

Report: Sharp increase in female employment in travel, tourism since 2010

Recent findings from a joint research initiative by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC) and the Sustainable Tourism Global Center (STGC), spearheaded by the Ministry of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, highlight a substantial increase in employment opportunities for women and young individuals globally within the travel and tourism sector.



Source: [Freepik](#)

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The report shows that the travel and tourism sector directly employed a rapidly rising number of women between 2010 and 2019, increasing from 38.6 million to 47.8 million, an increase of 24%.

It also found hospitality to be the leading employer of women within the sector, accounting for more than half of female employment.

Young workers are shown as an important component of the sector's workforce, representing 15% of all jobs in the sector in both 2010 and 2021.

By contrast, the share of young workers in overall global employment fell from 16.5% in 2010 to 12.5% in 2021, highlighting the importance of travel and tourism to youth employment.

H.E Ahmed Al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, says: "Providing insights and data on the sector's status quo, the report allows countries and regions to set clear goals to empower women and engage youth.

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to play a major role in investing in the talent required to meet the needs of this thriving sector. This is strategically aligned with Saudi Vision 2030 goals in relation to youth empowerment and women. As an illustration, we have increased female labour force participation by 64% since 2021."

Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO, says: "As part of our environmental and social research, we are incredibly proud to have worked alongside the Sustainable Tourism Global Center and to be releasing this incredibly important report.

"For the first time, we can show that the sector has an incredibly positive impact globally, supporting more high wage jobs, a level playing field for women, and provides long-term, sustainable, economically attractive jobs to young people across the world."

H.E Gloria Guevara, chief special advisor of the Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, says: "We see this joint report as another milestone for the global travel and tourism sector. By supporting quality employment for young people and for women, we develop a more sustainable sector. This approach is in alignment with Saudi Vision 2030, which aims to create a vibrant Saudi society in which all citizens can thrive."

The report provides a regional breakdown of employment across Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, Africa and Asia-Pacific, and is the first analysis of Travel & Tourism's global social footprint, broken down by age, gender and income.

Women in travel and tourism

The report reveals that the sector employed a marginally higher share of women compared to other sectors globally in 2021 – 39.3% compared to a 39.2% average.

According to the report, hospitality is the leading employer within the travel and tourism sector for women, accounting for more than half (52%) of all female employment in 2019.

Around the world, women make up a larger share of travel and tourism employment than the economy-wide workforce in Asia-Pacific and the Americas. The share of women working in travel and tourism in Africa has been rising since 2010, and female employment across the economy in the Middle East has also grown significantly.

Youth in travel and tourism

The research highlights the consistent, steady growth of young people employed directly by the sector over the last decade, with a total of 39.7 million jobs supported by travel and tourism around the world in 2019, up 28% since 2010.

However, this figure was significantly impacted by Covid-19, where youth employment dropped 27%.

Notably, in all the years analysed, more than half of the global youth employment in the travel and tourism sector was in the Asia-Pacific region, at 9.2 million in 2021. With a youth employment growth rate of nearly 37% between 2010 and 2019, the region outpaced all other areas which were all closer to 20%.

High wage jobs in travel and tourism

In 2021, nearly 34% of jobs in the global travel and tourism sector were categorised as high wage, an increase from 29.6% in 2010.

Regionally, Asia-Pacific had the largest share of high wage jobs in the sector (38.7%), followed by Africa (36.2%), and the Americas (30.6%).

Comprehensive data from the Environmental and Social Research reports can be found [here](#), and the full social report can be found [here](#).

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