

# ATM PREVIEW 2023

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- Highlights from the Event Programme
- The latest Industry News
- Travel Trends



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## DELVE INTO THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL AT ARABIAN TRAVEL MARKET 2023



Danielle Curtis

As we prepare to open our doors for the 30th edition of Arabian Travel Market (ATM), it feels like a monumental year – not just for the show but for the entire sector.

ATM has grown considerably during the past three decades. Inaugurated in 1994 by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the first edition welcomed about 7,000 attendees and participants from 52 nations. In contrast, ATM 2023, which will take place at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) from Monday, May 1, to Thursday, May 4, will feature more than 2,000 exhibitors and approximately 34,000 attendees from over 150 countries.

It therefore feels appropriate that this milestone show will focus on one of the biggest challenges – and opportunities – facing our sector. In line with its theme of 'Working Towards Net Zero', ATM 2023 offers a golden opportunity to build relationships, share knowledge and showcase innovations that will accelerate decarbonisation. Here are just a handful of the highlights I'm most looking forward to this year.

To mark our 30th edition, my colleagues and I will be unveiling a dedicated sustainability pledge, which has been created to reinforce RX's commitment to the delivery of sustainable events. In addition to providing a roadmap for ATM's journey towards net zero, this pledge will be supplemented by a brand-new sustainability playbook. In combination, these tools will offer a framework within which participants can mitigate their environmental impact before, during and after the show.

I am also eager to see the outcome of our inaugural 'ATM Sustainable Stand Award', which will be announced as part of the ATM 2023 Best Stand Awards. Entries will be judged according to an extensive range of sustainable criteria, including supplier choice, material usage, operational efficiency and what will happen to stands once

the event has concluded, meaning we are certain to witness a range of innovative approaches.

As ever, the ATM Global Stage will host a range of sessions focused on pivotal industry issues, including, but not limited to, hotels and hospitality, aviation and transport, MICE and business travel, investment, responsible tourism, workforce diversification, and emerging sectors such as attractions, cruises, wellness and cultural tourism. Our 30th edition will also see the return of the ATM Travel Tech Stage, which will explore how cutting-edge innovations, such as artificial intelligence, the metaverse, cryptocurrency and big data, are disrupting the market and reshaping the future of tourism.

ATM 2023 will also feature a Sustainability Hub for the first time, setting the backdrop for sessions dedicated to sustainable travel trends and innovations. This hub will also provide the ideal venue for the ATM 2023 Start-up Competition, an event hosted by conference partner Plug and Play that will see entrepreneurs go head-to-head in a 'Sustainable Tech Pitch Battle'.

Other highlights will include the International Luxury Travel Market (ILTM) Arabia, as well as sessions from the International Travel & Tourism Investment Conference (ITIC), the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) and the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA).

With a selection of additional must-attend events, including sessions focused on the key markets of India, China and the GCC, plus informal speed networking, ATM 2023 will offer something to suit every interest.

My colleagues and I look forward to welcoming you to Arabian Travel Market in Dubai this May. We wish you a safe and pleasant trip.

**Danielle Curtis**  
*Exhibition Director ME,  
Arabian Travel Market*



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# Rotana

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Gateway House 28 The Quadrant, Richmond,  
Surrey TW9 1DN, United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 8271 2158,  
Email: [arabian.helpline@reedexpo.co.uk](mailto:arabian.helpline@reedexpo.co.uk)  
Web: [www.arabiantravelmarket.com](http://www.arabiantravelmarket.com)

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**npimedia**  
PO Box 500573, Office 704,  
Executive Heights, Dubai  
Tel: +971 4 4243640  
Email: [enquiries@npimedia.com](mailto:enquiries@npimedia.com)  
Web: [www.npimedia.com](http://www.npimedia.com)

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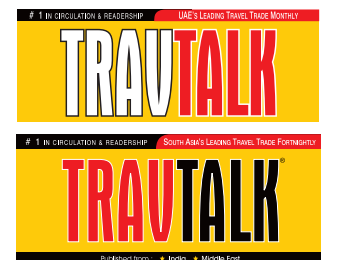
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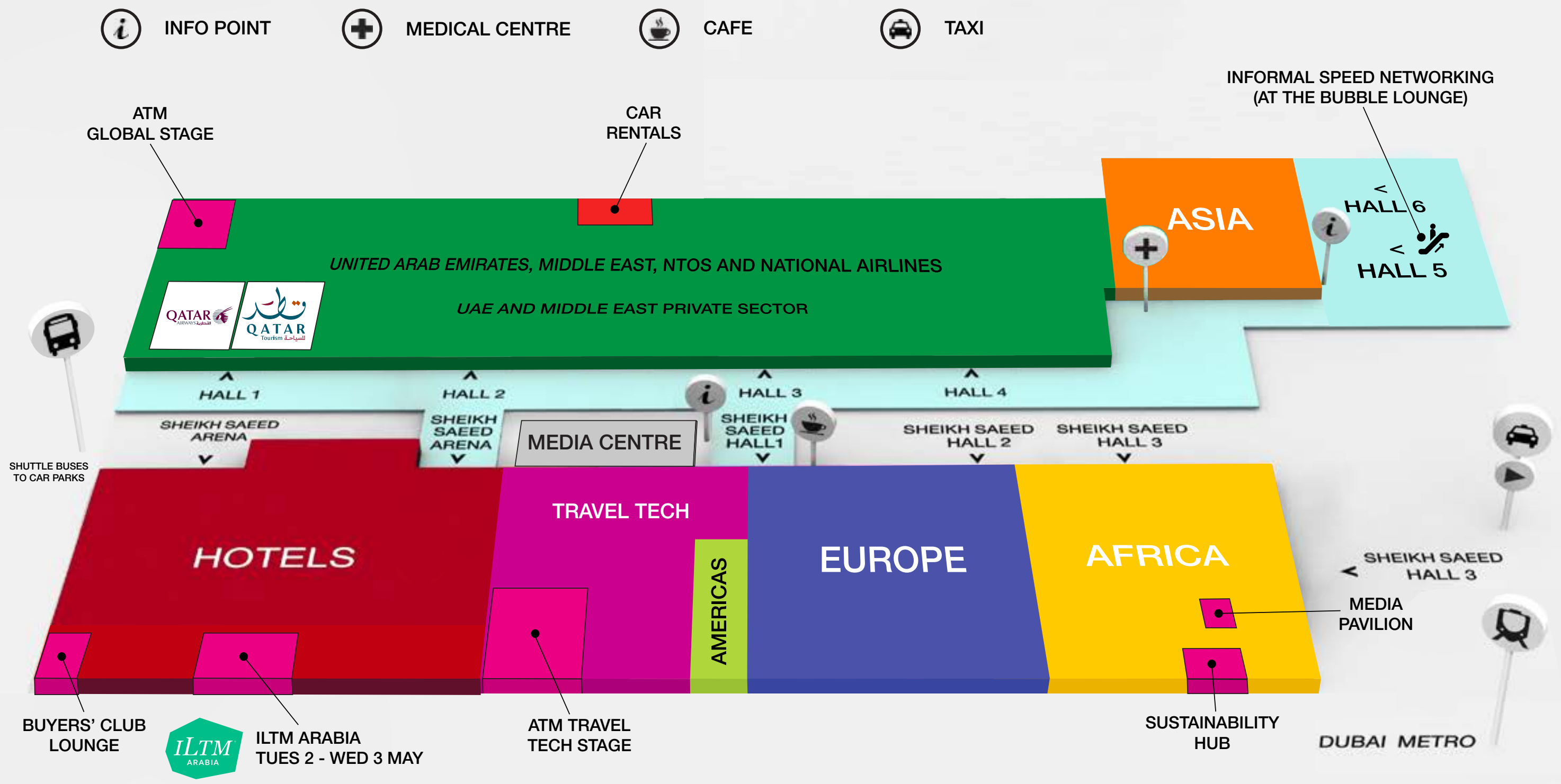


# ATM 2023 Floorplan



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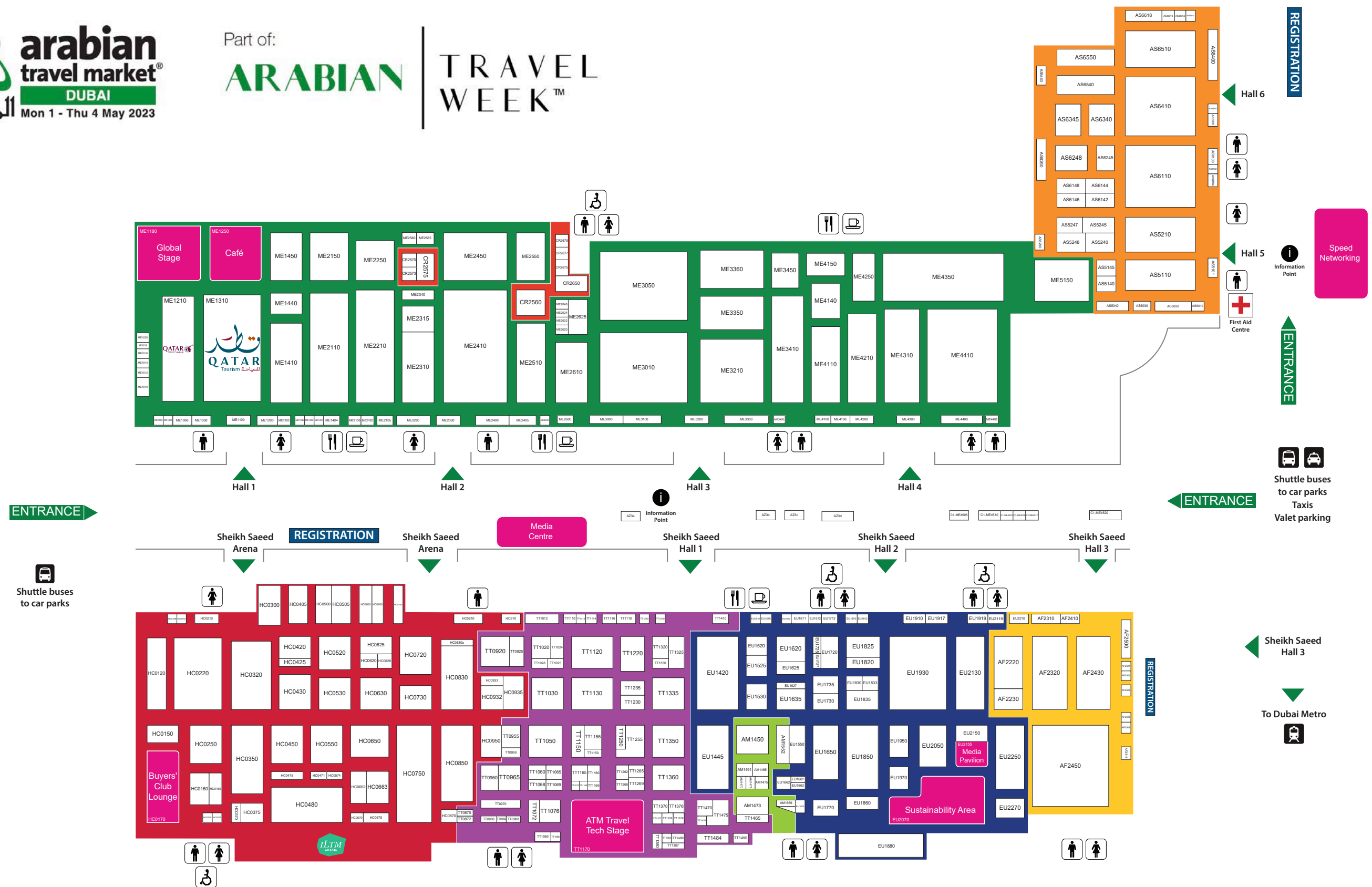
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### Sectors & Regions

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<span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span> Americas	<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Africa	<span style="color: purple;">■</span> ATM Travel Tech
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# SPOTLIGHT ON SUSTAINABILITY

The Middle East's leading travel and tourism event for industry professionals, Arabian Travel Market 2023 returns for its 30th edition with a dedicated sustainability pledge

From May 1 to 4, Dubai will once again welcome tourism professionals from all around the world to the region's leading annual travel trade event. Arabian Travel Market (ATM) celebrates a milestone year in 2023, as the event marks 30 years since its inaugural edition in 1994.

For the last three decades, ATM has connected products and destinations from around the world with buyers and travel trade visitors. The annual exhibition has served as the ideal platform for tourism professionals and businesses in the region and beyond to unlock their maximum potential.

Considered by industry experts as a barometer for the tourism sector in the Middle East and North Africa, ATM hosts the biggest names in the business. Travel luminaries and high-profile brands are in attendance, showcasing their latest products and technological innovations, while the conference programme features some of the most influential speakers in the industry.

Last year, the 29th edition of ATM attracted over 24,000 visitors and hosted over 31,000 participants, including 1,600 exhibitors and attendees from 151 countries, across 10 halls at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC).

**“ARABIAN TRAVEL MARKET CELEBRATES A MILESTONE YEAR IN 2023 AS THE EVENT MARKS 30 YEARS SINCE ITS INAUGURAL EDITION IN 1994**

## WORKING TOWARDS NET ZERO

Each year, ATM highlights specific aspects of travel that will be pivotal in determining the direction the industry will take moving forward. And this year, 'Working Towards Net Zero' has been aptly chosen as the theme for the show.

The programme, therefore, will primarily focus on the industry's sustainability efforts and explore how innovative sustainable travel trends will evolve. Industry experts from around the globe will come together to share their vision of how the travel and tourism sector will look in the coming years as well as identify new trends and opportunities for growth, innovation and effective recovery within specific key vertical sectors.

Also on the occasion of the event's 30th edition, RX (Reed Exhibitions – the show's organiser) has officially initiated its journey to net zero by unveiling a dedicated sustainability pledge, which aims to make ATM 2023 and future editions of the event more sustainable. The team has also announced 30 long-term goals as ATM works towards net zero by the year 2040 in line with the RX pledge.

Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director at Arabian Travel Market, said: "Compounding the challenges of reaching net zero, travel activity is expected to soar by 85 per cent from 2016 to 2030. If the UAE and the wider Middle East are to achieve their net zero ambitions, the travel and tourism industry will play a vital role, given its share of regional economic activity and, of course, its growth potential.

"With COP27 held in Sharm El Sheikh in 2022 and COP28 in Dubai in 2023, it is essential that hotels, airlines, leisure resorts and all associated companies start to put their sustainability strategies in place. While unveiling our strategic path to net zero, ATM 2023 will also provide an ideal platform for industry players to engage with sustainability experts and their peers to address the challenges of achieving net zero."

## GOING THE EXTRA MILE

As part of ATM's commitment to ensuring that the upcoming show is the most climate-conscious edition in the history of the event, the team has implemented an 'Exhibitor Environmental Checklist' that has been created with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in mind. It features practical advice for participants on how to manage waste, minimise



ATM 2022



their energy consumption and reduce carbon emissions, as well as guidance on how to create greener promotional materials and exhibition stands.

Taking the initiative forward, ATM has also introduced a brand-new 'Most Sustainable Stand' category to the ATM 2023 Best Stand Awards. With an aim to highlight the importance of 'thinking green' when it comes to large-scale conferences and exhibitions, entries will be judged based on an extensive range of sustainable criteria, including supplier choice, material usage, operational efficiency and even what happens to the stand once the show has concluded.

Curtis said: "We've really had to think outside the box this year when it comes to supporting and encouraging sustainability. From an internal perspective, our team has implemented a range of purposeful innovations and changes ahead of ATM 2023, such as the removal of printed show guides, QR codes for scanning purposes and digital leads capturing to remove the need for exhibitors to hand out brochures.

"We are confident that by engaging stakeholders with tools and initiatives such as our Exhibitor Environmental Checklist and Most Sustainable Stand category, ATM 2023 will not only set a new benchmark for sustainability within

the Middle East's exhibitions space but also help drive climate-conscious decision-making across the region's travel, tourism and hospitality industry."

Other on-the-ground innovations set to shape ATM 2023 and future editions include a ban on single-use plastic across the venue, water refill stations, a reduction in the volume of printed graphics and signage and the use of recyclable materials across the show.

#### ON THE AGENDA

The conference programme for this year's show has been specifically developed to address sustainability issues across the travel and tourism industry, with commentary from leadership figures representing a variety of sectors, such as destinations, travel technology, aviation, cruises, investment, recruitment, hotels and hospitality.

There will also be a number of sessions dedicated to key source markets, including India, China and the GCC. In addition, the show will see the return of the ATM start-up competition, where, this year, seven innovative travel start-ups will showcase their solutions impacting travel sustainability and recovery to a panel of expert judges and audiences.



ATM 2022



ATM 2022



ATM 2022

**“THIS YEAR'S PROGRAMME WILL PRIMARILY FOCUS ON THE INDUSTRY'S SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS AND EXPLORE HOW INNOVATIVE SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL TRENDS WILL EVOLVE IN THE COMING DECADE**

#### A WEEK IN TRAVEL

Arabian Travel Week, which made its debut during the 2019 edition of ATM, will return this year from May 1 to 10, 2023. A 10-day festival of travel events, it takes place within and alongside ATM.

This year's programme is dedicated to providing a renewed focus on the travel and tourism sector's sustainability efforts. It will feature events such as ILTM Arabia, ARIVAL Dubai, influencers' events and activations, ITIC, GBTA Business

Travel Forums, ATM Travel Tech, the ATM Buyer Forums, ATM Speed Networking Events and a series of country forums.

During the week, all eyes will be on the city as Dubai invites the international travel industry to come together each year and take part in the events that will shape the future of travel.

[Click here to register for ATM 2023](#)



# JAMAICA LAUNCHES 'COME BACK' CAMPAIGN



The year 2022 saw Jamaica bounce back from the COVID-19 fallout as it welcomed 3.3 million visitors to its sunny shores. The destination experienced robust recovery, with the tourism industry earning US\$3.6 billion during the year.

With its sights set on further growth, the forecast is that Jamaica's travel sector will see an 11 per cent increase in 2023. Returning to ATM this year, after its successful participation in last year's show, Jamaica will highlight its new global advertising campaign titled 'Come Back'.

Jamaica's Director of Tourism, Donovan White, said: "The ethos behind our new global campaign is that we are inviting the world to come back to feeling their best selves again in Jamaica. Not only is travelling known to be good for our mental health and physical well-being, but travelling in Jamaica is particularly good for the spirit.

"Jamaica has a way of opening people up to new experiences that feed their natural curiosity, helping them rediscover their sense of adventure and connect with people on the most human level."

The destination is also set to shine the spotlight on its sustainable offering at this year's ATM.

White explained: "We are the land of wood and water, and a great percentage of our attractions are eco-friendly. Jamaica has over 100 rivers and waterfalls with a generous amount of rainfall. The Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park, which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, remains one of Jamaica's most enduring and beguiling eco-attractions.

"Properties have also incorporated sustainable and eco-friendly practices into their operations, with recognition and certification from international organisations.

"Travel and tourism happen within our environment which makes it the background of all our activities. Without our beaches, good air quality, mountains, rivers and more, we would not be able to operate. It is therefore critical to include sustainability practices to preserve our environment, lives and livelihoods."

VISIT STAND AM1450

## TRAWORLUX MARKS INAUGURAL PARTICIPATION

Traworlux, the inbound tour operator and DMC specialising in popular Indian Ocean travel destinations, will be participating in ATM for the first time this year. During its inaugural showcase, the organisation will highlight the beauty of the Maldives.

Shelinaz Sookoor, Business Development Manager for Traworlux Maldives, said: "We are thrilled to participate in Arabian Travel Market and showcase the unique beauty and culture of the Maldives. ATM is one of the most important events in the travel sector, attracting industry professionals from all around the world. As a trusted DMC in the Maldives, we are excited to connect



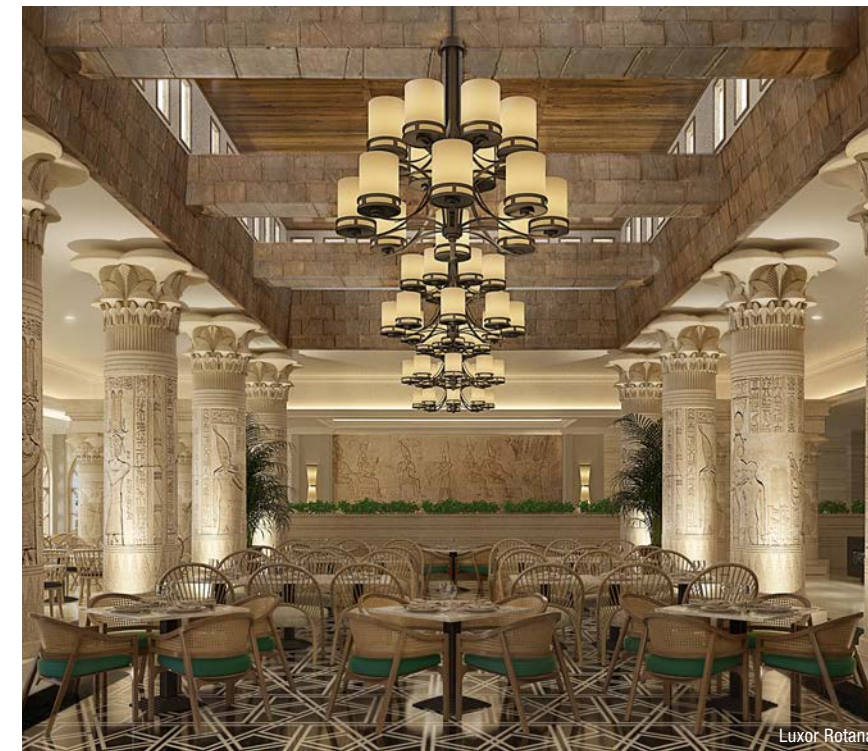
with our peers, share our expertise and establish new partnerships."

At the show, Traworlux Maldives will highlight its extensive range of services, including accommodation, transportation, tours and activities, with a team of experts available to provide personalised advice and recommendations to help clients plan the ultimate Maldives trip.

Sookoor said: "Participating in ATM is a significant step forward for Traworlux Maldives. Visitors to our stand will discover why the Maldives is one of the world's most popular destinations, and how Traworlux Maldives can help plan the ultimate tropical getaway."

VISIT STAND AS6110

## ROTANA TO SHOWCASE GROWING PORTFOLIO



Homegrown hospitality group Rotana is all set to highlight its expansive portfolio of hotels in and beyond the Middle East at ATM, with a special focus on new openings planned this year.

At the show last year, the group announced its hospitality brand Edge, which sees independent hotels utilising Rotana's advanced management and commercial systems to substantially accelerate financial performance. In a short space of time since the launch, Dubai has witnessed the opening of three hotels under the brand.

Guy Hutchinson, President and CEO of Rotana, said: "It's almost a year since we launched Edge at ATM 2022 and that's been a great story for us. We have seen three properties – Arabian Park Dubai, Damac Hills 2 Hotel and Park Apartments Dubai – already open under Edge, and we have a pipeline of another six to eight properties growing very quickly. We also discussed getting up to 30 properties in five years and that target is well within our sights.

"Launching Edge at ATM 2022 was a highlight for us and it has become a very important brand in terms of fuelling our growth across the region."

With its sights set on a successful year ahead, Hutchinson said that 2023 has already proved itself as another

strong chapter in the company's success, with further growth predicted, thanks to a series of new openings.

"The next chapter in our success story is just starting. 2023 is a foundational year and we are seeing rapid acceleration across the UAE and Saudi Arabia. So, we are expanding our business to match that growth.

"We have a number of hotels in the pipeline in Saudi Arabia. We have already established nine properties and are hoping to get up to at least 15 this year. We are also witnessing tremendous growth in Egypt and have a new hotel, Luxor Rotana, coming up this year."

Set to open in Egypt's historic city, the luxury five-star resort will begin welcoming business and leisure travellers in the last quarter of 2023. Nestled on the Nile river and offering stunning views, it will be in close proximity to the city's major attractions, including ancient ruins, monuments, tombs and temples.

The year will also see Rotana marking its first foray into the Algerian market, with the opening of Azure Rotana Resort & Spa. Located in the port city of Oran, the new property will offer 185 rooms and suites, with a host of leisure facilities available for guests.

VISIT STAND HC0720



## ETIHAD AND MARRIOTT BUILD MANGROVE FOREST

Etihad Airways and Marriott International recently planted 12,000 mangrove trees to create the Etihad Marriott Mangrove Forest, spread across 150 square kilometres on Jubail Island along Abu Dhabi's coastline.

The airline's collaboration with the hospitality group is part of the broader Etihad Forest initiative, which aims to plant 182,000 mangrove trees in 2023, before the programme expands to other destinations in which the airline operates.

Employees from Marriott International hotels in the UAE will continue to support preservation efforts of the forest while also monitoring the status of the mangroves through a dedicated app which includes educational information on the mangroves and the technology and processes used to help preserve its ecosystem.

Globally, mangroves store approximately 6.4 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide, almost four times more than other terrestrial forests. At a rate of just more than 12 kilograms a year, the average mangrove captures over 300 kilograms of carbon dioxide in its 25-year lifetime, helping to fight the effects of climate change, such as coral bleaching and coastline degradation, and supporting biodiversity and wildlife.

The Etihad Marriott Mangrove Forest initiative reinforces Etihad Airways and Marriott International's commitment to sustainability and reducing their carbon footprints, while supporting the UAE's wider sustainability efforts.

VISIT STANDS ME2315, ME2310 (ETIHAD AIRWAYS) AND HC0750 (MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL)



## MIRAL ENHANCES YAS ISLAND'S LEISURE OFFERING



SeaWorld Abu Dhabi

**M**iral, Abu Dhabi's leading creator of immersive destinations and experiences, is all set to showcase its diverse portfolio of leisure, entertainment and cultural landmarks at ATM, with a special focus on its latest addition – SeaWorld Abu Dhabi.

A collaboration between Miral and SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, the marine theme park will launch on May 23, featuring an array of immersive experiences and interactive exhibits across five levels spanning approximately

183,000 square metres on Yas Island. When it opens, the Endless Ocean realm (one of eight themed realms) will become the world's largest and most expansive multi-species aquarium, with more than 68,000 marine animals living in a habitat containing over 25 million litres of water.

With more than 100,000 marine animals and 150 species of birds, fish, mammals and reptiles, it will also host the recently opened Yas SeaWorld Research & Rescue centre – the UAE's first dedicated marine research hub.

Miral will also highlight its landmark Yas Island projects that have transformed Abu Dhabi's tourism scene. Warner Bros. World™ Abu Dhabi will soon launch a Harry Potter-themed zone – the first of its kind in the region. Ferrari World Abu Dhabi's new launch – Mission Ferrari – adds to the park's 44 Ferrari-inspired attractions with a 5D experience that features a roller coaster and the world's first sideways coaster drop.

Attendees to the Miral stand will also learn about the company's partnership with the Department of Culture and Tourism (DCT) – Abu Dhabi. Mohamed Abdalla Al Zaabi, Group CEO of Miral, said: "Miral was appointed by DCT – Abu Dhabi to oversee Saadiyat Island's Destination Management Strategy, helping to achieve Saadiyat Vision 2025 that aims to grow domestic, regional, and global visitors, as well as support the development of Abu Dhabi's tourism ecosystem and reaffirm its position as a centre for creativity and innovation."

Miral has also partnered with DCT – Abu Dhabi to develop the multi-sensory facility TeamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi and the Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi, anticipated to be the largest of its kind in the region.

VISIT STANDS ME2450, ME2410

## SAUDI ARABIA ON TRACK TO WELCOME 100 MILLION VISITORS PER YEAR BY 2030

**S**audi Arabia's total of foreign and domestic tourists reached a staggering 93.5 million during the year 2022, with the kingdom on track to reach its target of 100 million annual visitors by the end of this decade. Tourism spending in the kingdom also surged 93 per cent, hitting US\$49 billion.

Reviewing the tourism industry's achievements during 2022, it was revealed that the direct contribution of the sector to the kingdom's gross domestic product amounted to 3.2 per cent of the total target of 10 per cent by 2030. Moreover, the number of jobs reached 880,000 during the year, reflecting an increase of 15 per cent, when compared to the previous year.

Figures released by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) show that Saudi Arabia attracted more than 18 million inbound visits in the first three quarters of 2022, followed by the UAE (14.8 million tourists) and



Elephant Rock, AlUla

Morocco (11 million tourists), which ranked second and third in the region, respectively. Also, during the same period, Saudi Arabia registered more international arrivals than any other Arab nation. These rising figures are a

testimony to the kingdom's ever-growing tourism sector and its commitment to developing world-class destinations within the diverse Saudi landscape.

VISIT STANDS ME4410, ME4350



Hiroaki Castle, Japan

## JAPAN SEES SURGE IN GCC TRAVELLERS

**S**ince introducing a full visa waiver for UAE nationals in November 2022, Japan has witnessed an increase in arrivals from the GCC. Visitors have been flocking to the East Asian island nation at levels similar to that recorded before the international decline in travel in 2020.

The number of UAE nationals visiting Japan in December 2022 was 18.6 per cent higher than in December 2019, while January 2023 saw only a 10.7 per cent difference in comparison to the same period in 2019. With the ongoing cherry blossom season, visitation is expected to rise further.

Daisuke Kobayashi, Executive Director of Japan National Tourism Organisation's (JNTO) Dubai office, said: "The swift return and strong travel demand to Japan by the UAE and GCC nationals has been heart-warming and encouraging."

As a result, the country has ramped up its efforts to entice travellers with attractive packages and new promotions highlighting Japan's natural wonders and culinary delights.

VISIT STAND AS6340

## FLYDUBAI SET TO SOAR WITH NEW ROUTES



Flydubai Boeing 737 MAX

**O**n the heels of a successful year, Flydubai hit the ground running in 2023 with the addition and resumption of several routes.

In January 2023, the Dubai-based airline resumed operations to Ashgabat in Turkmenistan, with a twice-weekly service from January 23. With the resumption of flights to Ashgabat – the capital and largest city in Turkmenistan – the carrier expanded its network in Central Asia to nine points in five countries.

Building on the long history of trade relations between the UAE and Kazakhstan, Flydubai also announced the resumption of flights to Shymkent. The twice-weekly service grows the carrier's network in Kazakhstan to three destinations, including

Almaty and Astana. Furthermore, in March 2023, Flydubai became the first carrier to connect Somalia directly with Dubai and the UAE, with the launch of a daily service to Mogadishu. This move also saw the airline expand its network in Africa to 11 destinations.

In another first for the airline, Flydubai became the first UAE-based carrier to offer flights to Neom in Saudi Arabia, while further expanding its network in the kingdom to include Najran, Al Qaisumah and Jizan.

Flydubai operates flights to more than 116 destinations in the world, many of which were underserved markets that did not previously have direct air links to Dubai. The growing network is served by a fleet of 76 Boeing 737 aircraft.

VISIT STAND ME2510





## EMIRATES RAMPS UP GLOBAL OPERATIONS

Since the start of its financial year in 2022, Emirates has boosted its operations by 31 per cent (total ASKs) and ramped up seat capacity in its latest northern summer schedule. The airline has planned and executed the rapid growth of its network operations, including reintroducing services to five cities, launching flights to one new destination (Tel Aviv in Israel), adding 251 weekly flights onto existing routes and continuing the roll-out of service enhancements in the air and on the ground.

Adnan Kazim, Chief Commercial Officer for Emirates, said: "Emirates continues to expand its global network and deploy its capacity to meet travel demand across the world. Our financial year started relatively quietly as we held back our ramp-up until the planned northern runway rehabilitation program at Dubai International Airport was completed in June. From July 2022 onwards, it's been non-stop expansion."

The recently introduced route enhancements cover key destinations across Europe, Africa, Australia and New Zealand as well as East Asia.

"Emirates is working hard on several fronts – to bring back operating capacity as quickly as the ecosystem can manage, while also upgrading our fleet and product to ensure our customers always enjoy the best possible Emirates experience."

VISIT STAND ME3210

## DUBAI RELAUNCHES CARBON CALCULATOR FOR HOSPITALITY SECTOR



Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) has relaunched its pioneering Carbon Calculator tool that measures the hospitality sector's carbon footprint. The tool has been revamped to track real-time data for carbon emission sources, allowing hotels to identify and effectively manage their energy consumption.

Yousuf Lootah, Acting CEO of Corporate Strategy and Performance sector, DET, said: "We are pleased to relaunch the Carbon Calculator as part of our ongoing commitment to support the UAE Net Zero by 2050 Strategy and align with the Dubai Economic Agenda D33. The upgraded platform also further aligns with the UAE's commitment to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly as the city ramps up preparations to host the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) this year."

Since its inception in January 2017, Dubai Sustainable Tourism's Carbon Calculator tool, part of the Tourism Dirham Platform, has been measuring the carbon footprint of hotels across Dubai. On a monthly basis, hotels are mandated to submit their consumption of nine carbon emission sources, including electricity, water, district cooling, liquefied petroleum gas, landfill waste, recycled waste, petrol, diesel and refrigerants. This information is aggregated and

analysed to provide valuable industry insights on the sector's collective carbon footprint. In addition, by formulating a baseline along with consistent tracking, this information enables hotels to understand their energy, water and waste consumption and further identify successful cost-saving opportunities.

The data provided helps hotels and resorts implement initiatives to efficiently manage their carbon footprint in line with the 19 Sustainability Requirements put in place to establish a baseline across hotels in Dubai and unify their environmental practices. The 19 Sustainability Requirements include sustainable management approaches, performance metrics, energy, food and water management plans, guest education, employee training initiatives, the presence of sustainability committees within hotel establishments and corporate social responsibility programmes for local communities. By improving internal sustainability operations, hotel establishments, in turn, will enhance the competitiveness of Dubai's tourism-linked economy.

Lootah added: "In addition to supporting hotels and resorts within the city's tourism ecosystem, this initiative has a larger goal: creating a city that is the world's most visited and the best place to live and work in, as envisaged by the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan."

VISIT STANDS ME3100, ME3000, ME2610, ME3050, ME3010

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# SHERATON MALDIVES FULL MOON RESORT AND SPA PROMOTES CORAL PROPAGATION INITIATIVE



Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort and Spa

resort has witnessed coral spawning, a testament to the success of its efforts.

Extending the initiative to resort guests, those staying at Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort and Spa can participate in the 'Adopt a Coral' programme to help restore reef habitats and produce new coral colonies.

The resort is also committed to reducing plastic waste via its water bottling plant, which uses reverse osmosis technology to purify seawater, eliminating the need for water transportation from the mainland. The purified water is then bottled in reusable glass containers and made available to guests, reducing the number of plastic bottles.

General Manager, Mohamed El Aghoury, said: "At Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort and Spa, we are deeply committed to preserving the beauty and health of our ocean and island home. We aim to continue driving these efforts and explore new ways to promote sustainability in our operations. Our initiatives are a testament to our commitment to reducing our impact on the environment and leaving a positive legacy for future generations to enjoy."

VISIT STAND AS6110

**S**heraton Maldives Full Moon Resort and Spa has implemented a series of sustainability initiatives that the team will highlight at ATM this year. The Indian Ocean resort is committed to preserving the natural beauty of its island home for generations to come.

The coral propagation project is an example of the hotel's commitment to sustainability. As part of the programme, over 6,000 coral fragments from 15

different coral species have been rescued from the Gulhi Falhu atoll in South Malé and given a second chance to thrive.

These fragments have been transplanted on coral pyramids at the resort in partnership with Reefscapers – a coral propagation organisation appointed by the Maldivian government to protect the marine habitat and restore the coral reefs of the island nation. Since the inception of the programme, the

## VOCO DUBAI THE PALM IS NOW OPEN

**I**HG Hotels & Resorts recently added to its growing portfolio of more than 6,000 hotels worldwide with the opening of Voco Dubai The Palm. A brand-new beachfront hotel on Palm Jumeirah, the property is situated on the island's West Beach, with direct access to the promenade and the Arabian Gulf.

Voco Hotels is one of IHG Hotels & Resorts' 18 distinct brands and focuses on offering guests a charming experience, combining the reassurance of a global brand with the informality of an individual hotel.

Voco Dubai The Palm boasts 138 well-appointed rooms, offering sea and city views, with a host of amenities.

Adding to Dubai's growing dining scene, the resort is home to Maison Mathis, an all-day dining venue

championing European cuisine with a special focus on Belgian food. Another culinary highlight, Frenia serves up snacks and beverages at its rooftop poolside venue, overlooking the Arabian Gulf.

Guests looking to maintain their health routines can access the 24-hour fitness centre. Business travellers can also take advantage of the hotel's meeting rooms, well suited to all types of corporate gatherings.

Highlighting its commitment to a sustainable future, Voco Dubai The Palm boasts an innovative sustainable water system, duvets made of recycled plastic and aerated showers to reduce water usage, all of which are industry-leading initiatives.

VISIT STAND HC0650



Voco Dubai The Palm

# DIRIYAH

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# HILTON COMMITS TO DRIVING RESPONSIBLE TOURISM GLOBALLY

Global hospitality brand Hilton reaffirms its commitment to encouraging responsible tourism globally through its Travel with Purpose Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy. The hospitality chain has set ambitious targets with an aim to create a positive impact across its operations, supply chains and communities by 2030.

Jochem-Jan Sleiffer, President – Middle East, Africa & Türkiye, Hilton, said: “We are constantly assessing how we can embrace sustainability and live up to our Travel with Purpose commitments and Community Promise in everything we do, from using locally sourced products and reducing energy consumption to working with local academic institutions to train and nurture homegrown talent.”

With the goal of moving towards a net-zero future, Hilton’s strategies include cutting emissions by 75 per cent across its managed hotels and by 56 per cent across its franchised hotels. The group is also committed to reducing water consumption and waste by half.

The impact of these practices is measured through LightStay – Hilton’s



Hilton Seychelles Northolme Resort & Spa

award-winning platform for environmental and social impact reporting used by the organisation’s properties worldwide.

Sleiffer said: “In the UAE alone, 30 of our hotels saved close to 9,000 tonnes of carbon emissions from entering the atmosphere through our partnership with agritech platform Fresh on Table, which helped connect hotels to UAE farms to use locally produced ingredients and support local businesses.”

Aiding the MICE sector’s efforts geared towards hosting carbon-neutral

meetings, Hilton introduced ‘Meet with Purpose’, a responsible meetings programme that gives customers the tools to measure and manage the environmental footprint of their meetings using actionable data from LightStay.

“We all have a role to play in this global endeavour to preserve our precious environment, and, at Hilton, we continue to play our part through clear and measurable action.”

VISIT STAND HC0830

# INTERCONTINENTAL RAS AL KHAIMAH MARKS A SUCCESSFUL FIRST YEAR



InterContinental Ras Al Khaimah

Located on the shores of the UAE’s northernmost emirate, InterContinental Ras Al Khaimah recently celebrated its first anniversary. According to the five-star property’s Director of Sales, Denis DeWinter, the hotel has seen tremendous growth in its first year of operation, with a host of new measures introduced to keep the momentum going.

DeWinter said: “We started 2023 strong and the occupancy levels are beyond our expectations. We have established a strong presence in traditional source markets, including the UK and Germany, and are hoping to soon introduce our luxury property to partners in new and emerging markets to further diversify our business.”

“Looking at our performance year to date, we are expecting to achieve record-breaking results, especially as the region

has become a key holiday destination and will continue to further develop.”

Sustainability remains key this year for InterContinental Ras Al Khaimah, with a series of initiatives in place. “In line with IHG’s ‘Journey to Tomorrow’ programme, we strive to make a positive difference to our local communities while preserving the beauty and diversity of our pristine environment. We are proud to be at the heart of a community that places a strong emphasis on solidarity, sustainability and charity.

“Working with organisations such as Al Ihsan Charity and the UAE Red Crescent as well as IHG’s internal initiatives, such as ‘Giving for Good’ and ‘Green Engage’, ensures that our colleagues are empowered every day to dream and work for a better tomorrow.”

VISIT STAND ME3410



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# BEACONS OF THE FUTURE

Saudi Arabia's giga-projects are creating a new tourism landscape in the kingdom while transforming the country's economy



Saudi Arabia is in the midst of massive changes and gaining ground are some of the world's most ambitious giga-projects. From theme parks and metro lines to untouched islands, the country's biggest projects taking shape are rooted in its past with a focus on its future. Key to attracting foreign investment, the projects reflect the reforms taking place as Saudi Arabia moves away from its oil-dominated economy.

## NEOM

Planned for completion in 2025, NEOM was first announced as one of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's showcase projects in 2017. Set to become a city of the future, the US\$500 billion project is key in Saudi Arabia's post-oil diversification plan, expected to contribute at least US\$100 billion to the country's GDP by 2030. Located in northwestern Saudi Arabia, the smart city will span 26,500 square kilometres and will

include regions such as Oxagon, Trojena, The Line and Sindalah.

## THE RED SEA

Merging the goals of sustainability and tourism, The Red Sea Development Company was established in 2018 to transform 28,000 square kilometres of coastline to the kingdom's west. The destination is an archipelago of over 90 untouched islands, home to mountains, volcanoes and a wealth of wildlife. While the destination is already opening up to the public in phases, upon completion in 2030, it will be home to 50 resorts, offering 8,000 hotel rooms and more than 1,000 residential properties spanning 22 islands and six inland sites. While contributing to the economy is a key priority, the destination also aims to set a new standard in sustainable development.

## AMAALA

Intended to complement and sit alongside NEOM and the Red Sea destination is

Amaala on the northwestern coast of Saudi Arabia. Encapsulating three sites located within the Prince Mohammad Bin Salman Nature Reserve – Triple Bay, Coastal Development and The Island – the development will cover an area of more than 3,800 square kilometres. It is expected to have around 2,000 hotel keys, 800 residential villas, apartments and estates, plus 200 retail spaces.

## ALULA

AlUla's US\$15 billion master plan, Journey Through Time, aims to transform the ancient Nabataean region into a destination of art, heritage, culture, tourism and nature. With goals to attract two million visitors to the region annually, new direct flights and an array of new hotel openings show that things are more than underway. The country hopes to transform the region into a living museum, utilising its rich natural and human history to attract the world's curious travellers. A low-carbon tram line, connecting the



region's five districts, will cement its commitment to sustainability, following a similar route to the ancient Hijaz Railway traversed by pilgrims for centuries.

## QIDDIYA

Set to become the kingdom's entertainment, sports and arts capital on the outskirts of Riyadh, the Qiddiya project will span 334 square kilometres, offering a mix of attractions ranging from a 20,000-seat cliff-top stadium to a Formula One-standard racetrack. The US\$8 billion project has been underway since 2019. There will be more than 300 recreational facilities and the area will be divided into five major themes: parks and attractions, sports and wellness, nature and environment, arts and culture, and motion and mobility.

## ASEER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

As part of the tourism strategy for Vision 2030, the redevelopment of the southwestern Aseer region hopes to

attract more than 10 million visitors by 2030. The US\$13 billion project will transform the mountainous area into a year-round destination featuring hotels, residential units as well as commercial and entertainment attractions.

## DIRIYAH GATE PROJECT

Set to become the world's largest culture and heritage city, the US\$50 billion Diriyah Gate project will see the redevelopment of the birthplace of the kingdom. Located just 20 minutes northwest of Riyadh's city centre, all construction of the luxury development will be in the traditional Najdi architectural style and it will include museums, galleries and shops. The area is already home to the At-Turaif District, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which was a 15th-century trading hub made up of mud-brick structures and became the seat of power for the House of Saud in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

VISIT STANDS ME4410, ME4350



# BUILDING SUCCESS

Firm fixtures on Dubai's hospitality scene, Anantara The Palm Dubai Resort and Anantara World Islands Dubai Resort have their sights set on a bright, sustainable future



Manish Singh

The Anantara brand champions experiences that allow guests to fully disconnect from the humdrum of daily life, with properties that make the most of their surroundings and offer a new sense of adventure and leisure.

At Anantara The Palm Dubai Resort, guests enjoy uninterrupted access to 400 metres of private shoreline along the Arabian Gulf, rooms surrounded by a lagoon, the UAE's only overwater villas and relaxing spa rituals. Four kilometres off its coast, Anantara World Islands Dubai Resort, located on the emirate's manmade World Islands archipelago, offers one of Dubai's most unique hospitality experiences.

Since opening almost a decade ago, the former has become a firm fixture on Dubai's hospitality scene, while the latter has been attracting an increasing number of residents and visitors, thanks to its one-of-a-kind offering.

## CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS

Looking back at the past year, Manish Singh, Cluster Director of Sales for Anantara The Palm Dubai Resort, Anantara World Islands Dubai Resort and NH Collection Dubai The Palm, said: "In 2022, we engaged with key source markets from the GCC, while simultaneously exploring new and emerging markets in Israel, Africa, India and the Americas.

"We have been relentless in our pursuit of providing exceptional experiences for our high-spending guests. By focusing on improving and developing the overall quality of stay, we have managed to create unforgettable memories for our clientele. This, in turn, has not only enhanced our brand's reputation but has also positively impacted our bottom line.

"We have also made great strides in building a wider loyalty base by

consistently delivering unparalleled services and experiences to our patrons. We understand the importance of cultivating loyalty and have been dedicated to ensuring that our guests feel valued and appreciated every step of the way. This commitment has resulted in a growing number of returning guests who are eager to spread the word about the Anantara experience."

## FUTURE FOCUS

Singh believes that the brand's successes of 2022 have paved the way for a promising future. Speaking about the group's plans for the year ahead, he said: "As a resort brand that shows no signs of slowing down, we have several exciting openings lined up, such as Anantara Mina Al Arab Ras Al Khaimah Resort, the recently opened Anantara World Islands Dubai Resort and the acquisition and rebranding of Anantara Downtown. We are focused on enhancing our properties by refurbishing rooms, installing a hydroponic farm and implementing numerous sustainability measures both internally and for guests.

"To further elevate the guest experience, we are introducing the

innovative bubble dining concept and increasing visibility for staycations at Anantara World Islands Dubai Resort, providing a novelty experience for many in the GCC region who have yet to explore the World Islands.

"Recognising the potential of Anantara World Islands Dubai Resort as an ideal venue for exclusive events, we are actively promoting it as a viable option for buyouts and weddings. The picturesque setting, combined with our unparalleled service, makes it the perfect choice for unforgettable celebrations.

"The property has also successfully partnered with major travel advisors and high consortia, such as Virtuoso, FHR and Serendipians. These

**“WE HAVE BEEN RELENTLESS IN OUR PURSUIT OF PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCES FOR OUR GUESTS**

collaborations have significantly expanded our reach and allowed us to cater to an even wider client base."

## SUSTAINABILITY FIRST

While growing its hospitality offering, sustainability has been top of mind for Anantara and the brand has been steadfast in its commitment to reducing its environmental impact.

Singh explained: "Over the past six years, our award-winning Palm Jumeirah resort has prioritised sustainability, integrating it into our daily operations. This has involved investments in innovative energy and water efficiency measures, recycling initiatives and significant reductions in plastic and waste.

"To achieve our ambitious goals, we partnered with Sustainability Kiosk Advisors, who have educated and empowered our team. This collaboration has fostered a passionate, environmentally-conscious workforce that regularly proposes and implements eco-friendly solutions. We hold weekly meetings to measure progress and discuss new initiatives. Our team's collective efforts have increased our waste diversion from six per cent to

62 per cent, positioning Anantara The Palm Dubai Resort as a sustainability leader in the industry. This achievement has exceeded Minor Hotels' KPI expectations for organic waste reduction.

"We have also adopted a holistic approach guided by five key principles: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle. These principles have enabled us to make a significant positive impact on the environment, such as saving over one million single-use plastic bottles, reusing 9.7 tonnes of cooking oil and repurposing 21.6 tonnes of food waste into grey water for fertilising and landscaping.

"Our efforts have saved an estimated AED120,000 monthly, amounting to AED1.4 million annually. We anticipate our Food Digester and bottling plant providing a return on investment of almost double their value over the next decade."

The resort's efforts in this space haven't gone unnoticed as it won the Dubai Sustainable Tourism Award in 2019. Keen to further build on this foundation, the property also signed the UNESCO Sustainable Travel Pledge to further highlight its commitment to sustainability and responsible growth.

**VISIT STAND ME3010**



Anantara World Islands Dubai Resort



Anantara World Islands Dubai Resort



Anantara The Palm Dubai Resort





# Global Stage

MONDAY 1ST MAY

11:30 - 12:30  
**MINISTERIAL DEBATE: HOW SHOULD TRAVEL TACKLE THE CLIMATE CRISIS?**

Join tourism and economy figureheads from across the Arab States, as they discuss how the travel and tourism industry must adapt to tackle the pressing climate crisis and meet current regulations through the implementation of new sustainable policies, funds and support.  
**Moderator:** Eleni Giokos, Anchor and Correspondent, CNN  
**Speakers:** Sujit Mohanty, Chief at UNDRR for Arab States; HE Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, UAE Minister of Economy; HE Makram Mustafa Abdul Karim Al-Qaisi, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, Jordan; HE Eng. Walid Nassar, Minister of Tourism, Lebanon

12:45 - 13:30  
**SUSTAINABILITY STARTS WITH SUPPORTING YOUR COMMUNITIES**

How, and, why should you contribute to cultural heritage and reinvest in local resources? This session will highlight how to support your region's living cultural heritage and traditional values and contribute to intercultural understanding, as well as help develop new ways to train, support and learn from the pool of knowledge locally.  
**Moderator:** Jenny Southan, Editor, Founder and CEO, Globetrender  
**Speakers:** Jochem-Jan Sleiffer, President, Middle East, Africa & Türkiye, Hilton; Zina Bencheikh, Managing Director EMEA, Intrepid Travel; Heba Aziz, Director, Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage; Steve Scott, EMEA Market Leader – Future Communities GHD; Jerry Inzerillo, Group CEO, Diryah Gate Development Authority

**SUSTAINABILITY IN THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY: WHO PAYS?**

As pressures to make travel more sustainable, we begin to ask, where will the money to support this actually come from? Businesses still need to support their day-to-day functions, but how can they find additional funding to reach their sustainable goals?  
**Moderator:** Christopher Lund, Executive Director, Head of Hospitality & Tourism, MENA, Colliers  
**Speakers:** Yousuf Lootah, Acting CEO of Corporate Strategy and Performance sector, DET; Haitham Mattar, Managing Director of India, Middle East & Africa (IMEA), IHG; Raki Phillips, CEO, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA); Srdjan Susic MRSB CEnv, Chief Destination Sustainability Officer, PIF - Soudah Development

14:30 - 15:15  
**GREENWASHING IN TOURISM - RECOGNIZING COMPANIES WHO TRULY CARE**

Companies are trying to be more sustainable and reduce their negative environmental impact. However, some companies are taking advantage of this trend to represent themselves as more sustainable than they actually are! The session highlights how to build a more transparent, trustworthy brand when sharing these messages as well as debunking sustainable travel myths.  
**Moderator:** Sarah Hedley-Hymers, Editorial Director, Connecting Travel  
**Speakers:** Dirk Singer, Head of Sustainability, SimpliFlying; Lucas Bobes, Group Environmental Officer and Head of ESG Reporting, Amadeus; Catherine Logan, Regional VP, EMEA and APAC, GBTA;

Inge Huijbrechts, Global Senior Vice President, Sustainability, Radisson Hotel Group

15:25 - 16:25  
**IS SUSTAINABILITY PROFITABLE – WHY CHOOSE THE SUSTAINABLE ROAD?**

This session will showcase how, and, why the industry should be considering the move to sustainability and how other organisations have made changes to their business models, sources of financing and communication to fulfil this. For travel companies to remain competitive, their ethos must be integrated throughout the company's business model as they must remain accountable for their actions. Although initially, this may require additional investments and adjustments, sustainability policies can be immensely profitable in the long run.  
**Moderator:** Dr. Miniya Chatterji, CEO, Sustain Labs Paris  
**Speakers:** Carlos Cendra Cruz, CMO, Mabrian; Christian Delom, Secretary General, A World For Travel; Jared Harckham, Head of Aviation, Travel and Tourism, ICF; Zina Bencheikh, Managing Director – EMEA, Intrepid

16:30 - 17:15  
**SUSTAINABLE LUXURY: AT WHAT COST?**

Luxury and sustainability, find out whether it is possible to have both.  
**Moderator:** Joe Mortimer, Editor at Large, Destinations of the World News  
**Speakers:** Nadia Ibrahim, UN Global Compact; Amir Golbarg, SVP Operations, Minor Hotels; Candice D'Cruz, VP Luxury Brands, Marriott; William Harley-Fleming, Vice President of Operations, JA The Resort and Indian Ocean

TUESDAY 2ND MAY

10:30 - 10:50  
**WTTC'S ROADMAP TO SUSTAINABILITY: THE 5 PILLARS TO SUCCESS**

Join WTTC's Regional Director of Europe, Middle East & Oceania as he shares the five key pillars for successful sustainable travel businesses. This session will highlight best practices and will allow for audience Q&A on all things sustainability.  
**Speaker:** Andrew Brown, Regional Director, Europe, Middle East & Oceania, WTTC

11:00 - 11:45  
**EMIRATES RETURNS TO GROWTH: PRESIDENT OF EMIRATES AIRLINE IN DISCUSSION WITH JOHN STRICKLAND**

As Dubai opened its doors to the world, Emirates has seen a resurgence in traffic. Join Sir Tim Clark as he reflects on the strategies, the challenges and new opportunities which are yet to be exploited for the airline going forward.  
**Moderator:** John Strickland, Director, JLS Consulting  
**Speaker:** Sir Timothy Clark, KBE President, Emirates Airline

11:45 - 12:30  
**THE NET-ZERO FUTURE OF THE AVIATION INDUSTRY**

Will the aviation industry be able to future-proof itself, when the future is green?  
**Moderator:** Shashank Nigam, Founder & CEO, SimpliFlying  
**Speakers:** Brian Moran, Vice President, Global Sustainability Policy & Partnerships, Boeing; Mariam Musallam AlQubaisi, Head of Sustainability & Business

Excellence, Etihad; Yvonne Moynihan, Chief Corporate & ESG Officer, Wizz Air

12:40 - 13:20  
**DRIVING GREEN TRANSPORT IN TOURISM**

What is green transport and how does it impact sustainable tourism?  
**Moderator:** San Jeet, Founder and Managing Director, DDP Group  
**Speakers:** Jehan de The, MD, Europcar Mobility Group; Daniel Rosado, Director – Middle East Office, Spain Tourism

13:30 - 14:00  
**40 YEARS OF SUCCESS AND INNOVATION - DUBAI DUTY FREE**

Join Colm McLoughlin, Executive Vice Chairman and CEO of Dubai Duty Free, as he shares how he has transformed not only airport retail, but also Dubai Tourism, into the future.  
**Moderator:** Jane Witherspoon, Journalist, Euronews  
**Speaker:** Colm McLoughlin, Executive Vice Chairman and CEO, Dubai Duty Free

14:15 - 15:15  
**THE FUTURE OF TRAVEL FOR THE GCC**

How can the GCC countries as a collective, come together and benefit from the tourism boom in the region? This session will bring together representatives from Oman, Bahrain, Saudi and the UAE to discuss what actions need to be carried out to ensure the region can prosper best from its increase in popularity. From visas to infrastructure, how can the GCC become a

stronger collaboration of countries in travel?  
**Moderator:** Sameer Hashmi, Middle East Business Correspondent, BBC

**Speakers:** HE Fatima Al Sairafi, Minister of Tourism, Bahrain; Undersecretary, HE Abdulla Al Saleh, Government of the UAE; Fahd Hamidaddin, CEO, Saudi Tourism Authority

15:30 - 16:15  
**REIMAGINE THE FUTURE, UNLOCKING A NEW ERA OF TRAVEL FOR INDIANS**

As the travel community, how do they attract their clients to delve into this new line of thought? Will MICE also come into play?  
**Moderator:** San Jeet, Founder and Managing Director, DDP Group  
**Speakers:** Naveen Kundu, Managing Director, EbixCash Travel and Holidays; Matthias Sinner, Head of Tourism, McArthurGlen Group

16:30 - 17:30  
**CHINA IS BACK ON THE MAP: MACRO AND MICRO IMPACTS**

The panel will address the Chinese tourism recovery to the Middle East across both macro and micro levels, from understanding the trends to marketing, this session will help you make the most of this re-emerging market.  
**Speakers:** eggy Li, CEO & Chief Troubleshooter, sps:affinity; Sienna Parulis-Cook, Director, Marketing and Communications, Dragon Trail; Winnie Chiu, President, Dorsett Hospitality International





WEDNESDAY 3RD MAY

10:30-11:45  
**ITIC MIDDLE EAST TOURISM INVESTMENT SESSION: SUSTAINABLE DECISIONS**

Join ITIC as they present their annual ATM Investment Summit, covering: The tourism economic outlook; The increasing correlation between sustainability and investment in travel and tourism projects; The growing opportunities for women in the Middle East.  
**Host:** Gerald Lawless, Director, ITIC Ltd, Invest Tourism Ltd., and Ambassador, WTTC  
**Moderator:** Sameer Hashmi, Anchor, BBC  
**Speakers:** HE Ahmed Issa, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of Egypt; HE Makram M. Queisi, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, Jordan; HE Edmund Bartlett, Minister of Tourism, Jamaica; Raki Phillips, CEO, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority; Maher Abou Nasr, Vice President Operations – KSA, IHG; Hamza Farooqui, Founder & CEO, Millat Investments; Elizabeth Maclean, Co-Managing Director, Herdwick Communications; Dr. Lubna Bader Salim Al Mazroei, Manager - Economic Diversification Investments, Oman Investment Authority; Nicholas Maclean, Managing Director MENA Region, CBRE; Nicholas Mayer, Global Tourism Leader, PWC

12:00 - 13:00  
**FUTURE PROOFING THE INDUSTRY: NAVIGATING GEOPOLITICAL TURMOIL AND PLANNING FOR SUCCESS**

With supply and demand patterns disrupted by rising energy and food prices, inflation, the war in Ukraine, escalating geopolitical tensions in key markets around the world, plus the lingering impact of the pandemic, this session looks at the opportunities and challenges for the sector to plan for the future.  
**Moderator:** Rob Willock, Regional GM, Economist Intelligence Network  
**Speakers:** Guy Hutchinson, President & CEO, Rotana Hotel Group; Johan Eidhagen, Managing Director, Wizz Air; Muzzammil Ahussain, CEO, Almosafer

13:10 - 13:55  
**THE ROLE OF ASSOCIATION MEETINGS IN ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

Both developed and emerging economies have already taken steps towards implementing sustainable infrastructure strategies. This session will look at how sustainable infrastructure investment can be a source of economic growth, community well-being and financial returns and promote a sustainable legacy.  
**Moderator:** Anju Gomes, Regional Director Of Middle East, ICCA  
**Speakers:** Philip Dickinson, VP of International Markets and MICE, Qatar

Tourism; Layla Derraz, Director, Dubai Association Centre; Iyad Rasbey, Executive Director, Destination Tourism Development, RAKTDA

14:00 - 14:45  
**ALL HAIL THE TRAVEL INNOVATORS**  
As we enter an era of economic uncertainty, we take a look at the opportunities innovation offers to drive improved services, efficiencies and longer-term cost saving through investment now.  
**Moderator:** Aurelie Krau, Hubli  
**Speakers:** James Britchford, VP Commercial, IMEA, IHG; Jordan Bray, Vice President, Plug and Play; Mohammed Halawi, Global Travel and Journey Risk Management Director, Firmenich FZ LLC

14:50 - 15:35  
**SUCCESSFUL WORKFORCES ARE DIVERSE AND LOYAL**  
This session will highlight the impact of these laws on the industry and how travel, tourism and hospitality entities can recruit, retain and nurture talent to get the right balance, factoring in local laws and quotas.  
**Moderator:** Elham Bolooki, Experiential Learning Manager & Senior Instructor, Dubai College of Tourism  
**Speakers:** Assia Riccio, Founder, Evolvin' Women; Rajesh Chauhan, Head of Human Resources, India Middle East and Africa, IHG; Mira Zakharia, HR Director, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA); Eva Mattheussen, Head of Human Resources for the Middle East and Africa, DHL Global Forwarding

15:40 - 16:25  
**LOOKING BEYOND CONSERVATION: THE POWER OF URBAN REGENERATION**  
Tourism has the power to regenerate

urban areas, minimising environmental impact, preserving and promoting history and culture as well as creating jobs for local communities. We look at destinations and hospitality concepts prioritising urban regeneration, from the community and cultural hubs to new low-impact building techniques.  
**Moderator:** Lorenzo Curci, Co-Founder & CCO, Earthly  
**Speakers:** Andrew Brown, Regional Director, Europe, Middle East & Oceania, WTTC; Rami A. Moukarzel, Founder and Managing Partner, Earth Hotels; Kiran Haslam, Chief of Marketing, Diriyah Gate; Bernardine Galliver, Vice President – Global Tourism Advisory, JLLs

16:35 - 17:35  
**THE SUCCESS OF TOURISM FOR THE UAE: 30 YEARS ON...**  
The tourism industry in the UAE has positioned itself as a massive amplifier of economic diversity, but how? Our speakers will reflect on how the region has not only been able to grow into one of the most loved destinations for travel and tourism but how each state has been able to reposition itself and build a destination that stands out in its own right.  
**Moderator:** Eva Stewart, YouGov  
**Speakers:** Hoor Al Khaja, Associate Vice President – International Operations, DET; Mohamed Abdalla Al Zaabi, Group CEO, Miral; Meerah Ketait, Head of Retail and Leisure UAE at dnata Travel; Iyad Rasbey, Executive Director, Destination Tourism Development, (RAKTDA); Guy Hutchinson, President & CEO, Rotana Hotel Group; Mohamed Abdalla Al Zaabi, Group CEO, Miral; Meerah Ketait, Head of Retail & Leisure UAE, dnata Travel



THURSDAY 4TH MAY



10:15 - 11:30  
**INVESTING IN TOURISM'S FUTURE LEADERS**  
The panel discussion will focus on the benefits of engaging young people in the tourism industry, exploring the issues important to this younger generation, and how industry professionals can connect with their potential future employees. Following this session we will have a short break-out where we invite students to network with industry leaders.  
**Moderators:** Varisha Faisal; Mansoor AlHosani  
**Speakers:** Tim Cordon, CEO - Middle East & Africa, Radisson Hotel Group; Mark Kirby, Head of Emaar Hospitality Group; Mira Zakharia, our Senior Director of HR, RAKTDA

11:45 - 12:15  
**GLOBAL HORIZONS: DEFINING TRAVELLER BEHAVIOURS**  
This session will use Skyscanner's unique search data to cover the latest travel search and booking behaviour, including seasonality and booking horizons, and help you piece together who the traveller of 2024 will be.  
**Moderator:** Nick Hall, Digital

Tourism Think Tank  
**Speakers:** Mike Ferguson, Director, Destinations & Hotels, Skyscanner; Sasha Al Jurdi, Head of Content and Programming at TikTok MENA  
  
12:20 - 13:20  
**BEYOND 2031: WHO ARE THE MIDDLE EAST'S FUTURE TOURISTS?**  
It is important that the industry keeps up with trends and looks further than just year-on-year, instead has an eye on 10 or 15 years into the future. This session will look at trend reports, analysis and booking patterns of travellers to help paint a picture of the Middle East's travellers of the future.  
**Moderator:** Rohit Talwar, CEO, Fast Futures  
**Speakers:** Eva Stewart, Global Sector Head of Travel and Tourism, YouGov; Richard Stolz, Principal, Roland Berger; Sarah Duignan, Director of Client Relationships, STR; Dave Goodger, MD- EMEA, Oxford Economics

13:30 - 14:15  
**INNOVATING TRAVEL - EXPERIENCES, TOURS & ATTRACTIONS**  
What role will Tours, Attractions and Experiences play in tourism moving

forwards, and are they worth the investment?  
**Moderator:** Joe Naaman, Partner, Twenty31 Consulting  
**Speakers:** Stephanie Reichenbach, Founder, Nara; Liam Findlay, Chief Executive Officer, Miral Destinations; Joss Croft, CEO, UKinbound; Farshid, CEO of Turpal  
  
14:30 - 15:15  
**SPACE TOURISM, DO WE HAVE LIFT OFF?**  
Join our speakers as they discuss whether space tourism will actually be achieved and become a new part of travel or whether it is a race that can never be won.  
**Moderator:** Jenny Southan, Editor, Founder and CEO, Globetrender  
**Speakers:** Daniel Macinne, Director, PriestmanGoode; Michael R. Henderson, Co-Founder, Moon World Resorts Inc.





# Travel Tech Stage

## MONDAY 1ST MAY

11:30 - 12:15  
**TECHNOLOGY: THE ENABLER OF SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL**  
Which technology in the online business world is driving sustainability? And are travel platforms facilitating sustainable development?  
**Moderator:** Shashank Nigam, CEO, Simplifying  
**Speakers:** Tom Kershaw, Chief Product & Technology Officer, Travelport; Carlo Olejniczak, Vice President & Managing Director, EMEA, Booking.com; Lucas Bobes, Group Environmental Officer and Head of ESG Reporting, Amadeus; Andrea Prazakova, Senior Vice President, Mastercard EEMEA

12:20 - 12:50  
**DATA-DRIVEN TRAVEL RECOVERY: THE HOW, THE SIGNS, THE TRIUMPHS**  
In this session, our panel of travel industry leaders will discuss the signs of recovery that they are seeing in their businesses as well as discussing areas including the role that data will play in their recovery, the technologies they see as essential for the future of travel and why and how to aid the concerns of consumers.  
**Moderator:** Daniela Wagner, Group Business Development Director, Jacobs Media Group  
**Speakers:** Marc Padrosa, Global Industry Director – Travel, Kantox; Priyanka Lakhani, Senior Vice President, Commercial EMEA, Collinson; Tony Smyth, SVP Corporate Development and

Communications, iFree Group; Rainer Schäfer, Vice President Sales, GIATA  
13:00 – 13:20  
**AN INTERVIEW WITH THE GLOBAL CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER OF IHG HOTELS AND RESORTS**  
**Moderator:** Paul Clifford, Group Editor, Hospitality & Design, ITP Media Group  
**Speaker:** Claire Bennett, Global Chief Customer Officer, IHG Hotels and Resorts

13:30 - 14:15  
**HOSPITALITY DEBATE: WHAT MORE CAN BIG DATA UNLOCK?**  
The session will help you learn why to manage data for maximum effectiveness across different business functions, and how to elevate customer service in doing so.  
**Moderator:** Paul Clifford, Group Editor, Hospitality & Design, ITP Media Group  
**Speakers:** Chris Hartley, CEO, Global Hotel Alliance; Tommy Lai, CEO, GHM Hotels; Sandeep Walia, COO - Middle East, Marriott; Nicolas Huss, CEO, Hotelbeds

14:30 - 15:15  
**DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION DRIVEN BY SINGLE-PAYMENTS PLATFORM: A MILLION DOLLAR OPPORTUNITY**  
Discover how you can streamline operations and increase revenue using a single payments platform to provide your guests with a seamless experience that will keep them coming back for more!  
**Speakers:** Fleur Besteman, Growth Manager

– Hospitality, Adyen; Mansoor Khan, Vice President – Middle East Hospitality, Adyen  
15:25 - 16:00  
**INNOVATING WITH ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL**  
How can you innovate your current accessibility deliverables and advertise them to ensure everyone has the best experience possible? Join our speakers as they help shine a light on how technology can unlock this.  
**Moderator:** Nicholas Hall, Founder, Digital Tourism Think Tank  
**Speakers:** Renate Baur-Richter, Program Manager, SEDRA Foundation for Inclusion of People with Disabilities; Kyron Portwig, Acting Director – Visitor Experience & Sales, Louvre Abu Dhabi; Jason Burnett, Group Technical Director, Intertek Cristal

16:00 - 17:00  
**ENHANCING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THROUGH AI**  
Artificial Intelligence is beyond chatbots, biometrics and analytics. This session will uncover how the travel and tourism industry should be capitalising on this technology to improve customer experiences from start to finish.  
**Moderator:** Karl Escritt, CEO, Like Digital  
**Speakers:** Sanjay Sharma, Head of IT, Jumeirah Group; Frank Trampert, SVP and Global MD, Sabre Hospitality; Samir Abi Frem, CEO, Lokalee

## TUESDAY 2ND MAY

10:30 - 11:30  
**GETTING INTO THE MIND OF A DIGITAL CONSUMER**  
The typical traveller is changing and this is being led by technology. But how can you capitalise on this and pivot your business to gain their attention? This session will help you get into the mindset of a digital consumer.  
**Moderator:** Rohit Talwar, CEO, Fast Futures  
**Speakers:** Rabia Yasmeen, Senior Consultant, Euromonitor; Mario El Feghali, Industry Lead - Travel & Tourism, Global Business Solutions MENA at TikTok; Brent Roberts, Director of Sales, Global Destinations, Amadeus

11:45 - 12:30  
**HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY MARKET YOUR DESTINATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA**  
This session will reveal a highly effective strategy for promoting destinations in social media and influencer marketing age. It's clear that influencer marketing is a powerful tool for generating interest in travel destinations. During this session, YKONE will share valuable insights gained from executing numerous global and local travel campaigns over the past few years.  
**Speaker:** Dominique Audibert, Business Director, Ykone

12:45 - 13:45  
**BRAND DIFFERENTIATION: HOW TO CHANGE THE NARRATIVE**

**WITH STORYTELLING**  
This expert panel will discuss success cases and how you can leverage local storytelling to differentiate your brand and disperse visitors.  
**Moderator:** Matt Gibson, CEO, Upthink  
**Speakers:** Danny Cohanpour, CEO, Trove Tourism; Ruqaya AlHameeri, Education Manager, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Centre for Cultural Understanding; Matthias Albrecht, Director – GCC, Switzerland Tourism

14:00 - 14:45  
**MEET THE TRAVELLER OF THE FUTURE: FOUR NEW GLOBAL TRAVELLER TRIBES AND HOW THEY WILL ENGAGE WITH YOUR BUSINESS**  
This year at ATM, Amadeus is pleased to share its latest global, independently researched study of more than 10,000 travellers in 15 countries including the UAE. Future-proof your business by discovering what will make travellers tick in 2033 and see how the future traveller tribes are emerging today.  
**Speakers:** Jamel Chandoul, Senior Vice President – Travel Sellers, META and EMEA Partner Markets, Amadeus; Rob Golledge, Head of Corporate Communications for Europe, Middle East and Africa, Amadeus; Saleem Sharif, Deputy Managing Director, ATS Travel; Pallav Singhvi, Vice President of Consumer Business, Almosafer

15:00 - 16:00  
**DISRUPTING DESTINATIONS: HOW TECHNOLOGY IS INFLUENCING GROWTH**  
What emerging technologies are out there and how can you implement them to create a more connective and exciting destination that is ready for the future and how has technology changed the travel industry?  
**Moderator:** Karl Tlais, CEO, iAdvisory  
**Speakers:** Jan Dolezal, CEO, SmartGuide; Basmah Al Mayman, UNWTO Regional Director for the Middle East

16:15 - 17:00  
**IS SUSTAINABILITY THE FUTURE OF LOYALTY PROGRAMMES?**  
Our speakers will uncover how you can use data to refine and deliver more customer-led loyalty programmes, and how loyalty programmes can play a major role in helping companies to achieve their sustainability targets.  
**Moderator:** Dilek Glenister, Co-Founder & Executive Director, Global Loyalty Organisation  
**Speakers:** Jelena Kezika, Senior Director, Strategy at GHA; Kim Hardaker, VP of Loyalty & Partnerships, Etihad; Inge Huijbrechts, Global SVP Sustainability, Security and Corporate Communications, Radisson Hotels





WEDNESDAY 3RD MAY

10:30 - 11:15  
**INVESTMENT TRENDS**  
**LEADING TRAVEL TECH**  
Global travel demand is up, but with macroeconomic headwinds and fears of a global recession, what does that mean for travel startups and the world of venture capital? This session will provide the latest venture capital funding outlook and emerging investment trends in travel tech.  
**Speakers:** Mike Sung, Director, Partner Success - Travel & Hospitality at Plug and Play; Kristi Choi, Ventures Team Lead, Plug & Play (more to be announced soon)

11:30 - 12:30  
**THE FUTURE OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM IN THE METAVERSE**  
This session will help you understand how to effectively include metaverse into your marketing, talent and business development strategies, providing thought-provoking ideas on how travel and tourism can embrace this new 3D world.  
**Moderator:** Karl Escritt, CEO, Like Digital  
**Speakers:** Gauthier Guillaume, CEO & Creative Director, GG&Grace; Emanuel Erdem, Web3 and Metaverse Consultant, Excludible; Joël Kremer, Partner, Moyosa Media; Ahmed H. Daoud, Executive Director of Innovation at the Royal Commission for AlUla

12:45 - 13:30  
**THE MAIN TRENDS IMPACTING TRAVEL IN 2023 AND BEYOND**  
Travel players have been responding to these changes based on their own commercial priorities, perspectives and resources, but are these individual efforts driving the collective change that the industry needs, and how will the travel ecosystem develop as we move through 2023 and beyond?

**Moderator:** Abdul-Razzaq Iyer, Vice President – Travel Solutions, Sabre  
**Speakers:** Andy Finkelstein, Senior Vice President – Travel Solutions, Sabre; Jason Hooper, Head of Digital Solutions, Dnata; Dean Wicks, Chief Flights Officer (CFO), Wego

13:45 - 14:45  
**WEB3: A FAD OR THE FUTURE?**  
Web3 is the latest iteration of the internet, and while it is still evolving, several use cases in the travel sector are emerging, that threaten to disrupt the business model of some of the incumbent players. Learn whether the travel industry can capitalise on this technology or leave it to other industries.  
**Moderator:** Rahul Jagtiani, Founder & Managing Partner, Plush Living  
**Speakers:** Arul Prakash, Founder & CEO, Buk Technology Inc.; Ajay PV, Senior Vice President, Polygon Labs; Mauricio Marques, Co-founder & CEO, Yacooba Labs

15:00 – 15:45  
**EDITION OF ROYAL AIR MAROC’S DIGITAL OPEN INNOVATION PROGRAM**  
Royal Air Maroc is launching the second edition of RAM Digital Open Innovation program around new technologies

(AI, ML, RPA, etc.) applied to the challenges identified by the airline.  
**Speakers:** Addou Abdelhamid, Chairman of the Board and CEO, Royal Air Maroc; Kharlamov Alexei, Senior Vice President – Transformation, Royal Air Maroc; Driouiche Mohamed El Mehdi, Vice President – Digital & IT, Royal Air Maroc; Briuni Mohamed Amin, Head of Digital Strategy & Governance, Royal Air Maroc; Barramou Ola, Innovation & Culture Lead, Royal Air Maroc; El Mernissi Fatimazahra, Digital Strategy Manager, Royal Air Maroc; Zizi Yasmina, IT Internal Accounting and Quality Manager, Royal Air Maroc

16:00 - 17:00  
**THE RISE TO CRYPTOCURRENCY: USE-CASES WITHIN TRAVEL TRADE**  
Will we witness the widespread adoption of crypto in the time to come? Join our esteemed panel as they debate the use of crypto and whether it is beneficial to the travel industry.  
**Moderator:** Rahul Jagtiani, Founder & Managing Partner, Plush Living  
**Speakers:** Pekka Kelkka, Founder, Papa Blockchain; Sanjay Sharma, Head of IT, Jumeirah Group; Akshata Namjoshi, Associate Partner, KARM Legal Consultants Pvt Ltd.



THURSDAY 4TH MAY

11:00 - 11:30  
**ENCOURAGING INTERNAL CHANGE: THE DIGITAL MINDSET**  
This session is dedicated to digital transformation and the mindset and cultural shift required to support, embrace and remain agile to fully maximise digital and technology opportunities on the horizon. At a period of such seismic disruption when it comes to digital, driven by major developments in artificial intelligence, a session focused on the skillset, culture and knowledge required to tackle this could not be more timely.  
**Moderator:** Nicholas Hall, Founder, Digital Tourism Think Tank  
**Speakers:** Aun Asia, Director of Digital Field Marketing (UAE) - Marriott International; John Lee, CEO, H2O Hospitality; Daniel Rosado Bayón, Director, Spanish

Tourism Office for Middle East

11:45 – 12:30  
**DEMYSTIFYING NDC: INSIGHTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**  
How ready are you for NDC? Discover the latest trends and opportunities in NDC adoption. What does NDC mean for travel companies? Learn how NDC can be a force for good, albeit with challenges. Gain practical insights and applications from TPConnects, to help you navigate the dynamic world of modern airline retailing.  
**Speakers:** Rakshit Desai, Chief Executive Officer, TPConnects; George Rajan, Vice President – Sales, TP Connects

12:40 - 13:30  
**CHATGPT: IS IT THE FUTURE OF CONTENT?**

ChatGPT is one of the hottest words across all industries at the moment, but what really is it?  
**Speaker:** Matt Gibson, CEO, Upthink

14:30 - 15:15  
**DIGITAL INTERACTIONS AND DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING**  
Collaborative working is a key point to any company's success. Data is a vital part of any strategy, having the potential to use this effectively and sharing it with other networks can work to your benefit.  
**Moderator:** Becky Syder, Commercial Director, Oxford Economics  
**Speakers:** David Goodger, Managing Director - EMEA, Oxford Economics; Gabriel Seder, Vice President, Global Development, Destinations International; Ghadi Achkar, Market Manager, AirBnB



Sustainability Hub

MONDAY 1ST MAY

11:45 - 12:45  
**IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABILITY IN YOUR TRAVEL PROGRAM – WHERE TO START**  
Join the Global Business Travel Association, for practical insight on how to get started on making your corporate travel programme more sustainable.  
**Speaker:** Catherine Logan, Regional Vice President – EMEA & APAC, Global Business Travel Association

13:00 - 13:40  
**ACHIEVING NET POSITIVE HOSPITALITY, A CONVERSATION WITH THE CEO OF SUSTAINABLE HOSPITALITY ALLIANCE**  
As the SHA says: "The future of the tourism industry depends on protecting the locations, livelihoods and communities in which hotels are based." This conversation will cover why this major transformation has occurred, the SHA's plans for the next five years and how people in the audience can benefit from its programmes of work and publications.  
**Moderator:** Harold Goodwin, ATM's Responsible Tourism Advisor  
**Speaker:** Glenn Mandziuk, CEO, Sustainable Hospitality Alliance

13:45 - 14:45  
**RESPONSIBLE HOSPITALITY FOR A BETTER WORLD**  
Both the Sustainable Development Goals and changing consumer demand require

that the industry transition more rapidly to be more sustainable. How do hotels engage their guests and their staff in reducing their environmental impact?  
**Moderator:** Harold Goodwin, ATM's Responsible Tourism Advisor  
**Speakers:** Julie Cheetham, Managing Director, Weeva; Inge Huijbrechts, Global SVP of Sustainability, Security and Corporate Communications, Radisson Hotels; Glenn Mandziuk, CEO, Sustainable Hospitality Alliance; Christopher Warren, Founder and CEO, My Green Butler; Sherin Francis, Principal Secretary, Tourism Seychelles

14:50 – 15:20  
**THE GREAT DEBATE - DO WOMEN REALLY BELONG ON TOP IN TRAVEL & TOURISM?**  
Join Aradhana Khowala for a thought-provoking and out-of-the-box talk on women's empowerment and leadership. Expect a talk where nothing will be off-limit, an honest conversation that will lay down the cards on the table about the broken promise of women's empowerment.  
**Speaker:** Aradhana Khowala, CEO & Founder, Aptamind Partners

15:45 - 16:15  
**EVOLVING ROLE OF THE DMO**  
This session will look at the evolving role and function of the destination organisation and draws on Destinations International's global

membership of destination organisations to examine successful case studies of DMOs that are delivering measurable economic, social and environmental benefits for their communities.  
**Moderator:** Sarah Ayache, Government Advisory, Director, Consulum  
**Speaker:** Gabriel Seder, Vice President – Global Development, Destinations International

16:30 - 17:00  
**SUSTAINABILITY IN THE AIR - LIVE PODCAST**  
Join SimpliFlying as they interview a sustainable leader, live, for their podcast.  
**Moderator:** Shashank Nigam, Founder & CEO, SimpliFlying  
**Speakers:** Captain Ibrahim Koshy, CEO, Saudia; Con Korfiatis, CEO, flyadeal





TUESDAY 2ND MAY

11:00 – 11:45  
**THE SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE**  
This session will explore the topic of sustainability and how to live sustainably. Pillars of sustainability and our accountability towards our ecological footprint will be covered as well as the importance of living a sustainable lifestyle and its main motivators and how this can be achieved by individuals, businesses and countries will be highlighted.  
**Speaker:** Fatima Al Suwaidi, Specialist, BEEAH Group

11:45 - 13:00  
**PLUG AND PLAY: SUSTAINABLE TECH – START-UPS PITCH BATTLE**  
Discover what innovative technologies are being worked on within the travel industry, as seven innovative travel start-ups battle it out on stage to a panel of expert judges and audience members. We will be joined by start-ups: CarbonClick, Eliago, Winnow, Hotelverse, Thrust Carbon & OACIS.  
**Moderator:** Mike Sung, Director - Partner Success, Plug & Play  
**Judges:** Natalie Seatter, Chief Product Officer, OAG; Jalil Mekouar, Founder & CEO, Inovate Solutions; Kristi Choi, Ventures Team Lead, Plug & Play; Winnie Chiu, President, Dorsett Hospitality International; Essam AlZahrani, Tourism Startup Studio Programme

Manager, Ministry of Tourism – Saudi  
13:15 – 14:00  
**THE NEW TREND OF TOURISM. I AM A NOMAD OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC BASED ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**  
The Tourism Development Support Fund of the Kyrgyz Republic introduces the new trend of the travel and tourism industry based on sustainable development, untapped nature and the unique nomad's way of life connected to the legendary great Silk Road in the Kyrgyz Republic.  
**Speaker:** Kairat Itibaev, Vice President, Tourism Development Support Fund of the Kyrgyz Republic

14:15 - 14:45  
**IN CONVERSATION WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF KEF HOLDINGS & FAIZAL AND SHABANA FOUNDATION**  
This conversation will range across the wellness resorts concept, the launch of technology for responsible tourism and the range of sustainability technology deployed at Tulah, technology which has raised the water table.  
**Moderator:** Harold Goodwin, ATM's Responsible Tourism Advisor  
**Speaker:** Faizal Kottikollon, Founder & Chairman, KEF Holdings

14:50 - 16:00  
**GREEN TECHNOLOGY FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM**  
This panel of experts will share their views on reducing carbon emissions and water consumption and dealing with waste as well as the role technology can play within this.  
**Moderator:** Harold Goodwin, ATM's Responsible Tourism Advisor  
**Speakers:** Iftikhar Hamdani, Area General Manager, Bahi Ajman Hotel and Coral Beach Resort, Sharjah; Sari Abi Haidar, MEA Area Director for Engineering & Technical Services, Radisson Hotel Group; Keith Bradley, Managing Partner, Globally; Srdjan Susic MRSB CEnv, Chief Sustainability Officer, Soudah Development; Bernadette Willemin, Director General – Marketing, Tourism Seychelles

16:00 - 16:30  
**SUSTAINABILITY IN THE AIR - LIVE PODCAST**  
Join SimpliFying as they interview a sustainable leader, live, for their podcast.  
**Moderator:** Shashank Nigam, Founder & CEO, SimpliFlying  
**Speaker:** Shaenaz Voss, CCO, Fiji Airways and CEO, Fiji Link

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WEDNESDAY 3RD MAY

10:45 - 11:30

**STRATEGIC SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING – WHERE DOES THE SUPPLY-CHAIN START?**

Sustainable supply chains, where do they start? Our speakers will spar on their various perspectives which must take into consideration in the development of sustainable supply chains.

**Moderator:** Gabriel Seder, Vice President, Global Development, Destinations International

**Speakers:** Edmund Bartlett, Minister of Tourism, Jamaica; HE Ghada Shalaby, Vice Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, Arab Republic of Egypt; Dr. Miniya Chatterji, CEO, Sustain Labs Paris

11:45 – 12:30

**SHAPING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

Sustainability is playing a bigger role within activities, tours and attractions. Join Solar Innovation Centre Dubai as they explain how the Innovation Centre is becoming Dubai's New Icon for sustainability.

**Speaker:** Marwan Juma Mohammed Bin Doe, Business Development & Excellence, Solar Innovation Centre

12:40 - 13:40

**CARBON OFFSETTING, THE BIG DEBATE**

When planning to offset carbon footprints should the offset take place locally where the carbon is released, or does it matter? Is there a right answer? Where is local offsetting possible, and should it be done? Join our industry experts to find out.

**Moderator:** Andrew Brown,

Regional Director, Europe, Middle East & Oceania, WTTC

**Speakers:** Mark Corbett, Director, Thrust Carbon; Nicolas Soucaille, General Manager, Blacklane Middle East; Sanith de Silva Wijeyeratne, Director and CEO, Climate & Conservation Consortium

13:45 - 14:30

**THE SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY. HOW DO WE GET THERE?**

The presentation will provide visibility on the evolution of expectations regarding sustainable travel and will propose three strategic pillars to make the industry more sustainable  
**Speaker:** Lucas Bobes, Group Environmental Officer and Head of ESG Reporting, Amadeus

14:40 - 15:15

**MARITIME TOURISM - PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS AND AMAZING DEVELOPMENTS**

The Gulf supports a wide range of marine life, and is a magnet for visitors and locals, but, are the coastlines and the offshore habitats protected sufficiently to enable the maritime tourism boom successfully and sustainably?

**Moderator:** Bruno Wiley, Senior Advisor, Prospexi

**Speakers:** Will Bateman, CEO and Founder, CCell Renewables; Hon. Vensensius Jemadu, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Indonesia; Madame Sherin Francis, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Tourism Department, Seychelles

15:30 – 17:00

**THE SUSTAINABILITY THINK TANK**

Join Goumbook as they raise awareness on sustainable solutions, proper waste management, the benefits of recycling and more. This Think Tank is an opportunity for everyone to share ideas on how travel can improve and develop its sustainable offerings. The session aims to spark ideas and encourage audience interaction, whilst sharing best practices within the industry and beyond.

**Moderator:** Tatiana Antonelli, Founder & Managing Director, Goumbook

**Speaker:** Emma Banks, Vice President – F&B Strategy & Development EMEA, Hilton



THURSDAY 4TH MAY

11:30 - 12:00

**RURAL TOURISM: TAKING TOURISTS OFF-THE-BEATEN TRACK**

Rural tourism encourages the spread of tourists, reliance on public transport and is another opportunity to support heritage and culture locally. It is also a vital part of sustainable tourism. Learn the benefits of rural tourism and how you can tap into this growing market.

**Moderator:** Rashi Sen, Editor, TTN

**Speakers:** Matthias Albrecht, Director GCC, Switzerland Tourism; Yamina Sofo, Director of Sales & Marketing of German National Tourist Office for Gulf Countries; Ansar Babu, Director of Global Distribution & International Operations, Royal Commission of AlUla; Emily Jenkins Head of Product Development DW Travel

12:15 - 13:00

**TACTICALLY SUPPORTING SUSTAINABILITY**

Education about sustainability also must

include addressing the most difficult of all in this effort to save our planet – shifting the mindset of travellers and suppliers. Here are two companies using their platforms to change behaviours through commercial activities.

**Moderator:** Ben McCabe, Founder, McCabe & Associates

**Speakers:** Hon. Vensensius Jemadu, Deputy Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Indonesia; David Bishop, Government Affairs, CONSULUM; Rhea Saran, Global Head of Brand and Content, Travelzoo

13:10 - 13:45

**PLANTING THE SUSTAINABILITY SEED: CHANGING CULTURE WITH EDUCATION**

How can you embed the sustainability mindset into the culture of your business?

This session will demonstrate how to successfully manage, change and encourage sustainable mindsets in your staff to ensure that all practices from start to end are sustainable,

rather than seeing sustainable policies as a check box exercise.

**Moderator:** Jane Witherspoon, Journalist, Euronews

**Speakers:** Hind El Aoufi, Digital Leader - Middle East, Practice Director Digital Lab, EMEA; Basmah Al Mayman, Regional Director for the Middle East, UNWTO

14:00 - 14:45

**WORKSHOP - DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ACTION PLAN**

Showcasing those who are successfully taking a sustainable approach, from destinations to tour operators, hotels to aviation. Learn about the struggles they have faced and how to avoid them moving forwards.

**Moderator:** Tarek Shawki, Managing Partner, Katalysts & Co

**Speakers:** Jared Harckham, Head of Aviation, ICF; Ripin Kalra, Sustainable Destination Development, Urban Resilience - Project BASED

THE ABOVE ATM 2023 SEMINAR SCHEDULE IS UP TO DATE AT THE TIME OF PUBLISHING.



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# GROWING SUSTAINABLY

In alignment with the theme 'Working Towards Net Zero', the 30th edition of Arabian Travel Market offers tourism businesses the opportunity to undergo fundamental course correction and accelerate climate action

Halong Bay, Vietnam

Scientists have found that by the year 2050, our planet will have warmed 1.5°C above preindustrial times. By the end of the century, this figure is set to increase by another half-degree to 2°C. While it may seem like a marginal rise, it is projected to make a huge difference. If left unchecked, carbon emissions will accelerate this rate of global warming, bringing forth untoward ecological occurrences and cataclysmic weather patterns quicker than the predicted tipping point.

It is estimated that around 11 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions are due to global tourism activities, with this statistic expected to double in

the next three decades. From flights to lodging, every tourism-related activity that allows travellers to explore destinations around the world contributes to the industry's carbon footprint, negatively impacting the environment. A majority of this footprint can be attributed to destinations that rely on tourism as their primary source of income, as well as travellers from high-income countries.

With this impact on the planet becoming increasingly evident, it is critical for tourism businesses to take action and reduce the industry's reliance on fossil fuels and other resources available in a finite amount. Underscoring the urgency, Dr. Harold Goodwin, Responsible

**“FROM FLIGHTS TO LODGING, EVERY TOURISM-RELATED ACTIVITY THAT ALLOWS TRAVELLERS TO EXPLORE EVERY CORNER OF THE PLANET CONTRIBUTES TO THE INDUSTRY'S CARBON FOOTPRINT**



Bovilla Lake, Albania

Tourism Advisor, World Travel Market, said: "No longer are extreme weather events occurring only in the countries of the global south. It is increasingly evident that climate change is causing death and destruction, damaging our environment and buildings. We are experiencing the consequences of growth in our finite world. And overtourism is our sector's particular challenge."

## TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

According to a World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) report, 42 per cent of the travel and tourism businesses analysed currently have publicly announced climate



targets; 61 per cent of travellers said that they want to travel more sustainably in the future and over 80 per cent of travellers plan to prioritise sustainability in their travels in the coming year.

Furthermore, research by Skift and McKinsey found that, globally, more than 3,500 organisations across all industries have set emission-reduction targets, including airlines, hotels, restaurants and those providing leisure and tourism services. Air travel alone is predicted to account for 12 to 27 per cent of global emissions by 2050, and 40 per cent of travellers said that they were willing to pay at least two per cent more for carbon-neutral flight tickets.

Echoing this industry sentiment, 'Working Towards Net Zero' has, therefore, been aptly chosen as the theme for ATM 2023.

As ATM celebrates its 30th edition this year, RX (Reed Exhibitions), the show's organiser, has announced a net zero pledge for the company and the event, and has committed to 30 long-term goals in its journey towards net zero. The RX Sustainability Pledge is guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals and seeks to reduce the environmental impact of its events by educating the sector through the provision of quality content across all industry verticals, collaborating with partners, suppliers and advisors to make the show more sustainable, and deploying practices for waste reduction, limiting single-use plastic and more.

### COURSE CORRECTION

Travel activity is expected to soar by 85 per cent from 2016 to 2030, which makes a strong case for why the industry needs to fully embrace sustainability in its operations. Dr. Goodwin points out that among other strategies, the reduction and reuse of water and the elimination of plastics is a good place to start. But there are bigger, bolder steps that need to be taken to truly address these industry-wide challenges.



Dr. Harold Goodwin

### RELEVANT ATM SESSIONS:

The **conference programme for ATM 2023** will cover over a whole host of sessions discussing sustainable tourism and the industry's net zero targets during the course of four days. Sessions will cover everything from aviation to hospitality as well as green technologies helping the industry become more sustainable.



**“THE INDUSTRY MUST NOT DIMINISH THE SENSE OF URGENCY SURROUNDING THE NEED TO CURB – AND NOT JUST OFFSET – CARBON EMISSIONS**

“Achieving net zero is a big challenge for the travel and tourism sector,” Dr. Goodwin explained. Among other industry verticals, the impact of aviation and other forms of transportation is the greatest.

“Aviation is the challenge. It is our sector's Achilles heel; there has to be a step change in the decarbonisation of aviation. However, flying is not the problem; polluting fuel is. According to the Californian company Universal Hydrogen, a 40-passenger regional jet, driven in part by a hydrogen fuel cell, has successfully completed its first test. Airbus also remains confident that they will have a hydrogen-powered plane in the sky by 2035.

“Buses and cars are already running on renewable energy. Eurostar runs on nuclear-generated electricity and has 14 hydrogen-fueled Alstom trains already in service, while China has launched a 100-miles-per-hour hydrogen/supercapacitor train.”

The second largest carbon footprint comes from the hospitality industry and Dr. Goodwin points out that hotels, resorts

and other forms of accommodation need to transition rapidly to renewable energy to be able to make a positive impact.

Simply put, net zero is the point at which any residual emissions of greenhouse gases are balanced by technologies removing them from the atmosphere. And while Dr. Goodwin believes that this is a great idea, in principle, he emphasised that the industry must not diminish the sense of urgency surrounding the need to curb – and not just offset – emissions, which is the ultimate goal to work towards.

### CELEBRATING 30 YEARS WITH 30 SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

RX (Reed Exhibitions) has pledged to become net zero by 2040, 10 years ahead of the industry's commitment to reaching net zero by 2050. And as ATM marks its 30th annual event in 2023, the show's organiser has initiated 30 short-, medium- and long-term sustainability goals, which will not only make ATM more sustainable but will also support the company's corporate pledge on its journey towards net zero.

[Click here to learn about ATM's Roadmap to Net Zero](#)







Blacklane's all-electric fleet of Mercedes EQS vehicles

# TRANSFORMING TOURISM

Climate action occupies a central place in the global tourism industry as demonstrated in these bold strategies implemented by destinations and businesses around the region and the world

The tourism industry contributes to about 11 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, with this figure expected to grow 25 per cent by 2030 and even double within the next three decades, if left unchecked. At the same time, the tourism sector is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Pre-pandemic figures from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) show that the travel and tourism industry accounted for 10.4 per cent of the global GDP and one in four of all new jobs created across the world. Accelerating climate action in tourism is, therefore, integral to future-proof the industry.

"The travel and tourism industry has a critical role to play as one of the world's largest sectors that touches the lives of nearly everyone globally. With this comes the responsibility to implement sustainable practices and do what is needed to protect the vulnerable eco-system and biodiversity of destinations so that they remain vibrant and resilient for generations to come," said Jochem-Jan Sleiffer, President, Middle East, Africa and Türkiye, Hilton.

Sleiffer further stressed that there has never been a more important time for businesses across all industries to adopt responsible practices. Tourism regulators around the world have recognised that the sustainability of the industry needs to become a key priority by adopting long-term strategies for growth. Across various industry verticals, we can see a handful of pioneers leading the sustainable tourism development space.

**“THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A MORE IMPORTANT TIME FOR BUSINESSES ACROSS ALL INDUSTRIES TO ADOPT RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES**

## BUILDING SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS

In the region, Saudi-based Red Sea Global (RSG) is blazing the trail with its large-scale regenerative tourism project. The developer behind the kingdom's giga projects, The Red Sea and Amaala, RSG believes in putting people and the planet first.

The Red Sea project became the first development in the Middle East to secure platinum certification under the globally-recognised standard for green construction, LEED for Cities. It achieved excellence in governance, with an ESG score of 91 per cent, according to the Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark; signed an agreement with Ethmar and Ghoroos to support local communities through agricultural development opportunities; and rolled out a vocational training agreement to support local talent.



Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve, Germany



Tracy Lanza, Group Head of Global Brand Development at Red Sea Global, said: “Building a destination on a site the size of a small country certainly presents challenges, including the lack of pre-existing infrastructure. However, we view challenges as opportunities for innovation and our commitment to creating a regenerative tourism destination has resulted in the development of new best practices that we hope other destinations and developers can learn from. We have shown that it’s possible to not only conserve nature during development but to enhance it. And we have demonstrated that rather than pushing out local communities, tourism can be a force for good when we collaborate from the outset.”

Lanza hopes that RSG’s efforts in pioneering regenerative tourism don’t just set the benchmark regionally, but also inspire the industry on a global scale.

“Achieving this cannot be done alone – it requires collaboration. From our comprehensive marine spatial planning simulation, undertaken with our friends at the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, to working with ZeroAvia to explore hydrogen-powered seaplanes, partnerships have been critical to our success.”

#### ENCOURAGING ECO-CONSCIOUS TRAVEL

As destinations journey towards their net zero targets, experts have pointed out that the ultimate goal should be reducing emissions. A recent report jointly produced by the WTTC and the Saudi-based Sustainable Tourism Global Center revealed that Germany has managed to do just that, while simultaneously growing its tourism industry.

Yamina Sofo, Director of Sales and Marketing at the Dubai-based German National Tourist Office (GNT0), explained that Germany’s travel and tourism sector is taking action at three levels to reduce its carbon footprint, including focusing on technological advancements, such as new drive technologies and alternative fuels for different means of transport; encouraging companies to improve their sustainability performance at an operational level through carbon offsetting schemes; and incentivising customers to travel more sustainably by offering programmes that favour rail or coach travel or by extending the duration of trips to reduce the carbon footprint per travel day.



Nicolas Soucaille

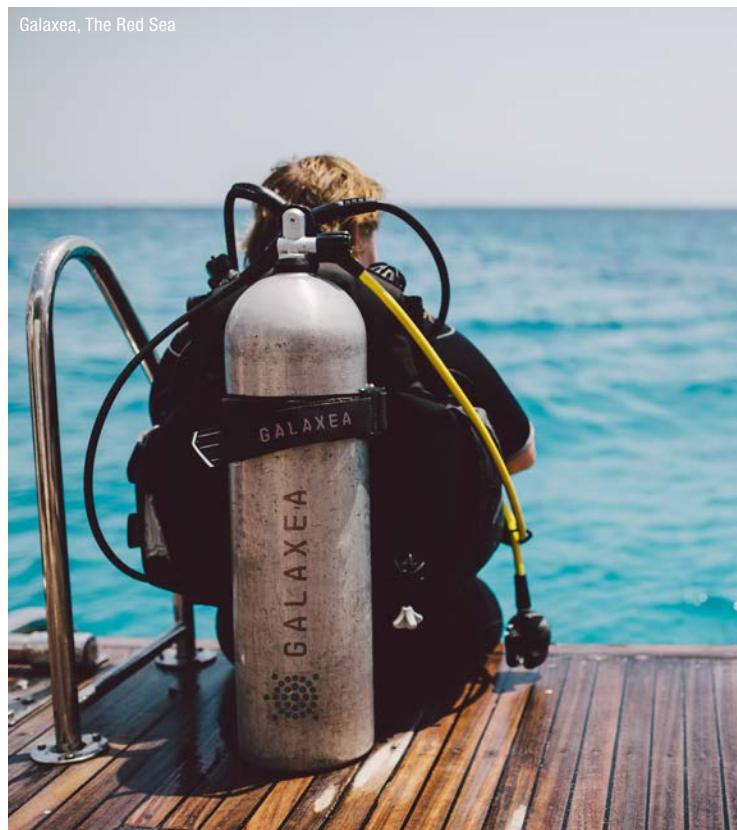


Tracy Lanza



Nujuma, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, The Red Sea

## “AN IMPORTANT STEP IN DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IS SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH ONE OPERATES



Galaxea, The Red Sea



Yamina Sofo



Jochem-Jan Sleiffer

Sofo said: “Germany has a strong reputation for sustainability, with ambitious targets designed to strengthen its positioning. Under the current coalition agreement, the aim is for Germany to become climate-neutral by 2045 and for all sectors of the economy to be brought on track to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

“Germany has also been at the forefront of promoting sustainable tourism offerings to travellers, encouraging eco-conscious travel expeditions and incorporating sustainable tourism initiatives to ensure experiences of the country’s illustrious landscape can be enjoyed while maintaining a minimal carbon footprint.”

Research from IPK International shows that travellers are becoming increasingly conscious about sustainability as well as climate and environmental protection. To align with this growing awareness, Germany has implemented a range of strategies.

“Germany’s plethora of sustainable offerings include affordable public transport options, green architecture and sprawling parks under the ‘Feel Good’ campaign that launched in 2022, focusing heavily on sustainable tourism.”

#### SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

An important step in developing sustainable business practices is supporting the community in which one operates – and this is no different for tourism. Investing in the local community contributes to the region’s

heritage and culture by encouraging both residents and tourists to participate, which in turn provides the economy with a much-needed boost.

Elaborating on this, Sleiffer said: “Travel gives us an opportunity to not only explore different corners of the world but also meet diverse people and celebrate their local cultures and traditions. Locals take pride in their rich heritage and strive to not only maintain their culture but also conserve their environment and natural beauty.”

Sleiffer further stated that this benefits everyone involved as tourism generates employment opportunities and income for the local population and supports the development of infrastructure at the destination while also offering travellers the authentic experiences they come seeking.

“Some of the ways in which this can be achieved include sourcing local ingredients for menus, incorporating cultural elements in the hotel’s design and partnering with local suppliers. Sustainability activities such as beach clean-ups and coral reef propagation projects further immerse guests into the destination by giving them the opportunity to interact with their surroundings.

“For example, our team at Hilton Seychelles Northolme Resort & Spa collaborated with the Marine Conservation Society Seychelles to develop a coral reef restoration programme aimed at protecting and restoring the remaining reef. Guests are invited on snorkelling tours to learn about the restoration process and adopt a piece of coral.”



Hilton Seychelles Northolme Resort &amp; Spa

#### DRIVING GREEN TRANSPORT

With aviation playing a role in bringing people to their destinations, other forms of transport are integral to the development of these destinations. The rise in the volume of tourists is pushing the transport industry to keep up. At the same time, they also need to deliver on the green agendas in place.

Blacklane – the luxury provider of rides services and professional chauffeurs – is leading the charge in this space, with an aim to make the future of transport seamless, sustainable and ethical.

Nicolas Soucaille, General Manager for Blacklane, UAE, said: “As the transport industry is challenged to meet the growing demand, we view this as an opportunity to incorporate sustainability into our offerings. Dubai now serves as the testbed for Blacklane’s inaugural all-electric fleet of Mercedes EQS vehicles and we have witnessed robust demand. As COP28 approaches, we anticipate further demand for sustainable ground transportation, and we are diligently preparing our fleet to accommodate this need.”

Highlighting the company’s sustainability commitment, he added: “Blacklane has consistently championed sustainability, becoming the first rides service to achieve carbon-neutral certification in 2017 by offsetting emissions from all rides and business operations. We furthered our commitment by retroactively offsetting our company’s entire carbon footprint since its inception in 2011. Additionally, Blacklane has signed The Climate Pledge, committing to achieve net-zero emissions by 2040. This ambitious goal signifies our dedication to moving beyond carbon offsetting, ultimately striving for a future where our operations produce no emissions at all.”

#### RELEVANT ATM SESSIONS:

Sustainability Starts With Supporting Your Communities

📍 Global Stage  
📅 Monday, May 1, 2023 ⌚ 12:45 - 13:30

Sustainability in The Travel Industry:

Who Pays?  
📍 Global Stage  
📅 Monday, May 1, 2023 ⌚ 13:30 - 14:15

Driving Green Transport in Tourism

📍 Global Stage  
📅 Tuesday, May 2, 2023 ⌚ 12:40 - 13:20

Rural Tourism: Taking Tourists Off-The-Beaten Track

📍 Sustainability Hub  
📅 Thursday, May 4, 2023 ⌚ 11:30 - 12:00



# A POSITIVE IMPACT

Industry experts identify the challenges and opportunities that the hotel sector faces in its journey towards sustainability

According to STR, the world's leading hospitality analytics firm, there are more than 187,000 hotels worldwide, offering more than 17.5 million guestrooms. Every one of these venues contributes to the consumption of the world's resources. The hospitality industry globally has therefore been shifting its focus and taking a robust approach to sustainability. Initiatives include everything from better energy management and efficient water consumption to a complete ban on single-use plastic and waste reduction.

The sector as a whole is working towards championing responsible operations to reduce the footprint of the travel and tourism industry. Hotels are increasingly scrutinising their sustainability practices, moving away from symbolic initiatives to strategies that offer better solutions to effectively combat climate change.

## IDENTIFYING THE OPPORTUNITIES

"Sustainability is at the heart of everything we do," said Guy Hutchinson, President and CEO of Rotana Hotels. The homegrown hospitality group has implemented enhanced sustainable offerings across its properties in the UAE and beyond, as part of its Global Corporate Sustainability Platform – Rotana Earth. These initiatives have seen the group increase recyclables by 8 per cent, reduce waste to landfill by 17 per cent and reduce electricity consumption by 8 per cent.

"We have been very focused on sustainability over the years and our initiatives in this space have grown from the initial platform, Rotana Earth, that we introduced more than a decade ago. We were one of the first in the region to eliminate single-use plastic from all

of our hotels. We pioneered multiple sustainability platforms in terms of energy management and emission reduction, introducing the use of solar energy across our properties. We have one of the very few hotels in the region, in Jordan, which is 100 per cent driven by solar power.

"Now, in the UAE, our hotels have introduced water recycling, a new breakfast offering that uses locally sourced, farm-to-table products and neutral fuels, which sees all of our kitchen oil recycled into biofuel. At any given time of the year, we have upwards of 300 activities taking place in this sphere."

Hutchinson emphasised that sustainability should remain at the forefront of everything that the hospitality industry does. "If you are not looking at how you build a company and grow through the lens of sustainability, you are going to be left behind."



According to Hutchinson, social media has created a global awareness that is encouraging businesses to work in a more sustainable way. He said: "This is a very positive movement as it puts pressure on communities to increase their sustainable footprint."

"Furthermore, travellers today have access to data and information that fuels their awareness in a way that it never did before. Everywhere you go now, even on travel websites, you see a sustainability rating, which has a fundamental impact on the choices people make. This is pushing the industry to change."

Highlighting the steps that the industry can take in this direction, Hutchinson identified three areas that make the most difference to a hotel's sustainability goals.

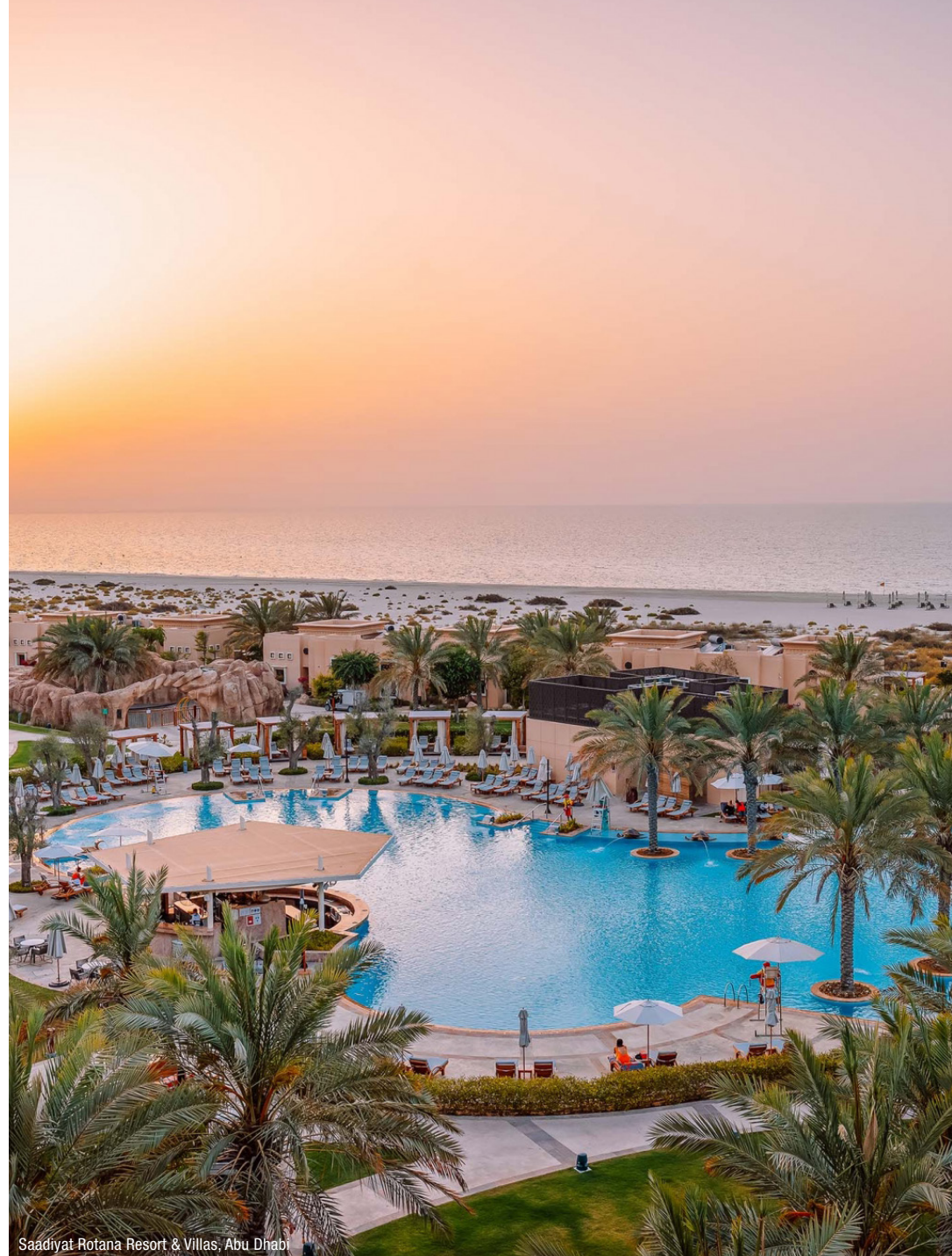
"One of the biggest factors – and possibly also the biggest challenge a hotel faces – is design and construction. Hotels being constructed today are built to optimise their net zero position. But the challenge is that hotels are usually built for a period of 25 to 30 years. There are probably around 300 hotels in the UAE today that were built around two decades ago, which makes retrofitting the building from an energy management perspective a challenge. Of course, there are ways to do it, but it's complicated."

"The next piece in the puzzle is operations, which is one of the most manageable factors as it's about identifying areas you can improve upon and implementing alternatives to how you do things."

"Single-use plastic is a good example. How do you get those plastic water bottles out and also satisfy that customer demand? At Rotana, by introducing water bottling plants across our hotels, we were able to remove an aspect that a customer really demands and replace it through sustainable ways."

"It's the same approach with our food waste, energy management water reduction and neutral fuels initiatives. Once you find the solutions to these operational modules, you can move quite quickly."

The third and final factor – infrastructure – relies on the facilities that exist around an individual establishment. "For example, if there are no established facilities for recycling, these solutions won't work. You need the infrastructure around you to develop to be able to support your initiatives."



Saadiyat Rotana Resort &amp; Villas, Abu Dhabi

**“HOTELS ARE ENHANCING THEIR SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES, MOVING AWAY FROM SYMBOLIC INITIATIVES TO STRATEGIES THAT OFFER BETTER SOLUTIONS TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE**

Nadia Ibrahim



Guy Hutchinson



**“IF YOU ARE NOT LOOKING AT HOW YOU BUILD A COMPANY AND GROW THROUGH THE LENS OF SUSTAINABILITY, YOU ARE GOING TO BE LEFT BEHIND**

Hutchinson pointed out that while achieving net zero is a very demanding target for the hospitality industry, it has to be achieved. "It's not a question of whether it is possible; it has to be possible. There might be a factor of time, but critical to that success is not just taking your existing operations and making them net zero; it's about implementing as many initiatives as you can to achieve that net zero target."

"For us at Rotana, there are two important aspects to our sustainability efforts – net zero and true zero. The closer you get to true zero, the smaller your target to net zero becomes, which involves reducing as much of our carbon emissions to begin with, before finding ways to offset our footprint. And we are working on both sides of that equation."

#### ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

Among the biggest challenges that hoteliers are facing now is developing, establishing and committing to their net zero strategic plan, according to Farnek, a bespoke sustainability solutions provider for the hospitality industry throughout the MENA region.

Nadia Ibrahim, Director – Consultancy & Sustainability, Farnek, said: "Even though tools and guidelines on carbon assessments and emissions reductions are available, there is a lack of experienced individuals within the industry who can standardise and analyse data as well as create bespoke carbon emission reduction plans suitable for properties, with realistic milestones."

"Conceptualising and communicating the value of sustainability initiatives

to stakeholders can also be a challenge, but their collective buy-in is crucial to any initiative's success."

"Furthermore, there are cost implications associated with environmental practices, and hotel owners and management companies need to agree on a net zero road map, the milestones, the action required and the financial investment needed, along with the potential cost and carbon savings."

Addressing these challenges, Farnek works with hotels across the region to create an effective sustainability plan using one or a combination of the company's sustainability tools.

Ibrahim explained: "These tools include the Hotel Optimiser, an internet-based solution that allows a hotel's energy, water and waste to be measured and benchmarked against similar-sized hotels over clearly defined periods of time. A new platform, Powertek, offers even greater flexibility and can be integrated with any energy meter, existing BMS systems, connected IoT sensors and CAFM software."

"We have also launched an online carbon footprint calculation tool, called Carbontek, which can measure and analyse a hotel's carbon emissions and identify emission hotspots, ideal for decarbonisation planning."

"Another solution is our hospitality app Flexiguest, which digitalises a hotel guest's journey from the initial reservation through to checkout. The app can even estimate the cost of offsetting a guest's carbon footprint during their stay."

"We also offer consultation and auditing for the US-based hospitality sustainability certification programme, Green Globe, which gives hotels credibility when communicating with guests and other stakeholders."

"The ultimate goal for hotels is to reduce energy and water consumption, efficiently manage waste and minimise emissions. This makes their operations more cost-effective, smarter and greener and sets the foundation for their journey towards net zero."

#### RELEVANT ATM SESSIONS:

Achieving Net Positive Hospitality  
Sustainability Hub  
Monday, May 1, 2023 13:00 - 13:40

Responsible Hospitality for a Better World  
Sustainability Hub  
Monday, May 1, 2023 13:45 - 14:45



# SUSTAINABILITY TAKES OFF



As the aviation industry works towards its sustainability goals, we take a look at airlines in the region doing their part to accelerate climate action

Etihad Airways 'Sustainable 50' A350



The aviation industry is an integral part of the global community, serving as an engine for economic, social and cultural growth. Yet, the global aviation sector is responsible for around 2.5 per cent of all carbon emissions, with the most significant proportion coming from the consumption of jet fuels.

In 2019, flights produced about 915 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, and it is predicted that by the year 2050, commercial aviation could generate up to 21.2 gigatonnes of emissions. At the same time, passenger traffic will continue to grow exponentially. For this reason, sustainability in aviation has become significant. While aircraft manufacturers and airlines, encouraged by government initiatives, are already taking steps toward reducing their environmental footprint, much more must be done in this space for the industry to reach its net zero ambitions by 2050.

"It's simply an enormous challenge," said John Strickland, Director at JLS Consulting and globally recognised media commentator on the aviation industry.

"The technology is not yet available to allow migration to zero emissions power sources for all aircraft. This may come by 2030 for smaller regional aircraft and potentially within 20 years for short-haul airliners. For long-haul aircraft, time scales could extend to 50 years.

"That means the alternative approach of producing sustainable aviation fuel is essential. At present, production is extremely limited and all efforts are being focussed on ramping this up. Yet, the task to achieve this cannot be underestimated.

"In the short term, we are seeing the replacement of older aircraft with new generation types using more efficient engines which burn between 20 to 25 per cent less fuel and produce much reduced emissions. Additionally, there are efforts to improve air traffic management to optimise and shorten flight routings but these are proving very slow to make progress, facing many political challenges.

"The industry needs to pull together to make progress and explain clearly what it is doing to the public at large and to win more political support to



work with and not against it in meeting the challenges and allowing aviation to continue to make the important economic contribution it does today.”

## CHARTING THE COURSE

The UAE’s national airline, Etihad Airways, was awarded Environmental Airline of the Year for 2022 in the Airline Excellence Awards. The carrier also won the Environmental Sustainability Innovation of the Year award at Capa Aviation’s annual Environmental Sustainability Awards for Excellence as well as the Best Airline for Sustainability 2022 award by Business Traveller USA.

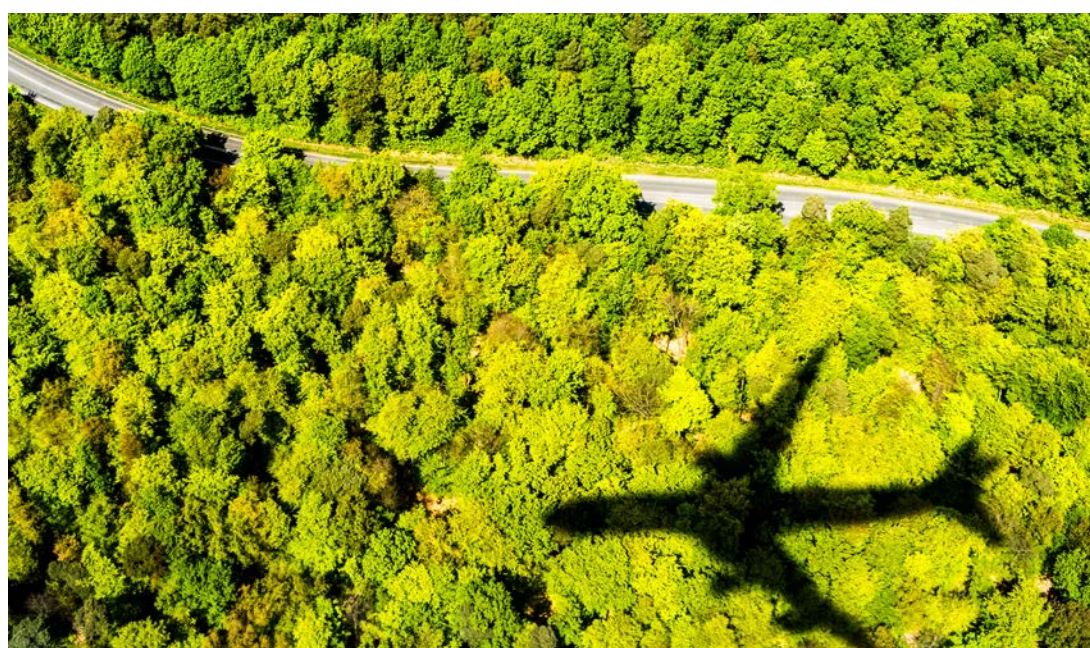
Etihad’s sustainability initiatives include the Greenliner programme, which uses a fleet of innovative Boeing 787 Dreamliners to test sustainable initiatives in aviation. As part of the programme, Etihad launched its first eco flight back in 2019, and later a sustainable flight in October 2021, which became the most environmentally friendly flight in the company’s history. In November 2022, Etihad flew its first net zero carbon flight from Washington to Abu Dhabi during COP27.

In partnership with Airbus, the airline also introduced the Sustainable50 A350-1000 jet, which offers 25 per cent less fuel burn and carbon dioxide emissions than previous-generation twin-aisle aircraft. It also slashed its noise footprint by 50 per cent, which is why Etihad named the jet Sustainable50.

From optimised routes and efficiencies to using sustainable fuels and managing secondary emissions, Etihad’s sustainable flights have proved to have a significantly lower impact on the planet.

Encouraging passengers to get involved, in 2021, Etihad launched Conscious Choices, a consumer-focused green loyalty programme that incentivises more environmentally friendly choices among passengers. The programme offers loyalty points to passengers opting to offset the emissions from their travel and carrying less baggage onboard.

A corporate-focused programme, Corporate Conscious Choices, was also added to facilitate corporate partner sustainability goals, offering purchase



## “AIRLINES AND AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURERS ARE TAKING STEPS TOWARD REDUCING THEIR FOOTPRINT”

John Strickland



options for sustainable aviation fuels, carbon offsets and a green surcharge.

Most recently, Etihad Airways, in partnership with Marriott International, completed the Etihad Marriott Mangrove Forest in Jubail Island, reinforcing the airline’s commitment to reducing its footprint and supporting the sustainability efforts of the UAE. The initiative is part of the broader Etihad Forest plan, which is targeted to plant 182,000 mangrove trees in the first quarter of 2023, before the programme expands to other international destinations in which the airline operates.

## A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Earlier this year, Emirates successfully completed a demonstration flight powered by 100 per cent sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). The Boeing 777-300ER plane flew for more than an hour over Dubai’s coastline, marking the first flight of its kind in the MENA region to be powered by SAF in one of two engines. This milestone aligns with the airline’s mission for SAF to make up half its total fuel supply by 2030, based on regulatory certification



and an adequate supply of alternative fuel at commercially viable prices.

Across the group, Emirates is promoting its sustainable operations with three core initiatives: reducing fuel emissions, conducting responsible operations in the air and on the ground, and protecting biodiversity.

With an average age of 6.5 years for its aircraft, Emirates has a modern, fuel-efficient fleet, supported by a fuel efficiency programme that helps reduce unnecessary burn through the use of advanced monitoring systems, flexible route planning, efficient air traffic management and aircraft weight management.

Each Emirates flight utilises between 50,000 to 60,000 items on board, from the food served to the toiletries, safety equipment and bed linen. The airline is committed to making responsible decisions while sourcing these items from ethical suppliers and disposing of them. Since 2017, the airline’s economy-class blankets have been manufactured from recycled plastic bottles, saving 95 million bottles from landfill so far. On the ground,

the group has invested in solar-powered systems to generate clean electricity at two of the airline’s major facilities in the UAE – Emirates Engine Maintenance Centre and Emirates Flight Catering.

Emirates has also actively supported fragile habits since 1999. Working alongside the Dubai government, the airline helped establish the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve. Occupying about five per cent of Dubai’s land mass, the reserve has helped successfully protect the once-endangered Arabian oryx and other fauna found here.

## RELEVANT ATM SESSIONS:

Sustainability In The Air - Live Podcast Sessions

📍 Sustainability Hub  
📅 Monday, May 1, 2023 ⌚ 16:30 - 17:00  
📅 Tuesday, May 2, 2023 ⌚ 16:00 - 16:30

Emirates returns to growth: President of Emirates in Discussion with John Strickland  
📍 Global Stage  
📅 Tuesday, May 2, 2023 ⌚ 11:00 - 11:45

The Net-Zero Future of the Aviation Industry  
📍 Global Stage  
📅 Tuesday, May 2, 2023 ⌚ 11:45 - 12:30



# LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Dubai's stellar performance on all fronts in 2022 and the tourism industry's bold vision for the future look set to carry the emirate through the year and beyond

The last decade has witnessed a seismic shift taking place across the Middle East; one that has seen nations charting a new course to move beyond traditional revenue streams. In this pursuit of new avenues for growth, a burgeoning tourism base has taken centre stage and is now at the heart of these efforts.

Particularly adept at keeping up with the changing times and diversifying its offering, Dubai has led the charge in this space. The emirate's master plan has covered everything, establishing Dubai as a global business centre, a knowledge hub, a smart city with a future-focused approach and a leading tourism destination.

At the forefront of this strategy is Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), which tirelessly pushed ahead with ambitious developments to future-proof the city. It has delivered exceptionally on all fronts, cementing the emirate's position as a leader on the global stage. And these efforts have paid off as 2022 witnessed exceptional growth in visitation, surpassing regional and global tourism recovery barometres.

## STELLAR STATS

Dubai's visitor arrivals reached 86 per cent of pre-pandemic levels in 2022, exceeding global recovery levels of 63 per cent and Middle East recovery levels of 83 per cent. The total number of international overnight visitors recorded was 14.36 million, representing a 97 per cent year-on-year growth from the 7.28 million tourist arrivals in 2021, with one of the world's highest occupancy rates of 73 per cent.

This performance contributes to the Dubai Economic Agenda (D33) launched by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to cement the emirate's status as one of the world's top cities for travel and business.

His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General of Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism, said: "While the global economy remains in a state of flux, Dubai has emerged as a clear leader in the tourism industry. The robust performance is a testament to Dubai's growing role at the vanguard of global tourism recovery."

Adding to its ever-expanding list of accolades, the tourism sector's outstanding performance in 2022 saw Dubai being crowned the number one global destination in the Tripadvisor



Travellers' Choice Awards for a second successive year. Award winners are uniquely chosen by millions of travellers from around the world, who provide their real and unbiased reviews or opinions on destinations, activities and experiences.

His Excellency Issam Kazim, CEO of Dubai Corporation for Tourism & Commerce Marketing (DCTCM), said: "Retaining our position as the number one destination in the Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Awards is just reward for the efforts to continuously innovate and adapt to the evolving nature of travel, build out exceptional guest experiences at every touchpoint and effectively tailor Dubai's offering for different needs and segments. As a city that is always on the move, Dubai's charm is its unique ability to surprise and delight both new and repeat visitors with its ever-growing diverse offering while keeping its authenticity and traditions intact."

#### SUCCESS STORY

One of the biggest success stories of the region in 2022 was Expo 2020 Dubai. The mega event, held for the first time on Middle Eastern soil, made a massive contribution to the tourism industry's outstanding performance. Over the course of six months, Expo 2020 Dubai attracted over 24 million visits. Its success reinforced the emirate's position as an international events destination.

Later in the year, Dubai unveiled Expo City Dubai – a green, tech-enabled smart city – to carry the legacy of this mega event forward, with a host of attractions from the original event continuing to entertain visitors at the site.

In addition to Expo 2020 Dubai, the city played host to a number of global business, leisure, sporting and entertainment events, attracting visitors from all around the world to experience everything that the emirate has to offer.

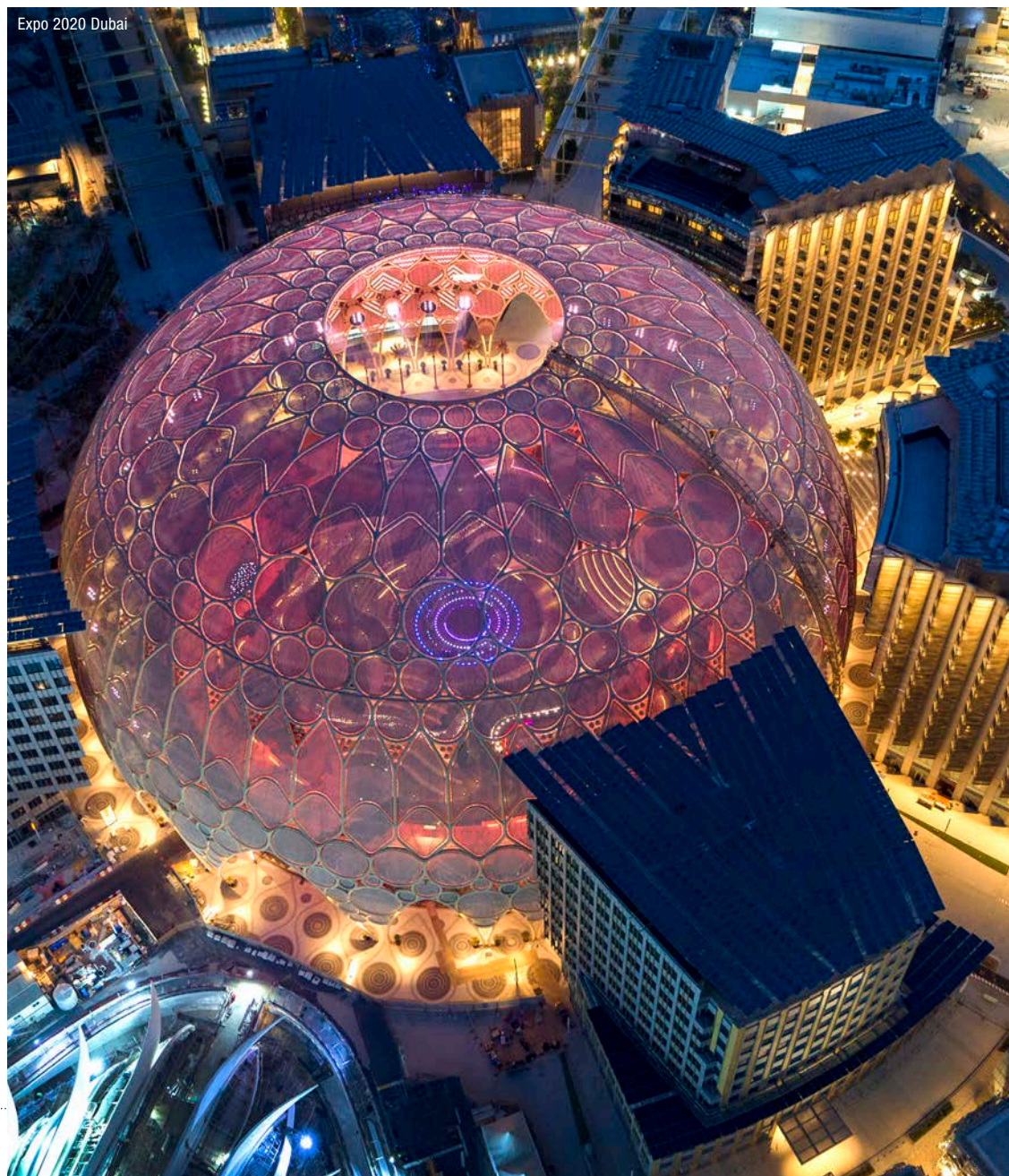
#### NEW LANDMARKS

The biggest reveal of 2022 was the Museum of the Future. Its striking façade had been garnering the world's attention even before the museum officially opened its doors; and when it did, it was dubbed the most beautiful building on the planet.

In a year's time, the museum recorded one million visits, thanks to the extraordinary experiences found within, which takes visitors on a journey to the future – all the way to 2071.



Dubai Water Canal



Expo 2020 Dubai



Al Muntaha, Burj Al Arab Jumeirah



Al Muntaha, Burj Al Arab Jumeirah

#### LEADER IN HOSPITALITY

Dubai's hotel sector continued to perform strongly across all metrics. The city's hotel inventory comprised 146,496 rooms at 804 hotel establishments at the end of December 2022, compared to 126,120 rooms available at the end of December 2019 across 741 establishments.

Occupied room nights reached a record high of 37.43 million room nights in 2022, registering a 19 per cent increase compared 2021 (31.47 million) and a 17 per cent increase over the pre-pandemic period of 2019, which yielded 32.11 million occupied room nights. The average daily rate (ADR) reached AED536 and its RevPAR growth saw an increase of 30 per cent compared to 2021 (AED391 versus AED301).

Dubai's penchant for luxury hospitality also played out on the world stage with the opening of the mega-resort, Atlantis The Royal, which saw international figures from around the world descend on Dubai for a grand pre-opening event.

**“DUBAI WAS NAMED THE NUMBER ONE GLOBAL DESTINATION IN THE TRIPADVISOR TRAVELLERS' CHOICE AWARDS FOR A SECOND SUCCESSIVE YEAR**

#### CULINARY INNOVATION

Dubai's multicultural dining scene – with more than 13,000 venues – has been a significant driver of growth, attracting guests from all around the world. The city's thriving culinary landscape was recognised with the launch of the Michelin Guide Dubai in June 2022. Dubai's restaurants and chefs were also recognised in the inaugural edition of the Middle East & North Africa region's 50 Best Restaurants list, unveiled in February 2022. DET also launched the region's first-ever Gastronomy Industry Report, a study of the gastronomy scene in the city and the region, reinforcing Dubai's position as a highly sought-after global food tourism destination.



“THE UAE 2031 TOURISM STRATEGY SEEKS TO ATTRACT 40 MILLION GUESTS BY 2031 AND INCREASE THE TOURISM SECTOR’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE EMIRATE’S GDP TO AED450 BILLION



Downtown Dubai

GROWING SUSTAINABLY

Throughout 2022, Dubai worked tirelessly to achieve its sustainability goals, led by Dubai Sustainable Tourism (DST), an initiative aimed at raising the city’s profile as a leading sustainable destination. Last year saw the launch of ‘Dubai Can’, an innovative citywide sustainability initiative, as part of the drive to transform the emirate into a leading sustainable destination and the world’s best city to live and work.

NEW INITIATIVES

In 2022, a number of new initiatives were launched as part of Dubai’s ever-evolving destination proposition. The UAE 2031 Tourism Strategy, announced in November 2022, seeks to attract 40 million guests by 2031 and increase the tourism sector’s contribution to the emirate’s GDP to AED 450 billion. Dubai also continues to unveil strong regulatory initiatives to promote the accelerated growth of the tourism sector, including hassle-free entry procedures for business and leisure travellers that streamline access to the emirate by establishing long-term engagement



Atlantis The Royal



Museum of the Future

with the city. These include the 60-day tourist visa, which was made available from September 2022, and the five-year, multi-entry visa for employees of multinational companies, in addition to the golden visa as well as virtual working and retirement programmes.

A FIRM FOUNDATION

Dubai’s ability to rapidly accelerate tourism growth in 2022 marked the emirate as a clear frontrunner in the international industry. While these achievements are celebrated in a big way, it has also set the stage for another year of milestones – perfectly in keeping with a city that is never keen to rest on its laurels. Kazim said: “Our focus for 2023 and beyond will be to drive and support growth through this mosaic of experiences, across all our tourism pillars, from entertainment to shopping and culture to culinary experiences.”

RELEVANT ATM SESSION:

The Success of Tourism for the UAE: 30 year’s on...  
📍 Global Stage  
📅 Wednesday, May 3, 2023 ⌚ 16:35 - 17:35



# THE WORLD AWAITS

As China's reopening gains momentum after a long isolation period of three years, the country's travel-hungry citizens are seeking immersive experiences; and destinations around the world are eager for their return

In 2019, outbound travel from China contributed over US\$253 billion to the global economy – the highest of any country. Chinese tourists took more than 150 million trips during the year, making them outsized contributors to the international travel market. No destination was off limits as travellers reached far and wide, from Vancouver to Japan and from Dubai to Singapore. That is until the pandemic.

Since 2020, strict health and safety measures nearly eliminated inbound and outbound travel from China. However, as of January 8, 2023, the country has eased all restrictions related to quarantine on arrival, encouraging eager travellers to once again explore the world.

The return of Chinese travellers signals the long-awaited recovery of the world's largest outbound tourism market. According to a sentiment survey compiled by marketing solutions company Dragon Trail International in the days leading up

to China's reopening in January, 60.4 per cent of respondents expressed their desire to travel outside of mainland China in 2023. While recovery is set to pick up gradually during the first half of the year, a strong comeback is expected from July onwards, continuing all the way through to the country's Golden Week and National Day celebrations and beyond.

Destinations around the world are hoping to cash in once again, but not without taking a fresh approach to the Chinese traveller who has evolved after spending three years in isolation. Travellers will not be the same as they were before, compelling tourism businesses to rethink and implement newer strategies to engage with this reemerging market.

"Experiencing local life and foreign cultures has become a top priority for Chinese tourists, which we might see manifested in seeking out new destinations, local cuisines





Japan

and cultural experiences,” said Sienna Parulis-Cook, Director of Marketing and Communications at Dragon Trail International.

“Chinese travellers today are also motivated to travel in order to explore their own personal interests – be it art or scuba diving – which creates diverse opportunities for tourism providers. Getting outdoors and into nature has been a big trend for Chinese domestic tourism over the past three years, and we expect beach destinations and other places of natural beauty to be popular, as well as activities like hiking, water sports and winter sports. That said, Chinese travellers are still keen on visiting must-see icons, such as museums and architecture, and shopping still ranks high as a travel activity.”

Since the removal of border restrictions, Ctrip.com – the leading Chinese-language platform from the Trip.com Group – revealed that overall outbound travel bookings grew by 640 per cent compared to the Lunar New Year period in 2022. Outbound air tickets and international hotel bookings increased by more than 400 per cent.

Data revealed by Fliggy, Alibaba Group’s online travel platform, indicated that the number of outbound and inbound flight bookings increased more than 4.5 times year-on-year in the first two months of 2023. The platform also noted a 190 per cent year-on-year increase in orders for outbound tour products, including overseas local rides, scenic spot tickets and online visa processing services during the same period.



Japan



The Grand Palace, Bangkok

Destination preferences are likely to be similar to those before the pandemic; however, new trends may follow in the rest of the year. Among the big winners, Asian destinations, particularly Southeast Asian countries like Thailand and Singapore, as well as Hong Kong and Macau, have been particularly popular so far.

“These have always been top destinations for mainland Chinese tourists, going back decades. They also enjoy easier access because of visa and entry rules as well as much higher flight capacity than long-haul destinations,” said Parulis-Cook. She further added that destinations such as the Maldives, Japan and France are among the top for HNWI (high-net-worth individual) Chinese travellers, while the UAE, Canada and South Korea have all grown significantly in popularity among this segment of wealthy travellers.

There is also notable interest in Europe, particularly France, as well as Australia and New Zealand, but, according to Parulis-Cook, recovery is expected to take longer because of lagging flight capacity and visa wait times. “These issues are certainly being addressed, but it will take some time to get back to a pre-pandemic normal.”

But, in the meanwhile, the world’s once-largest outbound travel market will provide the global tourism industry with that much-needed boost.

Parulis-Cook added: “The first Chinese to travel outbound once borders reopened were experienced international travellers, especially millennials born in the 1980s and 90s. We expect to see younger Chinese travelling abroad earlier,

with an emphasis on independent and small-group travel. There’s also high demand for family travel, and we should see this pick up a lot in July and August during the Chinese school holidays.”

With travel set to pick up later this summer, destinations still have the time to prepare for this comeback. “It’s important for tourism businesses to get a clear understanding of what Chinese market segments they are targeting. China’s tourism market is very large and diverse, and being able to effectively target specific segments will help ensure that marketing and product development is truly effective.”

## “THE RETURN OF CHINESE TRAVELLERS SIGNALS THE LONG-AWAITED RECOVERY OF THE WORLD’S LARGEST OUTBOUND TOURISM MARKET

### RELEVANT ATM SESSION:

China is back on the map: Macro and micro impacts

📍 Global Stage

📅 Tuesday, May 2, 2023 🕒 16:30 - 17:30



# A COMPETITIVE EDGE

The rise of digital technologies has had a huge impact on how customers plan and purchase trips, while also offering businesses the opportunity to thrive in a competitive marketplace

At the turn of the 21st century, planning a holiday usually entailed a visit to a local travel agency. The more adventurous might have sought inspiration in a magazine or guidebook to set their travel agendas. Today, this picture is vastly different. Thanks to breakthroughs in technology, travellers can plan and book their own flights and hotel rooms on a host of websites and apps as well as curate their own itineraries and make reservations based on online reviews.

Digitisation has given travellers the power of choice in a way that has disrupted traditional industry functions, and the pandemic has only accelerated the growth of these technologies. Nevertheless, the industry has been quick to adapt, leveraging all the tools at its disposal to better connect with its customers. And the businesses that have stood out in this competitive marketplace have worked to put the customer at the centre of all their efforts.

## TECHNOLOGY THAT EVOLVES WITH THE TRAVELLER

According to Nicolas Huss, CEO of Hotelbeds, travellers are becoming increasingly sophisticated and technology-savvy and they are seeking increased value in the price they pay for travel. They also want more tailored products, greater digital parity with analogue services and instant booking confirmation. The growth of technology platforms empowers them to curate their own trips and manage their budget while still taking the trip of a lifetime.

Huss explained: "Within all of this, a key trend in digitalisation is the rise of the connected trip. As consumers become increasingly time-poor, they not only want to have everything in the palm of their hand, but they also want a single point of contact for all their travel needs. This frictionless experience extends to all aspects of travel, from booking all elements at once, including hotels and attractions. The connected trip is beneficial throughout the lifetime of the trip. For instance, if a traveller needs to make changes, they can amend everything with one click and not have to change each booking independently."

To cater to the changing needs of customers and allow businesses to thrive, Hotelbeds believes that a combination of data, technology and people is important.

"We believe that true innovation happens when we put our customers and suppliers at the centre, and work with them to create those solutions so that they see us as the right business partner to solve their problems."



He added: “Our technology platforms enable us to react quickly to changing market dynamics and so we deliver the best to our customers and suppliers, regardless of where they are based in the world. Companies that achieve a balance between technology and personal connections will thrive in the era of digital acceleration.”

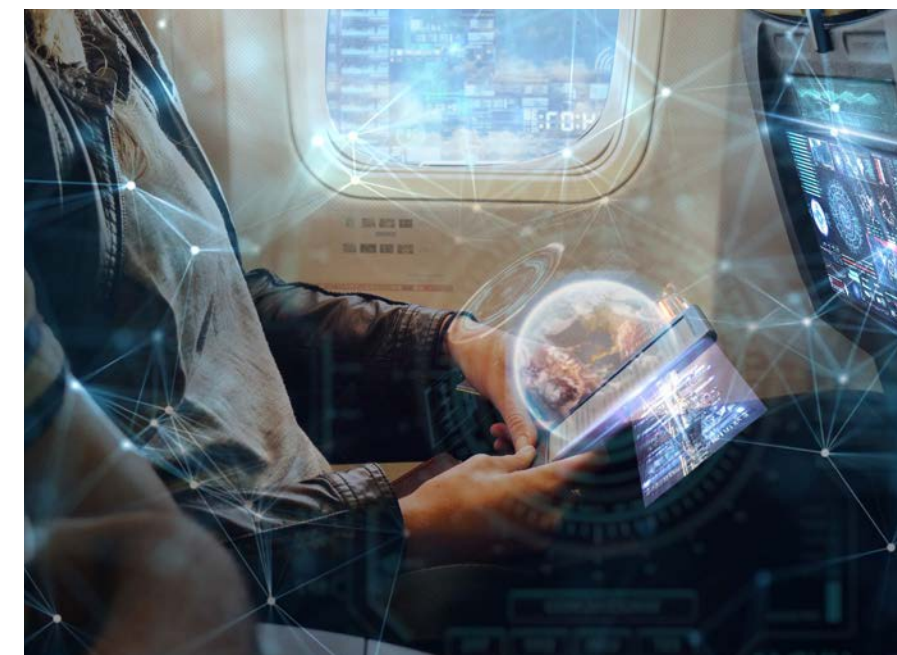
### ACHIEVING PERSONALISATION THROUGH DATA

Hyper-personalisation has always been a major trend in the hospitality sphere. The ability to customise services based on consumer preferences continues to drive hotel operators to invest more in smart technology. According to Tommy Lai, CEO of GHM Hotels, this allows them to better anticipate their guests’ needs by arriving at algorithms that reveal distinct, more detailed guest profiles. Operators can then elevate the stay experience by catering to these needs across a myriad of hotels and customer touchpoints.

“The pandemic has accelerated the world’s adoption of contactless technology and today, this has become easily compatible with hotel loyalty programs. Operators may leverage their guests’ data to push out loyalty and rewards in real-time, subsequently encouraging return stays by studying each guest’s unique preferences and stay expectations.

“The way guests view luxury is ever-changing. By investing in smart capabilities and big data, we are able to be a leading provider of guest-centric hospitality and curate personalised experiences. Each guest is welcomed into a tranquil environment with bespoke and discreet services that are respectful of their value for privacy. The staff is well-equipped when it comes to anticipating their unique needs and meeting them sensibly and unobtrusively.

“However, there are a number of growth areas in the travel sector, with personalisation at the forefront of understanding customer behaviour. Travellers, especially frequent ones or those in loyalty programmes, want personal service when they arrive at their hotel. Hotels that understand and remember preferences will gain ground and increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. This extends beyond hotels and is relevant across the hospitality industry, including restaurants. For example, does a diner like a particular table? In an increasingly competitive world, knowing one customer from another can be the key to success.”



## “COMPANIES THAT ACHIEVE A BALANCE BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY AND PERSONAL CONNECTIONS WILL THRIVE IN THE DIGITAL ERA

### TECHNOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABILITY

While digital acceleration provides a fantastic opportunity to make travel more seamless for suppliers and customers, it also helps the industry become more sustainable.

Lucas Bobes, Group Environmental Officer and Head of ESG Reporting, Amadeus, said: “The combination of vast and comprehensive amounts of data and the use of latest technologies helps travellers obtain more visibility on efficient and sustainable travel options.” In 2022, Amadeus joined the Travalyst coalition to provide consistent sustainability information to travellers so that they can factor in sustainability in their travel purchasing decisions.

Highlighting the company’s newest platform to help travellers plan and book their trips and encourage sustainable choices, Bobes said: “Amadeus is working to connect travel businesses to the wider travel ecosystem through initiatives such as the Amadeus Discover platform that provides easy access to activities at the destination.”

Amadeus Discover is a robust platform that allows activity providers to be interconnected with hotels, destination management companies, airlines, online travel agencies, travel guides and tourism offices to better

serve travellers at destinations. It spotlights curated and enriched experiences and information in one place, from discovery to booking, enabling destination ecosystems to collaborate and efficiently deliver their content.

### HUMAN TOUCH PREVAILS

As the industry becomes more reliant on technology, Lai emphasises that no technology can fully replace the human touch.

“While operational challenges can be alleviated through automatic and innovative digital solutions, the ability to deliver warm and genuine hospitality from the heart coupled with authentic conversations and intuitive responses from natural hosts cannot be replicated by technology. This will always be an intangible but definitive measure of success for hospitality operators.”

### RELEVANT ATM SESSIONS:

The **conference programme for ATM 2023** will cover a host of sessions discussing advancements in the travel technology segment, with a special focus on solutions that can help the industry achieve its sustainability goals. Covering everything from big data and consumer behaviours to green technologies, these sessions will be held on the Travel Tech Stage and at the Sustainability Hub.





# TRAVEL AND THE METAVERSE

As travellers become more reliant on technology to plan and book their trips, tourism businesses are encouraged to utilise every tool available to their advantage to better connect with their customers. And it's no different with the metaverse.

Research from Gartner Consulting predicts that, by the year 2026, a quarter of the world's population will spend at least one hour a day in the metaverse to work, shop, study or simply entertain themselves. This presents a huge opportunity for the travel and tourism sector to grow in this space. But, as with every new opportunity, there's a learning curve.

## DEFINING THE METAVERSE

Joël Kremer, COO of Moyosa Media, said: "I think we first need to take a step back as a collective industry and try and define what the metaverse is. I think the media especially jumped on a new phrase and hyped it similar to what happened to VR (but way faster). It very quickly morphed into only the projects of Meta, Roblox, Sandbox and Decentraland being the metaverse. This does not cater to a broad audience and the use cases just really aren't there (at least not successfully on a huge scale).

"If we add that the terminology of web3 has been mixed in anywhere at all times (NFT, blockchain, etc.), it all

gets very confusing. But the public gets bombarded with the terms and so "it must be big". The reality is that everyone needs time to figure out a strategy, fund it, test it, fail and try again. And that is in parallel to all the existing digital challenges they are facing.

"For us, the metaverse is adding a third axis to the internet, whereby users get the feeling of a 3D experience, sometimes even immersive."

Delving into how this could apply to the travel and tourism industry, Kremer highlighted that the metaverse can impact the entire user journey, from research to pre-experience and retention. "Users can step into a hotel room or restaurant at a

The metaverse has immense potential to shape every sector of the global economy – and it's no different for the tourism industry



resort via a digital door on their mobile devices and look around; experience AR art or an animal tour at the hotel; and stay connected with their favourite hotel or hotel chain using discovery technology for next year's family holiday."

From a business perspective, Kremer explained that understanding the technologies connected to the metaverse is a very important first step. Getting a clear market and tech-stack overview will allow companies to properly decipher how it fits into their operational models on a strategic, creative and business (ROI) level.

"When done properly, the end user will be able to enjoy travel much more by being better informed, better entertained and better retained."

#### A REAL OPPORTUNITY

According to Karl Escritt, Chief Executive Officer at Like Digital & Partners, technology comes and goes but what sticks around usually has the consumer at the centre of its experience and enhances our day-to-day. "It also rarely appears in isolation and often is only successful when combined with one another. GPS and the smartphone created Uber; high-speed internet and AI-driven personalisation allowed Netflix to flourish. These examples seem less exciting now, but they did two things: solved a real-world problem and became invisible (to the end-user).

"For the metaverse, this means the industry getting together and looking at all business sides and consumer pain points, including areas that can be optimised through digital opportunities to create better experiences. This exercise may show how the metaverse could be used to better educate staff during pre-opening periods, map out footfall during peak resort periods or visualise a room pre-stay. I firmly believe that the metaverse has huge potential in the education sector and the travel industry really needs to look at how this could play a role in the training of staff in the future."

#### TO ENHANCE, NOT REPLACE

While the relationship between the tourism sector and the metaverse is still in its infancy, many companies are already utilising this new world to enhance their business models and offer new experiences to their customers. But virtual travel is not replacing real travel; it's simply offering new growth opportunities.

**“RESEARCH PREDICTS THAT BY THE YEAR 2026, A QUARTER OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION WILL SPEND AT LEAST ONE HOUR A DAY IN THE METAVERSE**

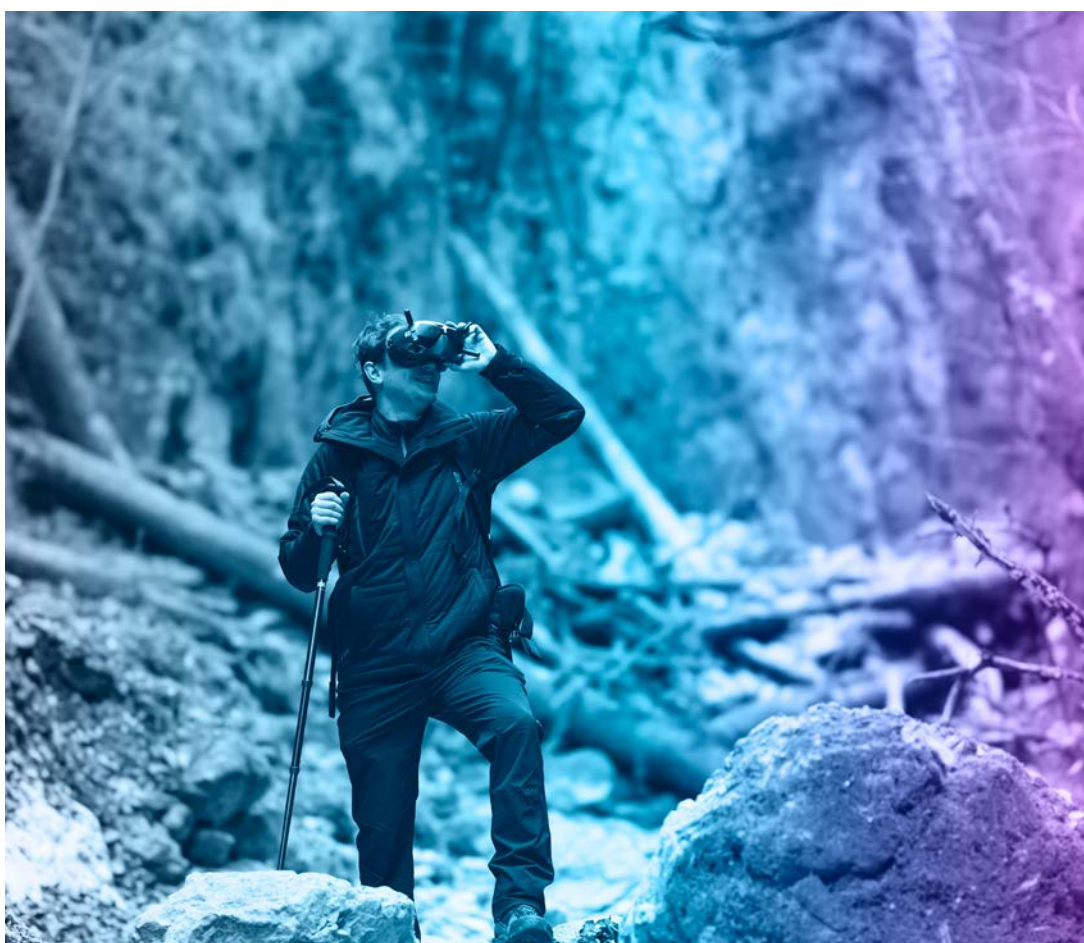
Joël Kremer



Karl Escritt



Emanuel Erdem



**“THE METAVERSE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO TRANSFORM THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY IN NUMEROUS WAYS**

"The metaverse represents the next evolution of the internet, where everything that was once 2D will become 3D. This 3D internet, or metaverse, is not intended to replace our physical world, but rather enhance it," said Emanuel Erdem, Web3 and Metaverse Consultant at Excludible.

"The metaverse has the potential to transform the travel industry in numerous ways, from virtual travel to enhanced tourism experiences. Virtual replicas of destinations can be created in the metaverse, providing a realistic and accessible virtual travel experience. This would enable people to explore destinations without leaving their homes, making travel more affordable and inclusive. Additionally, virtual travel could also serve as a preview of physical destinations, allowing travellers to assess these places before committing to a physical visit.

"Hotels, resorts and other hospitality establishments could also replicate their properties in the metaverse to attract younger generations and improve the

customer experience. This would provide a unique pre-booking experience as well as increase conversion rates."

Erdem highlighted that experiences offered in the metaverse can provide customers with a unique and immersive way to envision themselves in a travel destination. This can heighten their anticipation and excitement while giving them a better sense of what to expect when they physically visit the location.

"The metaverse can make travel more accessible and affordable for a broader audience, including those who may face financial or mobility barriers to travel. It can also foster cultural exchange and create a sense of connection and community among travellers."

For businesses, Erdem explained that immersive commerce provides an opportunity for increased user engagement. "Virtual showrooms and immersive spaces increase retention rates over 10 minutes compared to one minute spent on conventional websites. Moreover, products showcased

in these virtual environments can see up to a 50 per cent increase in engagement and conversion rates.

"Digital twins of travel and hospitality experiences also offer businesses an opportunity to expand their global reach and enhance the customer experience. Combining these digital twin experiences with immersive commerce elements could further elevate the customer journey.

Erdem also notes that integrating the metaverse into the travel industry can have a positive impact on the environment. "By reducing the need for physical travel, certain trips can be avoided, leading to a reduction in carbon emissions and promoting more sustainable travel practices."

#### RELEVANT ATM SESSION:

The Future of Travel and Tourism in the Metaverse  
 Travel Tech Stage  
 Wednesday, May 3, 2023 11:30 - 12:30



# BUSINESS TRAVEL GOES GREEN

The business travel sector has made significant strides in sustainability, as much of the industry has already adopted responsible business practices. Reducing carbon emissions and environmental footprint is now a major focus for companies, external stakeholders and policymakers. Yet, much more needs to be done.

In its 2022 State of Sustainability report, the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) – the world's largest business travel association – highlighted the industry's top priorities and opportunities as it accelerates its journey towards a more sustainable future, many of which will be discussed at ATM this year.

Almost nine in 10 industry respondents (89 per cent) collectively said that sustainability is already a priority for their company. While only 14 per cent said that the industry is currently well

## Research from the Global Business Travel Association highlights perceptions, priorities and actionable opportunities for a more sustainable business travel programme

advanced in sustainability, improvements are being made as 76 per cent of travel buyers have already incorporated or are planning to incorporate sustainability objectives in their travel policies.

"There's no longer the debate whether we should engage in sustainable actions for business travel, but how we turn ambition into action. Investing in sustainable solutions must be part of our game plan today to make sure we can still connect people and travel for business tomorrow. This is only possible if our industry joins forces across our full value chain and with external stakeholders including governments, to adopt ambitious targets, drive green investments and accelerate the uptake of clean technologies," said Delphine Millot, Senior Vice President for GBTA's Sustainability Program.

GBTA's State of Sustainability report highlighted the top challenges faced by the business travel industry in its journey towards sustainability. These include higher costs (82 per cent) and a lack of transparent information and data (63 per cent). The report also revealed that key enablers included fostering change in industry culture (63 per cent) and improved access to sustainability data (63 per cent).

### SUSTAINABILITY TOOLKIT

"To guide business travel managers in their own sustainability journeys, GBTA has designed a Sustainability Toolkit. It empowers businesses to partner with their colleagues, employees and suppliers to reduce the climate impact of business travel," said Catherine Logan, Regional Vice President – EMEA & APAC at GBTA.

The toolkit is built around a five-step process: understand, set, implement, involve and evaluate. It encourages businesses to understand decarbonisation strategies and greener travel policies to identify which ones might be more impactful than others;

set goals and milestone targets in the short, medium and long term; implement the measures by working across sustainability, travel, HR and finance; involve employees by discussing sustainability goals and their contributions and, finally, to evaluate travel policies and decarbonisation strategies to make necessary adjustments.

### EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS

Highlighting strategies that have proved most effective for the business travel industry, Logan said: "Many businesses are tracking and reporting on their Scope 3.6 (business travel) emissions publicly. Some are setting emissions reduction targets for 2030 and 2050.

"Many companies are incentivising their employees to travel in a more climate-friendly manner, either through travel policies or through activations on their online booking tool. They are also implementing sustainability performance vetting mechanisms for their business travel suppliers and are integrating clauses into their contracts to ensure suppliers meet basic sustainability criteria.

"Several have also purchased carbon offsets to compensate for their emissions, but some are now starting to invest in the uptake of sustainable aviation fuel instead."

To help businesses gain further insight into the best practices for a green travel programme, GBTA has launched a benchmarking report. Later this year, the association will also introduce a suppliers matrix, with a framework for corporates to assess the sustainability of suppliers.

### RELEVANT ATM SESSION:

Implementing Sustainability in your Travel Program – Where to Start

📍 Sustainability Hub  
📅 Monday, May 1, 2023 ⌚ 11:45 - 12:45





# DECODING THE MODERN TRAVELLER

Experiential, transformational and luxury tourism gain momentum as travellers seek to create a positive impact in their own lives and also on the planet

After almost two years of being kept on home turf, 2022 saw people take to the skies, seas, tracks and roads once again. Even amid rising costs, travellers were eager to explore the world more than ever before. But not with the same mindset as before; evolved travellers are now seeking a lot more from their trips.

Skyscanner's 2023 travel trends report revealed that consumers are looking to make better decisions about their discretionary spending, with 46 per cent of travellers planning the same number of vacations in 2023 as 2022 and 41 per cent thinking of going on even more trips next year. More than half of the respondents shared that rising costs and inflation are factors in their travel booking decisions, and travellers are looking to visit places where their currency will go further.

Seeking quality above all else, travellers today want more than limited guided tours offering the highlights of a destination. There is a desire to go deeper, explore more comprehensively and have a positive impact on the places they visit. They are looking for immersive experiences that will continue far beyond checkout. And while adding new meaning to their adventures, they are also hoping to make meaningful changes in the way they travel to avoid a negative impact on the planet.

Simon Casson, President of Hotel Operations, EMEA, at Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, said: "Guests no longer travel to simply visit new places. They wish to connect with the world on a deeper level and truly experience the unique character of each destination. Expectations have also evolved, particularly among millennials and Gen Z travellers."

This evolution in the way we experience the world is giving rise to a whole host of travel trends, among which new experiences, transformational retreats, luxury and sustainable offerings are valued more than others.

## EMBRACING AUTHENTICITY

In its 2022 Travel Report, TripAdvisor revealed that about three-quarters of travellers surveyed have new priorities while travelling, which included having new experiences and learning about the destination's history and culture. This is where experiential travel comes in. It involves meaningfully connecting with a particular place's history, culture, people, food and environment. This form of travel shifts the focus from the traveller to the destination they seek to engage with and offers complete immersion into the very essence of the locale.



The Nest by Sonara, Dubai

**GUESTS NO LONGER TRAVEL TO SIMPLY VISIT NEW PLACES. THEY WISH TO CONNECT WITH THE WORLD ON A DEEPER LEVEL AND EXPERIENCE THE CHARACTER OF EACH DESTINATION**



Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort by Anantara, Abu Dhabi



Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui

According to Stephanie Reichenbach, Founder of Nara, a luxury camp based in the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve: "With easy access to affordable flights and budget vacation packages, today's tourist is generally already well-travelled. But they are now seeking richer, more holistic experiences. People want to really experience a country, immerse themselves, understand its culture, taste the local cuisine and discover areas that are not typically touristic."

"We've found that our guests at Sonara Camp love the idea of riding a camel to the camp or eating dishes created from locally sourced produce, heightening the experience's authenticity."



SEEKING TRANSFORMATION

Going one step further from experiential travel, transformational travel takes authentic, local, culture-centric and off-the-beaten-path experiences to another level by incorporating an element of self-discovery and self-reflection. Through these experiences, it encourages travellers to incorporate the growth gained from their travels into their daily lives back home.

According to Casson, the trend towards transformational travel is continuing, especially within the luxury segment. Across its portfolio, Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, therefore, offers a host of experiences that resonates long after suitcases are unpacked.

At the Four Seasons Tented Camp Golden Triangle, visitors are in the company of rescued elephants, surrounded by the thick jungles of Thailand's Chiang Rai province. Here, guests can accompany *mahout* guides through the grasses and learn the stories of these gentle giants and discover their distinct personalities in a lesson that helps them build trust.

At the Four Seasons Resort Rancho Encantado Santa Fe, the Equus Experience pairs guests with horses for leadership training



and personal and spiritual growth through equine interaction.

Hidden in the lush jungle greenery overlooking the Ayung River Valley, the Four Seasons Resort Bali at Sayan offers traditional Balinese *chakra* ceremonies that are meant to align guests with the energy of the Earth using singing bowls and deep, slow massage to bring inner peace and help them embrace their full potential.

LUXURY REDEFINED

Once only symbolising all things grand, Casson points out that luxury travel has evolved. "In the past, luxury was associated only with opulence and exclusivity. Today, what resonates more powerfully with guests is the notion of connection.

"Across every touchpoint, whether face-to-face or digitally, travellers wish to be recognised as special guests and welcomed like a friend. They appreciate the genuine, personalised service and care provided by staff who share a passion for creating special moments every day and delivering them with a genuine heart.

"True luxury is not about rigid, impersonal service; rather, it's about creating a sense of belonging with a focus on the simple elegance of empathy in our service."

SUSTAINABILITY FIRST

With an ever-increasing awareness of the negative impact of climate change, travellers are becoming more and more conscious of their footprint. To offset this, many travellers seek alignment with brands that are conscious of creating a positive impact on the destinations in which they operate.

"Tourism is a huge part of our global culture, allowing us to explore different parts of the world, meet people from different walks of life and experience new traditions and activities. It brings benefits to both travellers and the communities they visit, so it is generally seen as a force for good," said Amir Golbarg, Senior Vice President of Operations – Middle East & Africa at Minor Hotels.

"However, since we've become more aware of the threat of climate change and our role in escalating it, it's become imperative to consider how we can lessen our impact on our environment



and the world at large. We also need to align with consumer sentiment."

With an extensive portfolio of hotels around the world – and a special focus on the luxury segment with brands like Anantara and Tivoli – the organisation seeks to balance luxury and sustainability by delivering high-end experiences while still creating a positive impact on the environment.

"Sustainability and luxury can be complementary; a sustainable offering doesn't mean that it looks, feels or tastes any less than premium. For example, using glass water bottles instead of plastic in guest rooms enhances the guest experience, and not just from an environmental perspective.

"It's also about delivering quality high-end amenities while minimising our impact on the environment. This can be achieved through the use of high-count linen sheets with organic cotton or the use of eco-friendly materials, such as bamboo, in hotel décor. Also, energy-efficient lighting can provide a warm ambience, and refillable bathroom amenities look luxurious and are also less wasteful."

Putting these principles into practice, the group is working on transforming the offering across four of its award-winning UAE resorts under the tagline of 'Indigenous Sustainable Luxury'.

"Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort by Anantara has partnered with Al Ain Water to launch biodegradable water bottles and remove 190,000 plastic bottles from use every year to become the greenest desert resort in the world. Also, a greenhouse at the resort provides over 150 kilograms

of organic produce every month, which is used in our signature dishes.

"At Anantara The Palm Dubai, 62 per cent of the waste produced has been consistently recycled and upcycled, while at Anantara World Islands Resort Dubai, the team reached 61 per cent waste diversion, placing both resorts among the best in the world when it comes to reduction of waste to landfill. To achieve these results, we have, among many things, installed a Food Digester in both hotels, allowing us to recycle more than 46 tonnes of food waste on-site. We have also installed bottling plants at both hotels to replace plastic bottles with glass, thus reducing usage by saving over one million plastic bottles per year.

"In the future, our projects will be designed with indigenous sustainable luxury in mind, from the ideal location to build a resort to the use of sustainable materials. The protection and promotion of local flora and fauna will be paramount, which in turn is a feature that guests will appreciate."

RELEVANT ATM SESSIONS:

Sustainable Luxury: At What Cost?  
📍 Global Stage  
📅 Monday, May 1, 2023 ⌚ 16:30 - 17:15

Rural Tourism: Taking Tourists Off-The-Beaten Track  
📍 Sustainability Hub  
📅 Thursday, May 4, 2023 ⌚ 11:30 - 12:00

Innovating Travel - Experiences, Tours & Attractions  
📍 Global Stage  
📅 Thursday, May 4, 2023 ⌚ 13:30 - 14:15



# SUCCESS STORY

As Arabian Travel Market celebrates its 30th anniversary, we chart the event's major milestones against the UAE's glittering transformation during the past three decades

Arabian Travel Market (ATM) first opened its doors in 1994 at Dubai World Trade Centre with 52 nations, 300 exhibitors and 7,000 trade visitors. Now, 30 years later, ATM facilitates US\$2.5 billion in industry deals and attracts thousands of exhibitors and travel trade visitors from around the world.

While the show has grown in stature to become one of the most prestigious travel trade events, the city – and country – in which it operates has transformed tremendously. Having risen from a humble desert settlement to one of the world's most futuristic destinations, rapid change is built into the very fabric of the UAE.

In many ways mirroring the development of the country itself, in the past 30 years, both ATM and the UAE have gone through major changes, witnessing stellar growth in a time that for many nations is a blink of an eye.

Here, we take a look at the major milestones in the history of the show against the backdrop of the UAE's ever-changing tourism landscape. Journey back with us from 1994 through to the present.

1994

ATM launched at Dubai World Trade Centre with 2,000 square metres of floor space, 300 exhibitors and 7,000 visitors.

For Dubai, this marked the beginning of a partnership that would attract thousands of travel trade professionals annually to the city from all around the world.



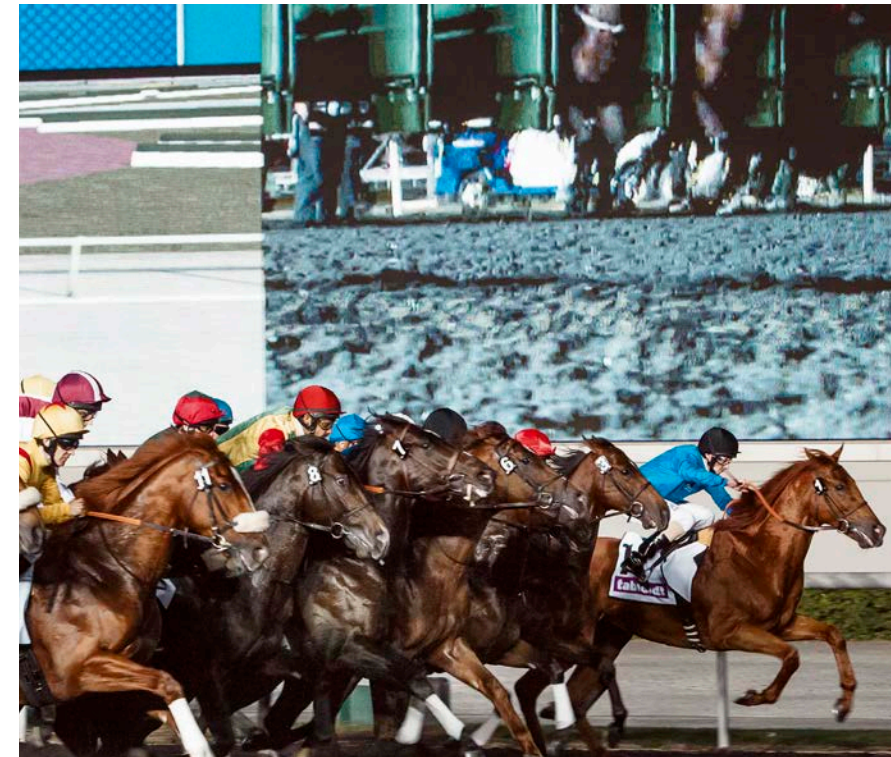
1995

ATM moved to Bahrain International Exhibition Centre (the only time the show was staged outside Dubai).

Meanwhile, in Dubai, Wafi City was established, styled after ancient Egypt, with the pyramid at its heart, and comprising a mall, hotel and dining venues.

1996

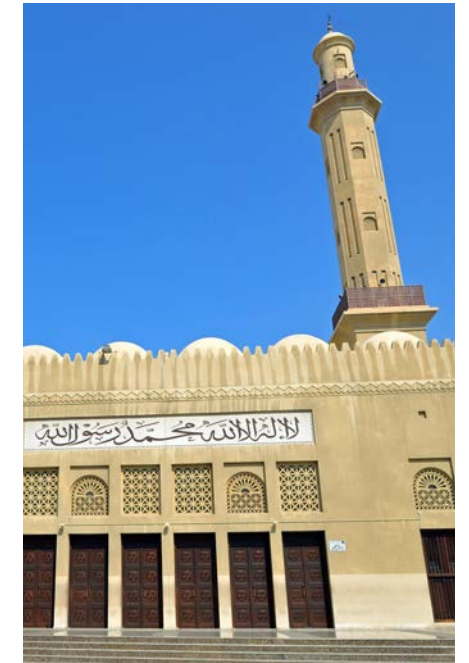
Before ATM moved back to Dubai in 1996, the emirate held the inaugural running of Dubai World Cup with top jockeys and thoroughbreds from



around the world. American horse Cigar won the day and a cheque for US\$4 million, making it the world's richest day in horse racing to ever be held.

1998

The stunning façade of Dubai's largest mosque – the Grand Mosque in Bur Dubai – was completed in 1998. Its tallest minaret, which lords over the city at a height of 70 metres, and more than 50 small and large domes give this mosque its distinctive silhouette.



1997

Real estate development company Emaar Properties was founded and established. In the last two decades, the homegrown company has become a leading developer in hospitality, retail, real estate, leisure and shopping, with its world-famous attractions drawing an increasing number of visitors year after year.

**“ATM FIRST  
OPENED ITS  
DOORS IN  
1994 AT DUBAI  
WORLD TRADE  
CENTRE WITH  
52 NATIONS**



1999

The Jumeirah Group, which launched two years earlier, raised the curtain on their most ambitious project yet – Burj Al Arab Jumeirah. It quickly became one of the city's most luxurious hotels and exclusive addresses, and is a Dubai icon in its own right.





2000

Dubai Airport opened Concourse 1 (now Concourse C), marking the start of a new chapter in Dubai's aviation history. Built as part of the general expansion project at a cost of US\$544 million, the terminal increased the airport's capacity from 10 million to 23 million.



2001

The world's largest man-made island was announced to the world and the construction of Palm Jumeirah officially began.



2002

ATM launched the first-ever hosted Meridian Club, an exclusive club for senior travel buyers. Meridian Club is now called the ATM Buyers' Club.

In the same year, the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve was established and eco-resort Al Maha began operating in the reserve.

**“WHILE THE SHOW HAS GROWN IN STATURE TO BECOME ONE OF THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS TRAVEL TRADE EVENTS, THE CITY – AND COUNTRY – IN WHICH IT OPERATES HAS TRANSFORMED**

2003

ATM celebrated its 10th anniversary with 783 exhibitors and 12,111 visitors. A total of 695 journalists covered the show along with 982 VIP guests arriving on-site.

Meanwhile, the national flag carrier, Etihad Airways, was established in Abu Dhabi. The airline commenced commercial operations in November 2003 with a flight to Beirut in Lebanon.



2004

A major milestone in the UAE's history came with the passing of the then President, His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, in November 2004. Since then, the country has celebrated his life and achievements at every turn.

During the same year, one of the region's most important business centres, Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), was established to provide a strategic link in the Middle East between the financial hubs of New York and London in the west and Hong Kong and Singapore in the east.

2005

Mall of the Emirates opened with more than 460 stores and 90 food and beverage outlets. One month later, Ski Dubai was introduced, featuring an 85-metre indoor ski slope, covered in real snow, with five runs of varying difficulty. Both have become hugely successful attractions in Dubai's tourism landscape.



2006

Abu Dhabi Airports Company was established to spearhead the redevelopment of the emirate's aviation infrastructure. The authority manages and operates Abu Dhabi International Airport and continues to oversee its multi-billion dollar expansion plan. Today, Abu Dhabi Airports has expanded its portfolio of assets to include Al Ain International Airport, Al Bateen Executive Airport, Sir Bani Yas Island Airport and Delma Island Airport.

2007

ATM 2007 featured a host of new initiatives, including an expanded seminar programme, an upgraded media centre and a new dedicated area for travel technology. The show occupied 24,600 square metres of space and hosted nearly 2,600 exhibitors.

Meanwhile, in the UAE capital, Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque opened to the public. Able to accommodate 40,000 worshippers, the mosque is a major attraction as it is open to visitors from all faiths.



2008

Dubai International Airport Terminal 3 – the world's largest airport terminal with over 1,713,000 square metres of space – opened. It was built at a cost of US\$4.5 billion, exclusively for Emirates, and has a capacity of 43 million passengers.

**“ARABIAN TRAVEL MARKET FACILITATES US\$2.5 BILLION IN INDUSTRY DEALS AND ATTRACTS THOUSANDS OF EXHIBITORS AND TRAVEL TRADE VISITORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

2009

The world's largest shopping mall, The Dubai Mall, opened to the public along with the official opening ceremony of the then-largest choreographed fountain system, The Dubai Fountain.

In the same year, the Dubai Metro made its first journey, ferrying more than 280,000 passengers during its first week of operation.

In Abu Dhabi, the state-of-the-art Yas Marina Circuit hosted more than 40,000 fans as they watched the final race of the Formula One 2009 season, with Sebastian Vettel triumphing in the very first Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.



2010

The most anticipated public landmark and the world's tallest tower, Burj Khalifa, officially opened.

In Abu Dhabi, Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, the world's first Ferrari-branded theme park with the world's fastest roller coaster, became the latest attraction to open on Yas Island.

In the same year, Dubai World Central (first announced at ATM in 2006) began operations in June 2010.



2011

With its sights set on becoming a global arts and culture destination, construction on Guggenheim Abu Dhabi began on Saadiyat Island. The museum is now slated to open in 2025.



2012

The first ATMxUNWTO Industry Forum took place in 2012, with over 17,500 visitors in attendance.



2013

ATM marked its 20-year milestone with a 14 per cent increase in total overall attendance.

Also, after four years of planning, it was announced on November 27, 2013, that Dubai had won the right to host the 2020 World Expo.



2014

The first phase of the Dubai Tram was officially opened to the public on November 12, 2014. Comprising 11 stations over more than nine kilometres, it connects with the Dubai Metro at two stations, and with the Palm Monorail.



2015

The 22nd edition of ATM was the most successful to date, with 2015 recording a 15 per cent increase in influential visitors and generating US\$2.5 billion in industry deals.

**HAVING RISEN FROM A DESERT SETTLEMENT TO ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST FUTURISTIC DESTINATIONS, RAPID CHANGE IS BUILT INTO THE FABRIC OF THE UAE**



2016

Adding to Dubai's endless roster of attractions, the Dubai Water Canal was inaugurated, while Dubai Parks and Resorts, sprawling over 25 million square feet with more than 100 rides and attractions, opened to the public.



2017

More than a decade in the making, Louvre Abu Dhabi opened its doors in the Saadiyat Island Cultural District. Designed by acclaimed architect Jean Nouvel, the museum has cemented Abu Dhabi's – and the UAE's – position on the global arts landscape.



2018

ATM celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2018. Before the show opened to the public, Dubai welcomed a new attraction on New Year's Day – The Dubai Frame. Standing 150 metres high, the landmark was designed to "frame" some of the city's most iconic buildings.

Located in Zabeel Park, this one-of-a-kind attraction also features a glass bridge at the top of the structure, which provides a view of both old and modern Dubai in a striking contrast.

2019

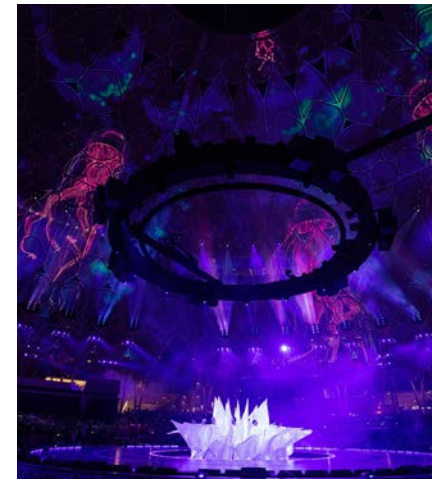
ATM's 26th edition was held during a record-breaking year for tourism in Dubai. From January to December 2019, the city welcomed a staggering 16.7 million tourists – an increase of 5.1 per cent compared to the previous year.



2020

For the first time in the history of the show, ATM ran virtually. Addressing the opportunities and challenges directly impacting the travel and tourism industry amid the COVID-19 global health pandemic and beyond, ATM Virtual attracted 12,000 attendees from 140 countries around the world, with over 11,000 video meetings and more than 24,000 webinar views over the course of three days.

For the UAE, while battling the unprecedented impact of the pandemic was high on the agenda, the country made history in July 2020 by launching the Emirates Mars Mission. Eight months later, the Hope orbiter successfully entered into orbit around Mars.



2021

The first-ever hybrid ATM event was launched, with an in-person show successfully taking place in Dubai from May 16 to 19 (the first live ATM since the pandemic) and then ATM Virtual taking place the following week from May 24 to 26, so that people who couldn't travel could still experience the show.

A historic year for the UAE, 2021 marked 50 years since the country's founding in 1971. Making it extra significant, the first world expo to ever be held on Middle Eastern soil – Expo 2020 Dubai – finally opened its doors in October.

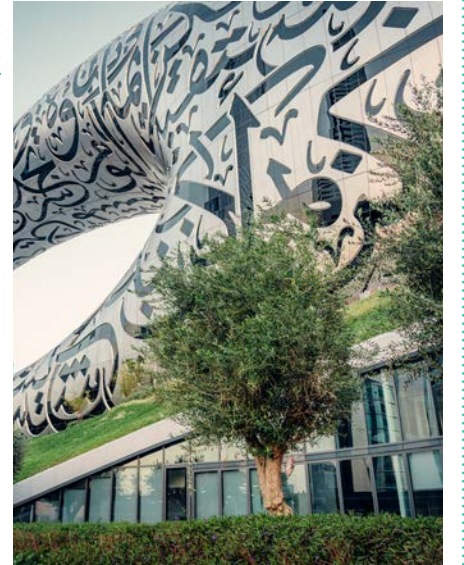
**IN MANY WAYS MIRRORING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY ITSELF, IN THE PAST 30 YEARS, BOTH ARABIAN TRAVEL MARKET AND THE UAE HAVE GONE THROUGH MAJOR CHANGES**



2022

With the recovery of travel and tourism high on the agenda, ATM's 29th edition featured a carefully curated programme of talks and panel discussions that focussed on the future of the industry, highlighting the way forward for businesses following the impact of the pandemic.

Dubbed the most beautiful building on the planet, the highly anticipated Museum of the Future opened to the public and in a year's time, welcomed more than one million visitors from over 163 countries.



2023

On the occasion of its 30th anniversary, ATM has taken a sustainability pledge, adopting 'Working Towards Net Zero' as the official theme for the year.

In alignment with the theme and the three pillars established by RX (Reed Exhibitions) – educate, collaborate and action – 30 long-term goals to reduce the event's environmental impact have also been announced with an aim to achieve these by the year 2040.

For Dubai, the year has already been off to a great start with the emirate having been crowned the number one global destination in the Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Awards for a second successive year, cementing its position as the world's favourite tourist destination.



# VOX POPS

**ROULA JOUNY**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Tourism 365



“At ATM 2023, we plan to communicate with industry leaders and showcase our advanced travel technology, greater regional and international connectivity as well as innovative travel solutions, all of which align with ADNEC’s mission to cement its position as a leading international entity which strives for the growth of sustainable tourism. The subsidiaries of Tourism 365, such as Capital Travel, Capital Experience, Etihad Holidays and the recently launched Capital Drive, are also contributing to achieving this vision.”

Visit stands: ME2450, ME2410

**AMIR GOLBARG**  
Senior Vice President  
Operations – Middle East  
& Africa,  
Minor Hotels



“At ATM, we will promote all of Minor Hotels’ brands in the region and the unique experiences guests enjoy when choosing Anantara Hotels Resorts & Spas, Avani Hotels, NH Collection, Oaks and Tivoli properties across Oman, Qatar and the UAE. ATM is a fantastic opportunity to connect with our current and future partners and colleagues from across the region. It showcases the scope of our offering to members of the trade and visiting media, and gives them a chance to discover what our brands and properties can deliver.”

Visit stand: HC0420

**JAMES BRITCHFORD**

Vice President  
Commercial – India,  
Middle East and Africa,  
InterContinental Hotels  
Group (IHG)



“Through our participation in ATM this year, we hope to increase the awareness of our initiatives under Journey to Tomorrow, our 10-year responsible business plan. As we continue to establish our brand and hotel portfolio across the Middle East, we aim to leverage this platform to make meaningful connections and achieve our business objectives. In engaging with partners and suppliers, we will no doubt gain insights into guests’ needs and behaviours whilst also learning about the latest innovations in the industry.”

Visit stand: HC0650

**TRACY LANZA**

Group Head of Global  
Brand Development,  
Red Sea Global



“Visitors to our stand at this year’s ATM will experience more of our luxury side than in previous years, reflecting our transition from developer to an operational destination. We’ll be highlighting the hotels set to open this year and the experiences available for when our first guests arrive. We’re also excited to show our sustainability ethos in action with a booth that is entirely plastic-free and fully digital. We’re eager to show how far we’ve come in developing the world’s most ambitious regenerative tourism destination.”

Visit stand: ME5150

**STEPHANIE REICHENBACH**  
Founder & CEO,  
Nara Desert Escape



“As a leading global platform for travel and tourism, ATM offers a formidable opportunity to connect with industry leaders and promote travel within the region. We are honoured to participate and showcase Nara Desert Escape, our elegant and sustainable collection of desert camps, restaurants and experiences that embody the concept of authentic and experiential travel. Sharing the knowledge and beauty of the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve on an international scale permits tourists to experience Dubai’s stunning nature.”

Visit stand: ME3010

**GUY HUTCHINSON**

President & CEO,  
Rotana Hotels & Resorts



“ATM has grown to become one of the most significant travel trade shows in the world. It is also one of the most well-attended travel exhibitions, especially for the markets in the Middle East, Europe, Africa and Asia. For us, having a significant presence in this environment is critical as we have the eyes of the travel world on us at the event. The traction you get from being present at ATM, in terms of meeting with peers, partners, owners, technology platforms and travel professionals from around the world, is significant.”

Visit stand: HC0720

**YAMINA SOFO**

Director of Sales &  
Marketing,  
German National Tourist  
Office - Gulf Countries



“As a regular participant in Arabian Travel Market, we aim to not only build our B2B network but also promote Germany as a sought-after sustainable tourism destination for everyone at the show. ATM offers the perfect platform for our partners to connect with the GCC market and develop long-term strategic partnerships. The show is instrumental to the travel and trade sector in the region and around the world as it allows all of us to come under one roof along with our international peers from the industry.”

Visit stand: EU1635

**MOHAMED ABDALLA AL ZAABI**

Group CEO,  
Miral



“Miral is a major contributor to Abu Dhabi’s growing economy, achieving international recognition and commercial success as well as strengthening the emirate’s position as a global tourism hub. Events such as ATM are important for the travel and tourism sector in the Middle East and North Africa region as it serves as a platform for companies like Miral to showcase their offerings, network with industry peers and keep up-to-date with the latest trends and developments across the industry.”

Visit stands: ME2450, ME2410

**RAKI PHILLIPS**

CEO,  
Ras Al Khaimah  
Tourism Development  
Authority (RAKTDA)



“ATM is an important event in the global tourism calendar, playing a leading role in connecting the travel ecosystem under one roof. For us at RAKTDA, it provides a platform to showcase our development and growth, driven by our goal to sustainably grow tourism’s GDP contribution to almost a third of the emirate’s economy in the near future. We are thrilled to witness the event’s continued success and look forward to joining our industry peers in unlocking the potential of responsible, purpose-driven tourism.”

Visit stand: ME3410



Just a Drop is an international water charity that brings sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene projects to communities across Asia, Africa and Latin America; transforming lives. Safe water changes everything. It improves health, education and women’s rights, and leads to secure food sources, community development, economic growth and brighter futures.

We are delighted to be the official charity of Arabian Travel Market.



Please visit  
[www.justadrop.org](http://www.justadrop.org)  
to find out how you can get involved





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