

First national Tourism Satellite Account Launched in Zimbabwe

Harare, Zimbabwe, 31 March 2022 – UNWTO has partnered with the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MECTHI) of Zimbabwe to launch the country's first National Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) today.

The Account shows the size and significance of the tourism sector for the Zimbabwean economy, based on the last available pre-COVID-19 data and on data gathered before the formal transition of national currency from US dollar into the Zimbabwean Dollar. The TSA revealed that tourism accounted for 4.25% of the National Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with a value of USD1.03 billion in 2018. In 2019 the sector accounted for 6.3% of GDP with a value of USD1.23 billion. At the same time, the data also shows that tourism accounted for 1.56% of national employment levels in 2018, with around 100 000 jobs supported and created.

The TSA was produced as part of the Zimbabwe Destination Development Program, a technical assistance program supported by International Finance Corporation (IFC). As well as recording the number of tourists visiting the country, the initiative also provides monetary and non-monetary tourism data related to demand and supply and measures the value of expenditure on goods and services across all types of tourism as well as the value of tourism-sector industries producing goods and/or services. It will be used for quantifying tourism's contribution to GDP and national employment rates.

Data for tourism's restart and recovery

Tourism in Zimbabwe has been significantly impacted by the pandemic, with the introduction of travel restrictions and lower demand from tourists leading to a massive fall in visitors. The loss to the national economy is estimated at USD690m. According to the IFC's Country Manager, Adamou Labara said, 'these empirical findings highlight the opportunity for policymakers in Zimbabwe to support recovery of the tourism sector through stimulating traveller demand, and responsibly reducing barriers to entry'.

By addressing information gaps and supporting a data-driven approach to policy development and investment decisions, the TSA should prove particularly relevant to Zimbabwe's tourism sector as it works towards sustainable recovery and growth from the impacts of the pandemic. The development of the TSA is one of the key milestone projects for the tourism sector under the National Development Strategy (NDS1 2021-2025).

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