

The face of Africa changed by tech startups

Euromonitor International's [WTM Global Trends Report 2015](#) reveals that technology startups are flourishing across Africa which is helping boost the economy and offer a fresh image to international tourists.



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According to the World Bank, over half of the countries in Africa now have at least one tech hub with investments in these tech hubs doubling last year, reaching US\$27 million. US President, Barack Obama, paid a visit to the Start-up conference in Kenya which aims to support Africa's inventors, entrepreneurs and future business leaders.

Two examples of these 'aspiring Silicon Valleys' in Africa are Hope City in Ghana and the Konza Technology City in Kenya. To be successful, these hubs must have investments in infrastructure, including transportation and education. All of the new technology cities have plans for hotel developments, which hold potential for both local and international properties.

An increase in business visitors

The travel industry is likely to reap the benefits of technology startups with increased domestic, regional and international business travel to a variety of countries in Africa. Business air arrivals are expected to post a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 5% for South Africa and 6% for Kenya over 2014-2019, according to Euromonitor International.

The increase of business visitors to the continent, due to the tech hubs, is likely to have a knock-on effect and encourage

more leisure tourists as facilities are upgraded and improved. Due to the greater amount of visitors, there is also an increasing number of travel startups including Hotels.ng, Nigeria's largest online hotel booking site.

Mark Essien, CEO, Hotels.ng believes that the travel industry is benefiting from the increasing number of technology start-ups. "The growing technology sector in Africa is helping to expand the travel industry. Easier online discovery combined with growing consumer confidence in online bookings has made it extremely straightforward for us to cater directly to travellers' needs," said Essien.

Another company, AwesomeSouthAfrica.com, has created an app that caters specifically to tourists and locals by using location-based data to find restaurants, hotels and activities in their vicinity.

World Travel Market, senior director, Simon Press said: "The introduction of technology hubs in Africa can have a massive knock-on effect for the whole continent. "Not only do they provide a huge increase of jobs and boost economy but it benefits the whole travel industry with increased flights and hotel bookings."

Caroline Bremner, Head of Travel at Euromonitor International, added: "With technology startups flourishing across the continent, Africa is entering a new era of innovation leading to greater economic and social benefits. The technology startups will also help change the perception of the continent to international tourists."

The list of trends identified by the global trends report by Euromonitor is below:

The new American dream: work less, play hard: A growing number of American companies offer unlimited vacation time to create a happier, loyal and motivated staff, which will have an effect on travel bookings.

Smart technology drives travel to UK's secondary cities: Digitalisation and hi-tech solutions are redefining the tourist offerings of UK urban centres to boost travel outside of London, currently the jewel in the crown of UK tourism.

'Hipster Holidays' revolutionise European city break: Young and hip travellers' interest in alternative city areas opens new business opportunities and helps diversify urban attractions in European cities struggling with excessive tourism.

Travel 3.0: the advent of smart travel: Smart technology is transforming the tourism industry with personalised services to create enjoyable experiences suited to a traveller's individual preferences.

Iran: the next travel hotspot: The recent sanction lift sparked a scramble to open Iran to international visitors, attracted by its ancient Persian history, 17 World Heritage Sites, as well as natural attractions.

Technology startups changing the face of Africa: With technology start-ups flourishing across the continent, Africa is entering a new era of innovation, which will help change the perception of international tourists.

Luxury hotels keeping in with the crowd: Luxury hotels are turning to crowdsourcing and crowd funding to get their properties financed, rather than relying on traditional sources of investment.

The sharing economy heads to China: After a shaky start, the sharing economy is taking off in China, with the rise of new local players in 2014, a trend boosted by the number of Chinese millennials.

Travel for the Indian unbanked: Travel firms are adopting 'cash-on-delivery' payments to cater to the half a billion Indians without a bank account.

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