AFRICA [139]

Air transport supports 6.8 million jobs and $72.5 billion in GDP in Africa

76.6
million passengers[140]

1,033,398
flights[141]

143.4
billion RPKs[142]

369
commercial airports[143]

244
airlines[144]

1,305
aircraft in service[145]

38
air navigation service providers[146]
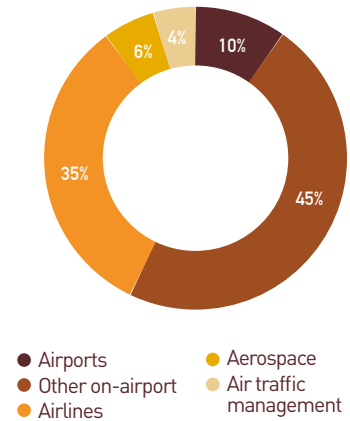
69%
Average regional load factor[147]

The air transport industry in Africa directly generated an estimated 381,000 jobs in 2014.

» 133,600 of those people (35% of the total) were in jobs for airlines or handling agents (for example, flight crew, check-in staff, maintenance crew, reservations and head office staff).
» Another 37,000 people (10% of the total) worked for airport operators (for example, in airport management, maintenance, security and operations).
» 170,300 jobs (45%) were on-site in airports, at retail outlets, restaurants, hotels, etc.
» A further 24,700 people (6%) were employed in the manufacture of civil aircraft (including systems, components, airframes and engines).
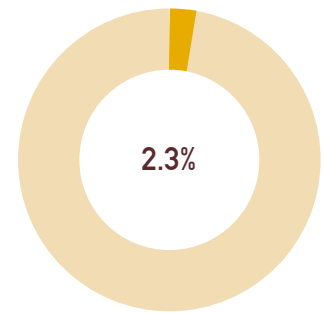» Air navigation service providers employed an additional 15,300 people (4%).

As well as this direct employment in the operations of the air transport sector itself, the sector's impact reaches further through African economies. Including direct impacts, as well as the effect of the sector's procurement of goods and services through its supply chain, and the benefits that arise when employees in the industry and its supply chain spend their wages in the local consumer economy, the air transport sector supported one million jobs and contributed $26 billion to GDP in Africa in 2014.

In addition, the spending of foreign tourists – most of whom arrive by air – supported an estimated 5.8 million jobs and contributed $46 billion to GDP in Africa's economies in 2014[149].
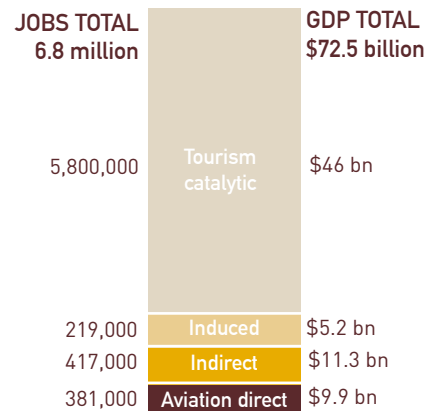
Direct jobs generated by air transport in Africa, **2014**

- Airports
- Other on-airport
- Airlines
- Aerospace
- Air traffic management

Africa's share of global passenger traffic, **2014**

2.3%

Total jobs and GDP generated by air transport in Africa, **2014**

JOBS TOTAL 6.8 million		GDP TOTAL $72.5 billion
5,800,000	Tourism catalytic	$46 bn
219,000	Induced	$5.2 bn
417,000	Indirect	$11.3 bn
381,000	Aviation direct	$9.9 bn

Projected annual growth rate for international traffic by region, **2014 - 2034**[148]

Region	Rate
AFRICA	**5.4%**
ASIA-PACIFIC	5.1%
EUROPE	3.6%
LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN	4.7%
MIDDLE EAST	6.0%
NORTH AMERICA	2.7%
APEC	3.9%
EUROPEAN UNION	3.6%
SMALL ISLANDS STATES	4.9%
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	5.0%
OECD	3.5%
WORLD	4.3%

In total, the industry supported 6.8 million jobs and made a $72.5 billion contribution to GDP in Africa. This accounted for 11% of the jobs and 3% of the GDP supported by the air transport industry worldwide.

The African aviation market is perhaps one that has the most potential for growth out of the global regions, due to it being a comparatively young industry and servicing a large and rapidly developing population. Overall, intercontinental air traffic to and from Africa has been growing at roughly 8% per annum over the last decade, with regional and domestic traffic growing even more. This has been due to greater economic activity in the continent. However, the performance of the industry itself is still catching up with other regions of the world[150].

The future outlook appears to be promising. Analysis from Oxford Economics suggests that the industry as a whole is expected to grow by around 5.4% per annum, a higher pace than most regions of the world[151].

The economic potential of the African aviation industry could be further realised if efforts to liberalise the continent's airspace finally bear fruit. African skies are subject to some of the most economically restrictive regimes in the world, with a host of individual bilateral agreements between states defining the regulatory environment. This system has been recognised as being a barrier for decades, with African states coming together to put forward the Yamoussoukro Declaration in 1988, which had the ambition of opening African skies and working towards air services liberalisation. This Declaration was followed by the Yamoussoukro Decision in 1999, which worked towards the same principles. However, progress has stalled. Industry associations, including IATA, AFCAC and AFRAA have long argued for the implementation of open African skies[152].

The restrictive regulatory environment is further compounded by some non-physical barriers such as visa requirements and inefficiencies in customs clearance procedures for goods. Industry costs in Africa, including passenger fees, are also among the highest in the world. The region also has prevalent monopoly service providers in areas such as ground handling, fuel supply and catering which do not make sense in an increasingly liberalised global operating environment.

Governments now need to act to address these issues and ensure the African industry can reach its potential.

Investing in ATC skills in South Africa

Air traffic controllers play an instrumental role in the running of the aviation system. Not only are they essential in ensuring air traffic is managed safely, but they also make an invaluable contribution to the overall efficiency of air transport, overseeing the air travel of millions of passengers each year.

It takes a certain type of person with innate visualisation skills to be able to become an air traffic controller and, for such an important job, air traffic management organisations need to ensure that they can attract the best and brightest, and not only those fortunate enough to be able to fund their own education. That is why South Africa's Air Traffic & Navigation Services (ATNS) has established an air traffic control officer trainee bursary programme.

This scheme is open to all South African citizens, as long as they are at least 18 years old, have high school level maths and English qualifications and are medically fit. The bursary programme allows those with the raw ability to become professional air traffic controllers to be funded through their training without the need for additional financial backing. For the duration of the training course, the bursary pays for tuition, accommodation at ATNS's own guest lodge, transport, meals and a monthly allowance.

The training programme consists of three phases: the Bursary Scheme, air traffic control officer learnership and, finally, full qualification as an air traffic controller. Over 100 students from South Africa, Zambia, Swaziland and Namibia were conferred with various aviation qualifications in November 2015.