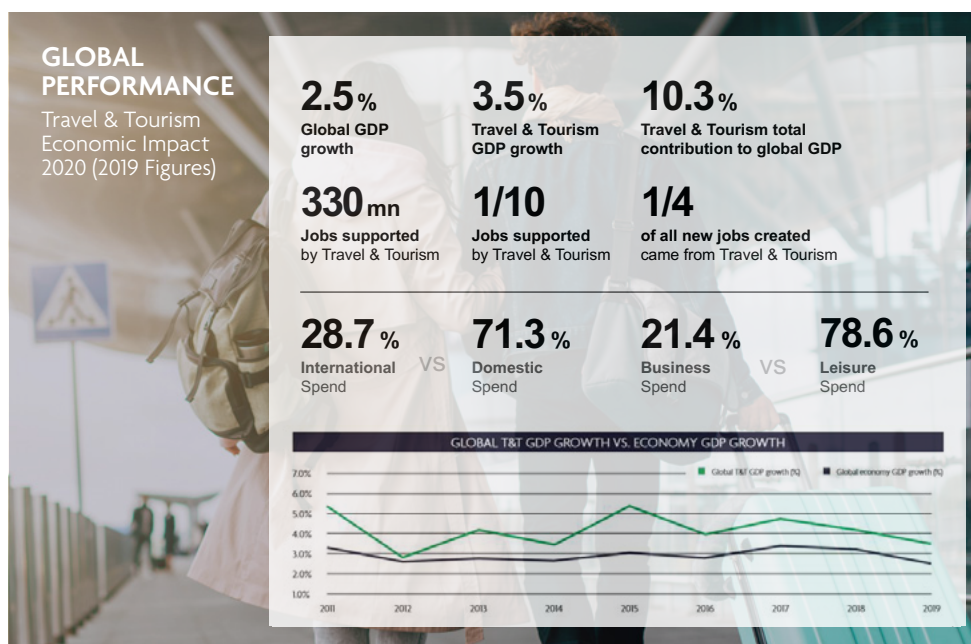


## WTTC SAFE & SEAMLESS TRAVELLER JOURNEY: BIOMETRICS AND SEAMLESS EXPERIENCE WITHIN TRAVEL ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

### CONTEXT AND CURRENT ECONOMIC IMPACT FROM COVID-19

WTTC's annual research shows the Travel & Tourism sector experienced 3.5% growth in 2019, outpacing that of the global economy (2.5%) for the ninth consecutive year. Also, over the past five years, one in four new jobs in the world were created by the sector, making Travel & Tourism the best partner for governments to create jobs. Employing more than 50% women and 30% youth, it is a sector that provides opportunities regardless of the gender, education, ethnicity, or beliefs.

In 2019, Travel & Tourism's total contribution was 10.3% of the global GDP (US\$8.9 trillion) and supported more than 330 million jobs worldwide or 1 in 10.



The Travel & Tourism sector is in uncharted territory and has been significantly impacted by COVID-19. The latest forecasts from WTTC show that more than 121 million jobs have been impacted and US\$3.4 billion economic loss. Unfortunately, without strong international coordination, these numbers can increase to 197.5 million jobs and US\$5.5 billion by end of the year.

Over the last decade, the Travel & Tourism sector has made enormous gains in driving solutions that will enhance security while improving the traveller experience. In particular, the industry has embraced the use of biometrics to cut costs, make travel safer, offer a better and unbiased experience and reduce friction points in the traveller journey.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented effect on the Travel & Tourism industry. Governments imposed travel restrictions, aimed at slowing the spread of the virus, which have resulted in a rapid economic decline. As countries across the globe continue to develop new and innovative strategies at identifying, isolating, and treating cases of COVID-19, several have started to reopen their economies. New policies and procedures to restart domestic and international travel are being implemented, some more successful than others.

WTTC led a series of measures designed to share best practices, learn from the past, and apply best current science base facts and expertise to rebuild global consumer confidence and encourage the return of safe travels. WTTC, its members and the global travel and tourism sector together defined Safe Travels Protocols, which followed strict health and hygiene regimes to re-opening for business, while implementing the same measures, the risk can be significant reduced while the traveller can have same experience and consistency during the journey.

These protocols are recognized by a Safe Travels 'stamp', for end consumer to identify as destinations starting to reopen and travel to resume.

Evidence shows that people can travel safely and economic activity to resume in a post-pandemic world, while protecting lives, but policies and procedures that limit the spread of COVID-19, defined by health authorities and experts, should be followed and embraced by all.

Touchless solutions and privacy-by-design biometrics play a critical role to restore the traveller confidence, significantly reduce the risk of the spread of the virus while meeting the challenges to resume the economic activity and bring back the millions of jobs impacted.

This privacy-by-design concept is critically important. As a relatively new technology, accountability and transparency about the policies governing the use of biometrics are critical to maintaining the public trust. Successful public-private partnerships that have incorporated the use of biometrics have benefited from a robust dialogue where the public, stakeholders and government collaborate to find the best solution. Since the establishment of the European Union's General Protection Data Regulation, industry has responded with unique and innovative approaches that give an individual more control over his or her own data, including biometrics. Data platforms that minimize the distribution of personal information (including biometrics) to multiple entities can protect the identity of the traveller, give the traveller greater control over who or what has his or her information, and give international governments more confidence in the identity of the traveler.

## **ECONOMIC VALUE: BIOMETRICS ARE A CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

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To support the recovery of the Travel & Tourism sector, WTTC is advocating for swift action and enabling strong policies through several activities. A core initiative is WTTC's Safe & Seamless Traveller Journey (SSTJ) which aims to enable a seamless, safe and secure end-to-end traveller journey, encompassing both air and non-air travel, through an approach for systematic biometric verified identification at each stage of the journey replacing manual verifications. The SSTJ initiative allows for a more secure and safe environment for travellers and employees, by creating a touchless environment through advances in technology.

The programme advocates for a globally aligned approach in the implementation of biometrics and complimentary systems within the travel sector. Much work has already been done to drive interoperability, biometrics and touchless capabilities to the traveller journey and this initiative has become even more important given the current pandemic.

While estimates vary on when domestic and international travel will return, government and industry should be poised to meet that demand and maximize efficiencies through the adoption of biometrics, to include dynamic passenger screening, biometric baggage drop, and biometric boarding. Future planning could include infrastructure investments and capital project planning to support the inclusion of biometrics. Smart money in the industry realizes that rebuilding travel in a safer and more cost efficient manner needs to happen now, when the cost and impact on a relatively few travelers will be less than the cost once travel has resumed in force.

## **SECURITY VALUE: BIOMETRICS IMPROVE SECURITY**

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Maintaining high standards of security is critical in the travel industry. Threats to transportation modes, specifically in commercial aviation, continue to persist and evolve. Incorporating biometrics can give screening authorities greater confidence in the travellers identity (versus relying on paper documentation or biographic data), subsequently reducing risk associated with each traveller. Over the past decade, the availability and prevalence of fraudulent identity and travel documents has grown. Valid identity packages can be obtained through the Dark Web and used to generate fraudulent identity and travel documents. Using biometrics to add an extra layer of verification mitigates the risk of fraudulently identity or travel documents to cross borders. Additionally, incorporating biometrics has allowed the government to focus resources on those travellers where there is less information, and therefore greater risk, allowing screening authorities to make better risk-based security decisions prior to the travellers scheduled trip. In addition to the unbiased screening benefits.

## **FACILITATION/PASSENGER VALUE: BIOMETRICS MAKE FOR A BETTER EXPERIENCE**

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Over the past decade, there has been robust growth in personal technology and communication. Often, travellers are looking toward their phones and mobile apps for convenience and facilitation. There continues to be an expectation that the Travel & Tourism sector will continue to evolve to provide a more convenient seamless experience for travellers. Private industry is currently exploring opportunities such as biometric bag drop, automated passenger screening and biometric boarding to reduce the number of friction points at the airport. Efficiencies gained provide a better passenger experience, reduce time in transit, and afford greater profitability for other travel related businesses.



## PUBLIC HEALTH VALUE: BIOMETRICS OFFER CONTACTLESS EXPERIENCE

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Mitigating the spread of COVID-19 for the Travel & Tourism sector will require public and private collaboration, in addition to public health input. While the degree of spread differs from country to country, several international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have already outlined key requirements for safe travel. Specifically, physical distancing and limiting cross contamination between individuals have become requirements across sectors. Incorporating biometrics into the traveller journey may provide those benefits by reducing contact in the travel environment.

Several facial recognition solutions for check in at the airport require no contact with another individual and offer additional capability such as temperature checks. Biometric bag drop limits the number of interactions travellers may have with airport crew or customs officials by automating and securing the bag using data. Finally, physical distancing (in many cases 1.5 to 2 metres between individuals) may use limited space. Therefore, biometrics may provide additional value in that the speed at which they move travellers will be increased.



## AUTHORS

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**GLORIA GUEVARA**  
WTTC President & CEO

**KEVIN MCALEENAN**  
Pangiam Chairman and Co-Founder  
Former Acting United States Secretary of Homeland Security

## CONTACT

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To learn more and engage with WTTC on the Safe & Seamless Traveller Journey, please contact:

**HELENA BONONI**  
VP Commercial & Membership  
[Helena.bononi@wttc.org](mailto:Helena.bononi@wttc.org)

**PANGIAM**



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