



Ground-breaking report reveals that as Travel & Tourism continues to grow, its water intensity falls

Europe and Africa saw a decline in water use despite international arrivals growth

Global tourism body takes bold steps towards water resilience

Dubai, UAE: The World Travel & Tourism Council ([WTTTC](#)) today launched its new groundbreaking report, 'Water Roadmap for Travel & Tourism', revealing total water intensity by global Travel & Tourism continues to decrease as the sector continues to grow.

Despite being one of the fastest growing sectors, accounting for one in 10 jobs globally and contributing 10.4% of global GDP in 2019, Travel & Tourism's water usage ranged between 3.5% and 5.8% of global available freshwater, in 2021 and 2019 respectively.

While this is a lower share than other key sectors, such as agriculture and food, which accounted for 70% of global water usage, there is more work to be done as growing water scarcity has become one of the most pressing challenges for sustainable development.

Today, over 2.2 billion people do not have access to safe drinking water, while 4.2 billion do not have access to safe sanitation services. Water is a vital natural resource, sustaining life on earth, making it an essential asset that must be protected.

The report highlights that further progress can be made if Travel & Tourism stakeholders take a series of actions, and sustainable water practices are implemented globally.

In a collaborative effort, WTTTC worked with Accenture and Oxford Economics to leverage their expertise in data analysis, best practices, and proven methodologies, providing a framework to help the global travel and tourism sector set water targets, reduce their water footprint and increase water resilience.

The data is a result of the partnership between WTTTC and the Saudi-based Sustainable Tourism Global Center.

According to the research, from 2010 to 2019, Asia Pacific, Americas and the Middle East saw their Travel & Tourism water usage increase, while experiencing significant growth in international arrivals.

Europe and Africa saw a yearly increase in international arrivals of 5% and 4% respectively between 2010 to 2019 but experienced a 1% decline in water use over the same period.

This achievement highlights the opportunities within the Travel & Tourism sector to further reduce water usage and take further steps towards the SDG 6 goals of the global water action agenda.

Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO, said: “Water scarcity is a pressing global issue that requires collective action. Travel & Tourism, with its unique influence and global reach, is perfectly positioned to play a pivotal role in fostering sustainable water practices.

“With this report, we aim to inspire a transformative journey toward responsible water use and a regenerative future, accelerating progress towards achieving SDG 6.”

Jesko-Philipp Neuenburg, Global Travel and Aviation Sustainability lead at Accenture, said: “This new publication highlights the transformative power of data and technology to drive collaboration, inform decision-making, foster innovation and implement water reduction and resilience action plans.

“From artificial intelligence, generative AI and machine learning, smart sensors and IOT, to blockchain and the metaverse, technology and data are enablers of sustainability and can play an important role in water stewardship efforts across the travel supply chain – whilst addressing security, privacy and environmental risks. With global travel demand booming, now is the time for travel and tourism organisations to reinvent their efforts and build actionable, impactful and accountable water strategies for this precious and finite resource.”

As climate change amplifies extreme weather events, building resilience becomes not just strategic but vital for the sector’s long-term survival. Recognising interdependencies and assigning a monetary value to water risks are now pivotal moves, ensuring Travel & Tourism navigates risks, meets stakeholder expectations, and spearheads global water stewardship.

According to the global tourism body, in the midst of emerging risks, embracing digital technologies becomes not just an option but an innovative approach to tackle complexity head-on.

It also introduces the Water Management Action Framework, rejecting a ‘one-size fits all’ solution, outlining four key steps, emphasising water footprint reduction and resilience building across supply chains.

Recognising the vital role of Travel & Tourism, WTTC issues a resounding call for collective action to safeguard water ecosystems. The framework can help guide Travel & Tourism stakeholders on a path to sustainability, emphasising science-based targets, internal prioritisation, appropriate funding and collaborative measures for a resilient future.

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Note to Editors

¹ Ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for everyone (SDG 6) is one of the 17 objectives that form the foundation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.