

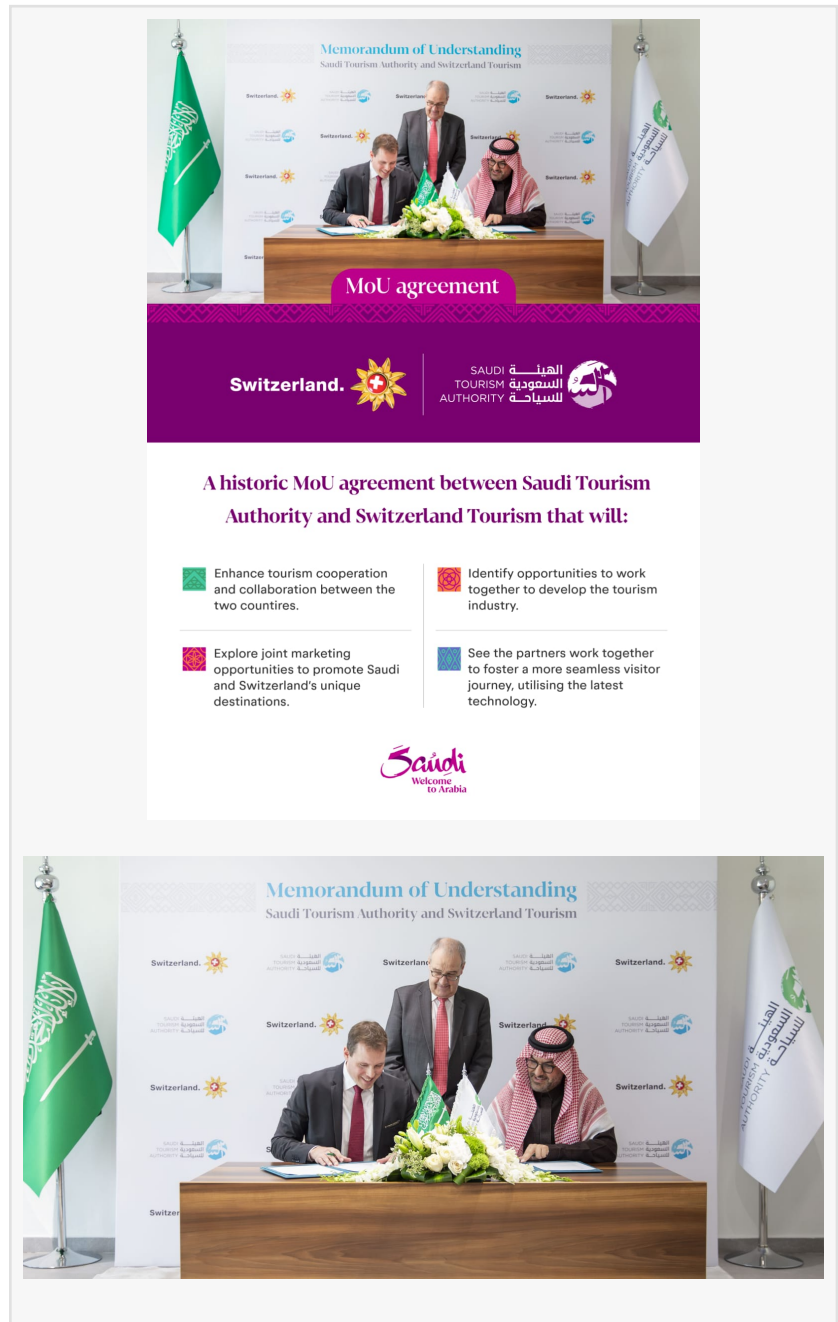
Saudi Tourism Authority Partners for the First Time with Switzerland Tourism

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RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, February 8, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a groundbreaking move, the Saudi Tourism Authority and Switzerland Tourism have forged a strategic partnership to bolster collaboration in the tourism sector. This historic agreement was ceremonially signed at the Saudi Tourism Authority headquarters by Fahd Hamidaddin, CEO and Board Member of the Saudi Tourism Authority, and Livio Gotz, Director GCC at Switzerland Tourism. The ceremony was attended by distinguished guests, including HE Guy Parmelin, Swiss Federal Councillor and Head of Economic Affairs, Education, and Research, along with Yasmine Chatila Zwahlen, the Swiss Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

This MoU, a first-of-its-kind between the two tourism boards, aims to foster the development of the tourism industry, foster mutual promotion, and enable collaborative tourism projects between Saudi Arabia and Switzerland, setting a new precedent for

international tourism cooperation. A key aspect of this partnership is the identification of joint marketing initiatives that showcase the unique attractions of each country. Special attention will be given to specialized tourism sectors such as sun and sea, cultural and heritage, and rural



tourism, through combined marketing efforts to attract travelers seeking unique experiences. This strategic promotion is intended to boost the visibility and appeal of both Saudi and Switzerland as premier tourist destinations that cater to every traveler.

Additionally, STA and Switzerland Tourism will work together to harness the latest technology in the industry to foster a more seamless travel journey for visitors, leveraging innovations to help build a tailored end-to-end visitor experience. This will be driven through increased cooperation between local tourism agencies and operators, fostering opportunities for further partnerships and value between Saudi Arabia and Switzerland.



Commenting on the partnership, Fahd Hamidaddin, CEO and a Member of the Board of the Saudi Tourism Authority stated: "We are thrilled to embark on this historic collaborative journey with Switzerland Tourism, which is the first of its kind between Saudi and any tourism board.

"Last year, Saudi saw an 84% increase in the number of visits from Switzerland and this new agreement will help build on that progress - with increased collaboration unlocking valuable opportunities for growth in both countries.

"This partnership not only signifies the convergence of two rich and diverse tourism landscapes but also emphasizes the importance of global cooperation in fostering sustainable and enriching travel experiences."

Livio Goetz, Director GCC at Switzerland Tourism (ST) comments: "Saudi Arabia holds immense importance as a key market for ST, being the largest market within the GCC. Notably, 40% of all overnight stays in the GCC are generated from Saudi Arabia. To bolster its presence and appeal to Saudi guests, ST has new dedicated representative based in Riyadh. This strategic initiative aims to enhance the proximity and visibility of Switzerland as a premier holiday destination. Saudi travelers, contributing 300,000 hotel nights annually (2022) exhibit a record average daily spending of CHF 420."

The Saudi Tourism Authority and Switzerland Tourism will further collaboratively organize events, exhibitions, and conferences in both nations to enhance tourism development, adhering to key goals under Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, and fostering a shared vision for the future of tourism.

Aiming to attract 150 million visitors by 2030, Saudi Arabia is one of the fastest-growing destinations in the world and is transforming to build the world's most dynamic year-round tourism destination for all. Saudi is increasing connectivity to the world through the \$100 billion Saudi Aviation Strategy and is currently connected to over 128 destinations, including Switzerland. Current operations include three weekly flights from Geneva to Riyadh, with a capacity of 330 seats, and four weekly flights from Geneva to Jeddah with 564 seats. Zurich has connectivity to Riyadh with three weekly flights with over 300 seats.

Switzerland is incorporated into Saudi's e-Visa program, which also accommodates Schengen, US, and UK visa holders, facilitating increased and seamless access to Saudi. This move simplifies travel considerably, making visits to Saudi easier than ever before. The strategic alliance between the two countries signifies a critical advancement in Saudi's tourism sector and lays the groundwork for future collaborations with Switzerland, a key European market.

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