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IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS



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Preface

This monthly statistical release provides information on South African residents and foreign travellers who entered or left South Africa in February 2021. Specific focus is on foreign tourists who entered the country during this month. The tourists are classified by region and country of residence. Details of their mode of travel; purpose of visit; age and sex distribution are also provided.

Risenga Maluleke
Statistician-General

1. Key findings

1.1 Travellers

1.1.1 Number of travellers

The routine data collected by the Department of Home Affairs' (DHA) immigration officers at the ports of entry into and out of South Africa shows that a total of 385 832 travellers (arrivals, departures and transits) passed through South African ports of entry/exit in February 2021. As presented in Table 1 on page 9, these travellers were made up of 131 693 South African residents and 254 139 foreign travellers. A further breakdown of the figures for South African residents indicates that there were 64 943 arrivals, 66 694 departures and 56 travellers in transit. The corresponding volume for foreign arrivals, departures and travellers in transit was 136 510, 114 436 and 3 193, respectively.

A comparison between the movements in February 2020 and February 2021 indicates that the volume of arrivals, departures and travellers in transit decreased for both South African residents and foreign travellers. For South African residents, the volume of arrivals decreased by 82,5% (from 370 823 in February 2020 to 64 943 in February 2021). Departures decreased by 82,5% (from 381 100 in February 2020 to 66 694 in February 2021) and transits decreased by 90,4% (from 584 in February 2020 to 56 in February 2021). For foreign travellers, arrivals decreased by 88,8% (from 1 218 468 in February 2020 to 136 510 in February 2021), departures decreased by 89,3% (from 1 074 252 in February 2020 to 114 436 in February 2021) and transits decreased by 93,1% (from 46 006 in February 2020 to 3 193 in February 2021).

A comparison between the movements in January 2021 and February 2021 indicates that the volume of arrivals and departures decreased for both groups of travellers whereas the volume of travellers in transit increased for South African residents but decreased for foreign travellers. For South African residents, the volume of arrivals decreased by 38,9% (from 106 216 in January 2021 to 64 943 in February 2021), departures decreased by 20,1% (from 83 456 in January 2021 to 66 694 in February 2021) and transits increased by 14,3% (from 49 in January 2021 to 56 in February 2021). For foreign travellers, arrivals decreased by 30,3% (from 195 861 in January 2021 to 136 510 in February 2021), departures decreased by 12,1% (from 130 208 in January 2021 to 114 436 in February 2021) and transits decreased by 32,4% (from 4 720 in January 2021 to 3 193 in February 2021).

Detailed information on the departure of travellers is not available in the movement control system. Data on the purpose of travel and the number of days South African residents intend to spend or spent abroad are not collected by the DHA. It is therefore not possible to categorise South African residents as tourists or non-tourists. However, some data are available on foreign arrivals for this categorisation.

As presented in Table 1 on page 9, in February 2021, 34 212 (25,1%) of foreign arrivals were classified as non-visitors while 102 298 (74,9%) were classified as visitors. The visitors were categorised into three groups:

- i. Arrivals only – comprising visitors who entered the country in February 2021 but did not depart in February 2021 [43 503 (42,5%)];
- ii. Single trips – visitors who came to South Africa once in February 2021 and left in February 2021 [24 057 (23,5%)]; and
- iii. Multiple trips – visitors who came to and left South Africa more than once in February 2021 [34 738 (34,0%)].

Visitors were further grouped as same-day visitors and overnight visitors (tourists). In February 2021, there were 12 133 (11,9%) same-day visitors and 90 165 (88,1%) tourists. Between February 2020 and February 2021, the volume of same-day visitors decreased by 96,5% (from 342 482 in February 2020 to 12 133 in February 2021) and that of tourists decreased by 88,7% (from 800 815 in February 2020 to 90 165 in February 2021).

1.1.2 Mode of travel of travellers

Information presented in Table 2 on page 10, shows that in February 2021, road transport was the most common mode of travel used by 277 365 (71,9%) of the 385 832 travellers. The total number of travellers who used air transport was 104 595 (27,1%). Compared to the use of air and land transport, a smaller number of travellers, 3 872 (1,0%) used sea transport. Information on arrivals of South African residents shows that 21 969 (33,8%) came by air, 42 796 (65,9%) came by road and 178 (0,3%) arrived by sea transport. For departures, 23 894 (35,8%) used air, 42 732 (64,1%) used road and 68 (0,1%) left by sea transport. All travellers in transit, 56 (100,0%) used air transport.

In the case of foreign travellers, 28 429 (20,8%) arrived by air, 106 173 (77,8%) came by road and 1 908 (1,4%) arrived by sea transport. When departing South Africa, 27 054 (23,6%) foreign travellers left by air, 85 664 (74,9%) left by road and 1 718 (1,5%) left by sea transport. All travellers in transit, 3 193 (100,0%) used air transport. Table 2 further shows that of the 12 133 same-day visitors, a majority, 10 804 (89,0%) arrived in the country by road, 1 327 (10,9%) flew into the country; and 2 (less than 0,1%) arrived by sea transport. Information on tourists shows that 67 875 (75,3%) used road transport, 22 285 (24,7%) came by air transport and 5 (less than 0,1%) arrived by sea transport.

1.2 Tourists

1.2.1 Mode of travel

The country of residence of tourists is used to categorise them according to their respective countries and regions. Information on the specific region and country of residence of tourists and the mode of travel used to enter South Africa is provided in Table 3 on pages 11 to 14. In February 2021, 10 066 (93,7%) of the 10 745 overseas tourists arrived in the country by air transport, whilst 674 (6,3%) came in by road transport and 5 (less than 0,1%) arrived by sea transport. Tourists from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, on the other hand, came predominantly by road, 67 022 (87,8%) and 9 276 (12,2%) came by air. The number of tourists who came into South Africa by air from 'other' African countries was 2 850 (96,0%), with 118 (4,0%) using road transport.

1.2.2 Regional and national distribution

In February 2021, the distribution of overseas tourists was as follows: Europe, 6 403 (63,4%); Asia, 2 209 (20,6%); North America, 1 420 (13,2%); Central and South America, 341 (3,2%); The Middle East, 206 (1,9%); and Australasia, 166 (1,5%).

Figure 1 on page 7 and Table 3 on pages 11 to 12, indicate that the ten leading overseas countries in terms of the number of tourists visiting South Africa in February 2021 were: Germany, 1 299 (12,1%); United States of America (USA), 1 241 (11,5%); United Kingdom (UK), 1 036 (9,6%); India, 983 (9,1%); Russian Federation, 692 (6,4%); France, 570 (5,3%); Pakistan, 423 (3,9%); The Netherlands, 395 (3,7%); China, 335 (3,1%); and Switzerland, 307 (2,9%). Tourists from these ten countries constituted 67,8% of all tourists from overseas countries. A comparison of movements in the ten leading countries between February 2020 and February 2021 shows that the number of tourists decreased for all ten leading countries. UK had the largest decrease of 98,0% (from 50 644 tourists in February 2020 to 1 036 tourists in February 2021).

Virtually, most tourists from Africa, 76 298 (96,3%), came from the SADC countries. The distribution of the remaining tourists from Africa is as follows: West Africa, 1 426 (1,8%); East and Central Africa, 1 241 (1,6%); and North Africa 301 (0,4%). The ten leading SADC countries in terms of the number of tourists visiting South Africa in February 2021 were: Mozambique, 21 406 (28,1%); Zimbabwe, 18 689 (24,5%); Lesotho, 12 488 (16,4%); Eswatini, 7 173 (9,4%); Namibia, 5 585 (7,3%); Botswana, 3 682 (4,8%); Zambia, 3 504 (4,6%); Malawi, 2 215 (2,9%); Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 795 (1,0%) and Tanzania, 587 (0,8%) (see Figure 2 on page 7 and Table 3 on pages 12 to 13). Tourists from these ten countries constituted 99,8% of all tourists from the SADC countries. A comparison between movements in February 2020 and February 2021 for the ten leading SADC countries shows that the number of tourists decreased for all ten leading countries. Botswana showed the largest decrease of 92,1% (from 46 469 tourists in February 2020 to 3 682 in February 2021).

The ten leading countries in terms of the number of tourists visiting South Africa in February 2021 from 'other' African countries, as shown in Figure 3 on page 8 and Table 3 on pages 13 to 14, were: Nigeria, 798 (26,9%); Ghana, 445 (15,0%); Kenya, 444 (15,0%); Uganda 236 (8,0%); Egypt, 178 (6,0%); Gabon, 153 (5,2%); Ethiopia, 152 (5,1%); Cameroon, 112 (3,8%); The Sudan, 77 (2,6%) and Congo, 62 (2,1%). Tourists from these ten countries constituted 89,5% of all tourists from 'other' African countries. A comparison between movements in February 2020 and February 2021 shows that the number of tourists decreased for all ten leading countries. Uganda showed the largest decrease of 81,4% (from 1 270 tourists in February 2020 to 236 in February 2021).

1.2.3 Purpose of visit

As observed in Table 4 on pages 15 to 18, in February 2021, the majority of tourists, 75 275 (83,5%), were in South Africa for holiday¹ compared to 11 107 (12,3%); 3 313 (3,7%) and 470 (0,5%) who were in South Africa for business, study and for medical treatment respectively.

Compared to other overseas regions, Europe had the highest number of tourists, 6 040 who came for holiday, 207 who came for business, 135 who came for study and 21 who came for medical treatment.

Within the overseas regions, Australasia had the highest proportion of its tourists who came for holiday, 98,8% (164) followed by North America, 95,7% (1 359); Central and South America, 95,0% (324); Europe, 94,3% (6 040); Asia, 91,0 (2 010) and The Middle East, 82,5% (170).

Asia, 4,1% (90) had the highest proportion of its tourists who came to South Africa for business, followed by Europe, 3,2% (207); North America, 2,3% (32); Central and South America, 1,5% (5) and The Middle East, 0,5% (1). Australasia had no tourists who came for business purposes.

The Middle East, 17,0% (35) had the highest proportion of tourists who came to study, followed by Asia, 4,3% (95); Central and South America, 3,5% (12); Europe, 2,1% (135); North America, 1,3% (18) and Australasia, 0,6% (1).

North America had 0,8% (11) of its tourists who came for medical treatment, followed by Asia, 0,6% (14); Australasia, 0,6% (1) and Europe, 0,3% (21). Central and South America and The Middle East had no tourists who came to South Africa for medical treatment.

The majority of African tourists, 65 065 (82,1%) came to South Africa for holiday. However, the following differences in terms of reasons for travel were observed between tourists from the SADC countries and 'other' African countries, namely:

- Holiday makers constituted 82,1% (62 665) of tourists from SADC countries compared to 80,9% (2 400) from 'other' African countries. Information on the regions of 'other' African countries shows that 86,5% (1 234) of tourists from West Africa were on holiday, followed by tourists from North Africa, 77,1% (232) and East and Central Africa 75,3% (934).
- Business persons constituted 14,0% (10 708) of tourists from SADC countries compared to 1,9% (55) from 'other' African countries. East and Central Africa, 2,4% (30) had the highest proportion of its tourists who came to South Africa for business purposes, followed by West Africa, 1,5% (22) and North Africa, 1,0% (3).
- Students constituted 16,4% (488) of tourists from 'other' African countries compared with 3,3% (2 528) from SADC countries. North Africa, 21,9% (66) had the highest proportion of its tourists who came to South Africa for study purposes, followed by East and Central Africa, 21,0% (261) and West Africa, 11,3% (161).
- Medical treatment tourists constituted 0,8% (25) of tourists from 'other' African countries, while those from SADC constituted 0,5% (397) of its tourists. East and Central Africa, 1,3% (16) had the highest proportion of its tourists who came for medical treatment, followed by West Africa, 0,6% (9). North Africa had no tourists who came for medical treatment.

¹ The holiday category includes tourists who came for vacation, visiting friends and relatives, shopping and other personal reasons. See section 4.5.2 on page 21 for a more detailed discussion.

1.2.4 Sex and age distribution

Table 5 on page 19 shows that in February 2021, there were 67 815 (75,2%) male and 22 350 (24,8%) female tourists. Overseas tourists were made up of 6 706 (62,4%) male tourists and 4 039 (37,6%) female tourists. There were 59 050 (77,4%) male and 17 248 (22,6%) female tourists from SADC countries. Tourists from 'other' African countries were made up of 1 963 (66,1%) male and 1 005 (33,9%) female tourists.

The ages of the tourists were categorised into seven broad groups (see Table 5 for detailed classification). The results presented in Table 5 further show that the majority of tourists were aged between 35 and 44 years [31 692 (35,1%)]. Taking the regions of residence into consideration, the results show that the highest proportion of tourists from 'other' African countries [1 002 (33,8%)] and those from overseas countries [2 693 (25,1%)] were aged between 25 and 34 years, whereas those from SADC countries [28 357 (37,2%)] were aged 35 and 44 years. The second highest proportion of tourists from 'other' African countries [930 (31,3%)] and overseas countries [2 350 (21,9%)] were aged between 35 and 44 years, whereas those from SADC countries [17 248 (22,6%)] were aged between 45 and 54 years. The median ages of tourists from overseas, SADC and 'other' African countries were 37, 40 and 34 years respectively. The proportion of tourists aged less than 15 years was higher among tourists from overseas countries, 6,8% (726) and those from 'other' African countries, 5,2% (154) compared to those from SADC countries, 2,3% (1 717).

A comparison of the three regions shows higher proportions of the elderly among both male and female tourists from overseas. Tourists aged 65 years and older comprised 5,9% (393) of male and 6,1% (247) of female tourists from overseas. This is in contrast to the pattern observed among tourists from the other two regions where tourists aged 65 years and older comprised less than 3,5% of both male and female tourists. From SADC countries, elderly tourists made up 1,4% (848) and 3,1% (535) of male and female tourists respectively; while in 'other' African countries elderly tourists made up 1,0% (20) and 1,2% (12) of male and female tourists respectively.

2. Figures

Figure 1 – Number of tourists from the ten leading overseas countries in February 2020 and February 2021

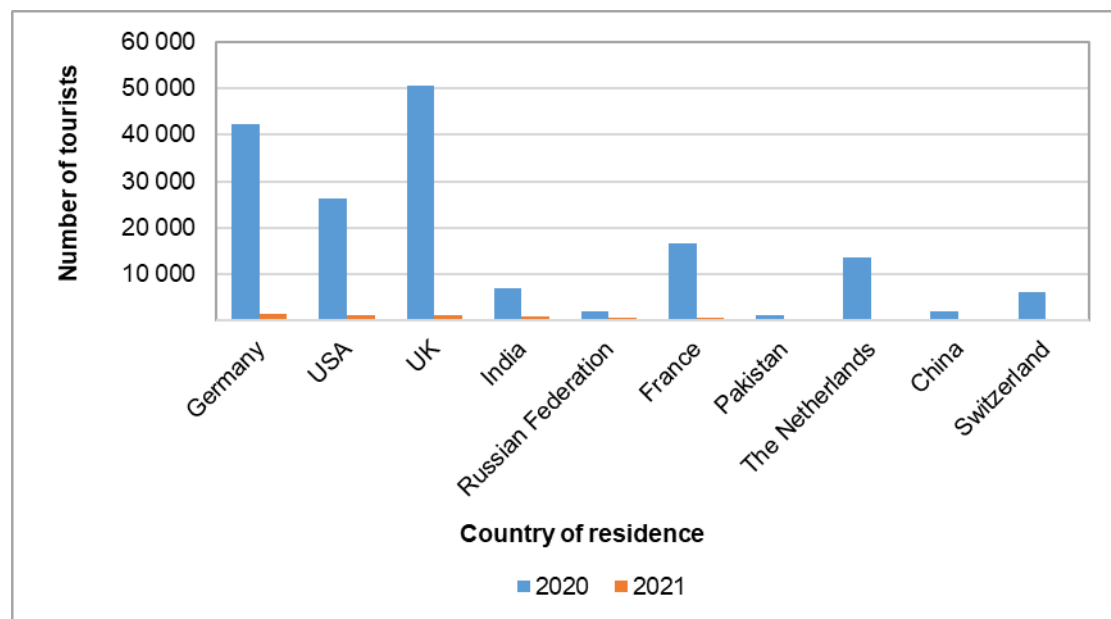


Figure 2 – Number of tourists from the ten leading Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries in February 2020 and February 2021

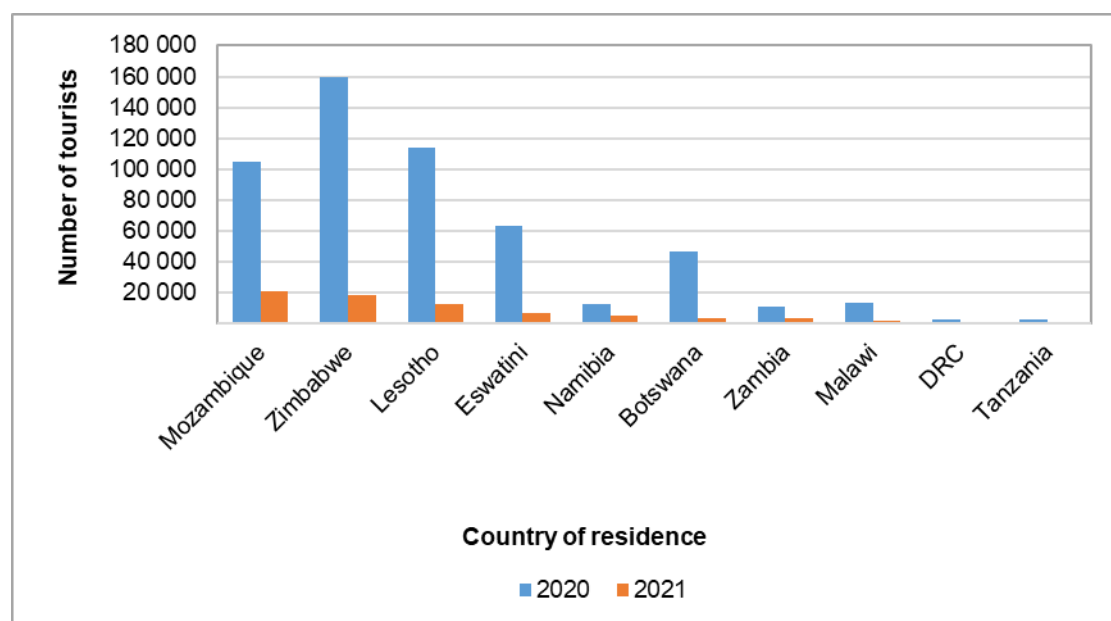
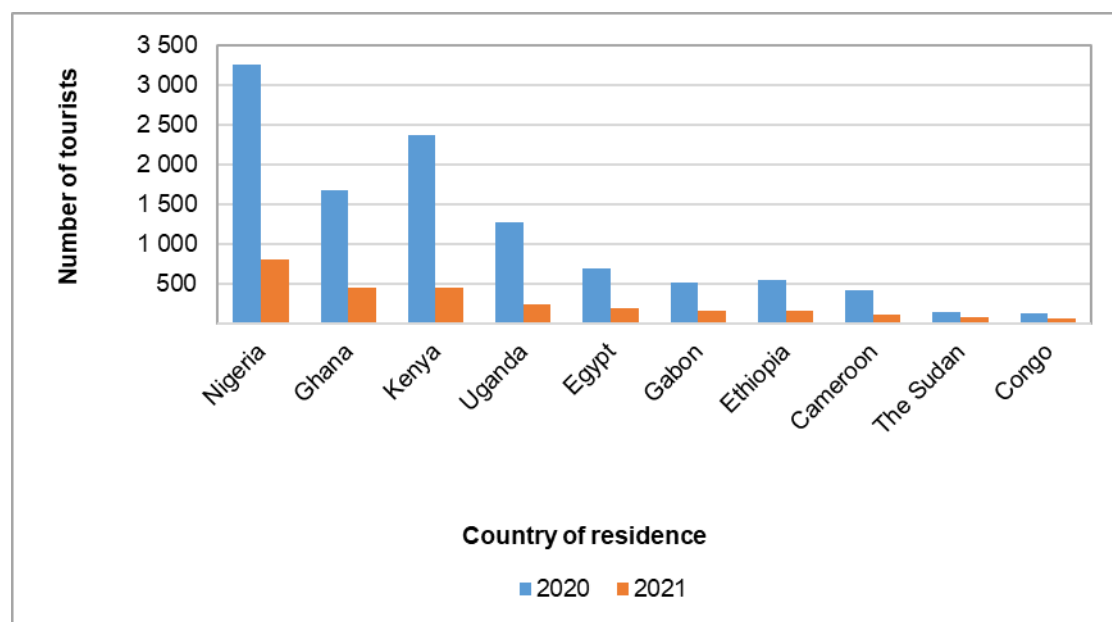


Figure 3 – Number of tourists from the ten leading 'other' African countries in February 2020 and February 2021



3. Tables

Table 1 – Number of South African residents and foreign travellers by travel direction

Travel Direction	February 2020	January 2021	February 2021	% Change Jan 2021 – Feb 2021	% Change Feb 2020 – Feb 2021
Total	3 091 233	520 510	385 832	-25,9%	-87,5%
South African residents	752 507	189 721	131 693	-30,6%	-82,5%
Arrivals	370 823	106 216	64 943	-38,9%	-82,5%
Departures	381 100	83 456	66 694	-20,1%	-82,5%
Transits	584	49	56	14,3%	-90,4%
Foreign travellers	2 338 726	330 789	254 139	-23,2%	-89,1%
Arrivals	1 218 468	195 861	136 510	-30,3%	-88,8%
Departures	1 074 252	130 208	114 436	-12,1%	-89,3%
Transits	46 006	4 720	3 193	-32,4%	-93,1%
Foreign arrivals	1 218 468	195 861	136 510	-30,3%	-88,8%
Non-visitors	75 171	45 870	34 212	-25,4%	-54,5%
Visitors	1 143 297	149 991	102 298	-31,8%	-91,1%
Visitors	1 143 297	149 991	102 298	-31,8%	-91,1%
Arrivals only	327 957	90 340	43 503	-51,8%	-86,7%
Single trips	426 238	26 254	24 057	-8,4%	-94,4%
Multiple trips	389 102	33 397	34 738	4,0%	-91,1%
Visitors	1 143 297	149 991	102 298	-31,8%	-91,1%
Same-day	342 482	10 857	12 133	11,8%	-96,5%
Overnight (Tourists)	800 815	139 134	90 165	-35,2%	-88,7%

Table 2 – Number of South African residents and foreign travellers by travel direction and mode of travel

Travel direction	Total	Air					Road	Sea
		Cape Town	King Shaka	O.R. Tambo	Other Airports	Total		
Total	385 832	17 720	1 723	84 641	511	104 595	277 365	3 872
South African residents	131 693	6 716	769	38 058	376	45 919	85 528	246
Arrivals	64 943	2 965	292	18 531	181	21 969	42 796	178
Departures	66 694	3 746	477	19 476	195	23 894	42 732	68
Transit	56	5	-	51	-	56	-	-
Foreign travellers	254 139	11 004	954	46 583	135	58 676	191 837	3 626
Arrivals	136 510	5 478	360	22 520	71	28 429	106 173	1 908
Departures	114 436	5 520	594	20 876	64	27 054	85 664	1 718
Transit	3 193	6	-	3 187	-	3 193	-	-
Visitors	102 298	4 220	132	19 241	19	23 612	78 679	7
Same-day	12 133	61	3	1 263	-	1 327	10 804	2
Tourist	90 165	4 159	129	17 978	19	22 285	67 875	5

Table 3 – Number of tourists by country of residence and mode of travel, February 2021

Country of residence	February		February 2021						
	2020	2021	Air					Road	Sea
			Cape Town	King Shaka	O.R. Tambo	Other	Total		
Total	800 815	90 165	4 159	129	17 978	19	22 285	67 875	5
Overseas	248 037	10 745	3 034	115	6 905	12	10 066	674	5
Europe	173 962	6 403	2 373	51	3 632	8	6 064	335	4
Austria	4 109	116	49	2	63	-	114	2	-
Belgium	5 045	196	65	-	112	1	178	18	-
France	16 485	570	173	-	375	-	548	22	-
Germany	42 302	1 299	639	3	621	1	1 264	35	-
Italy	4 429	229	66	-	151	1	218	9	2
Poland	1 697	150	63	-	83	-	146	4	-
Portugal	2 744	137	11	-	75	-	86	51	-
Russian Federation	1 896	692	414	-	267	-	681	10	1
Spain	2 239	152	57	-	86	-	143	9	-
Sweden	5 797	130	60	-	60	-	120	10	-
Switzerland	6 029	307	101	3	201	-	305	2	-
The Netherlands	13 543	395	172	4	205	-	381	14	-
Turkey	1 433	133	33	1	92	-	126	7	-
UK	50 644	1 036	223	19	708	3	953	82	1
Other	15 570	861	247	19	533	2	801	60	-
North America	32 806	1 420	356	23	943	3	1 325	95	-
Canada	6 488	179	32	2	129	-	163	16	-
USA	26 318	1 241	324	21	814	3	1 162	79	-
Central and South America	11 120	341	80	4	237	-	321	20	-
Brazil	6 922	180	45	1	120	-	166	14	-
Cuba	97	24	1	-	21	-	22	2	-
Mexico	246	27	6	-	21	-	27	-	-
Other	3 855	110	28	3	75	-	106	4	-

Table 3 – Number of tourists by country of residence and mode of travel, February 2021 (continued)

Country of residence	February		February 2021						
	2020	2021	Air					Road	Sea
			Cape Town	King Shaka	O.R. Tambo	Other	Total		
Australasia	8 607	166	18	2	138	-	158	8	-
Australia	7 239	142	15	2	117	-	134	8	-
New Zealand	1 348	24	3	-	21	-	24	-	-
Other	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Middle East	4 261	206	48	5	146	-	199	7	-
Israel	2 325	43	7	-	33	-	40	3	-
Jordan	178	25	4	-	20	-	24	1	-
Saudi Arabia	894	42	5	-	37	-	42	-	-
Other	864	96	32	5	56	-	93	3	-
Asia	17 281	2 209	159	30	1 809	1	1 999	209	1
Bangladesh	408	58	4	1	43	-	48	10	-
China	1 992	335	13	-	274	-	287	48	-
India	6 985	983	49	5	865	-	919	64	-
Japan	2 154	48	4	1	43	-	48	-	-
Pakistan	1 201	423	36	18	331	-	385	38	-
Philippines	442	144	11	2	124	1	138	6	-
South Korea	1 593	54	8	2	39	-	49	5	-
Sri Lanka	195	16	-	-	3	-	3	12	1
Taiwan	322	22	-	-	13	-	13	9	-
Thailand	436	69	13	1	45	-	59	10	-
Other	1 553	57	21	-	29	-	50	7	-
Africa	551 376	79 266	1 119	14	10 986	7	12 126	67 140	-
SADC	538 349	76 298	691	13	8 565	7	9 276	67 022	-
Angola	5 026	112	36	-	39	-	75	37	-
Botswana	46 469	3 682	1	11	487	-	499	3 183	-
DRC	2 441	795	81	-	665	-	746	49	-
Eswatini	63 357	7 173	1	-	83	-	84	7 089	-

Table 3 – Number of tourists by country of residence and mode of travel, February 2021 (continued)

Country of residence	February		February 2021						
	2020	2021	Air					Road	Sea
			Cape Town	King Shaka	O.R. Tambo	Other	Total		
Lesotho	113 820	12 488	-	2	40	-	42	12 446	-
Madagascar	211	24	5	-	19	-	24	-	-
Malawi	13 444	2 215	5	-	539	-	544	1 671	-
Mauritius	1 766	29	2	-	23	-	25	4	-
Mozambique	104 587	21 406	1	-	576	4	581	20 825	-
Namibia	12 543	5 585	458	-	485	-	943	4 642	-
Seychelles	582	9	1	-	8	-	9	-	-
Tanzania	2 984	587	49	-	399	-	448	139	-
Zambia	11 081	3 504	10	-	679	1	690	2 814	-
Zimbabwe	160 038	18 689	41	-	4 523	2	4 566	14 123	-
'Other' African	13 027	2 968	428	1	2 421	-	2 850	118	-
East and Central Africa	5 558	1 241	206	-	978	-	1 184	57	-
Burundi	78	30	4	-	25	-	29	1	-
Cameroon	411	112	17	-	88	-	105	7	-
Central African Republic	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chad	31	6	1	-	5	-	6	-	-
Comoros	36	6	1	-	5	-	6	-	-
Congo	129	62	30	-	31	-	61	1	-
Djibouti	5	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
Equatorial Guinea	21	21	1	-	20	-	21	-	-
Eritrea	43	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
Ethiopia	538	152	13	-	130	-	143	9	-
Gabon	514	153	18	-	134	-	152	1	-
Kenya	2 358	444	79	-	343	-	422	22	-
Rwanda	72	10	-	-	9	-	9	1	-
São Tomé and Príncipe	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Somalia	34	7	3	-	4	-	7	-	-
Uganda	1 270	236	39	-	182	-	221	15	-

Table 3 – Number of tourists by country of residence and mode of travel, February 2021 (concluded)

Country of residence	February		February 2021						
	2020	2021	Air					Road	Sea
			Cape Town	King Shaka	O.R. Tambo	Other	Total		
West Africa	6 076	1 426	175	-	1 201	-	1 376	50	-
Benin	142	31	3	-	28	-	31	-	-
Burkina Faso	77	10	4	-	6	-	10	-	-
Cape Verde Island	16	3	-	-	3	-	3	-	-
Côte d'Ivoire	221	24	8	-	13	-	21	3	-
Gambia	37	4	-	-	4	-	4	-	-
Ghana	1 671	445	56	-	384	-	440	5	-
Guinea	131	36	-	-	33	-	33	3	-
Guinea-Bissau	16	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Liberia	57	12	-	-	12	-	12	-	-
Mali	126	11	1	-	7	-	8	3	-
Mauritania	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Niger	26	3	-	-	3	-	3	-	-
Nigeria	3 253	798	101	-	663	-	764	34	-
Saint Helena	14	3	-	-	3	-	3	-	-
Senegal	126	31	1	-	29	-	30	1	-
Sierra Leone	87	6	-	-	6	-	6	-	-
Togo	53	8	1	-	7	-	8	-	-
North Africa	1 393	301	47	1	242	-	290	11	-
Algeria	100	6	-	-	6	-	6	-	-
Egypt	693	178	28	1	145	-	174	4	-
Libya	64	15	4	-	4	-	8	7	-
Morocco	203	3	1	-	2	-	3	-	-
South Sudan	66	16	4	-	12	-	16	-	-
The Sudan	138	77	10	-	67	-	77	-	-
Tunisia	129	6	-	-	6	-	6	-	-
Unspecified	1 402	154	6	-	87	-	93	61	-

Table 4 – Number of tourists by country of residence and purpose of visit

Country of residence	February			Purpose of visit (February 2021)			
	2020	2021	% change 2020–2021	Business	Holiday	Study	Medical treatment
Total	800 815	90 165	-88,7%	11 107	75 275	3 313	470
Overseas	248 037	10 745	-95,7%	335	10 067	296	47
Europe	173 962	6 403	-96,3%	207	6 040	135	21
Austria	4 109	116	-97,2%	4	111	1	-
Belgium	5 045	196	-96,1%	9	182	4	1
France	16 485	570	-96,5%	25	506	39	-
Germany	42 302	1 299	-96,9%	45	1 226	28	-
Italy	4 429	229	-94,8%	15	208	5	1
Poland	1 697	150	-91,2%	12	138	-	-
Portugal	2 744	137	-95,0%	1	133	1	2
Russian Federation	1 896	692	-63,5%	4	687	-	1
Spain	2 239	152	-93,2%	9	137	6	-
Sweden	5 797	130	-97,8%	3	122	5	-
Switzerland	6 029	307	-94,9%	2	303	2	-
The Netherlands	13 543	395	-97,1%	21	367	7	-
Turkey	1 433	133	-90,7%	3	124	6	-
UK	50 644	1 036	-98,0%	35	967	23	11
Other	15 570	861	-94,5%	19	829	8	5
North America	32 806	1 420	-95,7%	32	1 359	18	11
Canada	6 488	179	-97,2%	3	175	-	1
USA	26 318	1 241	-95,3%	29	1 184	18	10
Central and South America	11 120	341	-96,9%	5	324	12	-
Brazil	6 922	180	-97,4%	2	173	5	-
Cuba	97	24	-75,3%	-	24	-	-
Mexico	246	27	-89,0%	1	24	2	-
Other	3 855	110	-97,1%	2	103	5	-

Table 4 – Number of tourists by country of residence and purpose of visit (continued)

Country of residence	February			Purpose of visit (February 2021)			
	2020	2021	% change 2020–2021	Business	Holiday	Study	Medical treatment
Australasia	8 607	166	-98,1%	-	164	1	1
Australia	7 239	142	-98,0%	-	140	1	1
New Zealand	1 348	24	-98,2%	-	24	-	-
Other	20	-	-	-	-	-	-
Middle East	4 261	206	-95,2%	1	170	35	-
Israel	2 325	43	-98,2%	1	42	-	-
Jordan	178	25	-86,0%	-	23	2	-
Saudi Arabia	894	42	-95,3%	-	33	9	-
Other	864	96	-88,9%	-	72	24	-
Asia	17 281	2 209	-87,2%	90	2 010	95	14
Bangladesh	408	58	-85,8%	-	53	3	2
China	1 992	335	-83,2%	43	281	10	1
India	6 985	983	-85,9%	34	905	43	1
Japan	2 154	48	-97,8%	4	44	-	-
Pakistan	1 201	423	-64,8%	2	403	15	3
Philippines	442	144	-67,4%	-	137	6	1
South Korea	1 593	54	-96,6%	3	41	10	-
Sri Lanka	195	16	-91,8%	-	8	3	5
Taiwan	322	22	-93,2%	2	18	2	-
Thailand	436	69	-84,2%	1	67	1	-
Other	1 553	57	-96,3%	1	53	2	1
Africa	551 376	79 266	-85,6%	10 763	65 065	3 016	422
SADC	538 349	76 298	-85,8%	10 708	62 665	2 528	397
Angola	5 026	112	-97,8%	6	82	23	1
Botswana	46 469	3 682	-92,1%	399	3 067	157	59
DRC	2 441	795	-67,4%	31	619	127	18
Eswatini	63 357	7 173	-88,7%	424	6 386	247	116

Table 4 – Number of tourists by country of residence and purpose of visit (continued)

Country of residence	February			Purpose of visit (February 2021)			
	2020	2021	% change 2020–2021	Business	Holiday	Study	Medical treatment
Lesotho	113 820	12 488	-89,0%	991	10 660	732	105
Madagascar	211	24	-88,6%	-	18	6	-
Malawi	13 444	2 215	-83,5%	163	2 001	50	1
Mauritius	1 766	29	-98,4%	-	26	3	-
Mozambique	104 587	21 406	-79,5%	2 647	18 631	106	22
Namibia	12 543	5 585	-55,5%	2 988	2 073	485	39
Seychelles	582	9	-98,5%	-	8	1	-
Tanzania	2 984	587	-80,3%	17	495	73	2
Zambia	11 081	3 504	-68,4%	911	2 495	95	3
Zimbabwe	160 038	18 689	-88,3%	2 131	16 104	423	31
'Other' African	13 027	2 968	-77,2%	55	2 400	488	25
East and Central Africa	5 558	1 241	-77,7%	30	934	261	16
Burundi	78	30	-61,5%	2	18	8	2
Cameroon	411	112	-72,7%	3	78	23	8
Central African Republic	12	-	-100,0%	-	-	-	-
Chad	31	6	-80,6%	-	3	3	-
Comoros	36	6	-83,3%	-	5	1	-
Congo	129	62	-51,9%	2	44	15	1
Djibouti	5	1	-80,0%	-	1	-	-
Equatorial Guinea	21	21	0,0%	-	10	10	1
Eritrea	43	1	-97,7%	-	1	-	-
Ethiopia	538	152	-71,7%	1	136	15	-
Gabon	514	153	-70,2%	1	89	62	1
Kenya	2 358	444	-81,2%	16	346	79	3
Rwanda	72	10	-86,1%	-	8	2	-
São Tomé and Príncipe	6	-	-100,0%	-	-	-	-
Somalia	34	7	-79,4%	-	6	1	-
Uganda	1 270	236	-81,4%	5	189	42	-

Table 4 – Number of tourists by country of residence and purpose of visit (concluded)

Country of residence	February			Purpose of visit (February 2021)			
	2020	2021	% change 2020–2021	Business	Holiday	Study	Medical treatment
West Africa	6 076	1 426	-76,5%	22	1 234	161	9
Benin	142	31	-78,2%	1	23	7	-
Burkina Faso	77	10	-87,0%	1	9	-	-
Cape Verde Island	16	3	-81,3%	-	3	-	-
Côte d'Ivoire	221	24	-89,1%	2	21	1	-
Gambia	37	4	-89,2%	-	2	2	-
Ghana	1 671	445	-73,4%	4	416	22	3
Guinea	131	36	-72,5%	1	33	2	-
Guinea-Bissau	16	1	-93,8%	-	1	-	-
Liberia	57	12	-78,9%	-	11	1	-
Mali	126	11	-91,3%	-	10	-	1
Mauritania	23	-	-100,0%	-	-	-	-
Niger	26	3	-88,5%	-	3	-	-
Nigeria	3 253	798	-75,5%	11	660	124	3
Saint Helena	14	3	-78,6%	-	3	-	-
Senegal	126	31	-75,4%	-	28	2	1
Sierra Leone	87	6	-93,1%	-	5	-	1
Togo	53	8	-84,9%	2	6	-	-
North Africa	1 393	301	-78,4%	3	232	66	-
Algeria	100	6	-94,0%	-	5	1	-
Egypt	693	178	-74,3%	3	142	33	-
Libya	64	15	-76,6%	-	11	4	-
Morocco	203	3	-98,5%	-	2	1	-
South Sudan	66	16	-75,8%	-	10	6	-
The Sudan	138	77	-44,2%	-	56	21	-
Tunisia	129	6	-95,3%	-	6	-	-
Unspecified	1 402	154	-89,0%	9	143	1	1

Table 5 – Number of tourists from overseas, SADC and 'other' African regions by sex and age group

Sex	Age group	February		Region (February 2021)			
		2020	2021	Overseas	SADC	'Other' African	Unspecified
All	Total	800 815	90 165	10 745	76 298	2 968	154
	0-14	31 792	2 598	726	1 717	154	1
	15-24	62 845	7 362	1 190	5 784	384	4
	25-34	205 675	19 869	2 693	16 144	1 002	30
	35-44	219 862	31 692	2 350	28 357	930	55
	45-54	135 175	19 436	1 805	17 248	348	35
	55-64	86 138	7 150	1 341	5 665	118	26
	65+	59 328	2 058	640	1 383	32	3
Male	Total	450 209	67 815	6 706	59 050	1 963	96
	0-14	16 203	1 315	377	866	71	1
	15-24	33 007	3 956	668	3 055	230	3
	25-34	113 228	14 120	1 586	11 885	633	16
	35-44	132 549	25 900	1 593	23 593	680	34
	45-54	79 382	15 856	1 221	14 358	254	23
	55-64	45 536	5 405	868	4 445	75	17
	65+	30 304	1 263	393	848	20	2
Female	Total	350 606	22 350	4 039	17 248	1 005	58
	0-14	15 589	1 283	349	851	83	
	15-24	29 838	3 406	522	2 729	154	1
	25-34	92 447	5 749	1 107	4 259	369	14
	35-44	87 313	5 792	757	4 764	250	21
	45-54	55 793	3 580	584	2 890	94	12
	55-64	40 602	1 745	473	1 220	43	9
	65+	29 024	795	247	535	12	1

4. Explanatory notes

4.1 Introduction

Legal movements across South African borders, as well as legal immigration into South Africa, fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). Stats SA then processes, analyses and publishes this information.

Administrative data sources from the DHA, that is, information from all the country's ports of entry and applications for permanent residence, constitute the only comprehensive source of information on foreign arrivals and departures, documented immigrants and emigrants. The information from this source of data provides the best national coverage (both in terms of space and time) of the population movements of South African residents and foreign travellers. The data can be used for the following:

- To estimate, monitor and understand salient characteristics of foreign travellers and volumes of South African residents travelling outside South Africa.
- To provide information that can be used to (a) assess the extent of government's progress in strengthening bilateral political and economic relations by assessing the number of international tourist arrivals, and (b) benchmark surveys focusing on the demand for local tourism services by foreign travellers.

4.2 Purpose of the statistical release

This release reports on arrivals, departures and transit travellers of South African residents and foreign travellers. Detailed information on the age and sex distribution; mode of travel; national and regional distribution; and purpose of travel of overnight visitors or tourists are also provided.

4.3 Scope and coverage

The release covers data collected by DHA officials on travellers who departed from or entered the Republic of South Africa (RSA).

4.4 Data

Information published in this release is based on data obtained from the following data sources within the DHA:

- Data routinely collected by immigration officers at all road, air and sea entry ports on all travellers (South African residents and foreign travellers) arriving into or departing from South Africa are captured into the DHA's population Movement Control System (MCS). The counts/statistics relate to the number of individual movements, rather than to the number of people. Hence, the multiple movements of individual people during the calendar month are each counted separately. Generally, the data are collected directly from travel documents either by scanning or capturing onto the ports' electronic database. No forms or cards are used (except on rare occasions when the capturing system is down) to collect information from travellers. Individual ports regularly transmit data onto the national database at the head office of the DHA.
- Stats SA receives downloaded data covering a particular calendar month from the DHA.
- As part of data interrogation, data from O.R. Tambo International Airport, which has the highest volume of travellers, are compared with passenger statistics from the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA). As expected, in any specific month, an increase in the volume of passengers reported by ACSA is also reflected in an increase in the volume of travellers recorded by DHA. A similar pattern has also been observed when the volume of travellers decreased. In February 2021, the DHA data was 6,0% higher than that of ACSA.

4.5 Limitations

4.5.1 Outbound tourists

The information on the total number of arrivals and departures of South African residents is collected from the scanning of passports. However, data on the country visited are not collected from passengers; country of final destination; intended duration of stay and purpose of visit. With this limitation, it is impossible to identify the number of tourists from the data on South African residents.

4.5.2 Purpose of visit

The holiday category includes tourists who came for vacation, visiting friends and relatives, shopping and other personal reasons such as attending weddings. While it's possible to separate 'visiting friends and relatives' from the broad category of Holiday, shopping and other reasons for visiting South Africa are all combined with vacation in the DHA movement control system. Discussions are in progress with the Department of Home Affairs to capture vacation and shopping as separate categories for a clearer breakdown of tourists by purpose of visit.

4.6 Definition of terms

4.6.1 Definitions used by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)

Traveller is someone who moves between different geographical locations for any purpose and any duration.

Visitor refers to any person travelling to a place other than that of his/her usual environment for less than 12 months and whose main purpose of the trip is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.

Same-Day visitor is a visitor who visits a place for less than one night.

Tourist (overnight visitor) is a visitor who stays at least one night in collective or private accommodation in the place visited.

Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to, and staying in places outside their usual environment, for not more than one consecutive year, for leisure, business and other purposes. The usual environment of a person consists of a certain area around his/her place of residence, plus all the other places he/she frequently visits.

4.6.2 Definitions used specifically in this release

South African resident refers to either a South African citizen or a non-South African citizen with a South African permanent residence permit.

Foreign traveller refers to a traveller who is not a South African citizen or permanent resident.

Region refers to the following country classification:

- Overseas: Europe, North America, Central and South America, Australasia, the Middle East and Asia.
- Africa: SADC and 'other' Africa (East and Central Africa, West Africa and North Africa).

Country refers to individual countries within a region. The country of residence is used. The country of residence should not be confused with the country from which the visitor travelled.

Africa refers to all the countries in Africa (both mainland and island countries).

SADC refers to the fourteen countries, excluding South Africa, which belong to the Southern African Development Community.

'Other' African refers to all non-SADC African countries.

Overseas refers to all countries outside Africa.

Trip refers to the arrival and departure of a visitor in a specified month.

4.7 Symbols used

- = nil
- < = less than

4.8 Rounding off

Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

5. General information

Stats SA publishes approximately 300 different statistical releases each year. It is not economically viable to produce them in more than one of South Africa's eleven official languages, since the releases are used extensively, not only locally but also by international economic and social-scientific communities. Stats SA releases are published in English.

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