

SAUDI ARABIA FOCUSING MORE ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



SCTA, the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities reported that only 20% of tourists who visit the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia come for business purposes. The remaining majority of foreign visitors arrive for tourism and religious purposes.

The project manager of the SCTA, Tariq Al-Essa, stated that the government of Saudi Arabia intends to position the Kingdom as a “substantial meetings destination.” **The objective is to promote Saudi Arabia as a meeting ground for global business leaders.** This will add significantly to the economy of the Kingdom. The set of objectives also includes making the country an employment generator by 2025.

The SCTA is keen on maximizing Saudi Arabia’s potential as a destination for business and leisure.

The President of the SCTA, Prince Sultan bin Salman, stated that tourism and air transportation are inseparable. He highlighted the importance of focusing on aligning the sectors in order to make Saudi Arabia a destination that is both affordable and more accessible.

Based on the BMI’s (Business Monitor International) Saudi Arabia Tourism Report Q4 2013, the Eastern Province’s occupancy rates have grown during the summer months by as much as 80%. The forecast of BMI for 2013 arrivals is pegged at an increase of 7%. A further 38.6% increase is expected from 2013 up to the year 2017. **By the end of the forecast period, 2017, about 24 million arrivals are expected.**

The report specified that a growth rate of 41% is expected, reaching US \$13.09 billion. The total amount comprises an approximate \$12.21 billion (travel items) plus about \$1 billion (transport services).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is now engaged in upgrading the infrastructure. Some of those currently being constructed are hotels, commercial buildings, sea ports, roads, meeting halls, airports, exhibition centers, conference sites, heritage sites and a couple of holy sites as well. These projects are intended to boost and protect the business sector and the Saudi economy.

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