

“An inspirational story of recovery and transformation”: Rwanda’s tourism economy up 14% in 2018

The Travel & Tourism economy of Rwanda grew by 13.8% last year – one of the fastest rates in the world, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council’s (WTTC) annual review of the economic impact and social importance of the sector released today.

In 2018, Travel & Tourism contributed RWF1.3 trillion (US\$1.4 billion) to the country’s economy, an increase of 13.8% on 2017. This means that Travel & Tourism now accounts for 14.9% of the total Rwandan economy.

The WTTC research which compares the Travel & Tourism sector across 185 countries, shows that in 2018 the Rwandan Travel & Tourism sector:

- Outpaced the global growth rate of 3.9%, the African growth rate of 5.6%
- Supported 410,000 jobs, or 13% of total employment
- Accounts for the equivalent of one in seven Rwandan Francs in the local economy (14.9%)
- Is strongly weighted towards international travel: 67% of Travel & Tourism spending came from international travelers and 33% from domestic travel
- Was equally balanced between business travelers (48% of spending) and leisure travellers (52% of spending)

Commenting on the numbers, Gloria Guevara, WTTC President & CEO said: “Rwanda’s Travel & Tourism story is one of a remarkable transformation. Last year at our Global Summit in Buenos Aires, Rwanda was the recipient of our inaugural Global Leadership Award, for countries which have prioritised tourism development in a way which is sustainable, inclusive and transformative. We were honoured to give the award to Rwanda’s Prime Minister, Dr. Edouard Ngirente, who accepted on behalf of Rwanda’s President, Paul Kagame.

“Rwanda has made an extraordinary transformation and tourism has been at the heart of that transformation. Rebuilt on a strong foundation of reconciliation, and powered by the determination to succeed, Rwanda is now a leader in education and in environmental responsibility. National parks have been created so that communities can benefit from conservation and anti-poaching initiatives have protected the country’s unique gorilla population alongside the establishment Africa’s largest protected mountain rainforest.

“Rwanda now welcomes a million tourists a year and its tourism economy is booming, as our research shows. It is an inspirational story of recovery and transformation – with tourism at its heart.”

About the World Travel & Tourism Council

WTTC is the body which represents the Travel & Tourism private sector globally. Members consist of CEOs of the world's Travel & Tourism companies, destinations, and industry organisations engaging with Travel & Tourism.

WTTC has a history of 25 years of research to quantify the economic impact of the sector in 185 countries. Travel & Tourism is a key driver for investment and economic growth globally. The sector contributes US\$8.8 trillion or 10.4% of global GDP, and accounts for 319 million jobs or one in ten of all jobs on the planet.

For over 25 years, WTTC has been the voice of this industry globally. Members are the Chairs, Presidents and Chief Executives of the world's leading, private sector Travel & Tourism businesses, who bring specialist knowledge to guide government policy and decision-making and raise awareness of the importance of the sector.