureexperiences@ktb.go.ke

KTB will also make an initial evaluation of your potential in the program and can guide you to complete your application.

The application form you will receive after completing the pre-qualifying quiz is structured in three (3) sections:

- Sales and marketing information
- General company's information
- Details about the Magical Kenya Signature Experience proposal

If you are not ready for the MKSE program, KTB team can act as mentors, guiding you to apply to the program in future. Together with the application form, you will receive a manual to help you fill it in. This application guide will be handy to help you fill out the form.

3.2 Who evaluates the application?

KTB will appoint a MKSE audit team who will review and evaluate your application. At this stage, the unsuccessful applicants will be notified and given an explanation of why their application was declined as well as providing constructive feedback. KTB will notify the successful applicants they have been pre-selected.

3.3 What is required to be officially accepted?

Once KTB has reviewed the application forms and pre-selected your proposal, to become an official member of the program, applicants must:

- Allow the official KTB evaluator(s) to undertake an onsite audit. This will confirm the experience indeed deserves been certified as a Signature Experience
- Cooperate with KTB to generate editorial content on the experience.
- Present a minimum of three high-resolution, royalty-free images, to be used for marketing purposes by KTB. Ideally, it should also present a rights-free, high-definition video, although this is not a pre-requisite.
- Provide the URL of the landing page that provides access to the Signature Experience in the company's website.

The companies that comply with all these requirements will have their place in the program confirmed. This should remain confidential until KTB officially communicates new affiliates to the industry.

3.4 What are MKSE affiliate's responsibilities?

To retain the affiliation to the program, members must:

- Keep selling and delivering their certified Magical Kenya Signature Experience just as it was presented and approved.
- Continue catering for international markets. This maybe in addition to the domestic market.
- Ensure company staff know about Kenya Signature Program.
- Keep the certified Signature Experience in the website, even if it is a seasonal experience. This is to guarantee that the consumer, media and trade can find information about the experience all year round.
- Display the MKSE affiliate badge on the landing page. KTB will provide this.
- Support KTB with content to promote the certified experience.
- Keep complying with the export-ready market standards established by KTB.
- Reply to KTB questions about the certified Experience within 72 hours.
- Share any changes in contact names with KTB team.
- Fill in an annual survey of affiliates that provides basic feedback on the success of the program.

Affiliates are also encouraged to:

- Be part of a Kenya or international industry association.
- Participate in media or travel trade fam trips, if required by KTB.
- Support the photo/video sessions of their Signature Experience led by KTB.
- Use the MKSE affiliate badge in their marketing materials.
- Participate in partner marketing programs for MKSE affiliates.

- Support industry competitiveness by participating in interviews, case studies, or special requests from KTB.

To ensure continued integrity of the experience. Please be aware that KTB will review the current affiliation every year.

3.5 How can I leave the MKSE program or be asked to leave?

Affiliates choosing to leave the program

A company may want to leave the program for different reasons. It is possible that the approved Magical Kenya Signature Experience is no longer offered, they feel they are not receiving enough benefits from the program, they sell their business or lose their operating license.

Affiliates are asked to notify KTB in writing three months in advance if they want to leave the program. This will provide KTB with time to:

- Eliminate the contents about the experience on the various platforms.
- Stop any promotional activities in-progress.
- Communicate to travel trade partners, if necessary.

Affiliates may be asked to leave the program

KTB may need to ask an affiliate to leave the program. The reasons for this can include:

- Non-compliance with the program requirements.
- Complaints from consumers or industry regarding problems with the company and/or the experience that could impact KTB's reputation and/or the integrity of the program.

If this happens, KTB will contact the company owner/CEO to discuss circumstances. If anything can be done to solve the problems in a certain period, KTB may let the affiliate stay in the program.

If there is no determination, after a certain period of time (announced to the affiliate in advance), the affiliate will be informed in writing that they are no longer in the MKSE program. All marketing activities will immediately stop, and the affiliate will be asked to stop using any MKSE affiliate badge or marketing resources that identify their company with the program.

4. Pre-qualification

4.1 Pre-qualifying Quiz

Please answer the following questions to find out if your company can be a likely candidate.

1. Does my company offer a travel experience that meets the definition of a Magical Kenya Signature Experience?

Yes No

2. Does the travel experience include fascinating and seductive components, as well as a minimum of 2 of the following elements: entertainment, edutainment, aesthetics and escapism?

Yes No

3. Is my company already receiving international tourists?

Yes No

4. Does my company hold the requested licenses to operate in Kenya and provide safe experiences?

Yes No

5. Has my company been offering travel experiences in Kenya for two years or more?

Yes No

6. Is my company the sole provider and deliverer of the experience?

Yes No

7. Is my company working with international trade and meets commonly accepted export-ready criteria?

Yes No

8. Does my company have a website that meets the requirements?

Yes No

9. Can my company provide high-resolution content for marketing?

Yes No

10. Do I conduct my business in a socially and environmentally responsible manner?

Yes No

I certify that my company meets the above MKSE Program Criteria

(Name, Signature, Company name and date).

If you answered YES to all the above questions:

We encourage you to send a signed copy of this pre-qualifying quiz to the following e-mail address of the Kenya Tourism Board.

E-mail address: signatureexperiences@ktb.go.ke

When we receive the signed pre-qualification form, we will send you a MKSE application form for you to formally apply to the Program.

In the application form, you will be requested to show that you meet the standards. Before you apply, we strongly recommend you review the MKSE Application Guide to make sure you fully understand the MKSE Program, the benefits and the responsibilities.

If you answered NO to any of the above questions:

Unfortunately, you are not ready to become a candidate for the MKSE Program now. We invite you to get in touch with the contact person mentioned above, express your interest in joining the program and identify the standards you are not currently meeting. You will be advised on ways to meet the program standards.