## Middle East & Africa Duty Free Association signs up to m1nd-set B1S recovery monitor

MEADFA, the Middle East and Africa Duty Free Association is the latest industry trade association to sign up to m1nd-set's B1S Covid recovery monitor initiative. MEADFA's decision follows the recent announcements by both the Americas associations ASUTIL and IAADFS as well as the European Travel Retail Confederation (ETRC) that they are joining forces with m1nd-set for the research partnership to ensure their respective members benefit from the traffic and shopper insights data. The B1S recovery monitor is a complimentary service provided by the Swiss research agency, which will comprise quarterly reports with key traffic trends and relevant shopper insights, tailored to each regional association, from m1nd-set's proprietary Business 1ntelligence Service (B1S) data tool.

Highlights from the first quarterly report for MEADFA reveal that international departures in the Middle East and Africa region fell by 73% between 2019 and 2020, from 222.4 million passengers to 62.3 million in 2020. This is consistent with the traffic decline experienced in other world regions, ranging from -68% to -75%. The recovery will be among the most robust compared to other regions at +65 in 2021, to reach 103 million international departures, +62% in 2022 and +34.4% from 2022 to 2023, to reach 224 million international departures just over the pre-Covid traffic level.

The top airport destinations for international passengers departing from airports in the region pre-Covid were Dubai, Istanbul, Cairo, Paris Charles de Gaulle and London Heathrow. The other top destinations were all within the region: Jeddah, Kuwait, Adis Ababa, Riyadh and Doha. The UAE The UAE, Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt and the UK, will make up the top five travelling nationalities from the Middle East and Africa region in 2021 will be according to m1nd-set's B1S. In terms of international departure passenger numbers, Dubai will lead the rankings in 2021, followed by Doha, Abu Dhabi, Jeddah and Cairo.

As far as travel behaviour is concerned, the majority of passengers from the region (59%) prefer not to travel immediately after travel restrictions are lifted, but after around 6 months. Almost two-thirds of travellers (63%) say they will spend less on a daily basis post Covid and a similar number (61%) say they now spend more time on social media than before the pandemic.

Interaction with staff in the airport shops will be among the lowest compared to other world regions with 51% of shoppers from the region say they will continue to engage with sales staff in travel retail shops post-Covid, but with taking precautions, such as wearing a mask. and only 25% say they will try and test products without any concerns, significantly lower than other world regions. Looking at pre-Covid shopping behaviour, beauty is the leading category across the top travelling nationalities in the region; both travel retail exclusives and staff interaction count among the top purchase drivers among these nationalities.

m1nd-set Travel Retail Director Clara Susset commented: "We're delighted that another of the leading travel retail trade associations has signed up to research partnership initiative. m1nd-set has had the privilege of working with MEADFA through conference presentations over the years so we are delighted to be supporting this traditionally vibrant region and providing our insights once again to the MEADFA members."

MEADFA President Haitham Al Majali, who is also CEO of Jordanian Duty Free Shops, added: "The Middle East and Africa region is at the crossroads of global aviation and at the epicentre of innovation in the travel retail space. As the m1nd-set insights illustrate, our recovery will be among the strongest over the next 12 months. While I am positive and optimistic that we will continue to remain dynamic despite this downturn, traffic is not set to return to 2019 levels for another 2 years. These insights will be an essential service to all MEADFA members as we try to navigate through these stormy waters and chart our way forward to a robust recovery. We are truly grateful to m1nd-set for their support".

For more information on the post-Covid recovery research, please contact m1nd-set: info@m1nd-set.com.

**Ends.**

**About m1nd-set**
m1nd-set is the largest independent and privately owned travel and travel retail research agency, based out of Switzerland. It conducts research for clients across all world regions, working for over one hundred companies in the travel sector, including brands from all product categories, as well as a number of the duty free and travel retail associations and several leading retailers in the industry.

m1nd-set is present with local interviewers at over 60 airports on a regular basis to conduct on-site research. It also has its own database of regular international travellers. Corporate social responsibility is a fundamental part of the company's philosophy and each year commits a minimum of 10% of profits to charity, mainly for unprivileged children in developing countries.
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