

# HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM SECTOR

## INTRODUCTION

Lebanon's hospitality and tourism sector significantly impacts job creation, foreign currency earnings, and economic growth. In 2018, it contributed \$10 billion or 19.1% of the GDP, the Middle East's 2nd highest ratio. It also created 144,000 direct jobs, constituting 36% of total employment. The hospitality industry experienced rapid growth, averaging 10% annual growth from 2014 to 2019.

Since 2019, the sector has encountered various challenges, including the pandemic, political instability, power cuts, pollution, rising costs, inadequate planning, insufficient infrastructure, Syrian refugee impact on security, GCC embargo and Beirut Port explosion damage, to mention a few. Crisis-driven tourism disruptions and inconsistent public policies affected promising niche tourism sectors like religious, rural, wellness, aesthetic, environmental, and adventure tourism, leaving operators relying heavily on short seasonal business from well-off leisure and business travelers, middle class travelers from nearby Arab countries as well as visitors from the Lebanese diaspora.

To boost Lebanon's tourism sector, it is crucial to implement support measures with both short-term and long-term impacts. Public-private collaboration can boost the hospitality sector, generating over 100,000 potential jobs in three years.

## POLICY ASKS

**SHORT TERM:** Develop a One-year Urgent Tourism Plan



### ENHANCING ENTRY & BORDER EFFICIENCY:

- Allow eligible travelers to obtain visas on arrival to simplify the entry process.
- Install an e-Gate System for efficient processing, reducing wait times, and enhancing border security.



### TOURIST COMMUNICATION SERVICES:

- Provide cost-effective mobile services tailored to tourist needs.
- Establish a dedicated and responsive 24/7 Tourism Hotline with trained staff.
- Train tourism guides at the municipal level, creating job opportunities.
- Develop user-friendly tourism mobile applications for trip planning, information access, and exploring Lebanon's attractions, enhancing the visitor experience.



### OPENING SKIES FOR GLOBAL TRAVEL:

- Address understaffing at Rafik Hariri International Airport for flight safety and avoid international no-go listings.
- Permit foreign airlines access to Lebanon's airspace boosting competition, expanding flight options and, potentially, reducing air travel costs.



## LEBANON'S REVITALIZATION THROUGH REBRANDING & TOURISM ADVANCEMENT:

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- Reshape Lebanon's global image, perception, and identity through collaboration with key embassies, expat bloggers and online influencers.
- Address Lebanese representation at Qatar Expo to promote it as a brand.
- Develop Market Partnerships by leveraging existing local diaspora networks.



## ENRICHING LEBANON'S TOURISM AND CULTURAL SCENE:

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- Expand Casino Du Liban with a new brunch for a broader customer base and diverse entertainment.
- Organize a "Summer Cultural & Food Festival" across Lebanon, highlighting regional cuisine while supporting local food producers.

**LONG TERM:** Develop a Five-year Tourism Plan



## STRENGTHENING TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE VIA CLASSIFICATION & OBSERVATIONAL INITIATIVES:

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- Update classification systems for tourism related services and facilities.
- Establish a Tourism Observatory Entity to collect, analyze, and disseminate data and insights related to tourism trends, aiding informed decision-making and strategy formulation.



## FOSTERING SMART URBAN DEVELOPMENT & GLOBAL IMAGE ENHANCEMENT:

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- Create the Smart Hubs for innovation and connectivity.
- Develop Smart Cities for technologically advanced and sustainable urban transformation.
- Continue Lebanon's rebranding, positioning it as a global destination for tourism, investment, and cultural exchange.



## ELEVATING THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM TO SOVEREIGN STATUS:

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- Recognize the Ministry of Tourism as a sovereign entity within the government, focused on managing and promoting Lebanon's tourism.



## DEVELOPING TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICIES:

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- Develop Lebanon's heritage preservation, restoration, and promotion policies for Lebanon's rich cultural and historical heritage.
- Enhance policies for managing, preserving, and growing tourism sites.
- Develop sustainable Waste Management Policies to address environmental challenges, and resource efficiency in Lebanon.



## REVIVING LEBANON'S TOURISM SECTOR THROUGH SUBSIDIZED LOANS:

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- Reactivate subsidized bank loans to the sector, providing financial support.



## ELEVATING LEBANON'S EXPO SUCCESS:

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- Initiate a comprehensive action plan for Lebanon's participation in the Osaka World Expo in 2025, emphasizing the active engagement from the private sector.