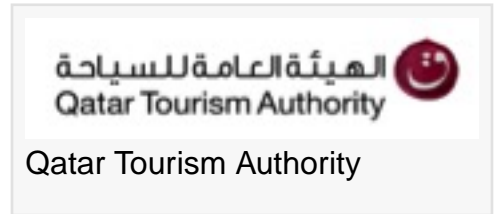


QTA and Qatar Chamber to co-host Industry Forum in January

- *Forum to explore needs of local tourism business owners and foreign investors*
- *Forum outcomes to feed into new licensing system for tourism businesses*



DOHA, QATAR, December 26, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a

move to support local tourism business owners and attract more local and foreign investment into the sector, Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA) and Qatar Chamber (QC) will be jointly hosting an industry-wide forum next January, the two organisations announced.

Discussions at the event will seek input from key stakeholders, including QC's Tourism and Exhibition Committee and industry professionals, for the development of licensing solutions that will greatly enhance the experience of investors looking to contribute to Qatar's tourism offering.

QTA is in charge of licensing tour operators and tour guides, tourism establishments and activities, hotel establishments, and exhibitions and exhibition organizers. As the government body responsible for planning, regulating and promoting a sustainable tourism sector in Qatar, the Authority puts mechanisms in place to ensure tourism establishments operate at the highest standards while promoting and perpetuating Qatar's culture.

According to QTA figures, the Authority has licensed 97 tourism establishments this year alone, including hotels, tour operators and destination management companies, and has renewed the licenses of 167 others. QTA has also licensed a total of 241 exhibitions and events, including charity events, in addition to licensing 90 exhibition organizing companies.

The forum will provide an avenue for QTA to ensure that the new process alleviates any concerns or pressures they may be experiencing and reflects their needs.

Since the launch of the Qatar National Tourism Sector Strategy in 2014, QTA undertook the task of revamping its licensing operations to ensure a more streamlined process for investors and tourism business owners.

Through this process, the average time needed to acquire a tourism license was significantly reduced from several weeks to two days, provided license seekers have the necessary paperwork from other authorities such as the Department of Civil Defense and the Ministry of Municipality. The new solution is expected to further refine this process.

Throughout 2015, QTA has increased efforts to attract investments in the country's tourism sector, developing a Tourism Promotion department that, among other initiatives, will be launching a Tourism Investment Guide in 2016. The guide will highlight opportunities for investment in Qatar, direct investors to QTA's priority areas, and provide a step-by-step guide to setting up a tourism establishment.

Locally, QTA partnered with Qatar Development Bank and Qatar Business Incubation Centre to soft launch an incubator specialized in tourism businesses. QBIC-Tourism has incubated nine businesses and is looking to welcome more small-to-medium enterprises on board when it officially launches in 2016.

About Qatar Chamber

Qatar Chamber is one of the oldest Chambers of Commerce in the GCC Countries. Having been established in 1963 by virtue of Law No (4) of the year 1963 dated on 16/2/1963, it used to operate within the structure of Government agencies until the promulgation of law no. (11) Of 1990 which empowered the Chamber to operate independently. This enabled the Qatar Chamber to exercise a wide range of activities commensurate with national, regional and international developments and serve the commercial, industrial and agricultural interests of its participants in the private sector.

About Qatar Tourism Authority

As the Qatari government's tourism planning, regulation and promotion arm, Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA) works in partnership with stakeholders to plan, regulate and promote the development of a sustainable and mature tourism sector that contributes to Qatar's future and positions the country as a leading tourism destination.

Chaired by H.E. Mr. Issa Bin Mohammed Al Mohannadi, QTA works on showcasing all that Qatar has to offer, reinforcing the country's position on the world tourism map as a premium destination for authentic experiences, business facilitation, and family-focused recreation.

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