

Saudi Arabia the world's new tourist destination



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Economic Impact of Saudi Tourism

●● We remain resolute in our pursuit of economic diversification by championing promising sectors. The Kingdom's objective is to achieve a significant boost in tourism, targeting 150 million internal and external visitors by 2030. ●●

Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al-Saud
Crown Prince, Prime Minister



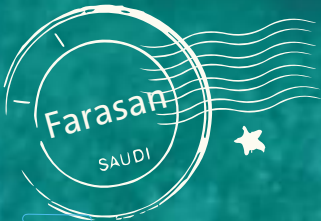
Saudi Arabia Tourism Overview

Tourism is undeniably a fundamental aspect of quality of life, as optimal performance in both professional and social domains requires regular intervals of rest and rejuvenation.

Today, we spotlight a truly distinctive tourist destination that has captivated global attention with its rapid advancements and remarkable development. This exceptional location is defined by its unique blend of contrasts—where land meets sea, modernity intertwines with heritage, vast deserts contrast with smart cities, and ancient traditions merge with contemporary innovations. Visitors experience breathtaking natural landscapes alongside stunning architectural marvels. Here, the tranquility of sacred sites seamlessly combines with the luxury of bespoke facilities designed to cater to every tourist's needs.

Located in Saudi Arabia , **this unparalleled destination stands out as one of the world’s most prominent tourist attractions, having witnessed impressive growth in its tourism sector.**

Tourism is a vital sector for the Kingdom, making a significant contribution to the national economy. This is particularly evident following the ambitious and comprehensive plan to enhance and invigorate the tourism industry in alignment with Vision 2030. This vision aims to diversify the Kingdom's economic sources and capitalize on the tourism sector as a key revenue driver. In response, Saudi Arabia has focused on advancing its tourism infrastructure, investing in hotels, tourist facilities, and airports, while modernizing regulations to foster a robust ecosystem for tourism companies and encourage further investment in the sector.



01

The Kingdom ranked first among G20 countries for the growth rate of global tourists and second globally for the fastest-growing tourist destination.

02

In 2023, Saudi Arabia experienced a remarkable surge in tourism, with 16.5 million international visitors— up 45% from 2019—and over 78.8 million domestic tourists, reflecting substantial growth in both travel sectors.

03

Minister of Tourism and Chairman of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, announced that 115 billion riyals have been secured ahead of the visa launch, demonstrating global confidence in the strength and promising opportunities of the Saudi market.

Jeddah

SAUDI



Saudi Arabia Tourism Overview

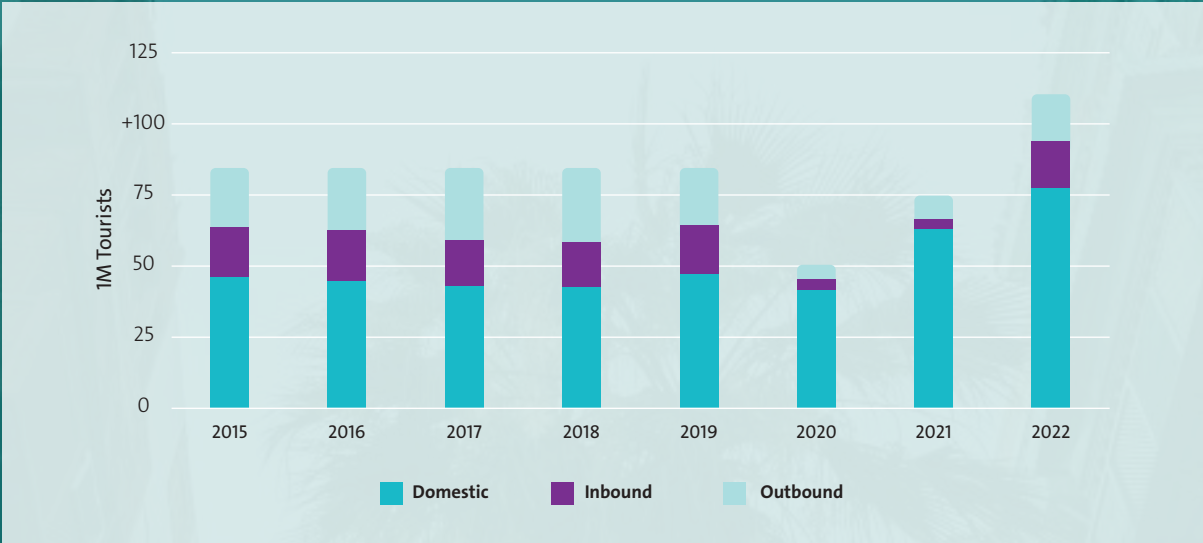
2023 KSA Tourism Stats and Insights



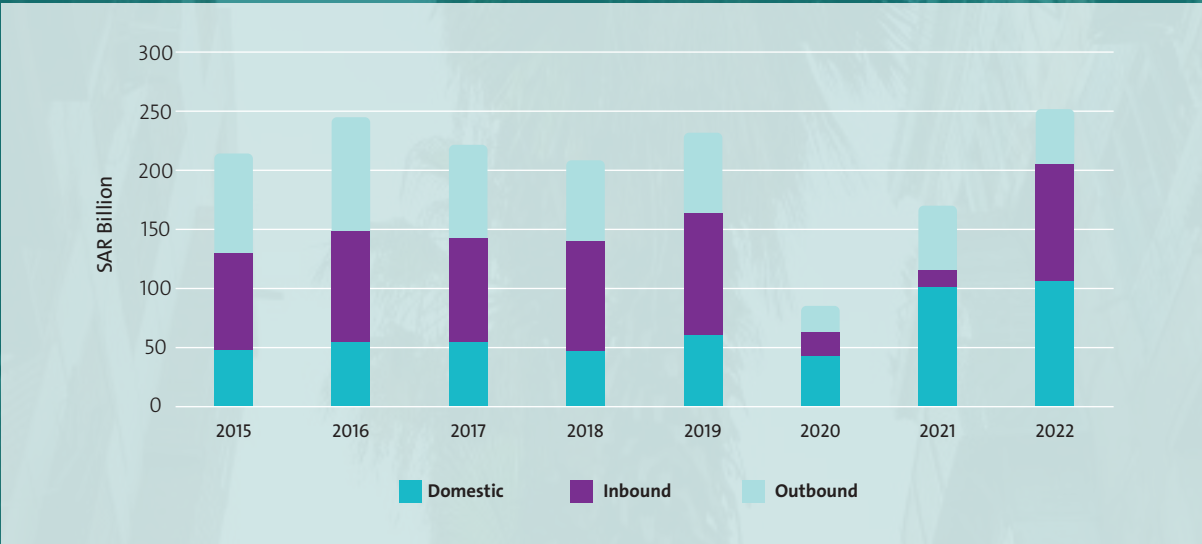
During H1 2023, **inbound tourism** experienced substantial growth, with tourist numbers rising by **142%** and tourist spending increasing by **132%** compared to the same period in 2022. Overall, inbound tourism has risen substantially, with **leisure and holiday visitation** experiencing the **highest percentage increase**. In H1 2023, this segment recorded a significant growth rate of **347%** compared to the same period in 2022.

Saudi Arabia Tourism Overview

Variations in tourist numbers over the years



Total tourist spending over the past years



Meanwhile, **domestic tourism in Saudi Arabia** also recorded an increase in tourism spending by **16%** in H1 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. This growth comes as a result of an increase in the average length of stays from 4.6 nights in H1 2022 to 6.3 nights in H1 2023.



The highest number of tourists came for leisure and holidays at approximately 16.6 million tourists. They represent 43% of the total tourists with a growth rate of 8% compared to H1 2022.

Domestic Tourist Numbers by Main Purpose of Trip in H1 2023*

Religious purposes	business	entertainment	other	family & friends visit	total	month
645	527	3,029	265	1,699	6,165	JAN
622	530	2,569	213	1,562	5,496	FEB
973	627	22,561	304	1,900	6,366	MAR
1,107	608	2,427	252	2,343	6,738	APR
515	522	2,202	292	1,368	4,900	MAY
1,211	773	3,792	380	3,186	9,342	JUN
5,073	3,586	16,580	1,708	12,059	39,007	Total

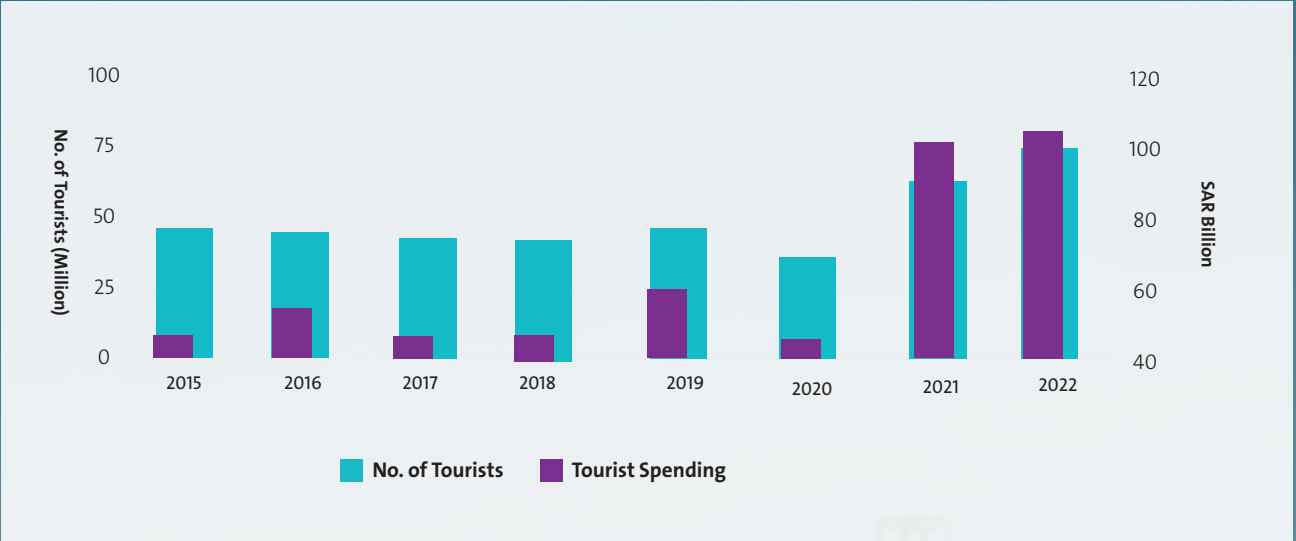
*1K tourists

Source: Preliminary data from MT

Outbound tourism in Saudi Arabia **recorded an increase in the number of tourists from citizens and non-Saudi residents by 37%** compared to H1 2022, **with tourism spending rising by 74%**. The increase in the overall number of outbound tourists is due to the return of travel conditions in most destinations around the world to pre-pandemic conditions. The beginning of the summer season and school holidays in June also contributed to this growth.



Total Domestic Tourist Numbers and Spending for 2022



Total Outbound Tourist Numbers and Spending for 2022





Key Highlights of Saudi Arabia Tourism

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Saudi Arabia accounts for 32% of all tourist trips to the Middle East, highlighting its growing reliance on the tourism sector. This sector is supported by several unique attractions, including World Heritage Sites recognized by UNESCO such as Mada'in Saleh, Diriyah, historic Jeddah, the rock art in Ha'il, and Al-Ahsa Oasis. The Kingdom boasts over 10,000 heritage and cultural sites, with 500 featured in Arabic poetry—the Diwan of the Arabs—and 400 mentioned in the biography of the Prophet Muhammad. Undoubtedly, Mecca, the birthplace of the Prophetic mission and the sacred sanctuary of the Haram, is the most revered and central of these sites, eliciting profound reverence, admiration, and devotion.

In addition to its revered sacred sites, Saudi Arabia features a diverse range of natural wonders. The Kingdom's extensive coastline, stretching for hundreds of kilometers along the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf, provides breathtaking maritime vistas. Vast deserts with striking sand dunes invite adventure sports, while dramatic mountain ranges and rocky cliffs, shaped over millennia, showcase natural beauty and the Creator's artistry. Complementing these landscapes, Saudi Arabia's archaeological sites provide a rich historical dimension, revealing ancient narratives and timeless marvels that enhance the overall tourism experience.



Key Highlights of Saudi Arabia Tourism

Prioritizing the tourism sector, the Kingdom has introduced a variety of innovative sites and facilities, including:

- **Pangeos Terayacht:** A floating city designed as a colossal sea turtle, measuring 610 meters in length and 550 meters in width. It features a range of amenities, including retail spaces, apartments, beach clubs, and luxury tourist villas.
- **Amaala Project :** Situated in the Prince Mohammed bin Salman Nature Reserve, this destination is strategically positioned between the NEOM smart city and the Red Sea project, which includes 50 hotels and 8,000 hotel units.
- **Trojina Resort:** The GCC's first destination dedicated to skiing and snowboarding, featuring a 135-kilometer Sports Boulevard for cycling, horse-riding, and racing enthusiasts.

Other projects celebrate heritage, such as the Diriyah Gateway, and offer time-travel experiences, like the AlUla project that links five of Saudi Arabia's key historical sites.

The Kingdom is advancing several significant projects to boost different tourism sectors. Business tourism is expanding with new venues and events designed to host international exhibitions and conferences. Shopping tourism is thriving through initiatives that provide seasonal discounts on Saudi products to attract shoppers. Medical tourism is supported by cutting-edge hospitals and medical centers providing world-class care. Sports tourism is rapidly growing as Saudi clubs attract global stars and elevate the standards of the Saudi Professional Football League. Saudi Arabia is gearing up to host the 2023 World Combat Games and the 2025 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games, which will significantly contribute to increasing the number of sports tourism visitors from around the globe.

Pangeos
Terayacht

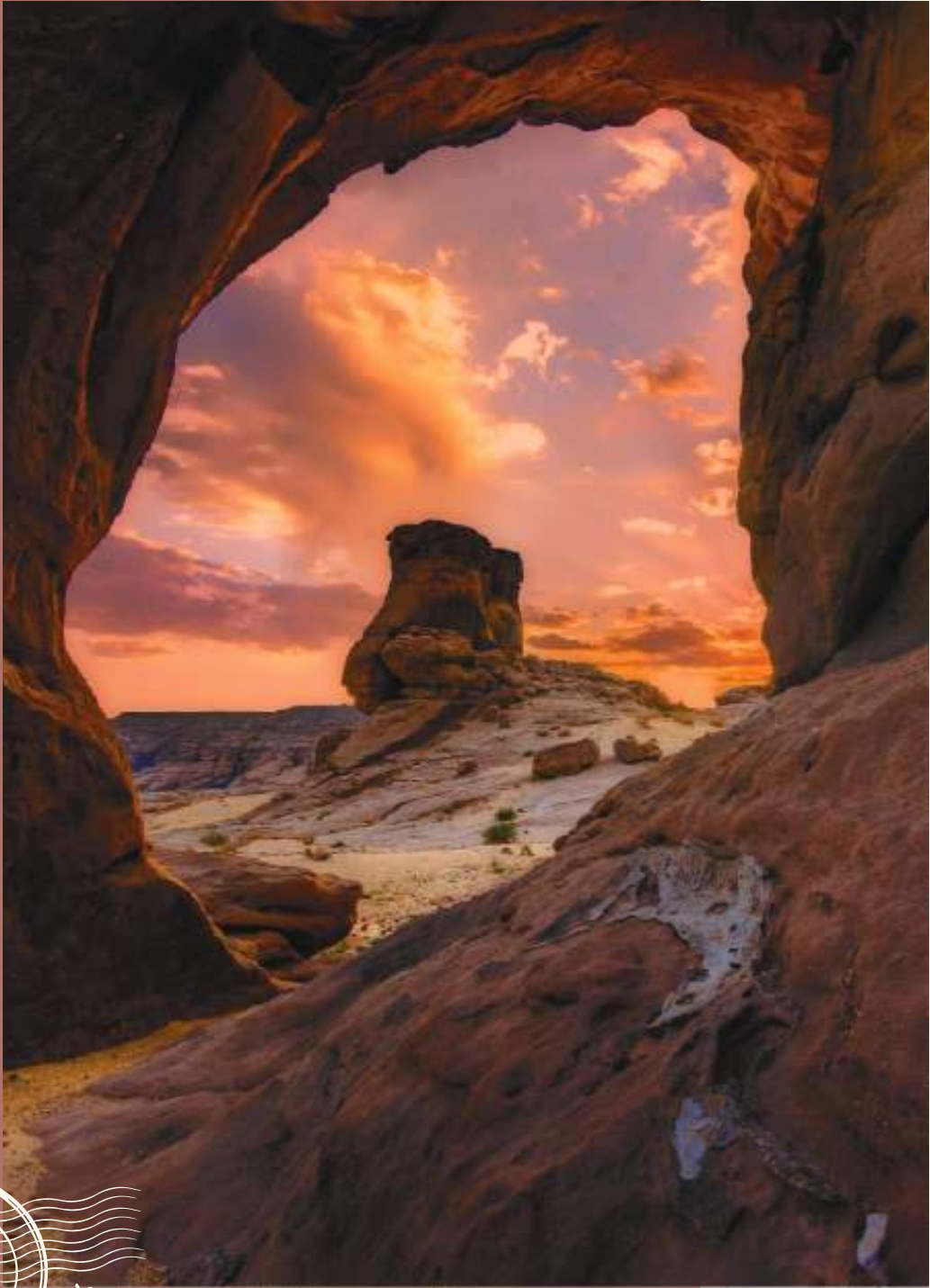


Trojina
Resort



Amaala
Project







National Tourism Strategy

The Kingdom's National Tourism Strategy aims to fully leverage its landmarks and destinations. It focuses on developing 10 key destinations to achieve international standards by 2023. In alignment with this strategy, the Ministry of Tourism has introduced ten new regulations designed to oversee the operation and management of tourist destinations and hospitality facilities. These regulations aim to foster an investment-friendly ecosystem by emphasizing business efficiency, innovation, and sustainability. They also focus on enhancing service quality, protecting tourist rights, and supporting the sector while creating job opportunities for citizens. The newly established regulations address various tourism activities, introduce new sector opportunities, and include provisions for monitoring and inspection to ensure high service quality.

National Tourism Strategy Targets



Targeting **150** million visitors domestically and internationally



Contributing **10%** to GDP



Creating 1 Million Jobs

By 2030

Top 10 Key Destinations Under Development as Tourist Attractions



Contributions of Different Entities to the Tourism Ecosystem

Ministry of Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism promotes sustainable sector growth through focused programs and initiatives. It builds effective partnerships, enhances national talent, and generates job opportunities for Saudi citizens, aligning with the Kingdom's vision.

Saudi Tourism Authority

Established to drive growth in the travel and tourism sector, the Authority supports tourism businesses and partners. It aims to position the Kingdom as a top tourist destination, manage marketing efforts, and oversee promotional campaigns. Additionally, the Authority participates in tourism exhibitions, assesses tourist experiences, and advises on improvements.

Tourism Development Fund

Established to advance the Kingdom's tourism sector, TDF develops tourism destinations, supports investment, and provides financing for related services. It enhances technology and infrastructure for various tourism activities and secures contracts with financing entities to support tourism ventures.

Tourism Development Council

TDC aims to align national tourism goals with stakeholders and partners, coordinate sector development, oversee initiative implementation with relevant authorities, evaluate activities, and define roles and responsibilities.

Saudi Red Sea Authority

Founded in 2021, the Saudi Red Sea Authority is committed to advancing coastal tourism along the Red Sea. It fosters collaboration among relevant authorities, issues licenses and permits, develops policies and strategies, and enhances infrastructure. Additionally, the Authority focuses on marine environment protection, encourages investment, and promotes maritime tourism to contribute to the national economy.

Saudi Air Connectivity Program

The Air Connectivity Program was introduced to enhance market access and expansion for air travel partners by developing and adding new air routes. It supports the National Tourism and National Aviation Strategies by fostering cooperation and partnerships within the tourism and aviation sectors. The Program ensures flexibility and high-quality service to strengthen the Kingdom's position as a top global tourism destination.

The six entities within MT ecosystem are dedicated to optimizing human resources and tourism assets, offering robust support for sector investors, and prioritizing tourism as a key focus for the Saudi government. Their efforts aim to realize the Kingdom's vision and establish Saudi Arabia as a premier global destination.



Saudi Arabia Key Tourism Initiatives

The Kingdom’s tourism sector is focused on innovation and growth, guided by the 2019 National Tourism Strategy. Saudi Arabia invests \$800 billion in tourism infrastructure and destinations, with funds coming from both government sources and private sector investments, supported by the Tourism Development Fund.

Efforts to Promote Tourism Sector Investment Include:



Saudi Arabia Introduces E-Visa Service for Stream-lined Travel

Tourists can obtain a special type of visa through a dedicated website or upon arrival at a border crossing from anywhere globally. Introduced by the Kingdom in 2019, this visa permits multiple entries, with each visit limited to a maximum of ninety days. According to the Ministry of Tourism, it facilitates Umrah, business activities, visiting family and friends, and general tourism. To streamline the visa application process, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs introduced the unified national visa platform (KSA VISA) by the end of 2023. This platform connects over 30 government ministries, agencies, and private sector entities, enabling easy access to various visa types including Hajj, Umrah, business, tourism, and work visas. Key visa issuance procedures have been automated to enhance the visitor experience, and the platform features an advanced search engine to easily navigate available visas, their requirements, and application procedures.

What is the Saudi eVisa?

Saudi Arabia is opening its doors to the world through its new tourist visa. Through the fast and easy-to-use online portal, international visitors from 63 eligible countries can apply for an eVisa and discover the warm hospitality of Saudi people the rich heritage, vibrant culture, and diverse and breathtaking landscapes; from the mountains of Abha to the beaches of the Red Sea to the shifting sands of the Empty Quarter.

The eVisa will be a one-year, multiple entry visa, allowing tourists to spend up to 90 days in the country. The tourist visa allows you to take part in tourism-related activities such as, events, family & relatives visits, leisure, and Umrah (excluding Hajj) and excludes other activities such as studying.

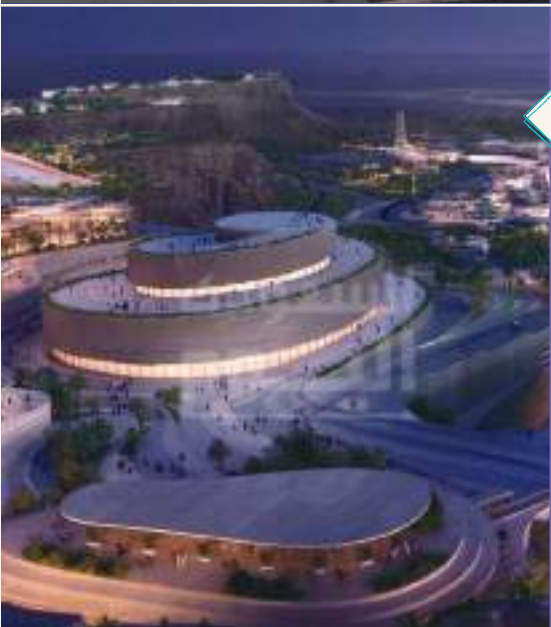


Mn visas 18.6



UNWTO Launches First Regional Office in Riyadh

The UNWTO has inaugurated its first regional office in the Middle East, located in Riyadh. This new office will serve as a central hub for coordinating policies and initiatives across 13 Middle Eastern countries. It will play a pivotal role in supporting the region's tourism strategies and fostering the sustainable growth of the sector.



The Riyadh School of Tourism and Hospitality

Saudi Arabia's Minister of Tourism, Ahmed Al-Khatib, has announced the establishment of the Riyadh School of Tourism and Hospitality, a \$1 billion initiative. This institution will offer premier training in the travel and tourism sectors, featuring an extensive 5 million square meter campus in Qiddiya. Scheduled to open in 2027, the school will be accessible to all, providing top-tier education in tourism and hospitality.



“Tourism Pioneers” Program

The “Tourism Pioneers” Program is designed to elevate the capabilities of 100,000 young Saudi professionals in the tourism industry. It offers comprehensive training that enhances their skills and prepares them for the job market. Participants will receive internationally recognized certificates from leading training organizations, with courses tailored to their experience and career goals, both locally and internationally.

Program Objectives:

- 1. Enhance the efficiency of tourism industry workers.
- 2. Offer specialized training opportunities for tourism industry workers.
- 3. Support career advancement within the tourism sector.

Tourism Program

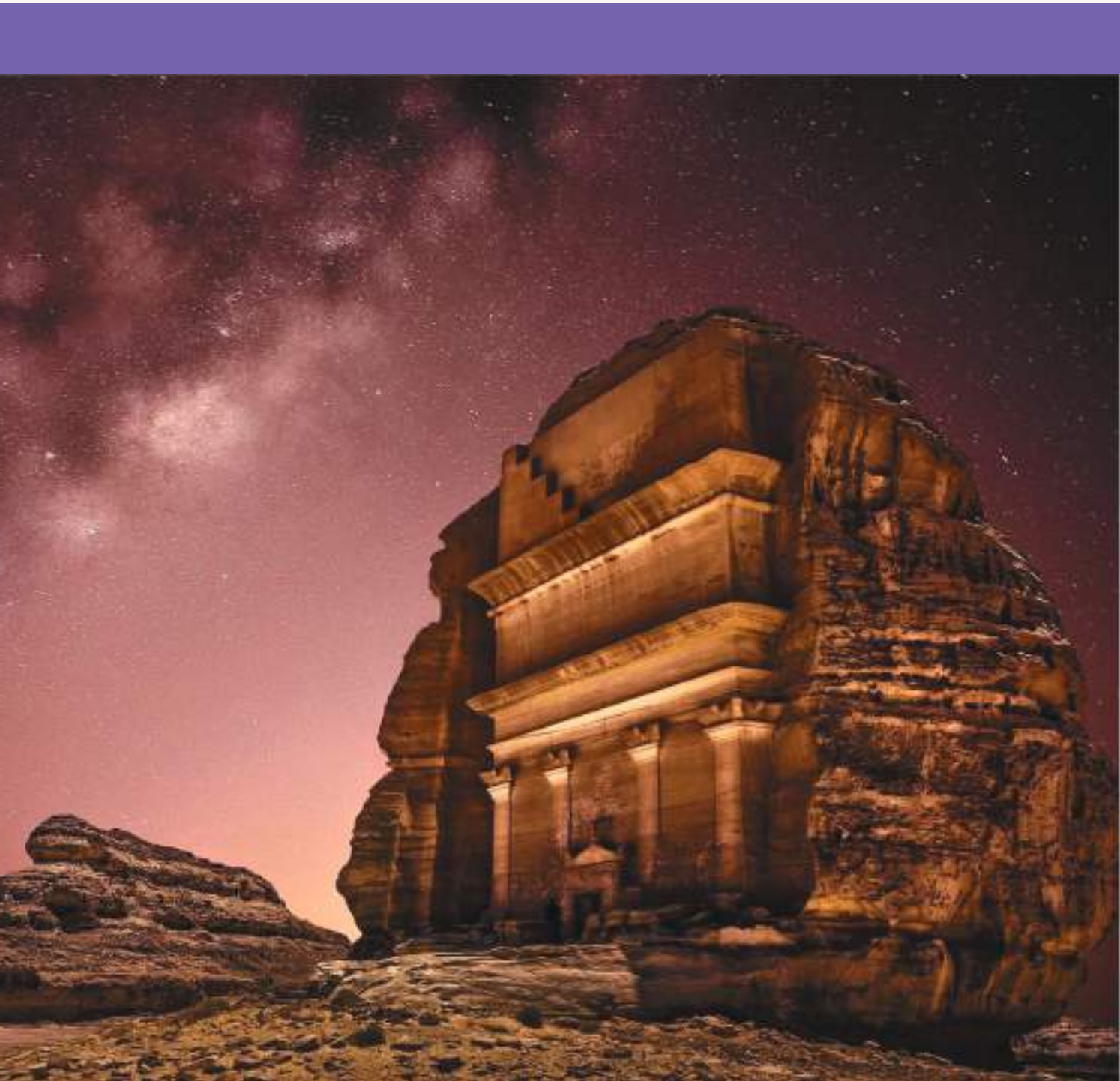
Tourism Pioneers Program opens registration for an accredited training program in a number of tourism fields, targeting workers in the tourism sector.

You must log in first to be able to book courses.

to log in

AlUla Province

The Royal Commission for AlUla was established to safeguard and develop AlUla, a significant landmark in Saudi Arabia renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and prominent archaeological sites. The ongoing development aims to position AlUla as a leading global destination for archaeological, cultural, and natural tourism. The Kingdom seeks to attract one million visitors to AlUla by 2023. Notably, AlUla is the first Saudi archaeological site to be included on the UNESCO World Heritage List.



The Red Sea Touristic Destination

The Red Sea Development Project is designed to establish a premier global tourism destination with a focus on sustainable development. It supports the local community and prepares future generations to enhance the area. The project also aims to boost the Kingdom's economy by attracting investment and creating numerous job opportunities.



Project Objectives



Localize the tourism sector and diversify income sources.



Eradicate all forms of pollution.



Protect and preserve natural areas.



Develop and diversify entertainment opportunities.



Promote foreign investment opportunities.



NEOM Project

NEOM aims to create a sustainable model with its diverse natural landscapes—coasts, deserts, and mountains—becoming the ideal place to work, live, and play. NEOM is the cornerstone of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. As such, it is fully funded and managed by the Public Investment Fund (PIF), Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund. This substantial investment is a fundamental pillar of Saudi Arabia's future. The PIF has allocated \$500 billion to finance and support NEOM, in addition to contributions from local and international investors.



Economic Impact of Saudi Tourism

Tourism has undeniably become a pivotal sector in Saudi Arabia's economy, representing a significant source of GDP. **The tourism sector contributed 5.3% to GDP in 2022.** Moreover, total spending by both domestic and international tourists exceeded 250 billion Saudi Riyals in 2023.

Collaboration among the tourism, sports, and entertainment sectors has enhanced Saudi Arabia's global standing as a premier tourist destination. This synergy has led to the establishment of numerous small and medium-sized enterprises in the entertainment field, the organization of various events, and the creation of job opportunities, which have collectively reduced unemployment rates. Additionally, the Kingdom has successfully hosted many international sports events and achieved remarkable success in its seasonal tourism, including summer and winter events.

Over **100 billion Saudi Riyals**

in total spending by visitors to Saudi Arabia by the end of the third quarter of 2023, representing a 53% growth compared to the same period in 2022.



References



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