Every person directly employed in the aviation sector and in tourism made possible by aviation supported another 4.3 jobs elsewhere in the Middle East. Similarly, $3.90 of economic activity was supported elsewhere in the Middle East for every $1 of gross value added directly created by the air transport sector.

The aviation sector in the Middle East directly employed an estimated 553,700 people in 2016. A sub-sectoral analysis of these workers suggests that:

» 192,900 of them (35% of the total) were employed by airlines or handling agents as, for example, flight crew, check-in staff, maintenance crew, or head office staff;

» 24,800 (5%) had jobs with airport operators in, for example, airport management, maintenance, and security;

» 326,700 (58%) worked on-site in airports at, for example, retail outlets, restaurants, and hotels;

» 4,400 (1%) were employed in the manufacture of civil aircraft (including systems, components, airframes, and engines); and

» 4,900 (1%) worked for air navigation service providers in, for example, air traffic control and engineering.

Airlines, airport operators, retailers and other on-site businesses at airports and air navigation service providers and civil aircraft manufacturers also contribute to GDP in the Middle East. In 2016, the operations of these businesses directly generated a $32.9 billion contribution to GDP.

The aviation sector’s spending with suppliers is estimated to have supported a further 389,500 jobs and a $20.9 billion gross value added contribution to GDP. In addition, wage payments to staff – by the aviation sector and businesses in the aviation sector’s supply chain – supported 183,400 more jobs and a $9.8 billion gross value added contribution to GDP.

Air travel in the Middle East is expected to continue to grow at about 5.8% per year over the next two decades. This increase will, in turn, drive growth in the economic output and jobs that are supported by the air transport industry over the next 20 years. Oxford Economics forecasts that by 2036 the impact of air transport and the tourism it facilitates in Middle Eastern countries will have grown to support 4.3 million jobs (78% more than in 2016) and a $345 billion contribution to GDP (a 166% increase).

The Middle East continues to consolidate its position as a hub region connecting the European and Asia-Pacific markets.

Air transport supports 2.4 million jobs and $130 billion in Middle East economic activity. That is 3.3% of all employment and 4.4% of all GDP in Middle Eastern countries in 2016.
The Middle East’s share of global passenger traffic, 2017

Total jobs and GDP supported by air transport in the Middle East

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOBS TOTAL</th>
<th>GDP TOTAL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.4 m</td>
<td>$130 bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 m</td>
<td>$66 bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>183,000</td>
<td>$9.8 bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>389,000</td>
<td>$20.9 bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>553,700</td>
<td>$32.9 bn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Direct jobs generated by air transport in the Middle East

- **Airlines**: $32.9 bn
- **Airports**: $9.8 bn
- **Aerospace**: $6.6 bn
- **Air traffic management**: $6.6 bn
- **Other on-airport**: $1.3 m
- **Other**: $1.3 m

Airlines and airports join forces to combat wildlife trafficking

The aviation industry has taken on a leadership role in the fight against wildlife trafficking.

The illegal trade of wildlife is the fourth most lucrative black market in the world – worth around $20 billion a year and impacting more than 7,000 species of animals and plants. Criminal organisations involved in wildlife trafficking are often directly connected to other trafficking networks, including the smuggling of narcotics, arms and people, and exploit the increasing connectivity of global air transportation to traffic the endangered species. The air cargo industry is therefore one of the key aviation sectors acting to break the supply chain from source to consumer.

One of the initiatives is the United for Wildlife Transport Taskforce Buckingham Palace Declaration, which IATA, along with around 50 of its member airlines and ACI, has signed. Signatories have committed to raise awareness of wildlife trafficking among passengers, train staff to help spot trafficked species, establish a system to share information on illegal wildlife trade and improve cooperation between transport bodies and regulatory and enforcement organisations.

Airlines and airports devote resources for extensive passenger awareness campaigns to educate potential buyers of illegal wildlife products, including exhibits at Dubai, Johannesburg and Kuala Lumpur International Airports, on-board videos and feature-length articles in in-flight magazines.

Two Emirates A380s have even taken to the skies with special liveries featuring wildlife threatened by poaching and the illegal wildlife trade to communicate the need for urgent action.

Airlines are further rolling out training programmes to improve the capacity of their cargo and customer-facing staff to be on the alert for suspicious signs relating to illegal wildlife transportation and to detect and report them.

Etihad Airways developed its own online module designed to inform its employees of the business risks associated with the illegal wildlife trade and ways to prevent them. Among others, Kenya Airways, Singapore Airlines, Turkish Airlines and LAM Mozambique, together with airports, train cabin crew, ground handlers, cargo processors, and staff from regional airports to help detect and stop smugglers carrying ivory, rhino horn, and other wildlife products.