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SA AIA Completes First Pilot of National Service Provider Verification Framework

A major milestone in strengthening quality, safety and professionalism across South Africa's Learning Outside the Classroom and Adventure-Based Learning sectors.

Northern Drakensberg, Kwa-Zulu Natal — 1 July 2026 — The South African Adventure Industry Association (SA AIA) is pleased to announce the successful completion of the first pilot implementation of its **Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTIC) / ABL Service Provider Verification Framework**.

The pilot marks an important milestone in the development of a sector-specific verification programme designed to support organisations that deliver outdoor education, adventure-based learning, school camps, experiential learning, leadership development and related programmes throughout South Africa.

The pilot was conducted in partnership with **ATKV Drakensville Environmental Centre**, who became the first organisation to voluntarily participate in the desktop review and on-site pilot verification process.

Unlike a traditional audit, the purpose of the pilot was not simply to review one organisation, but to test the verification framework itself, together with the supporting evidence requirements and the practical verification process. The lessons learned through this collaboration will directly inform Version 1 of the SA AIA Service Provider Verification Programme.

Building confidence across the sector

Schools, parents, corporate clients and government departments increasingly expect outdoor education and adventure programme providers to demonstrate sound governance, effective risk management and appropriate participant safeguarding.

The SA AIA Service Provider Verification Framework has been developed to provide an independent, evidence-based process that considers areas such as:

- Governance and organisational management;
- Participant safety and wellbeing;
- Safeguarding and duty of care;
- Risk management and emergency preparedness;
- Staff competency and operational systems;
- Continuous improvement and organisational learning.

Rather than prescribing a single way of operating, the framework has been designed to recognise the diversity of providers within the Learning Outside the Classroom sector while promoting a consistent standard of good practice.



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Learning through the pilot

One of the most significant outcomes of the pilot was confirmation that the framework itself is practical and comprehensive across a complex operational environment.

The pilot also identified the next phase of development for the programme, including:

- the creation of provider toolkits and guidance documents;
- practical templates and examples;
- a formal Verification Procedure Manual for future verifiers; and
- additional pilot projects with different provider types to ensure the framework remains applicable across the diverse South African outdoor learning sector.

A collaborative approach

SA AIA extends its sincere appreciation to the management and staff of **ATKV Drakensville and the ATKV Drakensville Environmental Centre** for their willingness to become the programme's first pilot provider.

Their openness, professionalism and constructive feedback have made a significant contribution to shaping what will become the first nationally developed, sector-specific Service Provider Verification Programme for Learning Outside the Classroom in South Africa.

What happens next?

Over the coming months, SA AIA will continue piloting the programme with additional organisations representing different operating models, including mobile providers, wilderness programmes, school-based providers and corporate learning organisations.

Following completion of the pilot programme, the Association will finalise Version 1 of the Service Provider Verification Framework together with the supporting verification procedures, toolkits and fee structure before formally launching the programme nationally.

Organisations interested in participating in future pilot projects or learning more about the programme are encouraged to contact SA AIA.

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