

Saudi Pets the Pace for Unprecedented Growth in the Tourism Sector at the Middle East's Largest Travel Trade Event

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DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, May 11, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Last week, Saudi, the authentic home of Arabia, celebrated its largest and most successful presence at an international trade event to date at the 30th edition of the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2023.

A hotbed of signed deals, commercial meetings and unique cultural activations, the Saudi stand dominated this year's event, welcoming more than 40,000 visitors over the four days to experience the sights, scents and sounds of the world's fastest growing tourism destination.

Saudi is turbocharging the tourism sector at a regional and global level and brought together the strength, breadth and depth of the country's tourism offering to ATM with 67 partners, showcasing more than 500 bookable packages and experiences. The partners on stand were the heroes of the event, highlighting the diversity of the destination and bringing to life the culture and beauty of the entire country.



Saudi witnesses incredible success at Arabian Travel Market 2023 in Dubai last week, reinforcing the country's position at the forefront of the world's leading tourism destinations



Saudi further strengthens its commitment to partners and acceleration of the sector's growth with a record number of MoUs signed

The stand was a world-class, sensory journey of discovery through Arabia showcasing the country's rich culture and heritage and featuring a range of interactive, immersive experiences, from virtual reality headsets of Saudi's spiritual offering in Makkah and Madinah, to live Arabic calligraphy to traditional dances from different provinces around the country.

The event was a reflection of the country's inspiring transformation journey and a true celebration of partnership, collaboration and commitment.

Visited by His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Second Deputy Ruler of Dubai, the Saudi stand was a hive of commercial activity, exceeding meeting targets by more than 140 per cent with valued partners spanning tour operators, travel agencies, OTAs and airlines.

A record 53 MoUs were signed on the Saudi stand with key international and regional partners including ODIGEO, Visa, Sabre Travel, Careem, Almosafer, Travelport and FTI. The partnerships signed focused on contributions beyond commitment to visits with more of a long-term strategic focus, the development of experiences and DMCs, data sharing and analytics, tech connectivity and ambassador creation.

The destination is delivering on its tourism ambition with projects including The Red Sea Project, the



A tourism destination like no other, the Saudi stand was a showcase of the country's unique product offering, experiences, events, rich culture, heritage and dynamic entertainment offering



world's most ambitious, sustainable luxury tourism development, Diriyah, the 300-year-old mud city and birthplace of Saudi and Sindalah Island, NEOM's incomparable island destination. The country is also home to a diverse landscape that can be enjoyed year-round, from the UNESCO-listed oasis of Al-Ahsa, to the pristine coral reefs of Saudi's 1,700km long Red Sea coast, which can be enjoyed by divers and cruise liners, and where the first of 16 luxury hotels will be opening later this year. Saudi also offers the cool, green highlands of Asir where the locals holiday in the summer.

Fahd Hamidaddin, CEO and Member of the Board at Saudi Tourism Authority, said:

"Saudi returned to ATM this year, one of the world's leading travel industry events, to share the story of the country's transformation and growth, to inspire and convert the trade and to cement the destination's position as the tourism powerhouse of the region."

"We saw unprecedented success at ATM, a record number of partners joining us on the stand, more bookable packages and experiences showcased, targets exceeded in terms of commercial engagements and the biggest ever commitment to partners through MoU signings and deals."

"Our success is dependent on the success of our partners and we continue to develop trade and consumer experiences to drive business and growth. Saudi represents a wealth of untapped opportunity, of unparalleled growth and it is our role to enable and empower our partners, to invest in a shared future."

"Saudi is witnessing growth like no other, exceeding both Umrah and visit numbers and inbound in the first quarter of this year and with a pipeline of new openings, experiences and a dynamic events and entertainment line-up, is an opportunity not to be missed."

Nusuk, an integrated digital platform to facilitate seamless Umrah journeys, launched by Saudi Tourism Authority in September last year, showcased an impressive presence for its first ATM participation, with more than 20 partners on stand.

The STA CEO took part in a ted-talk style discussion on the stand with partners, Ross Veitch, CEO & Co-Founder, Wego and David Loiseau, CEO, Meeting Point International, to discuss how Saudi represents the biggest opportunity for business in tourism and the collaborative environment that is facilitating its success.

H.E. Fatima Al Sairafi, Minister of Tourism, Kingdom of Bahrain, Undersecretary, H. E. Abdulla Al Saleh, Government of UAE, and His Excellency, Salem bin Mohammed Al Mahrooqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, Oman, joined Hamiddadin in a panel discussion 'The Future of Travel in the GCC' to highlight key opportunities for the region, namely collaboration, innovation, and maintaining authenticity to traditional value. The panelists discussed how, from visas to infrastructure, GCC countries can work hand in hand for all to benefit from the tourism boom in the region.

Saudi continues to enjoy investment from huge players in the industry, with more than USD1 trillion of real estate and infrastructure projects under development or in the pipeline in the country, indicating strong confidence in Saudi tourism's upward trajectory.

This year's ATM participation coincided with global football icon Lionel Messi's visit to Saudi with his family for an action-packed two day trip in the country's capital, Riyadh.

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