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KEY FINDINGS

1. Number of travellers

The January 2009 data collected by the Department of Home Affairs' (DHA) immigration officers at the ports of entry into South Africa show that a total of 2 447 857 travellers (arrivals and departures) passed through the ports of entry. As presented in Table 1, these travellers are made up of 803 207 South African residents and 1 644 650 foreign travellers. A further breakdown of the figures indicates that 482 126 and 321 081 South African resident arrivals and departures respectively were recorded. The corresponding volumes for foreign arrivals and departures are 920 338 and 724 312 respectively. A comparison between the movements in December 2008 and January 2009 indicates that there was a decrease in all movements except South African resident arrivals. The January 2009 figure (482 126) for South African resident arrivals shows an increase of 6,0% compared to the January 2008 figure of 454 720. There was also an increase of 5,8% for foreign arrivals from 869 659 in January 2008 to 920 338 in January 2009. The data on travellers received from the DHA do not provide detailed information on departures. Similarly, data on South African residents are limited. Information on the purpose of travel and the number of days South African travellers intend spending or spent abroad is not collected by South Africa immigration officers. Hence, it is not possible to categorise them as tourists and non tourists. However, data are available on foreign arrivals for this categorisation. In January 2009, there were 213 032 same-day visitors and 607 808 overnight visitors (tourists) among the foreign arrivals (see Table 1).

2. Mode of travel of travellers

Travellers who cross South Africa's borders rarely use trains and ships since they are mainly used for transporting goods. Data presented in Table 2 show that in January 2009, road transport was the most common mode of travel used by 1 699 126 (69,4%) out of the 2 447 857 travellers. The number of travellers who came in by air were 730 011. The arrival data on South African residents show that 166 421 (34,5%) came by air and 314 022 (65,1%) by road. For their departure, 131 691 (41,0%) and 189 282 (59,0%) used air and road transport respectively. In the case of foreign travellers, 210 446 (22,9%) arrived by air. Those who came by road were 693 066 (75,3%). When departing South Africa, 221 453 (30,6%) foreign travellers left by air whilst 502 756 (69,4%) left by road.

Data on same day visitors show that 13 856 (6,5%) of them entered the country by air compared to 199 171 (93,5%) that arrived by road. On the contrary, 179 849 (30,0%) overnight visitors (tourists) came by air whereas 427 875 (70,4%) used road transport. The country of residence of foreign arrivals is used to categorise them into their respective countries and regions. Information on the specific country (and region) of residence of the tourists and the mode of travel used to enter South Africa is provided in Table 4. A significantly high proportion of overseas tourists arrived in the country by air 142 003 (91,5%) compared to those who came in by road 13 169 (8,5%). This is in contrast to tourists from SADC countries who came into South Africa predominantly by road 411 353 (94,2%) compared to air 25 275 (5,8%). A relatively high proportion 10 569 (87,6%) of tourists from 'other' African countries flew into the country whereas 1 490 (12,4%) used road transport.

3. Sex and age distribution of tourists

According to Table 3 in January 2009, there were 349 360 (57,5%) male and 257 620 (42,4%) female tourists. The overseas tourists were made up of 85 386 (55,0%) male tourists and 69 655 (44,9%) female tourists. Tourists from 'other' Africa countries had a significant proportion of male tourists, 7 921 (65,7%) compared to male tourists, 253 979 (58,2%) from SADC countries. There were 4 141 (34,3%) and 182 036 (41,7%) female tourists from 'other' African countries and SADC countries respectively.

Data on the age distribution of the tourists were categorised into three broad age groups namely, those younger than 15 years, those aged 15 up to 64 years, and persons 65 years and older. As presented in Table 3, a significant proportion 547 218 (90,0%) of tourists in January 2009 were aged 15 to 64 years. There were very few tourists younger than 15 years, 32 180 (5,3%) and those aged 65 and older, 28 067 (4,6%). Taking the country of residence into consideration, the data clearly show relatively high proportions of overseas tourists for both male (12,9%) and females (13,0%) were older persons (i.e. 65 years and older). This is in contrast to tourists from SADC countries, male (1,3%), female (2,4%) and tourists from 'other' African countries, male (1,3%) and female (1,7%).

4. Regional and national distribution of tourists

In January 2009, overseas tourists came mainly from Europe 107 785 (69,4%); followed by North America 18 654 (12,0%); Asia 14 784 (9,5%); Australasia 7 318 (4,7%); Central and South America 4 598 (3,0%); and Middle East 2 089 (1,3%). Virtually all tourists from Africa came from the SADC countries 436 647 (97,3%). The distribution of the remaining tourists from Africa is as follows: East and Central Africa 6 352 (1,4%); West Africa 4 848 (1,1%) and North Africa 864 (0,2%).

Data presented in Figure 1 indicate that UK, 39 675 (25,6%); Germany, 17 662 (11,4%); USA, 14 978 (9,6%); France, 9 242 (6,0%); The Netherlands, 8 358 (5,4%); Australia, 6 168 (4,0%); Sweden, 4 272 (2,8%); and Canada, 3 671 (2,4%) were the eight leading overseas source countries. Tourists from these eight countries constitute 67,8% of all tourists from overseas countries.

The eight leading source countries from SADC were Mozambique, 110 764 (24,7%); Lesotho, 108 336 (24,1%); Zimbabwe, 88 130 (19,6%); Swaziland, 51 274 (11,4%); Botswana, 30 246 (6,7%); Namibia, 13 454 (3,0%); Malawi, 12 985 (3,0%) and Zambia, 12 530 (2,8%) as shown in Figure 2. Tourists from these eight countries constitute 95,3% of all tourists from Africa countries.

The eight leading source countries from 'other' African countries, shown in Figure 3, are Nigeria, 3 147 (26,1%); Kenya, 2 082 (17,3%); Uganda, 1 150 (9,5%); Ghana, 823 (6,8%); Ethiopia, 710 (5,9%); Gabon, 557 (4,6%); Congo 547 (4,5%); and Egypt 427 (3,5%). Tourists from these eight countries constitute 78,2% of all tourists from 'other' African countries.

5. Purpose of travel of tourists

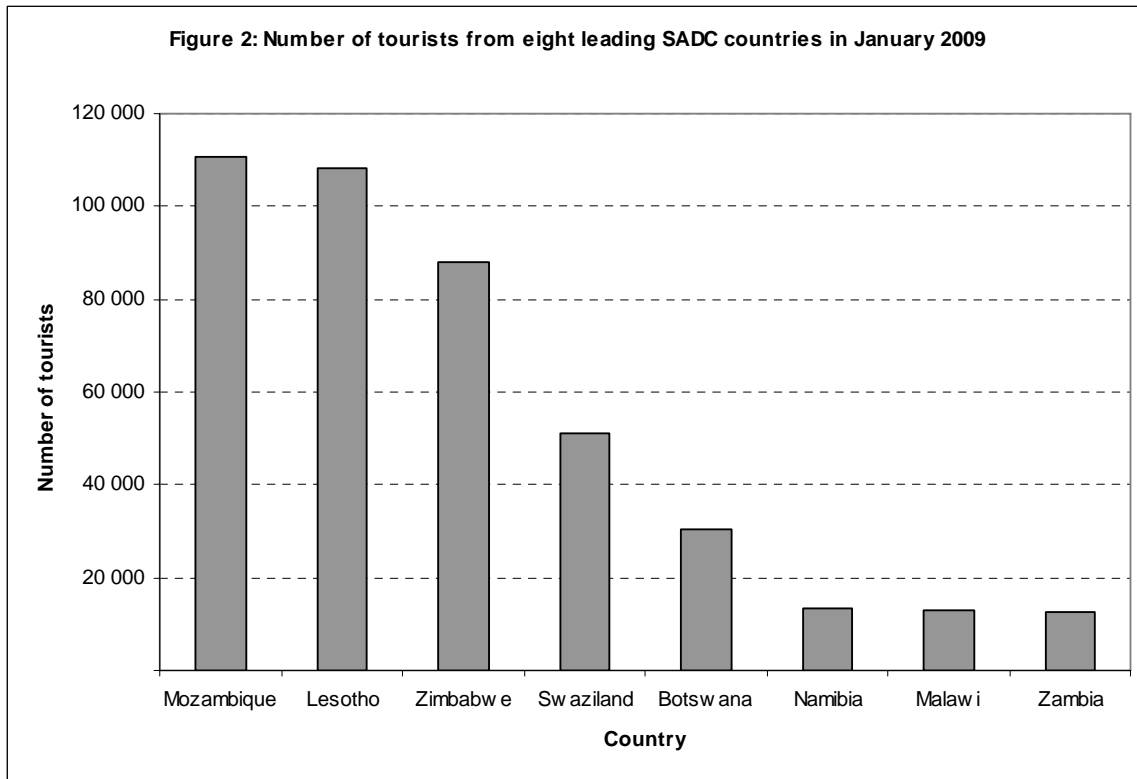
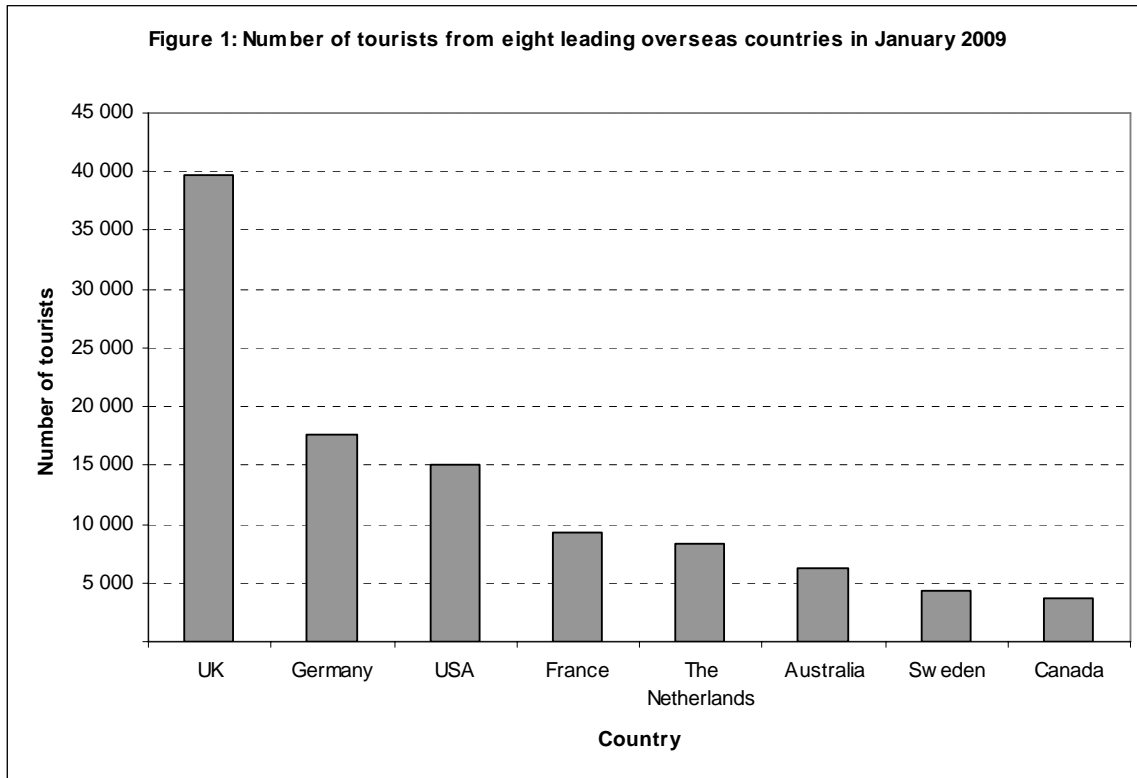
As observed from data given in Table 5, in January 2009, an overwhelming majority (95,7%) of tourists was in South Africa for holiday. This is a large difference compared to those who have come to study (2,7%) and those on business (1,6%).

A detailed analysis reveals that all the overseas regions had more than 90,0% of their tourists coming to South Africa for holidays. Tourists from Australasia (98,0%), Europe (96,8%), Central and South America (96,5%), North America (93,4%), Asia (90,6%) and the Middle East (90,2%) were in South Africa for holidays. Tourists from Middle East and Asia were more diverse in their purpose. Middle East and Asia had 6,2% and 5,3% respectively of their tourists in South Africa for business. Furthermore, students made up 3,6% and 4,2% of Middle East and Asia tourists respectively.

Although the majority (96,1%) of African tourists came to South Africa for holiday, there is a significant difference between tourists from SADC countries and those from 'other' African countries, namely:

- Whereas 96,5% of tourists from the SADC countries were on holiday; 80,8% of tourists from 'other' African countries were on holiday. Proportionally, the lowest percentage (75,9%) of tourists on holiday came from East and Central Africa, a region where, a large percentage (19,8%) of tourists were students.
- A relatively higher percentage of tourists from 'other' African tourists and from SADC countries were here for business and studies.
- Overall, North Africa and East and Central Africa had 11,9% and 4,4% respectively of their tourists in South Africa for business compared to only 1,3% of business persons among the tourists from SADC countries.
- Similarly, 19,8%; 8,9% and 8,7% of tourists from East and Central Africa; West Africa and North Africa respectively were students compared to only 2,2% among tourists from SADC countries.

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Statistician-General



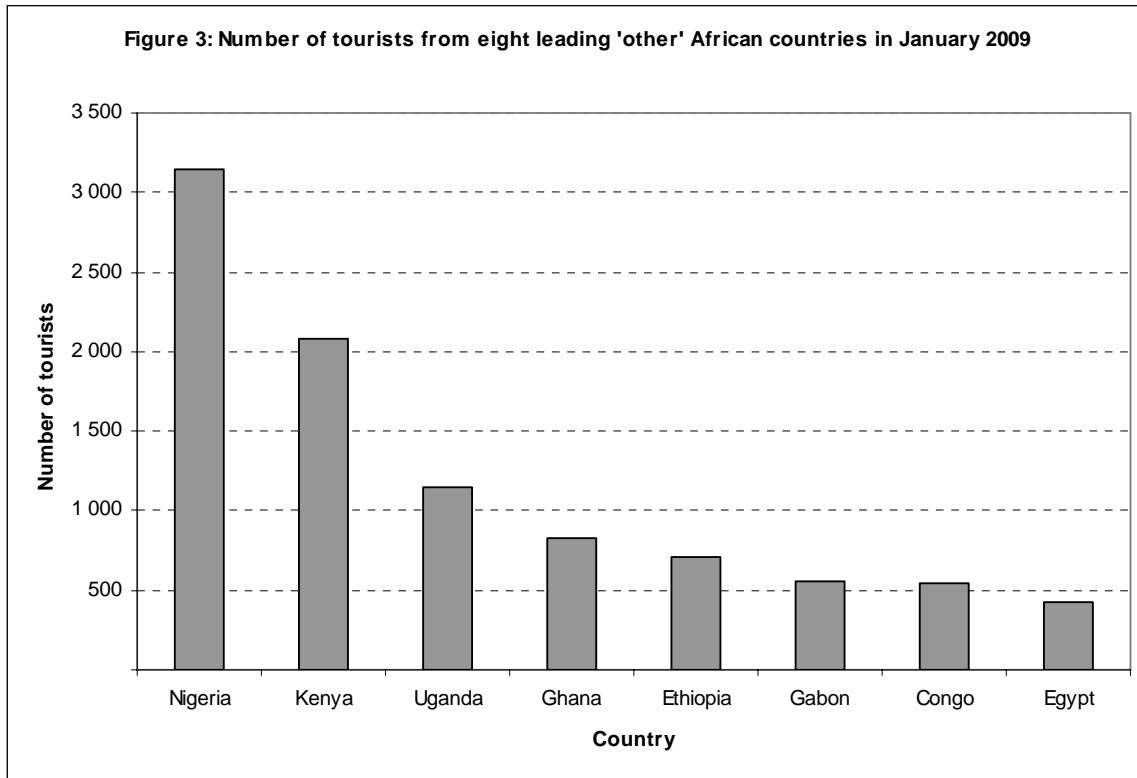


Table 1. Number of South African residents and foreign travellers by travel direction

Travel direction	January	December	January	% change	% change
	2008	2008	2009	Jan 08 – Jan 09	Dec 08 – Jan 09
Grand Total	2 316 283	2 941 454	2 447 857	5,7	-16,8
South African residents	764 049	1 054 315	803 207	5,1	-23,8
Arrivals	454 720	460 659	482 126	6,0	4,7
Departures	309 329	593 656	321 081	3,8	-45,9
Foreign travellers	1 552 234	1 887 139	1 644 650	6,0	-12,8
Arrivals	869 659	974 975	920 338	5,8	-5,6
Departures	682 575	912 164	724 312	6,1	-20,6
Visitors			820 840		
Same day			213 032		
Overnight (Tourists)			607 808		

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

Travel direction	Total	Mode of travel (January 2009)								
		Air					Rail	Road	Sea	Unspec.
		(C/Town)	(Durban)	(OR Tambo)	(Other)	Total				
Grand Total	2 447 857	161 990	3 790	558 131	6 100	730 011	132	1 699 126	272	18 316
Arrivals:	1 402 464	82 860	2 126	288 817	3 064	376 867	112	1 007 088	95	18 302
South African residents	482 126	24 385	1 760	138 080	2 196	166 421	26	314 022	45	1 612
Foreign travellers	920 338	58 475	366	150 737	868	210 446	86	693 066	50	16 690
Visitors	820 840	56 243	314	136 431	717	193 705	68	627 046	21	-
Same day	213 032	318	10	13 414	114	13 856	5	199 171	-	-
Overnight (Tourists)	607 808	55 925	304	123 017	603	179 849	63	427 875	21	-
Non Visitors	14 518	1 746	8	8 406	96	10 256	6	4 247	9	-
Unspecified	84 980	486	44	5 900	55	6 485	12	61 773	20	16 690
Departures:	1 045 393	79 130	1 664	269 314	3 036	353 144	20	692 038	177	14
South African residents	321 081	19 623	1 178	108 585	2 305	131 691	12	189 282	89	7
Foreign travellers	724 312	59 507	486	160 729	731	221 453	8	502 756	88	7

Table 3. Number of tourists from overseas, SADC and 'other' African residents by sex, age groups and region

Sex	Age group	Total	Region			
			Overseas	SADC	'other' African	Unspecified
All	Total	607 808	155 228	436 647	12 064	3 869
	<15	32 180	8 976	21 839	832	533
	15-64	547 218	126 061	406 798	11 059	3 300
	65+	28 067	20 144	7 715	173	35
	Unspecified	343	47	295	-	1
Males	Total	349 360	85 386	253 979	7 921	2 074
	<15	16 157	4 665	10 757	450	285
	15-64	318 492	69 645	239 712	7 368	1 767
	65+	14 562	11 057	3 381	103	21
	Unspecified	149	19	129	-	1
Females	Total	257 620	69 655	182 036	4 141	1 788
	<15	16 022	4 311	11 081	382	248
	15-64	228 061	56 297	166 549	3 689	1 526
	65+	13 406	9 026	4 296	70	14
	Unspecified	131	21	110	-	-
Unspecified	Total	828	187	632	2	7
	<15	1	-	1	-	-
	15-64	665	119	537	2	7
	65+	99	61	38	-	-
	Unspecified	63	7	56	-	-

Table 4. Number of tourists by country residence and mode of travel

Country	Mode of travel (January 2009)								
	Grand Total	Air					Rail	Road	Sea
		Cape Town	Durban	OR Tambo	Other	Total			
Grand Total	607 808	55 925	304	123 017	603	179 849	63	427 875	21
Overseas	155 228	53 959	122	87 551	371	142 003	39	13 169	17
Europe	107 785	45 938	93	52 386	236	98 653	28	9 088	16
Austria	1 704	744	-	835	-	1 579	1	124	-
Belgium	2 760	959	-	1 500	14	2 473	2	285	-
Denmark	2 367	728	5	1 366	40	2 139	1	221	6
Finland	1 218	718	-	426	1	1 145	-	73	-
France	9 242	2 619	34	5 742	25	8 420	2	820	-
Germany	17 662	7 955	3	7 973	6	15 937	6	1 717	2
Ireland	3 115	1 664	1	1 217	5	2 887	-	227	1
Italy	3 279	1 022	-	1 914	4	2 940	-	339	-
Norway	2 078	976	2	936	10	1 924	1	153	-
Portugal	2 207	165	6	1 133	6	1 310	-	897	-
Sweden	4 272	1 951	3	1 967	-	3 921	-	351	-
Switzerland	2 928	1 019	3	1 621	2	2 645	3	280	-
The Netherlands	8 358	3 539	-	3 785	7	7 331	1	1 026	-
UK	39 675	19 729	31	17 709	98	37 567	9	2 093	6
Other	6 920	2 150	5	4 262	18	6 435	2	482	1
North America	18 654	4 528	8	12 520	66	17 122	2	1 529	1
Canada	3 671	902	2	2 418	12	3 334	-	337	-
USA	14 978	3 626	6	10 099	54	13 785	2	1 190	1
Other	5	-	-	3	-	3	-	2	-
Central and South America	4 598	600	-	3 598	2	4 200	2	396	-
Argentina	956	403	-	511	-	914	-	42	-
Brazil	2 559	53	-	2 266	1	2 320	-	239	-
Chile	182	26	-	143	-	169	-	13	-
Other	901	118	-	678	1	797	2	102	-
Australasia	7 318	728	8	5 842	24	6 602	-	716	-
Australia	6 168	591	7	4 978	21	5 597	-	571	-

Table 4. Number of tourists by country residence and mode of travel (continued)

Country	Mode of travel (January 2009)								
	Grand Total	Air					Rail	Road	Sea
		Cape Town	Durban	OR Tambo	Other	Total			
New Zealand	1 096	132	1	842	3	978	-	118	-
Other	54	5	-	22	-	27	-	27	-
Middle East	2 089	309	-	1 619	10	1 938	-	151	-
Cyprus	163	18	-	107	2	127	-	36	-
Israel	1 005	78	-	876	1	955	-	50	-
Saudi Arabia	190	39	-	144	-	183	-	7	-
Other	731	174	-	492	7	673	-	58	-
Asia	14 784	1 856	13	11 586	33	13 488	7	1 289	-
China	3 398	283	-	3 000	2	3 285	-	113	-
Hong Kong	1 126	79	-	1 030	-	1 109	-	17	-
India	3 478	331	11	2 698	8	3 048	2	428	-
Japan	1 075	152	-	835	1	988	-	87	-
Korea	1 418	322	2	985	-	1 309	-	109	-
Malaysia	468	97	-	329	1	427	-	41	-
Pakistan	625	49	-	425	2	476	5	144	-
Taiwan	1 422	258	-	1 067	2	1 327	-	95	-
Thailand	443	28	-	400	7	435	-	8	-
Other	1 331	257	-	817	10	1 084	-	247	-
Africa	448 711	1 778	182	33 668	216	35 844	24	412 843	-
SADC	436 647	1 527	182	23 371	195	25 275	19	411 353	-
Angola	4 083	199	-	3 696	20	3 915	-	168	-
Botswana	30 246	10	-	1 451	39	1 500	-	28 746	-
DRC	2 258	2	-	1 722	14	1 738	-	520	-
Lesotho	108 336	-	-	237	-	237	1	108 098	-
Madagascar	223	15	-	200	-	215	-	8	-
Malawi	12 985	5	-	1 659	3	1 667	-	11 318	-
Mauritius	1 229	212	135	803	-	1 150	-	79	-
Mozambique	110 764	118	43	1 898	12	2 071	1	108 692	-
Namibia	13 454	886	-	1 645	16	2 547	-	10 907	-
Swaziland	51 274	12	1	348	10	371	7	50 896	-

Table 4. Number of tourists by country residence and mode of travel (continued)

Country	Mode of travel (January 2009)								
	Grand Total	Air					Rail	Road	Sea
		Cape Town	Durban	OR Tambo	Other	Total			
Tanzania	1 135	2	-	823	1	826	-	309	-
Zambia	12 530	13	-	3 573	50	3 636	2	8 892	-
Zimbabwe	88 130	53	3	5 316	30	5 402	8	82 720	-
East and Central Africa	6 352	59	-	5 283	6	5 348	4	1 000	-
Burundi	74	1	-	58	-	59	-	15	-
Cameroon	403	11	-	364	-	375	2	26	-
Central African Republic	7	-	-	6	-	6	-	1	-
Chad	11	-	-	11	-	11	-	-	-
Comoros	9	-	-	9	-	9	-	-	-
Congo	547	7	-	448	-	455	-	92	-
Djibouti	6	-	-	6	-	6	-	-	-
Equat Guinea	37	-	-	27	-	27	-	10	-
Eritrea	36	3	-	28	-	31	-	5	-
Ethiopia	710	4	-	500	-	504	-	206	-
Gabon	557	6	-	532	2	540	-	17	-
Kenya	2 082	10	-	1 834	2	1 846	1	235	-
Reunion	83	11	-	72	-	83	-	-	-
Rwanda	295	2	-	267	-	269	-	26	-
Sao Tome and Principe	7	1	-	6	-	7	-	-	-
Seychelles	155	-	-	153	-	153	-	2	-
Somalia	182	-	-	5	-	5	-	177	-
Tristan Da Cunha	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
Uganda	1 150	3	-	956	2	961	1	188	-
West Africa	4 848	62	-	4 339	15	4 416	1	431	-
Ascension	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
Benin	97	1	-	87	-	88	-	9	-
Burkina Faso	26	1	-	23	-	24	-	2	-
Cape Verde Island	70	1	-	48	-	49	-	21	-
Cote D'Ivoire	184	1	-	180	-	181	-	3	-
Gambia	31	-	-	24	-	24	-	7	-

Table 4. Number of tourists by country residence and mode of travel (concluded)

Country	Mode of travel (January 2009)								
	Grand Total	Air					Rail	Road	Sea
		Cape Town	Durban	OR Tambo	Other	Total			
Ghana	823	13	-	755	-	768	-	55	-
Guinea	110	1	-	61	-	62	-	48	-
Guinea-Bissau	12	-	-	7	-	7	-	5	-
Liberia	31	-	-	24	-	24	-	7	-
Madeira Islands	4	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
Mali	53	2	-	39	-	41	-	12	-
Mauritania	9	1	-	8	-	9	-	-	-
Niger	19	1	-	18	-	19	-	-	-
Nigeria	3 147	22	-	2 875	14	2 911	1	235	-
Saint Helena	6	-	-	5	-	5	-	1	-
Senegal	146	12	-	121	1	134	-	12	-
Sierra Leone	48	1	-	36	-	37	-	11	-
Togo	31	1	-	27	-	28	-	3	-
North Africa	864	130	-	675	-	805	-	59	-
Algeria	106	28	-	56	-	84	-	22	-
Egypt	427	36	-	373	-	409	-	18	-
Libya	60	16	-	40	-	56	-	4	-
Morocco	67	14	-	51	-	65	-	2	-
The Sudan	144	25	-	106	-	131	-	13	-
Tunisia	60	11	-	49	-	60	-	-	-
Unspecified	3 869	188	-	1 798	16	2 002	-	1 863	4

Table 5. Number of tourists arrivals by country of residence and purpose of visit

Country	Purpose of visit (January 2009)			
	Grand Total	Business	Holiday	Study
Grand Total	607 808	9 910	581 711	16 187
Overseas	155 228	3 738	148 598	2 892
Europe	107 785	2 232	104 288	1 265
Austria	1 704	19	1 669	16
Belgium	2 760	57	2 652	51
Denmark	2 367	49	2 300	18
Finland	1 218	14	1 185	19
France	9 242	217	8 910	115
Germany	17 662	366	17 027	269
Ireland	3 115	40	3 049	26
Italy	3 279	69	3 176	34
Norway	2 078	56	1 956	66
Portugal	2 207	20	2 172	15
Sweden	4 272	84	4 129	59
Switzerland	2 928	56	2 839	33
The Netherlands	8 358	147	8 087	124
UK	39 675	789	38 552	334
Other	6 920	249	6 585	86
North America	18 654	433	17 432	789
Canada	3 671	75	3 544	52
USA	14 978	358	13 883	737
Other	5	-	5	-
Central and South America	4 598	65	4 438	95
Argentina	956	12	931	13
Brazil	2 559	24	2 516	19
Chile	182	5	172	5
Other	901	24	819	58
Australasia	7 318	101	7 168	49
Australia	6 168	90	6 044	34

Table 5. Number of tourists arrivals by country of residence and purpose of visit (continued)

Country	Purpose of visit (January 2009)			
	Grand Total	Business	Holiday	Study
New Zealand	1 096	7	1 077	12
Other	54	4	47	3
Middle East	2 089	129	1 884	76
Cyprus	163	2	159	2
Israel	1 005	40	943	22
Saudi Arabia	190	10	169	11
Other	731	77	613	41
Asia	14 784	778	13 388	618
China	3 398	106	3 207	85
Hong Kong	1 126	3	1 120	3
India	3 478	436	2 925	117
Japan	1 075	60	998	17
Korea	1 418	27	1 170	221
Malaysia	468	10	441	17
Pakistan	625	48	547	30
Taiwan	1 422	10	1 337	75
Thailand	443	4	434	5
Other	1 331	74	1 209	48
Africa	448 711	6 102	431 235	11 374
SADC	436 647	5 545	421 491	9 611
Angola	4 083	54	3 151	878
Botswana	30 246	56	28 683	1 507
DRC	2 258	57	1 838	363
Lesotho	108 336	71	107 612	653
Madagascar	223	16	194	13
Malawi	12 985	385	12 359	241
Mauritius	1 229	16	1 025	188
Mozambique	110 764	278	110 253	233
Namibia	13 454	1 375	10 266	1 813
Swaziland	51 274	362	49 877	1 035

Table 5. Number of tourists arrivals by country of residence and purpose of visit (continued)

Country	Purpose of visit (January 2009)			
	Grand Total	Business	Holiday	Study
Tanzania	1 135	60	853	222
Zambia	12 530	1 623	10 593	314
Zimbabwe	88 130	1 192	84 787	2 151
East and Central Africa	6 352	278	4 819	1 255
Burundi	74	-	60	14
Cameroon	403	23	230	150
Central African Republic	7	-	7	-
Chad	11	2	6	3
Comoros	9	-	9	-
Congo	547	3	444	100
Djibouti	6	-	6	-
Equat Guinea	37	2	15	20
Eritrea	36	3	29	4
Ethiopia	710	23	655	32
Gabon	557	4	347	206
Kenya	2 082	148	1 510	424
Reunion	83	-	78	5
Rwanda	295	11	176	108
Sao Tome and Principe	7	-	6	1
Seychelles	155	2	131	22
Somalia	182	1	180	1
Tristan Da Cunha	1	-	-	1
Uganda	1 150	56	930	164
West Africa	4 848	176	4 239	433
Ascension	1	-	1	-
Benin	97	4	87	6
Burkina Faso	26	5	20	1
Cape Verde Island	70	-	67	3
Cote D'Ivoire	184	21	145	18
Gambia	31	2	19	10

Table 5. Number of tourists arrivals by country of residence and purpose of visit (concluded)

Country	Purpose of visit (January 2009)			
	Grand Total	Business	Holiday	Study
Ghana	823	14	746	63
Guinea	110	1	88	21
Guinea-Bissau	12	4	8	-
Liberia	31	1	29	1
Madeira Islands	4	-	4	-
Mali	53	6	40	7
Mauritania	9	1	8	-
Niger	19	3	14	2
Nigeria	3 147	97	2 762	288
Saint Helena	6	-	6	-
Senegal	146	11	131	4
Sierra Leone	48	5	35	8
Togo	31	1	29	1
North Africa	864	103	686	75
Algeria	106	3	95	8
Egypt	427	62	352	13
Libya	60	6	39	15
Morocco	67	8	55	4
The Sudan	144	10	103	31
Tunisia	60	14	42	4
Unspecified	3 869	70	1 878	1 921

EXPLANATORY NOTES

NOTICE

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) has completed its Duration of Stay exercise as part of improving its information on foreign travellers and measurement of foreign tourists. As a result of this exercise, it is now possible to distinguish SAME DAY visitors and OVERNIGHT visitors (tourists) from the arrival data it receives from the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). That is based on the date on which the arrivals that entered the country for purposes other than work left. Starting from this month, January 2009, Stats SA will be publishing data on TOURISTS as defined by United Nations World Tourism Organisation.

It is important to note that detailed analysis in the January 2009 and the subsequent months are based on TOURISTS and not arrivals as has been the case in previous publications.

1. Introduction

Legal movements across South African borders as well as legal immigration into South Africa fall under the jurisdiction of the DHA. Stats SA then processes 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 to estimate, monitor and understand salient characteristics of foreign travellers and volumes of South African residents travelling outside South Africa;
- 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 demand for local tourism services by foreign travellers.

The information on documented migrants provides crucial information on receiving countries of South African emigrants which could be targeted in initiatives geared towards attracting back migrants into the country. In addition, the data on permanent residents are valuable in assessing not only the demographic and economic profiles of immigrants but also their contribution to national social and economic programmes.

2. Purpose of the statistical release

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

3. Scope and coverage

This release covers all the data as received from the DHA. The arrivals of foreign travellers are more detailed than departures as they are reported by mode of travel, gender, age and purpose of visit whereas statistics on South African residents are reported by mode of travel. Statistics on documented migration, i.e. self-declared emigrants and documented immigrants, are currently not reported due to the unavailability of data from the DHA.

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 land, 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). Generally the data are collected directly from travel documents either by scanning or capturing onto the port's electronic database. No forms or cards are used (except in rare occasions when the system is down) to collect information from travellers. Individual ports regularly transmit data onto the national database at the head office of the DHA. Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) downloads the data covering a particular calendar month from the mainframe of the State Information Technology Agency (SITA), where the DHA stores its data.

- As part of data interrogation, data from the OR Tambo International Airport, which has the highest volume of travellers, are compared with passenger statistics from the Airport Company of South Africa (ACSA). As expected, in any specific month, an increase in the volume of passengers reported by ACSA has been accompanied by an increase in the volume of travellers recorded by DHA. A similar pattern was also observed when the volume of travellers decreased. However, the volume of passengers recorded by ACSA is higher than that of the DHA because of, among other reasons, travellers who are in transit and those who boarded airplanes but refused entry into the country. In December 2008, the DHA data was 15,0% lower than that of ACSA.

5. Limitations

The information on the total number of arrivals and departures of South African residents is collected from the scanning of passports. However, data are not collected from passengers on country visited; country of final destination, the duration of stay; 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.

Due to unavailability of data from the DHA, information on documented immigrants is not included in this current publication. The documented immigration information will be provided as soon as it is made available to Stats SA.

6. Definition of terms

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

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 other places he/she frequently visits.

6.2 Definitions used specifically in this report

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, Asia. Africa: SADC, East and Central Africa, West Africa and North Africa.

Country: refers to individual countries within a region. The country of residence is used.

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

SADC: refers to the thirteen countries, excluding South Africa, that belong to the Southern African Development Community.

'other' African: refers to all non SADC African countries.

Overseas: refers to all countries outside Africa

7. Symbols and abbreviations used

- = nil
Unspec. = unspecified

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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