

QATAR TOURISM AUTHORITY: public and private sector synergy in tourism development



The Qatar Tourism Authority was launched in 2000. Its mission is to establish Qatar as a leading platform for tourism investment in the Middle East and become the Gulf's preferred destination for up-market travellers. Its role is to encourage and ensure overall co-ordinated tourism infrastructure development.

Qatar Tourism Authority is based upon a commitment to diversity within the tourism product. Specific focus has been placed upon sports events, heritage tourism, natural and eco-tourism, family holidays, business related tourism and the stopover market. Such diversification can overcome seasonality, allows wider integration of stakeholders and avoids dependence on one particular sector of the industry. It is this commitment to Sustainable Tourism which will be crucial to the development of tourism in Qatar.

In order to achieve this, Qatar Tourism Authority aims to build on Qatar's economic, social, cultural and environmental assets. The country's experience in attracting foreign investments and geographical position in the Gulf leave it well placed to expand the tourism industry and make the most of its natural resources (sand dunes, mangroves and inland sea), historical and archaeological attractions and year round sunshine. At the centre of this development is Qatar's high quality National Carrier, Qatar Airways.

Also central to QTA's strategy is to increase the level of awareness and co-operation between the public and private sectors to improve infrastructure, such as the US\$1 billion new international airport which is scheduled for completion in 2007, and work to create a well-defined brand for Qatar. Vital to this is Qatar's attractive foreign investment policy.



Testament to the work of QTA and its partners in government and industry is the way in which Qatar, 'the heart of the Arabian Gulf' is now firmly on the tourist map. High level participation in industry events in 2003, including the World Travel Market and the International Luxury Travel Market, will be compounded by Qatar's hosting of the 4th Global Travel & Tourism Summit in 2004, World Tourism Day in 2005, and the 2006 Asian Games. Local commitment and support on the part of the government – tourism is a high priority of His Highness the Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani – and industry – in particular Qatar Airways, local hotels and tour operators – has been central to this raise in profile.

In addition, 2003 saw the launch of QTA's Hotel Classification Project which will ensure the high level of quality of Qatar's hotels and provide statistical data. Already a complete inventory of 36 existing hotels has been completed, hotel managers have been interviewed and existing laws and legislation has been analysed. The project is scheduled for completion in 2004.

Preservation of the country's social, cultural and environmental resources while at the same time ensuring economic benefits through tourism is at the heart of QTA's mission. Several projects are already in progress with more in the pipeline. The Cultural Village, which reflects daily Qatari life activities, will not only raise cultural awareness but is also of paramount importance in establishing a continuous link between QTA and other agencies such as the National Council of Heritage and Art and the Supreme Council of the Environment and Nature Reserves (SCENR). Al-Shahania Farm has been named as Qatar's First National Park. Home of the Oryx, an animal indigenous to Qatar, the farm is owned by SCENR and will offer accommodation based on ecological criteria. Furthermore, the Museum of Islamic Art is scheduled for completion in 2006 and will house the largest collection of its kind in the world thus ensuring Qatar as an important centre for the preservation of Islamic culture.



The integrated approach of Qatar Tourism Authority, which has a strong emphasis on public and private partnership, will ensure that tourism development in the state at the 'heart of the Arabian Gulf' is commercially, environmentally and socially sustainable over the coming decades.

For more information on Qatar and Qatar Tourism Authority visit www.qatartourism.gov.qa