



Sustainable Tourism Global Center and WTTTC Unveil Pioneering Global Research on Travel & Tourism

Landmark Environmental Research Disclosed for 185 Countries, Reflecting Depth of the Travel & Tourism Sector's Global Influence

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: In a defining moment for the global Travel & Tourism sector, the World Travel & Tourism Council ([WTTTC](#)) and the Sustainable Tourism Global Center (STGC) initiated by the Ministry of Tourism of Saudi Arabia today released the latest industry-shaping Environmental Impact Research data.

Last year, during the WTTTC Global Summit in Riyadh, the two organizations launched the collaboration and unveiled the inaugural results including the sector's accurate greenhouse gas emissions for the first time ever.

This represents the most comprehensive environmental data in Travel & Tourism's history.

H.E. Ahmed Al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, said:

"We welcome this joint report initiated by the Ministry of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, and WTTTC, as an invaluable resource for decision makers around the world. It provides vital insights and unique impactful environmental research into how Travel & Tourism has both an influence on climate change and how it is affected by it.

"Our research highlights the consistent decline of emissions intensity of Travel & Tourism over the last decade. Whilst the sector's GDP growth averaged 4.3% annually, emissions only grew by 2.5% annually between 2010-2019. Still, the continued commitment to achieve net zero emissions for the Travel and Tourism sector has never been more important.

"We firmly believe Travel & Tourism is part of the solution and that is why Saudi Arabia has taken a leading role to accelerate and track this change to promote sustainability across the sector, protect nature and support communities."

Today's launch not only tells the sector's direct impact, but also its supply chain impacts, both within national borders and those that are embedded in Travel & Tourism's international supply chains.

The groundbreaking ER data covers 185 countries across all regions and will be updated each year with the latest figures.

Building upon WTTC's world-renowned Economic Impact Research, this initiative introduces individualized factsheets for each country and major global regions, and a dedicated microsite allowing users to explore the data in detail.

Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO said: "Today marks a pivotal moment for the global Travel & Tourism sector. Through this data, we are highlighting the sector's multi-dimensional impact — economically, environmentally, and societally.

"We're talking about a vision that sees beyond tourism and leans into its sustainable future. With this data, we are not just reflecting on where we are now, but actively charting our course for a future where the sector progressively reduces its environmental footprint and boosts its social impact."

H.E. Gloria Guevara, Chief Special Advisor of the Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, said:

"There is no doubt that this joint report between the Saudi Ministry of Tourism's STGC and WTTC is a major milestone for the global Travel & Tourism sector. We are proud that Saudi Arabia has stepped up to become part of the solution. The STGC will unite the sector to accelerate the transition to a net-zero world, while protecting nature and supporting communities. Our mission is to be the leading global center for sustainable Travel & Tourism, delivering impact driven research, stakeholder-centric services, and tangible end-to-end solutions."

"As an industry, we are responsible for 8.1% of all carbon emissions globally, rising on average 2.5% a year between 2010 and 2019. However, global Travel & Tourism's GDP grew at an average of 4.3% per year, indicating the link between our sector's growth and its carbon footprint has been loosened.

"Now for the first time we have the data which enables us to properly quantify the sector's global emissions and identify and track which measures will work so we can map our journey towards a net zero future."

Arnold Donald Chairman of WTTC said, "This first of its kind, in-depth report is a significant contribution to ensuring the inclusive, sustainable growth of the sector. Through its sponsorship, It's yet another example of how the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is leading in so many ways in advancing global Travel and Tourism."

The data converges economic metrics with crucial issues such as greenhouse gas emissions, energy use and composition, freshwater use, air pollution and resource use as well as age, gender, and wage profiles of different employments, as well as harmonised indicators across a wide range of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The comprehensive data reveals the nexus between each dollar generated by Travel & Tourism in the economy and its consequential environmental and social impact.

Key highlights from the research include:

Environmental Impact (highlights):

- The Travel & Tourism sector demonstrates an impressive trend of decoupling its environmental footprint from its GDP growth.
- Key achievements include reductions in the intensity of water usage, greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption, and material extraction.
- Travel & Tourism's share of global energy consumption amounted to 10.6% in 2019
- The sector represented 0.9% of total global water consumption in 2019
- Travel & Tourism's material footprint accounts for 5-8% of global material extraction
- The report's monitoring extends to pollutants such as particulate matter, carbon monoxide, ammonia, and nitrogen oxides, among others.

Importantly, the data tracks the sector's performance towards 15 UN Sustainable Development Goals, highlighting its commitment to a more equitable and sustainable world.

The prime objective of this groundbreaking work is to elevate the accuracy and pertinence of sector-specific data, setting the trajectory for future initiatives and realigning with global sustainability milestones.

WTTC and STGC remain committed to cultivating cooperation and conversation among all industry stakeholders.

For detailed insights, comprehensive reports, or to delve deeper into the unveiled data, interested parties can visit <https://researchhub.wttc.org/global-travel-footprint>.

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Note To Editors

About Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Tourism

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Tourism leads the Saudi Tourism ecosystem. The Ministry sets the Kingdom's tourism sector strategy and is responsible for the development of policies and regulations, developing human capital, gathering statistics, and attracting investment. It works in partnership with the Saudi Tourism Authority, which promotes Saudi Arabia as a global tourism destination, and the Tourism Development Fund, which executes the Ministry's investment strategy by providing funding for the sector's development. Headed by His Excellency Ahmed Al Khateeb, the Ministry was founded in February 2020, following the opening of Saudi Arabia to international leisure tourists for the first time in its history in 2019. Saudi Arabia aims to welcome 100 million tourists by 2030, increasing the sector's direct contribution to GDP from 3.8% in 2019 to 10%.

About The Sustainable Tourism Global Center

The Sustainable Tourism Global Center (STGC) is the world's first multi-country, multi-stakeholder global coalition, incubated within the Ministry of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, that will lead, accelerate,

and track the tourism industry's transition to net-zero emissions, as well as drive action to protect nature and support communities. It will enable the transition while delivering knowledge, tools, financing mechanisms and innovation stimulation into the tourism sector.

The STGC was announced by His Royal Highness the Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman during the Saudi Green Initiative in October 2021 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. His Excellency Ahmed Al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism for Saudi Arabia then led a panel discussion during COP26 (November 2021) in Glasgow, United Kingdom, to elaborate on how the Center will deliver on its mandate with founding country representatives and experts from partner international organizations.

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