

Story Of a Year



حكومة الشارقة
هيئة الإنماء التجاري
والسياحي بالشارقة

Government of Sharjah
Sharjah Commerce & Tourism
Development Authority



Annual Report
2016

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H.H. SHEIKH DR. SULTAN BIN MUHAMMAD AL QASIMI

Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah

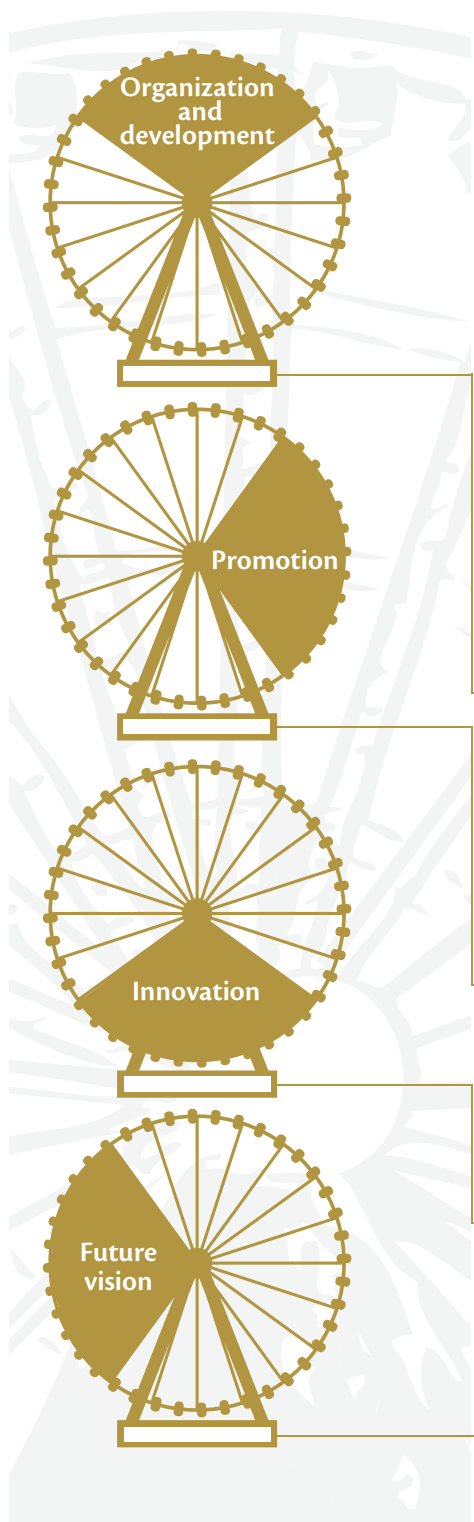


H.H. SHEIKH SULTAN BIN MOHAMMAD BIN SULTAN AL QASIMI

Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Sharjah



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Chairman's message

I am delighted to present a year-long story highlighting the major achievements and successes of the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA), which have had a significant impact on the development of the tourism industry in 2016.

The Emirate of Sharjah nowadays has become an attractive destination for tourists from all over the world, thanks to the continuous efforts it has undertaken to achieve the vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammed Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, and the follow-up and continuous support from His Highness Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammad bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Crown Prince.

SCTDA has focused its efforts on achieving its strategic objectives to enhance Sharjah's position on the Arabic and international tourism map as a safe family destination with great potential at various levels. SCTDA has always encouraged the tourism establishments in the Emirate of Sharjah to develop and provide quality tourism services to meet the desires and hopes of visitors from all around the globe.

SCTDA has participated in the most important international tourism exhibitions, as part of its strategy to attract tourists from all around the globe. The participation left a wonderful impact, and was widely covered by local and international media. SCTDA also succeeded in reaching out to new markets, and authorized a number of representative offices in the targeted countries, which in turn will support strongly SCTDA's efforts in increasing the tourist flow to Sharjah.

Cruise tourism is one of our stand-out success stories of 2016. We have succeeded in attracting a number of large cruise ships to the Khorfakkan port. The port has become one of the most famous tourist ports preferred by the biggest marine tourism companies around the world. This is due to the quality of services and the hospitality provided to visitors of the port, as well as the entertainment programs and heritage tours, managed by a dedicated, specialized SCTDA team.

Sharjah is proud of its vibrant cultural and social heritage. It hosts many world-class family-oriented festivals and cultural events throughout the year, such as Sharjah International Book Fair, the Sharjah Light Festival tops the list of events, Sharjah Biennial for the Arts, the Sharjah Heritage Days and the Sharjah World Championships Week, which includes the Formula 1 Power Boat Championship - Sharjah Grand Prix, and the UIM-ABP Aquabike Class Pro Circuit - Sharjah Grand Prize, as well as other festivals and events.

In the field of sustainable tourism, the Authority has sought to promote and spread/disseminate the best practices of sustainable tourism and raise levels of awareness about them, which has contributed to increasing the implementation of green tourism standards in the hospitality sector.

In conclusion, we wish the Almighty help us to raise the status of our beloved Emirates, and contribute to the welfare of the UAE community under the wise leadership of UAE.

Khalid Jasim Al Midfa

About SCTDA



About SCTDA

Established in 1996, the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) is entrusted with promoting commercial and tourism activities in the Emirate of Sharjah.

SCTDA endeavors to develop these sectors through various events and activities, and promotes the emirate at the local, regional and international levels.

SCTDA carries out the work and activities necessary to achieve its goals by way of drawing up strategic plans to further develop and promote the tourism industry in all its forms. It sets policies for participating in local, regional and international exhibitions with the ultimate goal of promoting Sharjah as an attractive environment for foreign investment.

SCTDA harnesses all available means and a variety of media to raise public awareness of the unique features Sharjah offers as a special tourist destination locally, regionally and internationally. On the international front, SCTDA takes part in events and activities to promote the emirate and place it on the international tourism and business map.

In its strategy to promote the emirate as a unique tourist destination, SCTDA focuses on Sharjah's key factors of distinction and exclusiveness.

In coordination with other government departments and the private sector, SCTDA spares no effort to achieve development of the Emirate of Sharjah, which is ranked among the most prestigious and distinguished commercial and tourist destinations in the world.



Integrated Tourism Branding

In 2008 Sharjah launched its branding identity, which was the fruition of a concerted effort to develop an integrated brand to represent Sharjah. The brand encompasses a slogan and a set of several tools.

The branding has two main components.

The first includes:

A set of visual tools which include a logo, fonts and colors..

The second includes

A set symbolizing the five sectors that Sharjah embodies:

- Business Tourism
- Arts, Heritage and Culture
- Education
- Adventure, Leisure, Shopping, City Breaks, Events and Festivals
- The East Coast

The branding is inspired by traditional Islamic designs that distinguish the emirate's past and present.



The following colors represent key elements of the emirate:

Business Tourism

Warm Gold Pantone 4505C C: 36 M: 100 Y: 0 K: 0

Arts Heritage & Culture

Creative Purple Pantone 247C C: 36 M: 100 Y: 0 K: 0

Education

Smart Blue Pantone 2945C C: 100 M: 45 Y: 0 K: 14

Adventure Leisure Shopping City Breaks Events & Festivals

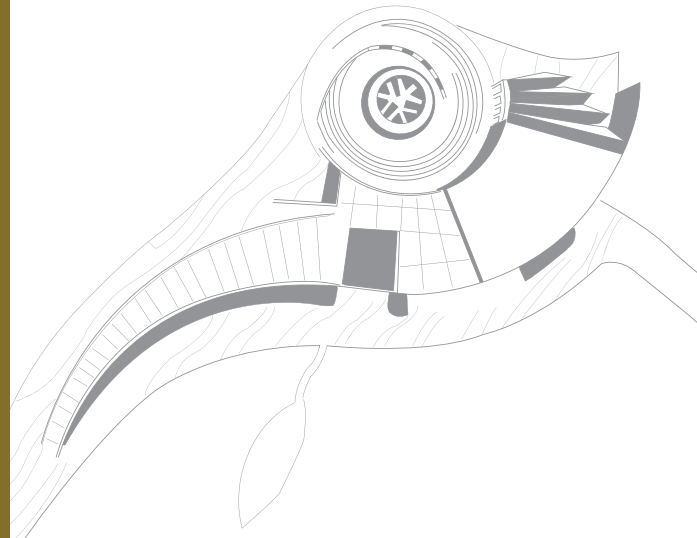
Radiant Orange Pantone 179C C: 0 M: 70 Y: 100 K: 0

East Coast

Natural Blue Pantone 639C C: 100 M: 0 Y: 5 K: 5

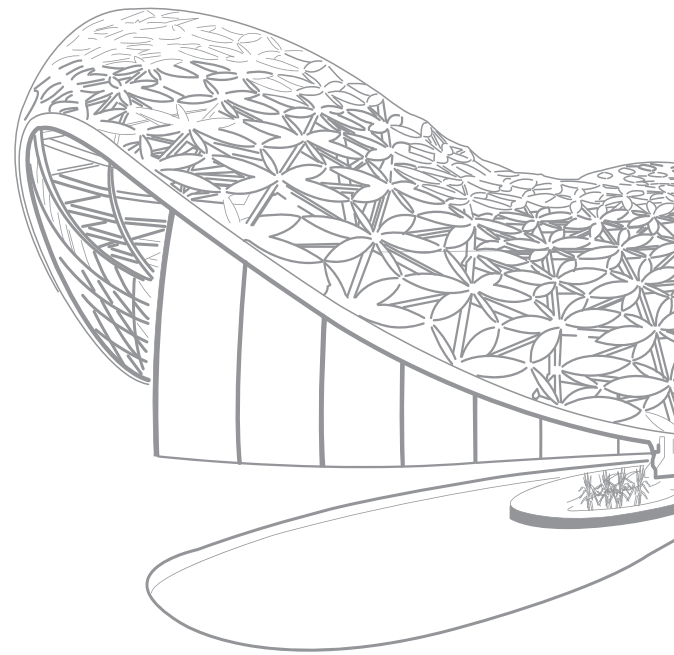
Vision

Sharjah is the ideal destination for a sustainable tourism underpinned by its cultural heritage.



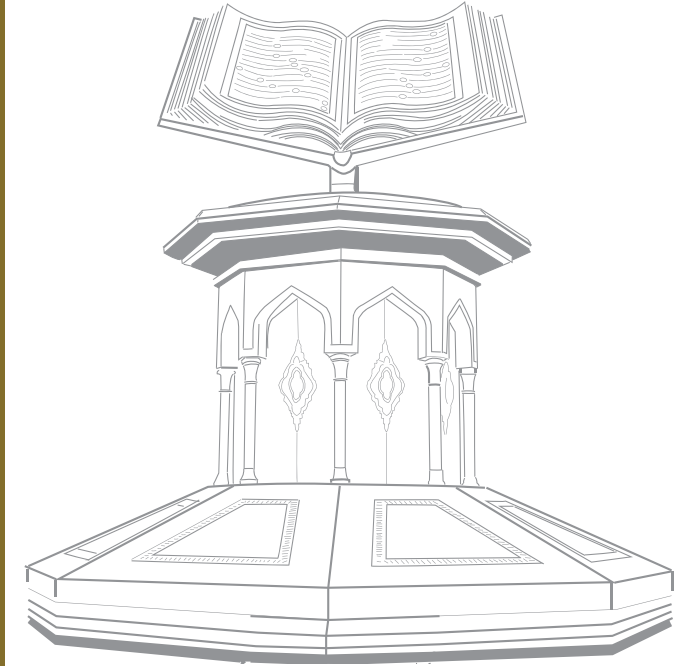
Mission

Develop, promote and encourage the tourism sector in Sharjah, by sustaining and developing its resources and investments to increase its contribution to the national economy in cooperation with our partners in the public and private sectors to achieve the strategic directions of the Government of Sharjah.



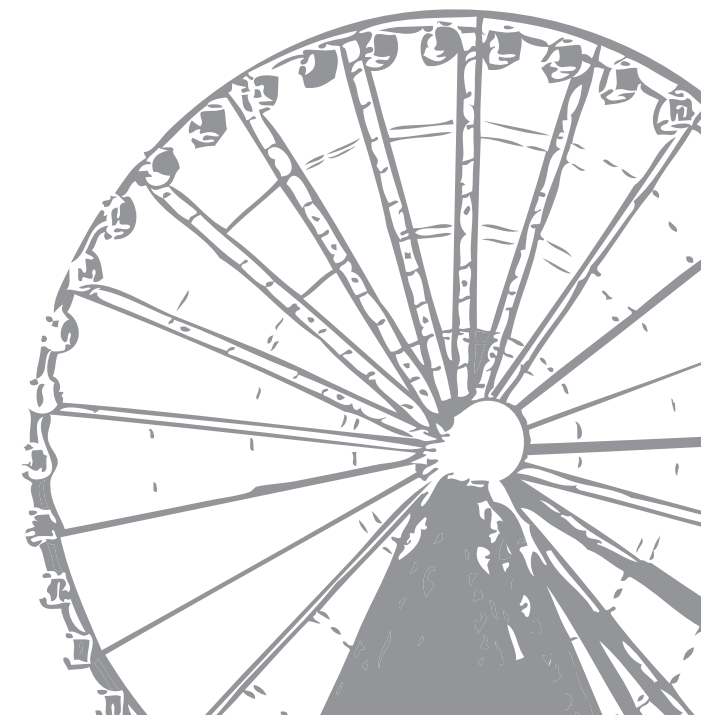
Values

- Teamwork
- Efficiency
- Innovation
- Trust
- Effectiveness
- Passion
- Openness
- Continuous improvement



Goals

- Promote tourism products locally.
- Enhance the tourism experience for Sharjah's visitors.
- Diversify foreign markets.
- Develop excellence and innovation practices in the SCTDA and the tourism sector.



SCTDA Competencies and Services

SCTDA Competencies and Services



- Promote tourist and historical attractions in the emirate.
- Offer leisure and entertainment activities for tourists.
- Enhance Sharjah's status as a distinct cultural, heritage and a family tourist destination.
- Provide marketing collaterals, and organize familiarization trips.
- Achieve commercial development and improvement of the tourism industry with the aim of attracting foreign investment, increasing tourist flow, increasing the number of hotel establishments and maintaining a high percentage of hotel room occupancy.
- Grant initial approval to tour operators management & operation licenses.
- Grant initial approval to hotel establishment management & operation licenses.
- Manage the classification of hotels, hotel apartments and resorts.
- Inspection of all tourism properties (hotels, hotel apartments and resorts), and ensure all hotel properties comply with SCTDA's standards, rules and regulations.
- Conduct industry and tourist guide training.



Sharjah
Tourism Vision

2021

Sharjah

an ideal family destination

Aiming to attract more than 10 million tourists by the year 2021

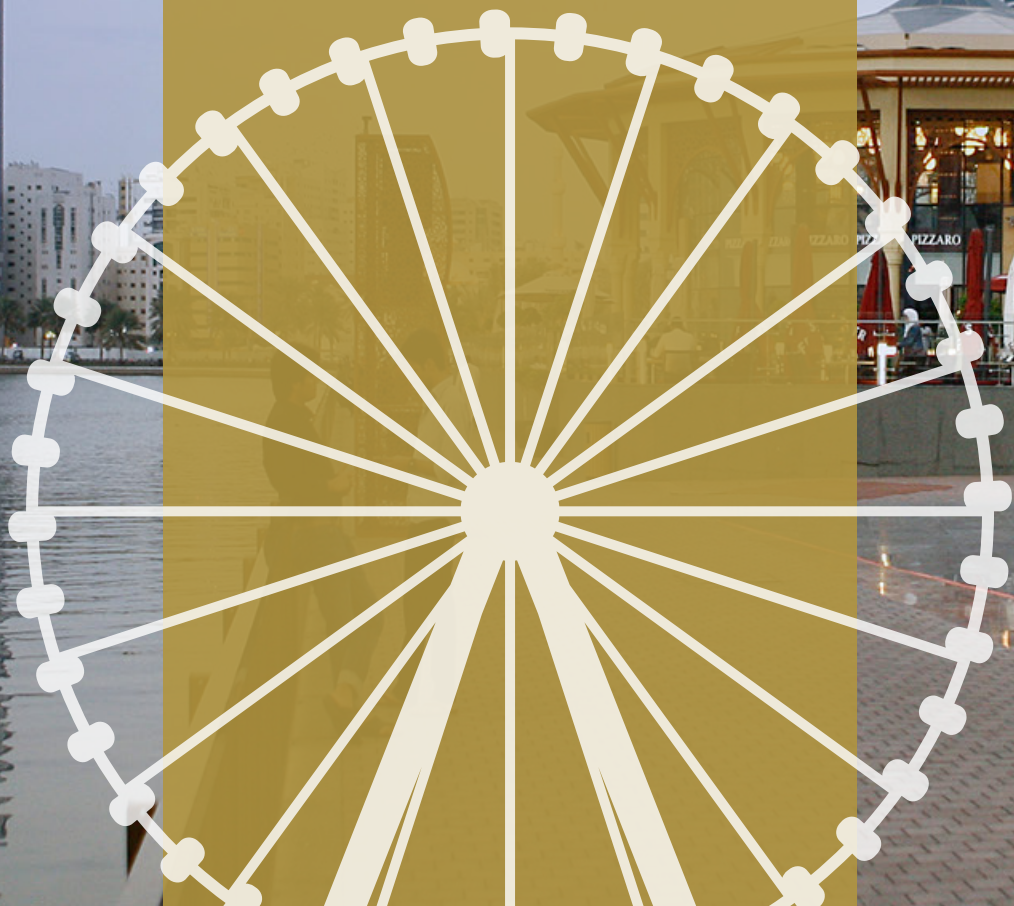
SCTDA launched its Sharjah Tourism Vision 2021 aiming to attract more than 10 million tourists by the year 2021 when the UAE celebrates its 50th anniversary.

The vision aims to build a platform to unite all the efforts, initiatives and tourism programs under one umbrella, to provide industry players and stakeholders with the ability to reach the stated goal, and enable the tourism industry to play a prominent role as one of the most important economic sectors in Sharjah.

Sharjah Tourism Vision 2021

To position Sharjah as a leading family tourism destination, through an innovative approach that ensures the development of its resources to promote Sharjah's status as an international hub for culture and heritage.

Organization and Development



Development of Quality Standards

Quality Standards Development

SCTDA is responsible for maintaining tourism quality standards in the emirate. In cooperation with the competent authorities, it sets out quality standards in accordance with the international tourism. The hospitality establishments have to comply with these standards in order to receive a license.

SCTDA conducts regular inspections for the current hotel establishments and those under construction to ensure their compliance with the international tourism standards that match the grading and classification the hotel has. SCTDA also conducts regular hotel guest satisfaction surveys in cooperation with specialized agencies. Monthly reports are produced highlighting any issues that require taking any immediate measure.

Activities conducted to ensure quality services in hospitality establishments in 2016



6 Initial approvals for the issuance of new licenses

Issuance of initial approvals for building a hotel establishment (hotel or hotel apartments) including services and amenities matching the hotel classification system of Sharjah.



92 Initial approvals for the renewal of a license

Issuance of initial approvals to renew the trade license of a hotel establishment in order for it to proceed with its commercial activity.



73 Initial approvals for the issuance of a tourism company license

Issuance of initial approvals for tourism company licenses, which specialize in organizing tourist entertainment programs to destinations inside and outside the emirate.



20 Other initial approvals

Change (trade name, commercial activity) – partner (addition, exit, entry), trade name (issuance, waiver)- Amendment of layout (existing establishment, building a hotel or hotel apartments project) - doing business – cancellation of license.



424 Inspections

Carry out regular inspections of hotel establishments to guarantee the quality of provided services within a specified timeframe by following the approved classification standards.



8 Periodical meetings

SCTDA conducts regular meetings with the managers of hotel establishments on a quarterly basis to follow up on the developments and discuss any issues relevant to the hospitality activity or any other related activity.



97 Mystery shopper visits

SCTDA cooperates with companies that specialized in mystery shopping in the hospitality sector to measure the level of services provided to hotel guests, by having someone stay at and experience all the services provided by the establishment to guests.



13 Reports for measuring the experience of hotel guests

SCTDA cooperates with one of the major international expert companies to study, measure and analyze guest experience through international booking sites. SCTDA is provided with monthly reports to evaluate the situation and take the necessary action.

Contributing to the Development of Sharjah's Tourism



SCTDA has been concerned with digital information since its inception, due to its influential role in the economic, social and scientific domains. Digital information is an indicator that reflects the vitality and development of one of the most important economic sectors in Sharjah and the UAE. The tourism sector contributed to over 9% of Sharjah's GDP, and provided more than 20,000 jobs in the local labor market. It is a promising area of development and innovation through its services and diversified activities, promoting the emirate and the UAE as a leading tourist destination in the region.

Sharjah's tourism sector data and statistics consist of the main indicators measuring the performance of hotel establishments in terms of growth of the numbers of hotel guests, occupancy rates, residence data and revenue, in addition to the classification of the number of guests by nationality and much more.

This data is an important reference for all those interested and working in planning and decision-making and the growth of the tourism sector in Sharjah from the public and private sectors. The statistics reflect a promising reality given the changes experienced by the global and domestic economy in recent times, confirming the competitiveness of the UAE and the emirate at the regional and international levels in light of the vision of our wise leadership.

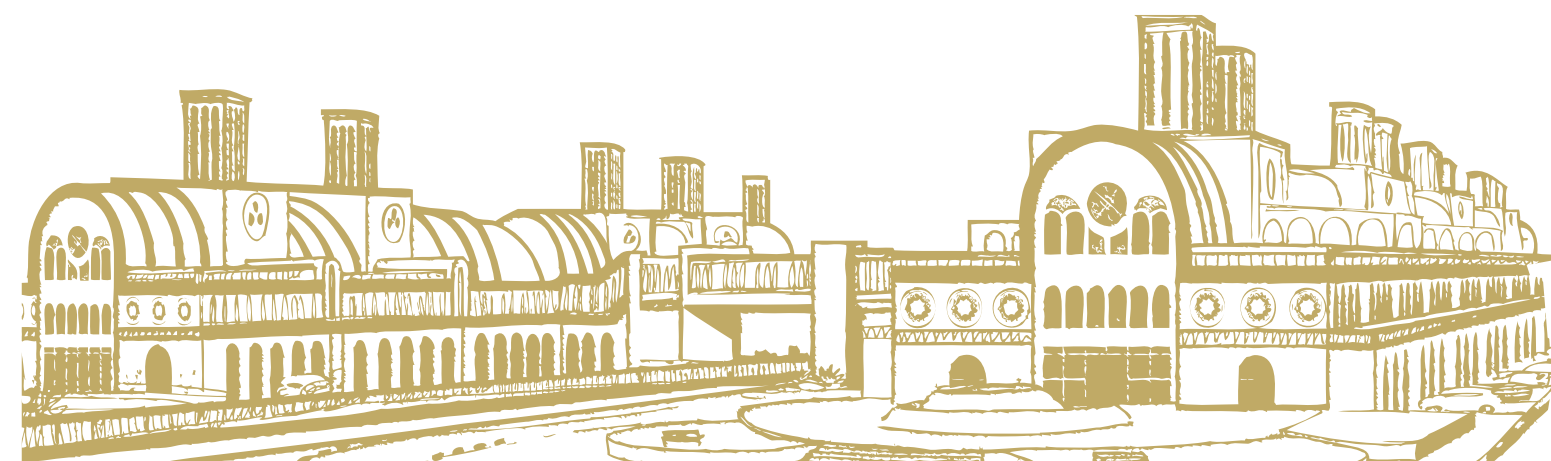


9%

of Sharjah's GDP



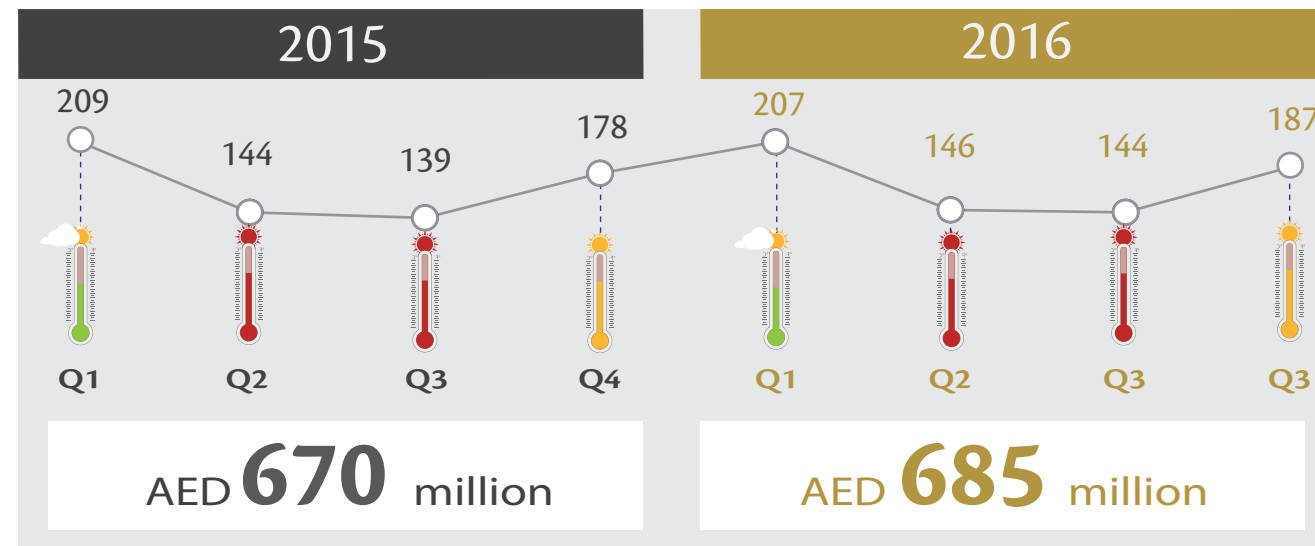
20,000
jobs



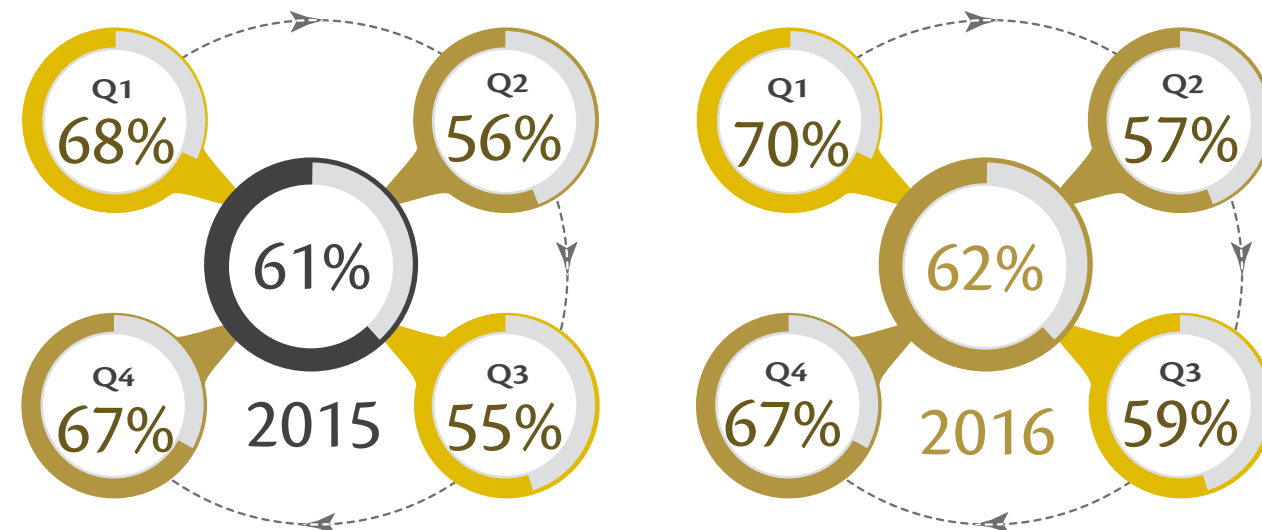
Growth of the Tourism Sector in Numbers

In 2016, the tourism sector witnessed a growth of 2.2% in comparison to 2015 with revenues of AED 685 million. The average length of stay also increased by 21% to become 2.3 days. This resulted in an increase of 1.4% in the occupancy rate to become 62.6% with a total number of hotel guests reaching 1.8 million.

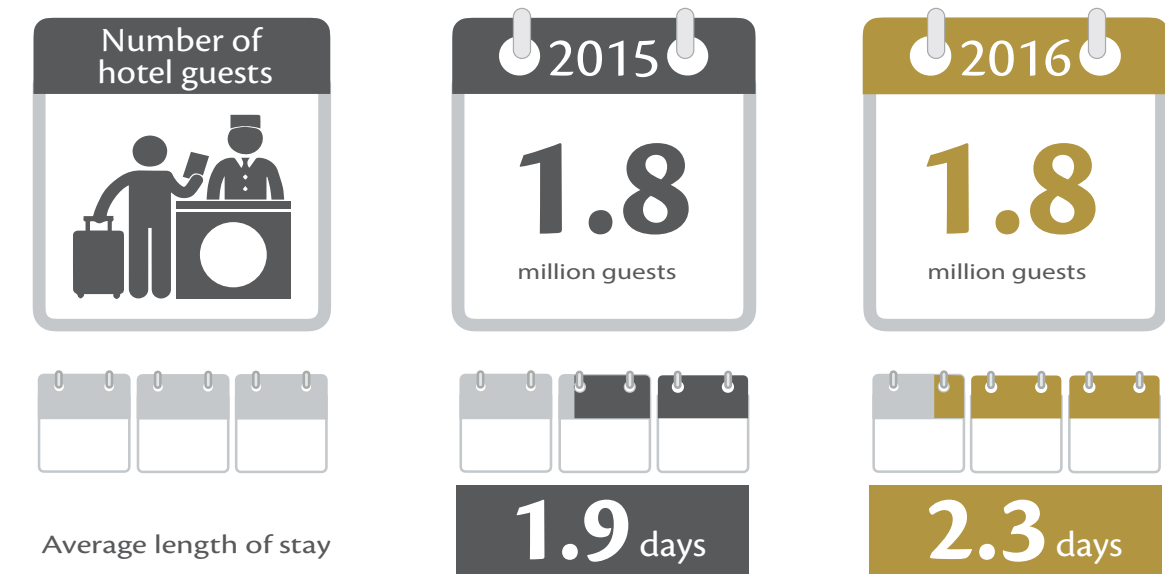
• Tourism sector revenue per quarter in 2015 and 2016 in million dirhams



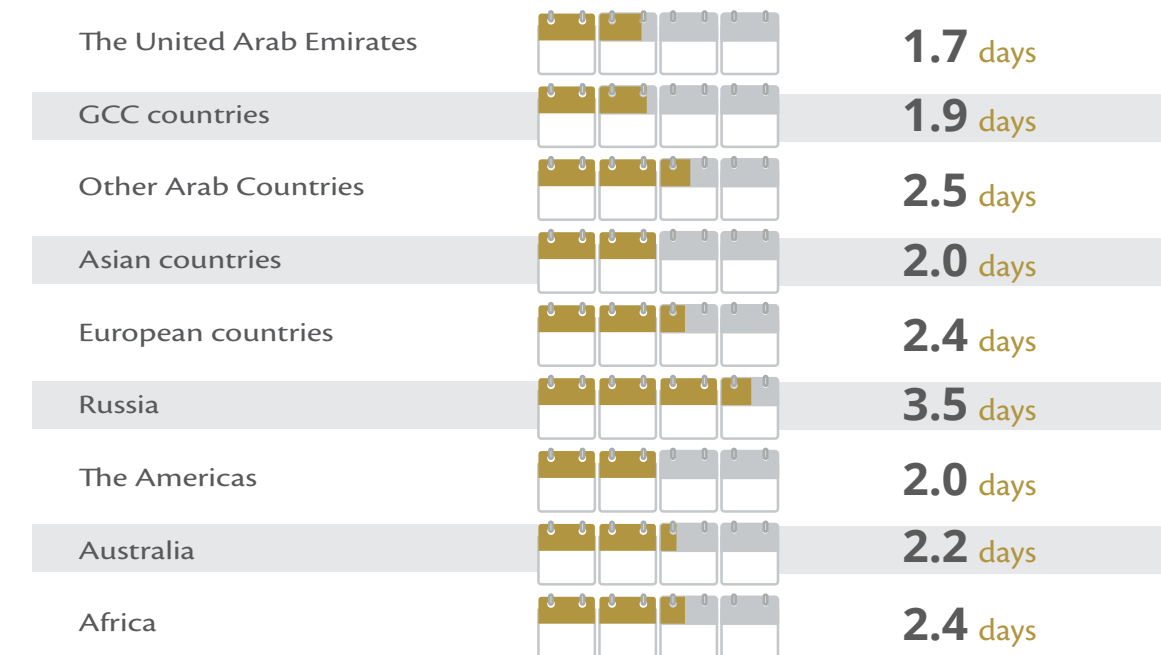
• Occupancy rate per quarter in 2015 and 2016



• Number of hotel guests and average length of stay in 2015 and 2016

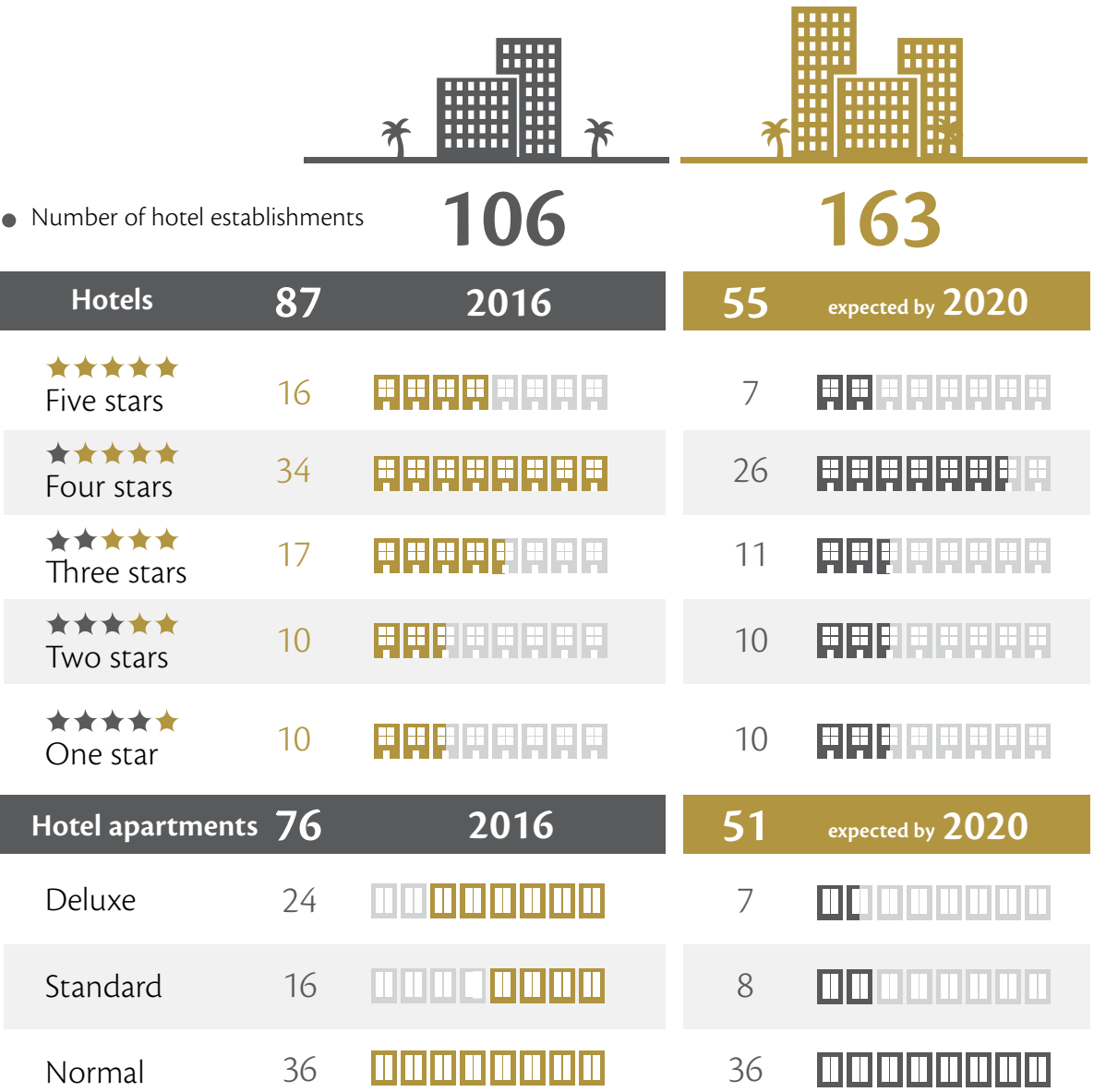


Average length of stay per country in 2016

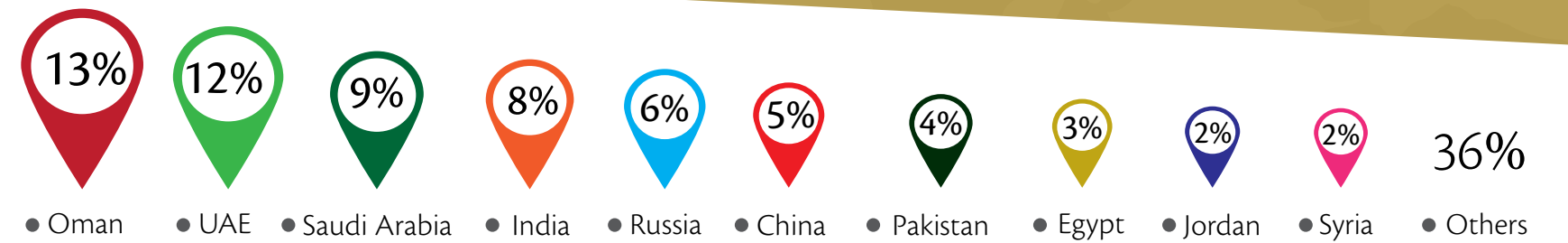


Sharjah is home to 106 hotel establishments and hotel apartments offering around 10,000 rooms. It is expected that the number of hotel establishments will increase by 2020 by an average of 53% to become 163 hotel establishments.

● Classification and the number of hotel establishments in Sharjah in 2016, and the expected by 2020



Top 10 Source Markets by Market Share



Cruise Tourism

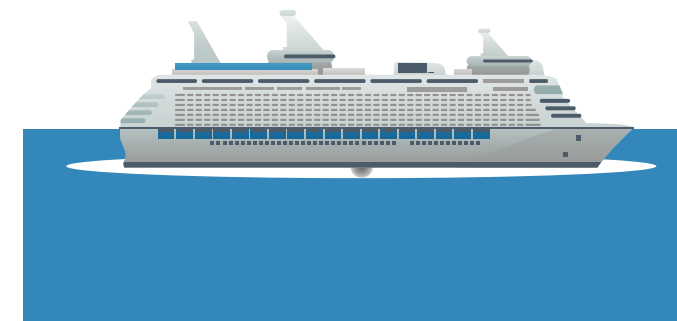


Cruise tourism is an integral part of Sharjah's tourism activity as it plays a role in attracting a large number of cruise passengers every year. To develop this sector, SCTDA works on launching initiatives and organizing workshops concerned with developing the competencies of those working in the tourism industry. The emirate understands the importance of developing the infrastructure of the cruise tourism industry to attract more tourists, and has set its priorities to develop it.

SCTDA works on attracting luxury cruise liners to the emirate's east coast port in Khorfakkan. As part of its efforts to promote Sharjah as a leading cruise tourism destination, the emirate attracted more than 28 cruise trips with 72,000 tourists to Khorfakkan Port on six cruise lines.

SCTDA has been helping cruise lines cater to the different interests of visitors from all around the world and, at the same time, providing them with an enchanting touristic stay and allowing them to fully experience the culture of Sharjah by regularly organizing cultural, traditional and entertainment events.

Sharjah is part of the Cruise Arabia Alliance, which includes Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Oman, Doha, and Bahrain. The Alliance aims to develop the region as a destination for major cruise liners. GCC countries received more than a million visits from cruise passengers by the end of the 2015-2016 cruise season, as per estimates.



Cruise trips to Khorfakkan port
2015-2016

72

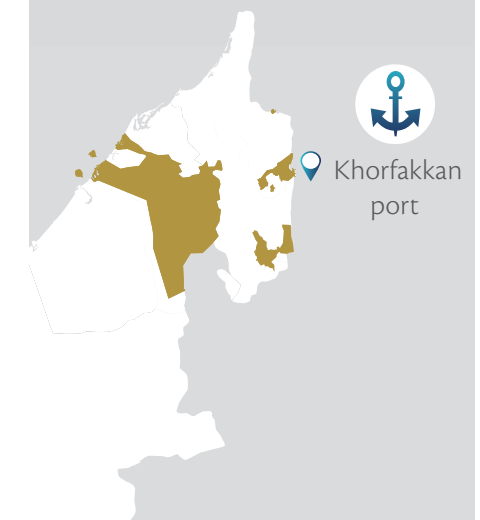
Thousand Visitors

28

Cruise trips

6

International Cruise lines



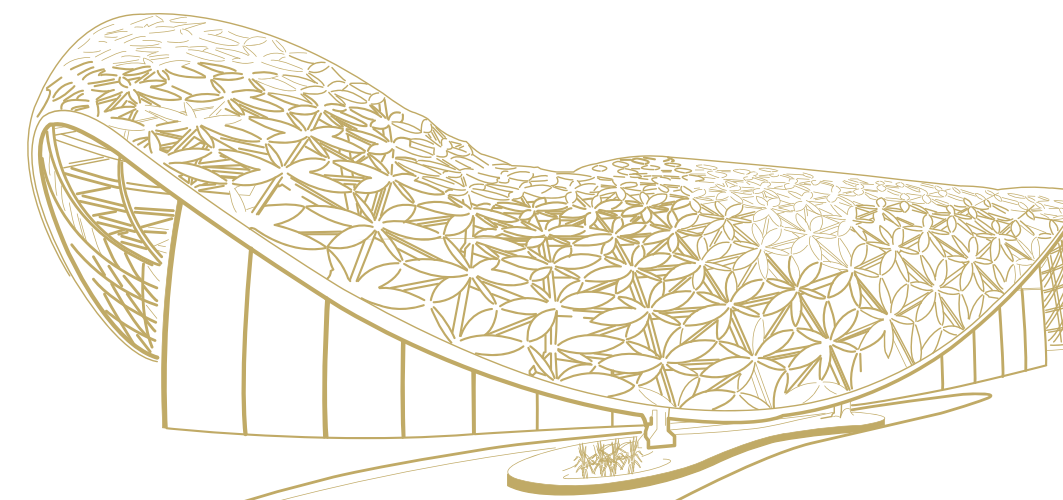
Sustainable Tourism

SCTDA encourages the commitment to applying sustainable tourism practices, and supporting green economic growth in line with the UAE vision 2021 that aims at building the green economy and enhancing the position of the UAE as an international hub to export green products and technologies. SCTDA also focuses on raising awareness in regards to reducing the harmful impact on the environment and supporting all tourism projects in Sharjah in order to be environmentally friendly.

As part of its priorities to enhance the best practices in the field of green economy, SCTDA focuses on the importance of sustainable tourism and the economic, social, and cultural benefits to those working in the entertainment and tourism industry. It also focuses on applying green practices to contribute to protecting the climate and environment from negative changes by facilitating the requirements of sustainable economic growth and encouraging the responsible use of energy, waste management and resources, thus resulting in minimizing the operational costs.

In 2016, SCTDA organized several workshops to raise awareness about the best sustainable practices for the implementation of green tourism criteria in the hospitality sector. The most significant workshop was held in cooperation with the Emirates Green Buildings Council under the title "Green Buildings in the Hospitality Sector". The workshop was held to spread awareness about the most efficient methods of sustainable hospitality waste and energy management practices in Sharjah. It demonstrated the emirate's commitment to promoting sustainable tourism and green economic growth, while supporting the role played by environmental companies in raising awareness among all sectors of the society.

SCTDA seeks to support the eco-tourism initiative by highlighting advanced concepts for preserving eco-tourism and the environmental and natural resources Sharjah has, especially in the area of nature reserves such as, Wasit Nature Reserve, Meleiha Protected Area, Wadil Helo, Elebriddi, Jazirat Sir Bo Naair, Alqurm Wa Lehhfaiiah, and Ed Dhelaimah, based on its belief that eco-tourism helps maintain sustainability and preserves the environment for generations to come.



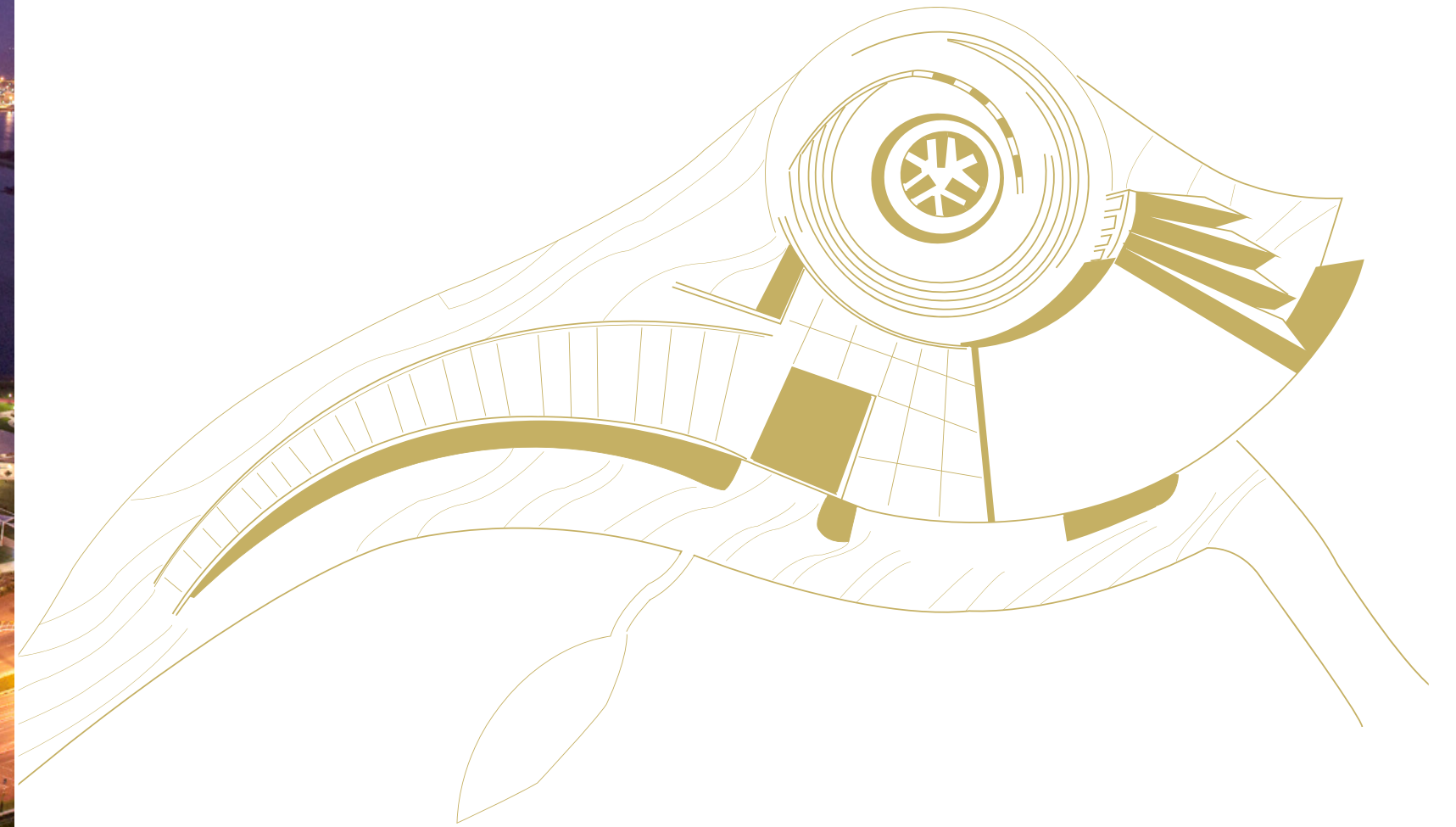
Promotion



Tourism Promotion for Sharjah



SCTDA adopted several initiatives and activities throughout 2016 inside and outside the UAE to promote the cultural, tourism and heritage attractions in Sharjah.



Overseas Promotion for Sharjah

As part of its role in promoting Sharjah's tourism industry, SCTDA adopted an effective communication strategy outside the UAE to achieve its goals, which are summed up in the development of Sharjah's tourism sector, contributing to the Emirate's GDP and supporting the economy.

SCTDA focused on international exhibitions, roadshows, and opening representative offices in Russia, India and China in its overseas promotional strategy to reach out to international potential markets.



Overseas Promotion Targets



Promote Sharjah as a leading tourist destination in the region, and increase tourist flow to more than 10 million tourists by 2021.

Consolidate all the promotional and marketing efforts of those working in the tourism industry in Sharjah to ensure its development and growth.

Highlight tourist attractions, enrich the annual events agenda, and hold specialized shows and events to enhance the tourist experience.

Enhance participation in local, regional and international conferences and exhibitions to achieve better communication with partners in the targeted markets.

Innovate promotional tools to attract decision-makers from the tourism industry in the targeted markets to Sharjah.

Key Messages Used in Overseas Promotion

The Authority focused in its campaigns on specific key messages to promote the tourist, cultural, and heritage destinations of Sharjah. The main messages are:



Overseas Promotion Initiatives

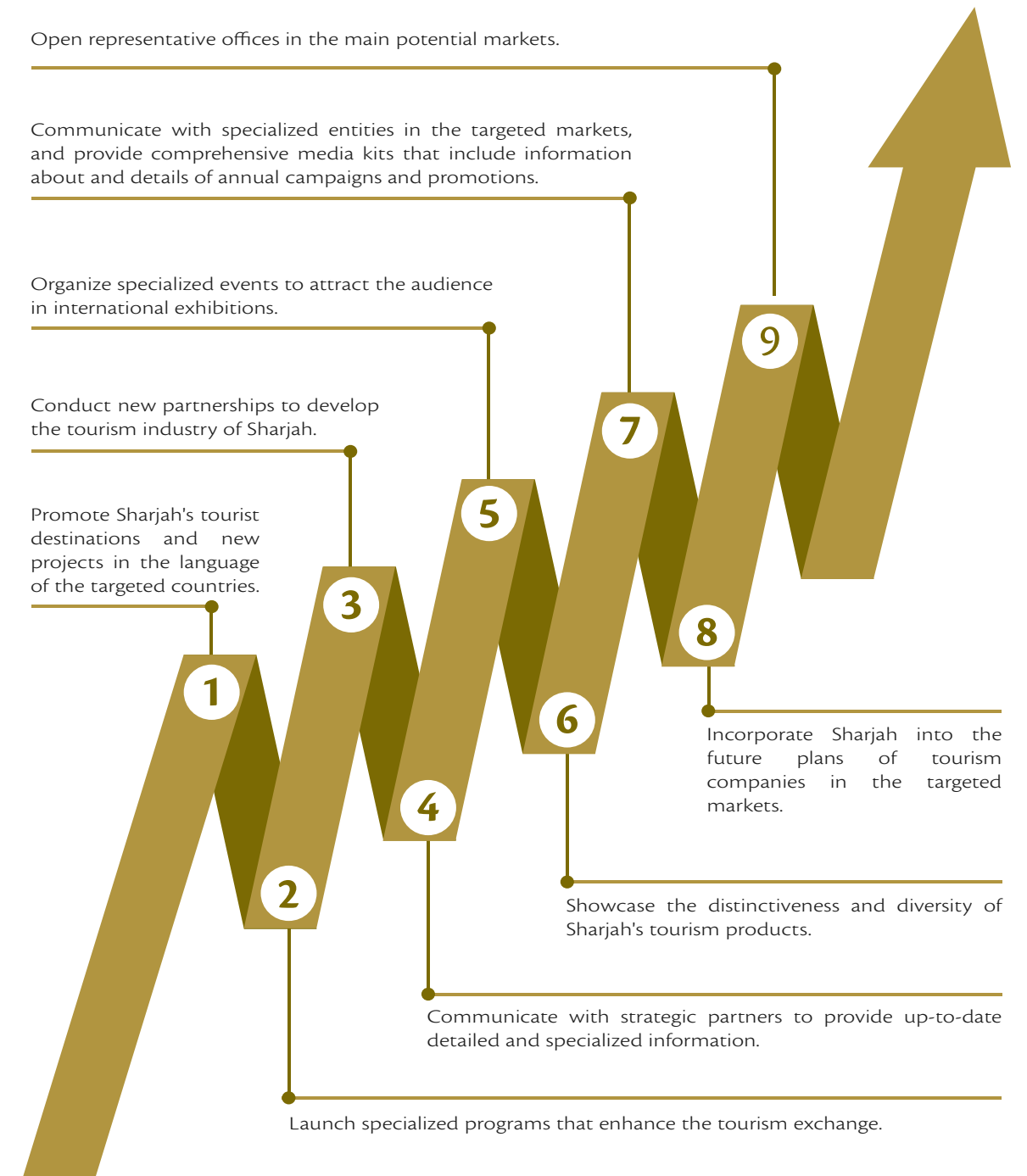
Open representative offices in the main potential markets.

Communicate with specialized entities in the targeted markets, and provide comprehensive media kits that include information about and details of annual campaigns and promotions.

Organize specialized events to attract the audience in international exhibitions.

Conduct new partnerships to develop the tourism industry of Sharjah.

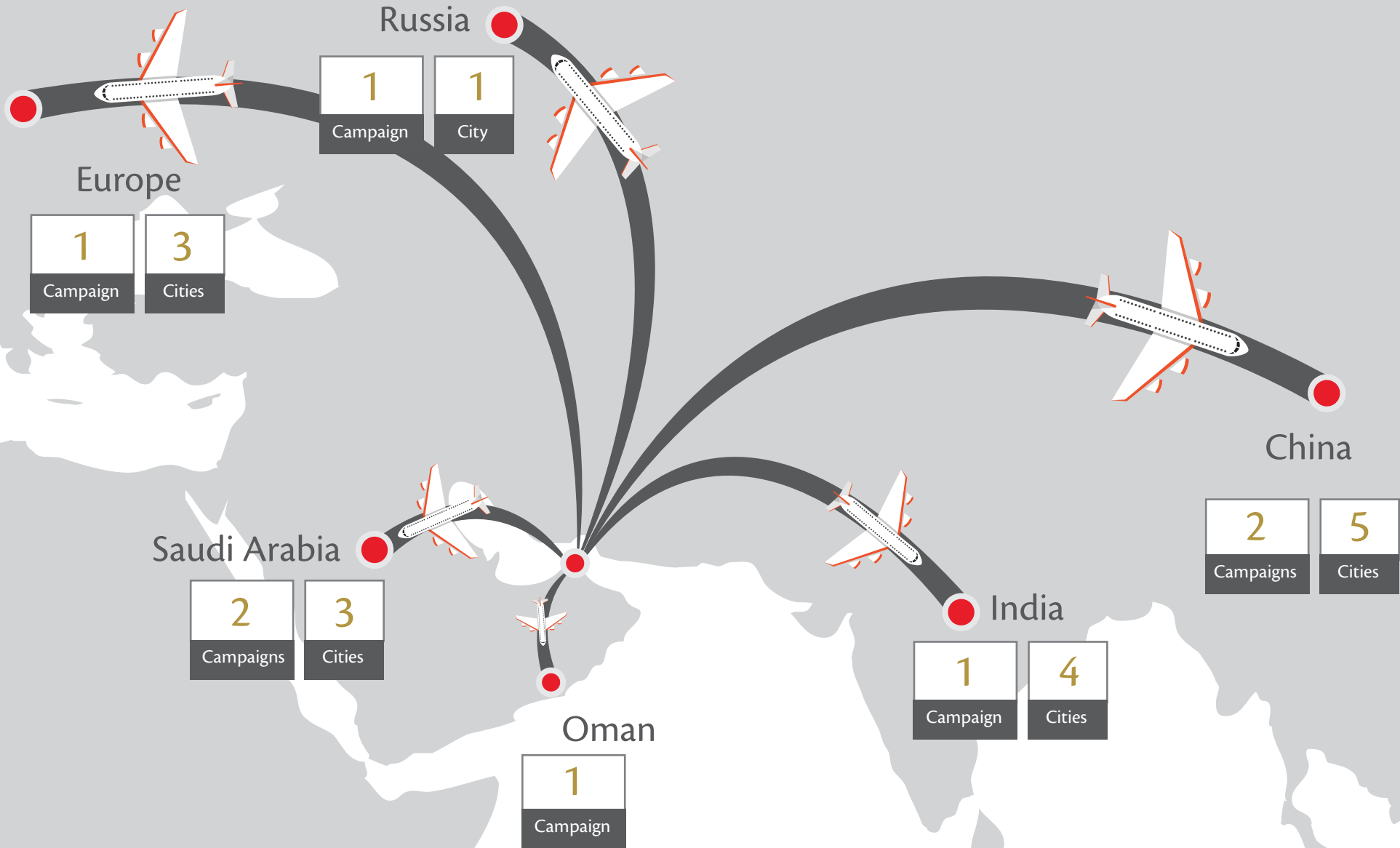
Promote Sharjah's tourist destinations and new projects in the language of the targeted countries.



Overseas Promotion Campaigns in 2016

In 2016, SCTDA has been running several marketing campaigns targeting potential source markets like the GCC, Russia, China, India and Europe.

These campaigns resulted in reaching out to new markets, increasing coordination of joint efforts by stakeholders in the development of the emirate's tourism sector, the building of strategic partnerships in regional and global target markets, and innovative initiatives and presentations in foreign markets. These campaigns have also played an important role in direct communication with the international media and the target audience and introducing it to the local culture, and promotion of the elements of Sharjah tourism.



China

Two roadshows in China: The first roadshow was conducted in Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong between 28 March and 1 April. The second took place in the period of 27 – 30 September in Guangzhou, Chengdu, and Hong Kong.

Russia

The Russian Business Council under the patronage of Sharjah's Chamber of Commerce and Industry in May.

Europe

A roadshow in Europe under the patronage of the National Council for Tourism and Antiquities (NCTA), in Prague, Warsaw, and Budapest in May.

India

A roadshow in India in the period of 18 -21 October in Mumbai, New Delhi, Chennai and Bangalore.

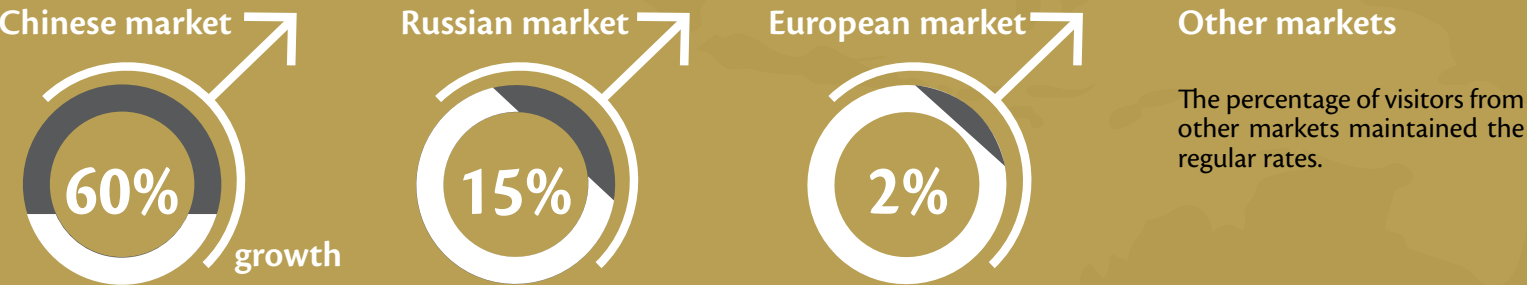
Saudi Arabia

A roadshow in Saudi Arabia in Khobar and Riyadh in the period of 13 – 17 November.

Saudi Arabia and Oman

A roadshow in Saudi Arabia and Oman between 10 June and 30 August.

• Results of the roadshows



Participation in International Exhibitions

In cooperation with strategic partners, SCTDA participated in 10 international exhibition with an average space of 1,992 square meters. The partners include government departments, museums and private sector companies working in the aviation, tourism, and hospitality sectors.

The list of exhibitions includes:

10
international exhibitions

1,992
Square meters
average space
in 2016



The World Travel Market - London

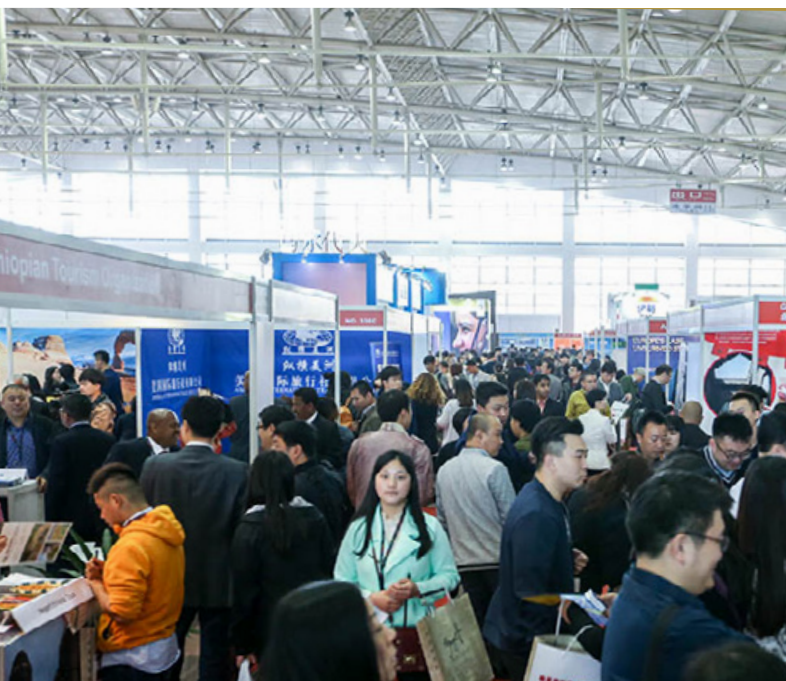
SCTDA participated in the exhibition with a 330 square meters must-visit stand. Held in London in the period of 7-9 November, the exhibition is one of the leading events for the travel and tourism industry globally. It brings together the pioneers of the tourism industry from all over the world, and offers a platform for exchanging knowledge and expanding networks through activities, meetings, workshops and conferences.



ITB Berlin (Internationale Tourismus-Börse Berlin)

SCTDA participated in the exhibition, which was held in the period of 9-13 March, with a 330 square meters stand. In 2016, the exhibition attracted more than 146 thousand visitors with around 10 thousand exhibitors from 187 countries. It aimed at discussing the latest updates in the international tourism industry and creating new partnerships, as well as promoting tourism industry sectors such as the entertainment, medical, family, shopping and business tourism.





The China Outbound Travel and Tourism Market

SCTDA participated in the exhibition for the third consecutive year with an 81 square meters stand. It was held in the Chinese capital Beijing in the period of 12-14 April. The exhibition is an important platform bringing together experts and decision-makers in the Chinese tourism industry, as well as specialized companies and businessmen.



Arabian Travel Market 2016 – Dubai

SCTDA participated in the exhibition that was held in Dubai in the period of 25-28 April with a 532.5 square meters stand, to enhance its position as a leading tourism destination in the region and showcase the latest touristic projects. The participation included the launching of "Sharjah my family destination" campaign in cooperation with success partners in the tourism industry in the emirate. A total of 26,000 visitors from 133 countries visited the exhibition.

Moscow International Travel and Tourism Exhibition

SCTDA participated in the exhibition that was held in Moscow in the period of 14-16 March with a 120 square meters stand. It led a delegation of representatives from the tourism industry in the emirate.



Russia's International Trade Fair for Travel & Tourism-Leisure

SCTDA participated in the exhibition that was held in Moscow at the Expocentre Fairgrounds in the period of 21-24 September with a 120 square meters stand. Russia remains a key source market for the emirate's tourism sector. The participation at the Leisure fair in Moscow is of high importance due to the Russian market support to the tourism industry in Sharjah.





Outbound Travel Mart – Mumbai

SCTDA participated in the exhibition that was held in New Delhi in the period of 18-20 February with a 108 square meters stand as part of the UAE delegation under the umbrella of the Ministry of Economy. The exhibition, one of the largest specialized travel and tourism shows in India, attracts a large number of entities from the tourism and travel industry from the region and the world.

Kazakhstan International Tourism and Travel Exhibition

SCTDA participated in the exhibition that was held at Almaty in the period of 20-22 April with a 102 square meters stand. The exhibition is one of the major touristic events in Central Asia. It focused in 2016 on medical tourism highlighting the main destinations and the latest updates around the world. It attracted the world's best resorts, upscale hotels and major airlines.



Riyadh Travel Fair

SCTDA participated with a delegation from the emirate in the exhibition that was held in Riyadh in the period of 15-18 April with a 72 square meters stand. Over 3500 exhibitors and visitors representing travel and tourism entities and tourism authorities in the region took part in the fair.

FITUR International Tourism Trade Fair

SCTDA participated in the exhibition for the fifth consecutive year, with a delegation from the emirate, in the period of 20-24 January with a 70 square meters stand. The exhibition, held in Madrid, is one of the most specialized tourism and travel industry exhibitions in the world.



Domestic Promotion of Sharjah

Promoting the emirate of Sharjah internally is of similar importance to SCTDA as promoting it on a regional and international level. SCTDA starts by building strong relationships with its partners through the international exhibitions and roadshows. Tourism companies and media professionals are encouraged to visit Sharjah to get to know the emirate closely, through familiarization trips (Fam trips).

SCTDA plans and coordinates with all relevant entities to ensure that these visitors get an enchanting experience from the minute they reach Sharjah's International Airport. A specialized team welcomes them and arranges for their transport to the hotels, after which they start the tourist tour that is specially prepared for them.

On a different level, SCTDA arranges for delegations to participate in the main events conducted in the emirate such as the Sharjah Light Festival, Sharjah World Championship Week, and Sharjah Heritage Days, among others.



Services and Activities of Effective Promotion

SCTDA employs several tools and technologies in its marketing campaigns, which include:

Sharjah App

The Sharjah app showcases why Sharjah is a great place for tourists and investors to visit and do business, with an amazing array of heritage and culture attractions, events, entertainment, family fun, shopping, activities, hotels, museums, wildlife, and business. Sharjah app offers an interactive and practical tool that enables tourists to plan and manage their trips to Sharjah with online booking for their hotel rooms and car rentals. The app is available in seven languages that include Arabic, English, French, German, Russian, Spanish and Chinese.

To download the app to your mobile, please scan the QR codes below:



Sharjah Tourism and Corporate portals

SCTDA runs two websites, the first is specialized in the tourism of the emirate of Sharjah. You can visit the website at the following address: <https://sharjahmydestination.ae>

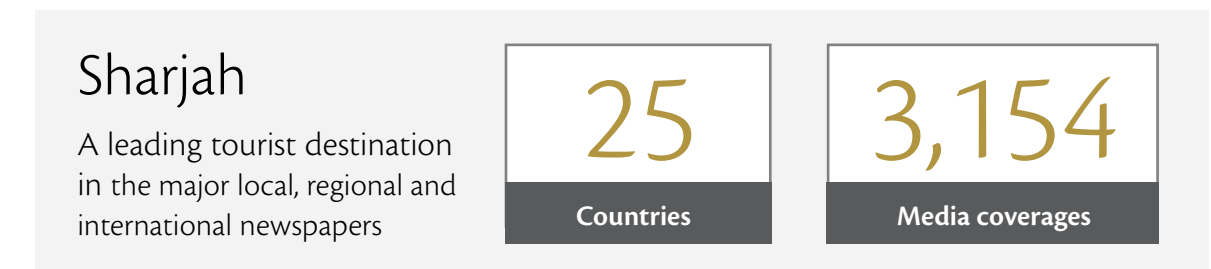
The second is a corporate website for SCTDA. You can visit the website at the following address: <http://corporate.sharjah tourism.ae>

Communicating with the Media and the Public

SCTDA is making great efforts to achieve effective communication with the media and the public through its official channels and its social media accounts, in addition to press releases, news stories, an electronic newsletter and many more.

SCTDA has succeeded in attracting international media to cover stories about Sharjah as a leading tourist destination.

In 2016, there were 3,154 media items in the major local, regional and international newspapers in more than 25 countries around the world.



More than 100 hashtags are used in social media accounts in both the Arabic and English languages to highlight specific marketing campaigns.

Distinctive Events and Festivals

Sharjah Light Festival - 2016

Sharjah Light Festival is one of the most spectacular and dynamic light shows in the world organized by the SCTDA in February each year. In 2016, the festival lasted for ten consecutive days in 23 various locations within the emirate.

During the festival, the emirate's major buildings, mosques and other landmarks are brought to life with dazzling light displays and musical performances, highlighting the aesthetic qualities of Sharjah's architectural landscape.

Sharjah Light Festival has gained popularity over the years at the international level. As the first event of its kind in the region, the festival has been attracting a large number of families and visitors from inside and outside the UAE, especially from the GCC countries. Social media channels also recorded 2.8 million interactions (according to Google Analytics) – a clear indication of the festival's widespread appeal.

During the festival, SCTDA was keen to use the latest technology to reduce electricity consumption.





Sharjah World Championship Week

F1H2O UIM World Championship - Sharjah Grand Prix

In December 2016, the Emirate of Sharjah, hosted for the 17th consecutive year, the F1H2O UIM Formula 1 Powerboat Championship - Sharjah Grand Prix. Over 24 contestants from different nationalities participated in the race. It lasted for 40 minutes and involved completing 40 laps at a speed of over 200 kilometers per hour.

The Championship, which is considered one of the safest races, was broadcast live to more than 75 countries around the world through various international channels.



Innovation



Innovative Activities and Services

SCTDA has accorded great importance to innovation in tourism and has made it one of the most important themes of Sharjah Tourism Vision 2021. It has supported and implemented innovative projects aimed at developing and enhancing the culture of innovation in the business environment and in the tourism industry through the services provided by SCTDA.

Sharjah VR App

Explore and walk around the different tourist destinations and streets of Sharjah from your place using the augmented reality glasses.

Interactive Touchscreens

Gives you a unique experience that is one of its kind in the region, to explore Sharjah in a new and attractive way with various types of information media such as virtual reality, brochures, films, and others, available at 50 locations/hotels in Sharjah.



Innovation Week

SCTDA participated in the UAE Innovation Week, presenting two professional workshops. The first was titled "Certified Tourism & Hospitality Innovator" and was held in the period of 22-24 November. The second was titled "Digital Transformation & My Sharjah workshop , Augmented reality & DAF Tech" and was held in the period of 25-26 November. The workshops were facilitated by experts and professionals with extensive experience in innovation and development in the sectors of tourism and trade, and targeted specialists and professionals in these sectors.

Innovation Lab

An innovation lab was established by SCTDA for tourism innovation through which the ideas and initiatives that contribute to the development and sustainability of the tourism sector in Sharjah have been adopted and implemented in order to promote innovative ideas that help drive the tourism development process.



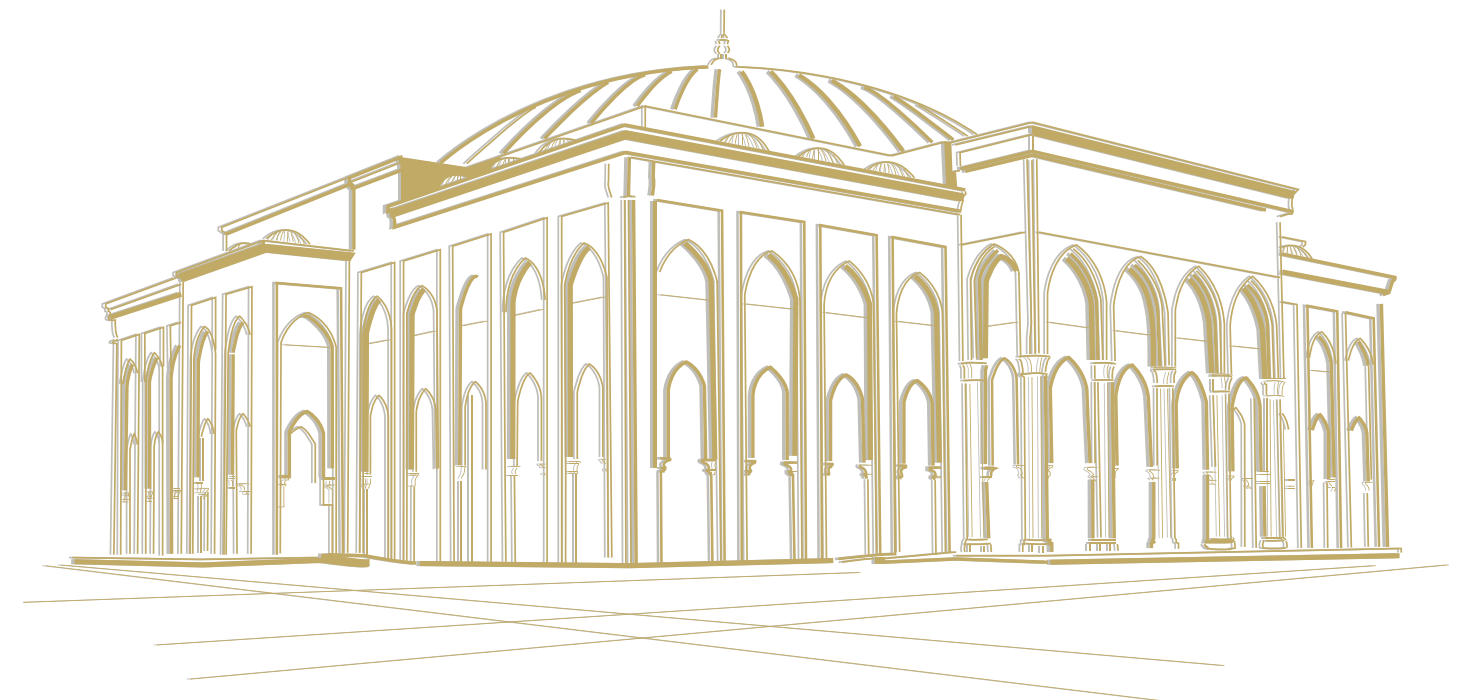
Marhabtain Program

Marhabtain is a human capital development program designed for professionals who work in hotels and other organizations within the tourism and hospitality industry. The series of diverse programs form the foundation for many future initiatives planned for the development of knowledge, skills and improvement of the overall quality of services.

A successful implementation of the Marhabtain Program will enhance the knowledge and quality of services required for the tourism and hospitality sector and will support the promotion of tourism and commerce in Sharjah. The industry will find our programs to be a long term supportive strategy for maintaining a skilled and customer-focused workforce, guided by economic, cultural and social values in performing their work.



Marhabtain program results:



Corporate Social Responsibility

As part of its role in economic development, SCTDA works on adapting its social activities to its goals and values. In 2016, it supported several social, charity, cultural, sports and national activities by providing logistical support for events aimed at the community. SCTDA also worked on raising awareness of the importance of social responsibility to workers in the tourism industry, and supported the sector in organizing events in this field within the larger vision of Sharjah and the UAE.



Future Vision



In order to develop the tourism sector in the Emirate of Sharjah, SCTDA is working on foreseeing the future of tourism, contributing to the development of the industry, and linking it to the best international practices. This is done through addressing the early prospects and challenges of this sector in order to ensure continuity of success and adopt a clear vision for the future.

SCTDA cooperates with the economic sector entities in Sharjah and the UAE to implement coherent and consistent strategies, expand the knowledge base of the local tourism sector and ensure that the vision and strategies are in line with the technical, scientific, economic and social changes expected to be seen by the emirate and the state.

In this context, SCTDA will direct the local tourism sector to the latest means, innovative tools and applications and benefit from the technological and digital revolution in the development of its business and its relations with the targeted visitors through innovative tourism products.

SCTDA will also promote alternative forms of tourism along with traditional tourism such as ecotourism, fair tourism, responsible tourism, social tourism, solidarity tourism and cultural tourism, which will support Sharjah's pursuit for long-term, optimal use of natural, cultural and social resources.

In addition to the above, SCTDA will look into the potential capabilities of the human resources working in all the activities of the local tourism sector, train them to meet the needs and challenges and prospects of the future and raise the level of competitiveness of Sharjah tourism.

**Until we meet again
with the story of a new year**



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Sharjah tourism