

Saudi Arabia tourism to rise rapidly says WTTC

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 06 July, 2022



The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has revealed the travel and tourism sector in Saudi Arabia is expected to grow at an average of 11PC annually over the next decade, making it the fastest growing travel and tourism in the Middle East. According to the forecast from WTTC's latest Economic Impact Report (EIR), this annual growth, more than six times the 1.8PC growth rate of the country's overall economy, will bolster the economic recovery of the Kingdom.

By 2032, the travel and tourism sector's contribution to GDP could reach nearly SAR 635 billion, representing 17.1PC of the total economy.

The forecast also reveals travel and tourism employment could double over the next 10 years, creating more than 1.4 million jobs, to reach almost three million employed within the sector by 2032.

The projections for both employment and the sector's contribution to the Kingdom's economy, surpass the ambitious goals set out by the government's Vision 2030 strategic framework.

By 2023, following two years of heartache, Saudi Arabia's Travel & Tourism sector's contribution to the national economy could surpass pre-pandemic levels, when it is projected to rise 2% above 2019 levels, to reach nearly SAR 297 billion.

Employment in the sector could also exceed 2019 levels by 14.1%, creating more

than 223,000 additional jobs, representing nearly more than 1.8 million by the end of next year.

By the end of this year, the sector's contribution to GDP is expected to grow 15.2PC to nearly SAR 223 billion, amounting to 7.2% of the total economic GDP, while employment in the sector is set to grow by 16.1PC to reach more than 1.5 million jobs.

According to the global tourism body, the Kingdom, due to host WTTC's 22nd Global Summit in Riyadh from 28 November to 1 December this year, is witnessing a faster than average recovery following the government's total commitment to the Travel & Tourism sector, ensuring it remained at the forefront of the global agenda.

Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO, said: "Throughout these difficult times for our sector, the Saudi Arabia government has recognised the importance of travel and tourism and has led the world in its recovery. Through his leadership, Travel & Tourism will become a driving force of the Saudi Arabian economy and will surpass the goals set out in its Vision 2030 blueprint.

"I would like to commend Ahmed Al Khateeb, who has shown strong leadership during this crisis which has boosted the sector's growth with unprecedented investments and new approaches to tourism.

"I am delighted the Kingdom is hosting our 22nd Global Summit, where we will be able to continue our efforts of showcasing the importance of the travel and tourism sector and look ahead to the future of travel."

Before the pandemic, Saudi Arabia's Travel & Tourism total contribution to GDP was 9.7PC (SAR 291.6 billion) in 2019, falling to just 6.6PC (SAR 190.6 billion) in 2020, representing a staggering 34.6PC loss.

The sector also supported nearly 1.6 million jobs, before an almost complete halt to international travel which resulted in a loss of 350,000 (22.2PC), to reach just over 1.2 million in 2020.

-B