

WTTC and WEF announce partnership to promote safe, secure and seamless journeys

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) and the World Economic Forum (WEF) are partnering to help shape the future of how we travel by using digital traveller identity management throughout the whole Travel & Tourism sector.

The agreement will see the two organisations collaborating, exchanging information and working together to achieve international harmonisation through the use of standards and inter-operability across different parts of the Travel & Tourism journey.

Both organisations are committed to increasing the use of biometric-enabled technology as the way to increase passenger efficiency while improving border security.

The Known Traveller Digital Identity (KTDI) project is a World Economic Forum initiative that brings together a global consortium of individuals, governments, authorities and the travel industry to enhance security in world travel. In January 2018, the Governments of Canada and The Netherlands committed to piloting the concept in an international cross-border context in collaboration with Air Canada, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, Toronto Pearson International Airport, and Montréal-Trudeau International Airport. This week, the KTDI Pilot Consortium was officially launched, with testing of the enabling technology to start during the course of 2019.

WTTC, which represents the global private sector of Travel & Tourism, is committed to working with the existing initiatives in this area to encourage the use of biometric technology and digital identity throughout the wider sector. Through its Seamless Traveller Journey programme (STJ), WTTC has researched over 53 initiatives using biometrics in the Travel & Tourism sector and has identified potential emerging models – such as the WEF KTDI initiative – which may address the end-to-end traveller journey of the future.

Gloria Guevara, WTTC President & CEO, said: “Our data shows that Travel & Tourism contributes 10.4% of global GDP and 319 million jobs. One in five of all new jobs on the planet are being created by Travel & Tourism and we forecast that 100 million jobs will be created by our sector in the next ten years. Not only will we need to do things differently - as we cannot expect a near-doubling of airport capacity in the next 20 years – but we will need to do things right. The key, therefore, is to maximise the growth in a way that ensures safe and hassle-free travel by using biometric technology.

“The range of work across the sector is welcome but demonstrates the unfortunate fragmentation and complexity. The challenge is to align ourselves – in the way we are announcing today – so that all parts of the sector work on same standards and make sure the different solutions can work together and successfully achieve “interoperability” so that a traveller can move seamlessly from one part of their journey to another using biometric technology.”

Dr. Christoph Wolff, Head of Mobility Industries and System Initiative, Member of the Executive Committee, World Economic Forum explained: “The Known Traveller Digital Identity concept was co-designed by stakeholders across the aviation, travel and tourism ecosystem with the intention of testing a platform that is scalable, interoperable and useful to all actors relying on identities in their service provision. As an open-source, vendor-agnostic approach that promotes privacy-by-design we see it as a mechanism towards the full alignment as desired by both industry and public sector partners. Working alongside WTTC provides the valuable opportunity to refine the framework and platform to serve all Travel and Tourism services.”

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.