



Middle East's Travel & Tourism sector could grow to US\$246 billion in 2022, says WTTTC

Jobs in the sector could almost reach pre-pandemic levels

Reopening of borders and easing travel restrictions having considerable positive effect

London, UK: New research from the World Travel & Tourism Council ([WTTTC](#)) has revealed the Travel & Tourism sector in the Middle East could reach US\$246 billion this year, just 8.9% behind pre-pandemic levels.

In 2019, before the pandemic struck and began to devastate economies around the world, the Travel & Tourism sector in the Middle East was booming, generating US\$270 billion to the region's economy.

However, in 2020, when COVID-19 brought international travel to an almost complete standstill, its contribution more than halved, plummeting 51.1%, suffering a brutal loss of more than US\$138 billion.

Latest research from WTTTC shows that as the region continues to recover from the pandemic, with major markets reopening borders and easing restrictions to travel, the sector's contribution to employment could almost reach pre-pandemic levels this year.

Research by WTTTC reveals that if countries continue to roll out the inoculation programme at pace this year, and restrictions to international travel are eased around the world – 6.8m people could be employed in the sector by the end of 2022, just 40,000 behind pre-pandemic levels.

Julia Simpson, WTTTC President & CEO, said: "The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant losses to the Middle East's Travel & Tourism sector, but we now have reason for real optimism.

“Since the start of the pandemic, governments across the Middle East have shown real commitment to travel and tourism. Saudi Arabia in particular, has shown strong leadership throughout the crisis and is making a major investment in Travel & Tourism.

“2022 is poised for a strong recovery if governments across the region continue to open up their borders and remove restrictions to travel which will have a massive positive effect on both the economy, the society and jobs.”

To reach close to pre-pandemic levels this year, WTTC says governments around the world must continue focusing on the vaccine rollout and allowing fully vaccinated travellers to move freely.

The global tourism body also urges governments in the Middle East and around the world, to ditch the patchwork of restrictions and enable international travel using digital solutions that allows travellers to prove their status in a fast, simple and secure way.

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