

دائرة الثقافة والسياحة
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE
AND TOURISM



Abu Dhabi Tourism Investment Prospectus 2025



An aerial photograph of a city skyline at sunset. The sky is filled with dramatic, orange and purple clouds. In the center, a tall, modern skyscraper with a curved facade stands out prominently. Other buildings of varying heights are visible in the background. A body of water is visible in the lower left, reflecting the sky. The overall scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of the setting sun.

Disclaimer

This document has been prepared for informational purposes only. The information contained in this document is provided as of the date of issuance and is subject to change without prior notice. Prospective investors should seek independent legal, financial and tax advice as appropriate before making any investment decision.

The document has been prepared as a 2025 prospectus. In instances where 2025 data is not yet available, the most recent 2024 data has been used to ensure accuracy and completeness.

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Foreword

A World of Opportunities Awaits

Situated in the heart of the Middle East, Abu Dhabi is a vibrant centre of innovation, rich cultural heritage, and endless opportunities. This prospectus goes beyond outlining the emirate's strategic advantages, such as a robust infrastructure, supportive regulatory frameworks, and long-term growth potential. It is a genuine invitation to the global community to explore unique investment prospects within Abu Dhabi's flourishing tourism sector.

Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), ranks among the world's top cities for consistent progress in economic growth, tourist attractions, and quality of life. Through its forward-thinking policies and strategic initiatives, the emirate is successfully transforming its economy, moving away from reliance on oil revenues and prioritising investments in sectors such as renewable energy, technology, healthcare, and tourism.

By nurturing a culture of innovation through support for startups and investments in research and development, Abu Dhabi is establishing itself as a global leader in key economic sectors that drive and enable tourism. Abu Dhabi is a prime destination for business, attracting significant foreign direct investment (FDI), developing state-of-the-art infrastructure, and creating a portfolio and a pipeline of world-class cultural, leisure, and entertainment assets.

Tourism GDP is projected to grow by 46% between 2024 and 2030, reinforcing its role as a key contributor to the emirate's economy. Hotel revenue surged by 44% in 2025 compared to 2023, and increased by 19% year-on-year, reflecting the sector's rapid expansion. Visitor numbers continue to climb, with annual growth projected at 7.3% through the decade. With steady increases in both visits and spending, the tourism sector is on a strong upward trajectory. Backed by full commitment from both the government and private sector, the emirate is well-positioned to sustain growth in the coming years.

As Abu Dhabi emerges as a global tourism hub, investors gain unique advantages through specialized investment zones with tailored incentives and innovative public-private partnership models. The emirate offers streamlined regulations, attractive financial benefits, and specialized support mechanisms for tourism ventures, while its commitment to sustainable development ensures long-term viability for investors who participate in this transformative period of growth. Now is the time to be part of Abu Dhabi's tourism success story. We invite investors and partners to shape the future with us. Together, we elevate Abu Dhabi's tourism sector to new heights, driving economic growth, and setting new benchmarks for excellence in the region and beyond.

A portrait of a man wearing a white thobe and ghutra, with a black agal. He has a beard and is wearing glasses. The background is dark and out of focus.

“

Abu Dhabi stands at the threshold of a transformative era in tourism, as we enrich our cultural landscape, foster economic resilience, and create unparalleled experiences through strategic investment. With a vibrant trade ecosystem and a resilient, diversified economy, our city offers a strong and sustainable investment landscape for the future.

His Excellency
Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak,
Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism Abu Dhabi

Why Invest in Abu Dhabi?

Abu Dhabi stands out as a leading global destination for investment.

Known for its strategic location, resilient economy, stable governance, business-friendly environment and rich cultural heritage, the emirate boasts world-class infrastructure that supports its key industries. Through a dynamic and diverse economic landscape, Abu Dhabi provides the ideal setting for businesses' growth, innovation and long-term success.

▲ A Strategic Gateway Between East and West

Situated on the southeastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula and bordered by the Arabian Gulf, Abu Dhabi is not only the largest emirate within the UAE, but also holds a critical geopolitical position. **With one-third of the world's population within a four-hour flight away and**

80 percent reachable in just eight hours¹, the emirate is a global hub for commerce and travel. Offering world-class infrastructure and connectivity across four time zones, Abu Dhabi's Zayed International Airport serves over 135 destinations through 41 airlines.



80%

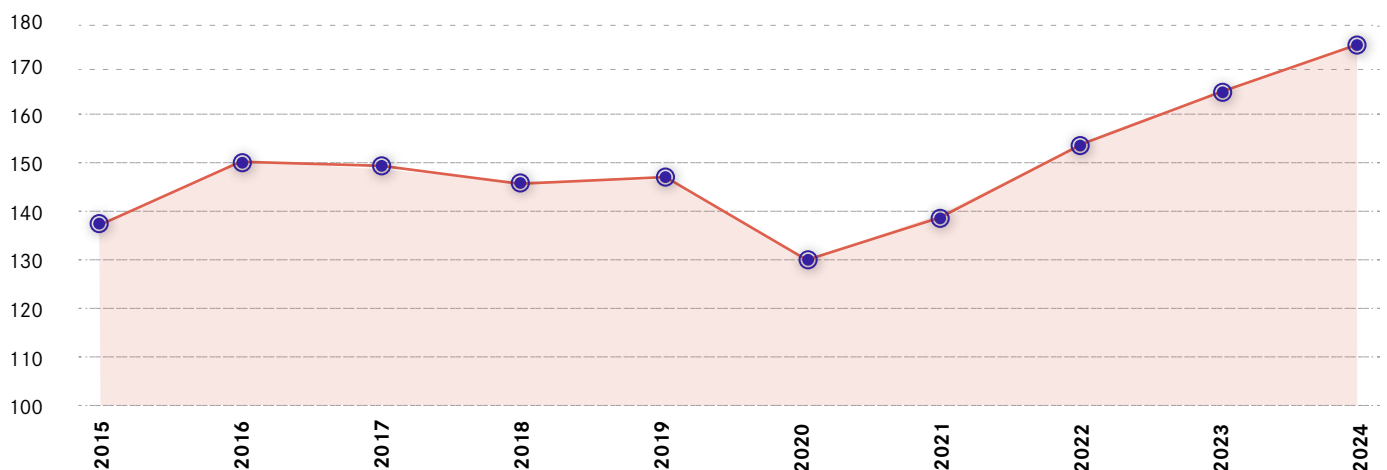
of the World
Reachable in Just
8 Hours

▲ A Flourishing Economy and a Vibrant Tourism Sector

Abu Dhabi's economy is one of the region's strongest, with a GDP that underscores its role as an **economic powerhouse**. The emirate has undertaken significant sectorial diversification efforts, reducing its reliance on oil and expanding into sectors such as tourism, renewable energy, and technology. Abu Dhabi's non-oil GDP saw an impressive 6.2 percent growth in 2024.

Tourism plays a critical role, with the emirate positioning itself as a premier destination for families, entertainment, and cultural experiences - currently contributing 9.6 percent to the non-oil GDP.

Abu Dhabi Non-Oil GDP, 2015-2024 (USD Billion)



■ A Key Pillar of Political Stability in the Region

Abu Dhabi, as part of the UAE, **upholds long-term political stability and maintains an open diplomatic policy worldwide**, reflected in its extensive network of over 126 diplomatic missions abroad and nearly 195 foreign diplomatic missions within the country². In the 2025 Global Peace Index, the UAE ranked 4th in the MENA region³. The government's significant

investment in healthcare, education, and social services has elevated living standards, placing the UAE second globally and first in the region for quality of life⁴. In addition, the UAE's security standards and commitment to regional and international cooperation further solidify its position as a politically stable and secure destination.



125

Bilateral Treaties Signed (89 treaties in Force as of 2025)⁵

■ Abu Dhabi's Business-Friendly Environment Attracts Global Investors

Abu Dhabi offers an environment conducive to business growth, marked by robust infrastructure and access to a highly skilled global talent pool. **The emirate is one of the easiest places to do business in the world**. The government of

Abu Dhabi actively fosters the growth of its tourism sector through a variety of supportive measures and policies, including favourable tax policies, exemptions, and subsidies designed to encourage business establishment and expansion.



+29%

Growth in New Economic Licenses in 2025 (average across all regions and sectors)⁶

■ Offering a Captivating Blend of Exceptional and Unique Natural and Cultural Heritage

Abu Dhabi is a place where past and present come together to create something extraordinary. Along with its modern attractions, the emirate boasts a rich history and unique traditions, with numerous cultural and heritage landmarks including the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Qasr Al Hosn, the UNESCO World Heritage-designated Cultural Sites of Al Ain, and the Jebel Hafit Tombs. Its commitment to preserving traditional

crafts, uncovering archaeological sites and protecting natural reserves underscores Abu Dhabi's commitment to its heritage and environmental conservation. Furthermore, Abu Dhabi offers a **wide range of entertainment and cultural properties**, from the iconic Louvre Abu Dhabi and Ferrari World Abu Dhabi to the upcoming Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, The Sphere, and Disneyland.



44%

Increase in Hotel Revenues in 2025 from 2023

■ Cutting-edge Infrastructure Sets Abu Dhabi Apart as a Premier Destination

Abu Dhabi's state-of-the-art infrastructure seamlessly integrates **advanced transport systems, aviation facilities, high-speed digital networks, top-tier service platforms, and a robust financial foundation**. The emirate's transportation infrastructure, including a network of well maintained roads, efficient public transit systems, and the upcoming

Etiihad Rail project, enables efficient mobility within the emirate and beyond. Zayed International Airport ensures global connectivity by linking the emirate with an array of key destinations worldwide. In the digital arena, Abu Dhabi boasts one of the world's most extensive fibre-optic networks and seamless e-services, setting a benchmark for modern infrastructure.



32.4M

Passengers Served in 2025 via Abu Dhabi airports, (13% Growth since 2024)

² UAE Government Portal, 2025

⁴ Expat Insider, 2025

⁶ ADMO, 2026

³ Global Peace Index, 2024

⁵ UNCTAD Investment Policy Hub, 2025

Abu Dhabi Profile

3.1 A Gateway for Businesses to Enter and Grow in the Middle East

As the capital of the UAE, Abu Dhabi's vibrant and thriving economy empowers the growth of innovative enterprises. Its strategic location provides unparalleled global access, placing 80 percent of the world's population within an eight-hour flight.

Leading the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region for its ease of doing business, it is a prime location for investment ventures. Supported by a highly favourable tax regime, access to a top-tier talent pool, and an unmatched quality of life in the region, Abu Dhabi offers the perfect environment for business success.



Located at the **intersection** of Europe, Asia, and Africa



9.6% of non-oil GDP was driven by tourism in 2024



AED 1,178B (USD 320B) GDP in 2024⁷



Named **the most liveable city** in MENA in 2025⁹



UAE ranks **2nd** in MENA for GDP per capita (**25th Globally**)⁸



The UAE ranks **5th** in the Global Competitiveness Index¹⁰

3.2 A Robust and Diverse Economy, Enhanced by a Multicultural Population



Attractive Location

The largest of the United Arab Emirates, **Abu Dhabi**, represents 84 percent of the country's landmass. Counting 215 islands and a vast 2,435-kilometre coastline, its total area spans 67,340 square kilometres. The Emirate of Abu Dhabi lies on the coast of the Arabian Gulf and is bordered by the Sultanate of Oman to the east, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the south and the west, and the Emirate of Dubai to the northeast, an attractive gateway.

The three main regions of the emirate are:

01

Abu Dhabi City

As the capital of the UAE and the heart of the emirate, Abu Dhabi City sits on a T-shaped island extending into the Arabian Gulf from the central western coast.

02

Al Ain

Located in the eastern part of the UAE near the Oman border, Al Ain is a city nestled between picturesque mountains. Known as the "Garden City" for its abundant greenery, it is also home to the UAE's first UNESCO World Heritage Site.

03

Al Dhafra

Al Dhafra covers the western region of the emirate. It is defined by vast deserts, including a portion of the Empty Quarter (Rub' al Khali), the largest sand desert in the world, and home to Liwa and its famous Liwa International festival.

Strong Economic Profile

Abu Dhabi is one of the wealthiest economies in the world. In 2024, the emirate's non-oil GDP reached AED 644 billion (USD 175 billion), reflecting a 6.2 percent growth from 2023¹¹. **Over the past few decades, Abu Dhabi has embarked on a comprehensive diversification journey, investing heavily in AI, renewable energy, tourism, cultural infrastructure, finance, technology, and other non-oil sectors.** The emirate is also home to three of the world's largest

sovereign wealth funds, the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, Mubadala, and L'IMAD, which are instrumental in driving strategic investments both locally and internationally. This focus on economic diversification aligns with the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030, a forward-thinking strategy aimed at reducing its dependency on oil revenues and building a sustainable and opportunity-rich economy for its citizens, residents and the international community alike.



AED 644B

(USD 175B)
Non-oil GDP in 2024



54.7%

Non-oil Activity Contribution
to GDP in 2024



6.2%

Non-oil GDP Growth
in 2024 (vs. 2023)



AED 245B

(USD 67B) Non-oil
Exports* in 2025¹²



AED 170B

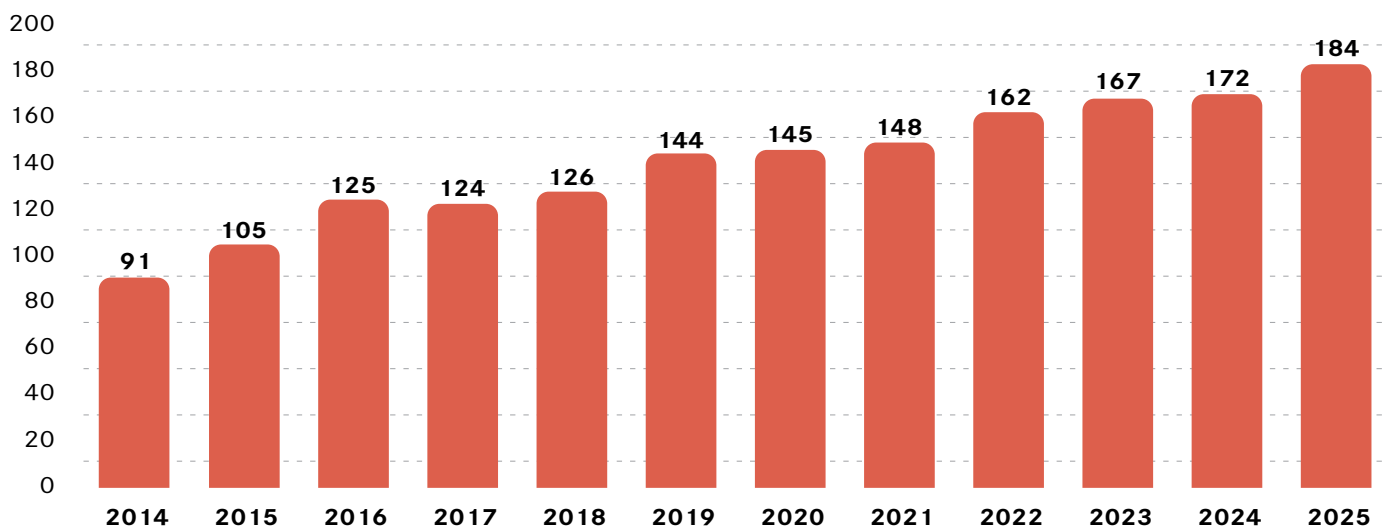
(USD 46B)
Imports in 2025¹³

Growing Investment and Trade Landscape

Abu Dhabi's track record in securing foreign direct investment (FDI) is underpinned by the UAE's broader success in attracting global capital. Announced greenfield FDI into the UAE surged to USD 33.16bn in 2025, ranking 10th globally for FDI capital inflows and representing a 78% increase from USD 18.66bn in 2024. The UAE also ranked second worldwide by number of announced greenfield FDI projects, which increased 10.7% year on year to 1,491, underscoring the sustained expansion and diversification of international investor interest¹⁴.

In 2025, the United Arab Emirates ranked 9th globally in the 2025 FDI Confidence Index reflecting strong investor confidence in its long-term growth trajectory. **In the emerging markets ranking, the UAE stood 2nd**, underscoring its appeal relative to other developing¹⁵ economies. These placements signal robust optimism among global executives about the UAE's economic diversification, policy environment, and ability to attract future foreign direct investment. In Abu Dhabi, foreign investment stock surged by 6.8 percent in 2025, reaching nearly **AED 184 billion (USD 50 billion)**.¹⁶

Total Stock of Foreign Investment in Abu Dhabi, 2014-2025 (AED Billion)



Complementing its strong investment landscape, Abu Dhabi's non-oil trade figures for 2025 further underscore the resilience of its diversified economy. The emirate recorded non-oil exports of AED 175 billion and re-exports of AED 70 billion, totalling AED

245 billion (USD 67 billion), alongside imports of AED 170 billion (USD 46 billion). These numbers reflect Abu Dhabi's vibrant trade ecosystem and its strategic role in fostering sustainable economic development.

¹² SCAD

¹⁴ ENBD Research, 2025

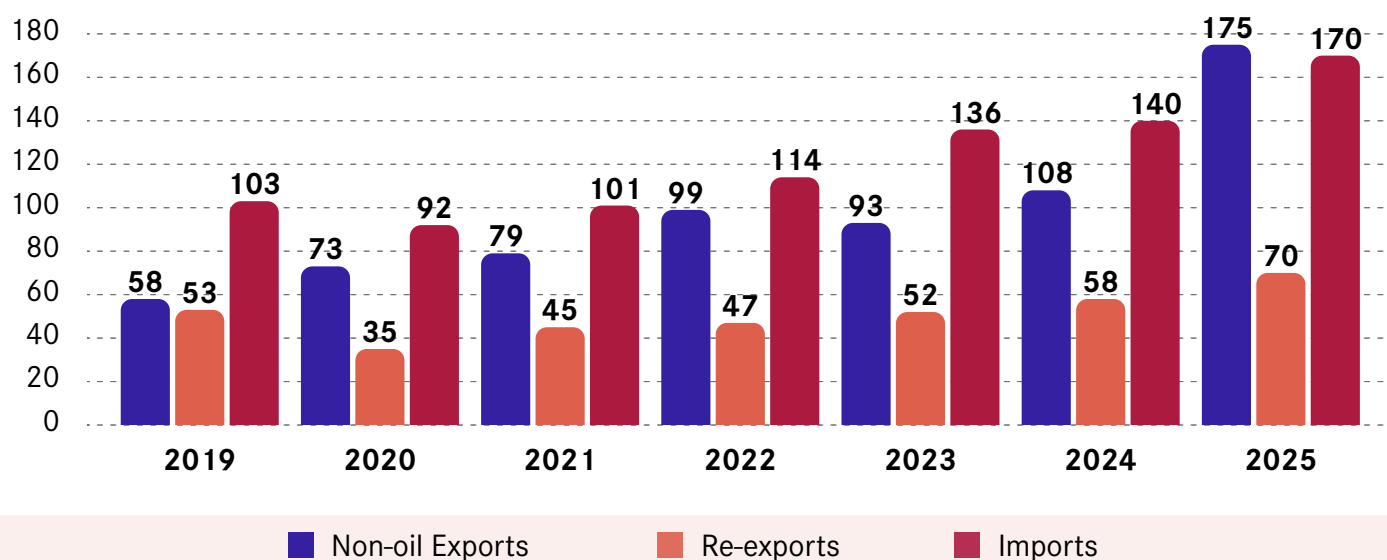
¹⁶ SCAD

¹³ SCAD

¹⁵ Kearney FDI Confidence Index, 2025

*The value of exports includes the total value of exports and re-exports

Abu Dhabi Non-oil Exports, Re-exports, and Imports, 2019-2025 (AED Billion)



Multinational Demographics

Abu Dhabi's diverse demographic composition reflects its status as a true global crossroads in the modern era. As of early 2025, the emirate's population reached approximately 4.14 million¹⁷ residents, with expatriates constituting a significant majority¹⁸. This diverse mix is part of the UAE's wider multicultural identity, counting **over 200 nationalities** and further strengthening Abu Dhabi as a hub for business, education, and tourism.

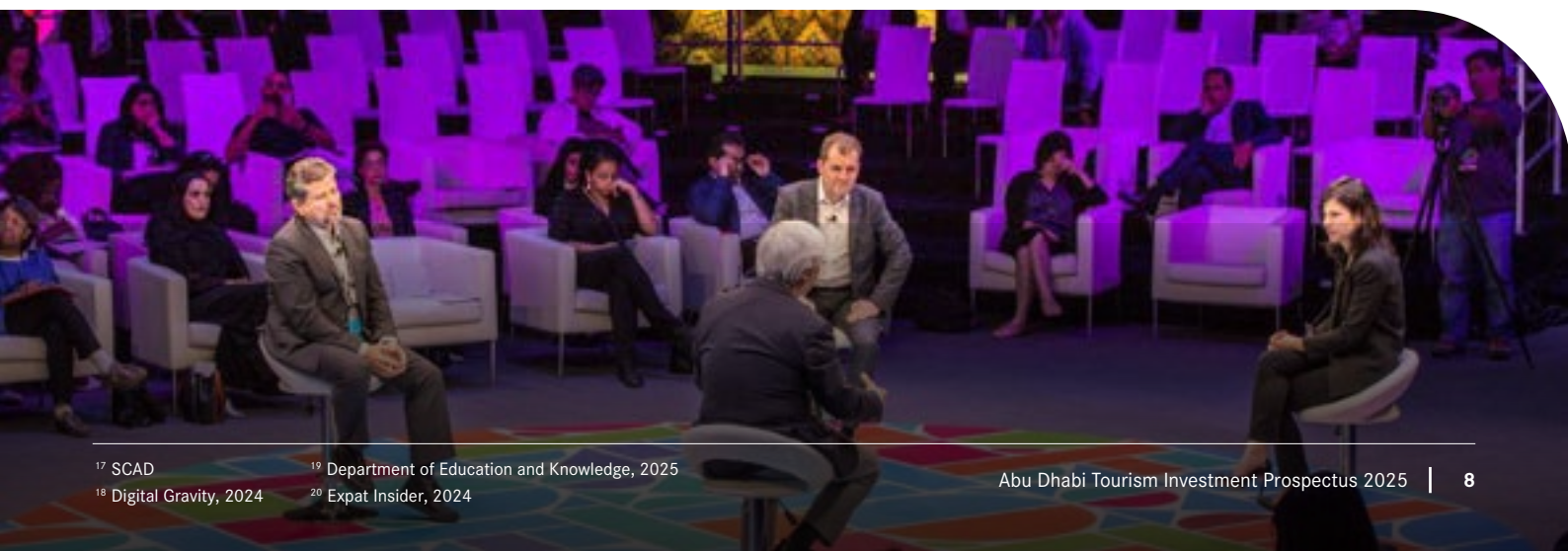
Arabic is Abu Dhabi's official language and serves as a vital link to the emirate's deep-rooted Arab heritage.

Meanwhile, English acts as a common language of business and daily communication, facilitating interactions across the emirate's diverse communities. Additionally, widely spoken languages such as Hindi, Tagalog, Tamil, and Urdu enrich Abu Dhabi's cultural landscape. The emirate is home to hundreds of schools offering a wide array of curricula, including British, American, IB, Hindi, French, Tagalog, Russian, Spanish, and Italian, reflecting its commitment to providing inclusive and globally relevant educational opportunities for its residents.

Access to a Diverse Talent Pool

Abu Dhabi offers access to a diverse and highly skilled talent pool. Home to over 29¹⁹ institutions of higher learning and a growing multinational workforce, the emirate provides businesses with abundant opportunities to recruit exceptional talent from within Abu Dhabi and across the UAE. Ranked as **the 12th-best city for working abroad**²⁰,

Abu Dhabi attracts large volumes of international talent seeking employment opportunities. To support this, the emirate has implemented various initiatives, including comprehensive long-term policies and frameworks, enabling the provision of flexible insurance packages and visas, thus supporting international investors and top-tier professionals across various sectors.



¹⁷ SCAD

¹⁹ Department of Education and Knowledge, 2025

¹⁸ Digital Gravity, 2024

²⁰ Expat Insider, 2024

3.3 The Emirate's Journey of Ambition and Achievement

Abu Dhabi's transformation from a humble fishing village to a thriving global economic hub is a testament to visionary leadership, strategic development, and relentless ambition. Initially sustained by pearl diving and fishing, the discovery of oil in the late 1950s marked the beginning of a new era. However, it was the forward-thinking leadership of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, former Ruler of Abu Dhabi and Founding President of the UAE²¹, that laid the foundation for diversification and elevated Abu Dhabi onto the global stage.

By the 1970s, Abu Dhabi began building the infrastructure needed to support its rapidly growing oil industry while also establishing itself as a hub for tourism, culture, and commerce.

Fast forward to the 21st century, Abu Dhabi has inaugurated world-class attractions and institutions, underscoring its position as a global culture and tourism destination. Key attractions include Yas Island, featuring the Formula 1 Yas Marina Circuit and renowned theme parks like Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, alongside the Saadiyat Cultural District, which boasts the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the Sheikh Zayed National Museum, the Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi, and major forthcoming museums such as the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi.

Introduced in 2008, the **Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030** outlines a **transformative strategy aimed at reducing the emirate's dependency on oil, fostering sectors like tourism, renewable energy, and finance**. The resulting initiatives have been instrumental in shaping the emirate's modern identity.



04

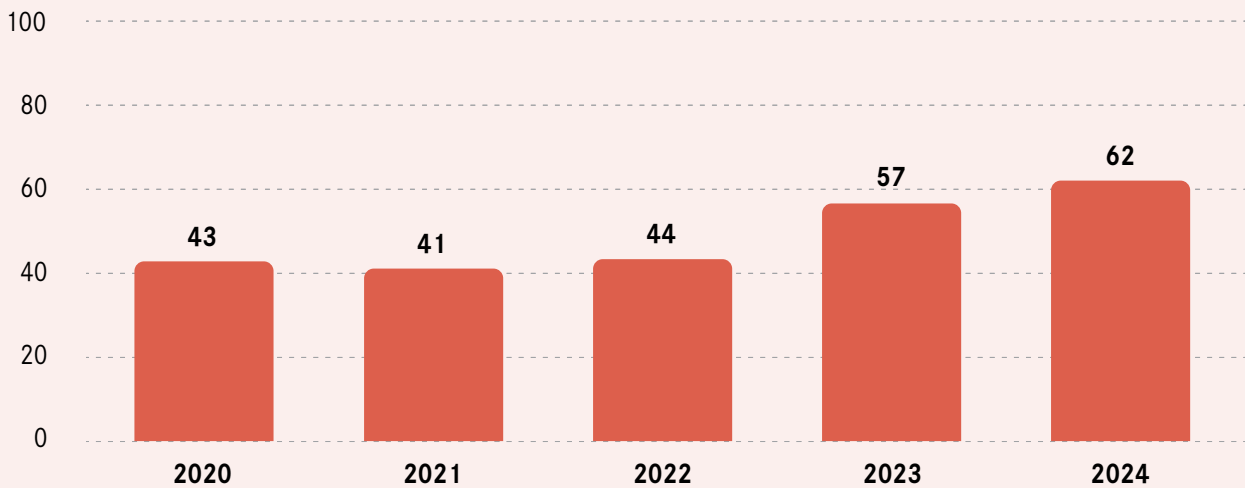
Tourism Sector Overview



4.1 Economic Shift Towards Tourism Over the Last Decade

Tourism is a cornerstone of the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030, contributing 9.6 percent of the emirate’s non-oil GDP in 2024. The sector’s GDP contribution increased significantly to AED 61.8 billion (USD 16.8 billion) in 2024, with ambitions to reach AED 90 billion (USD 24.5 billion) by 2030.

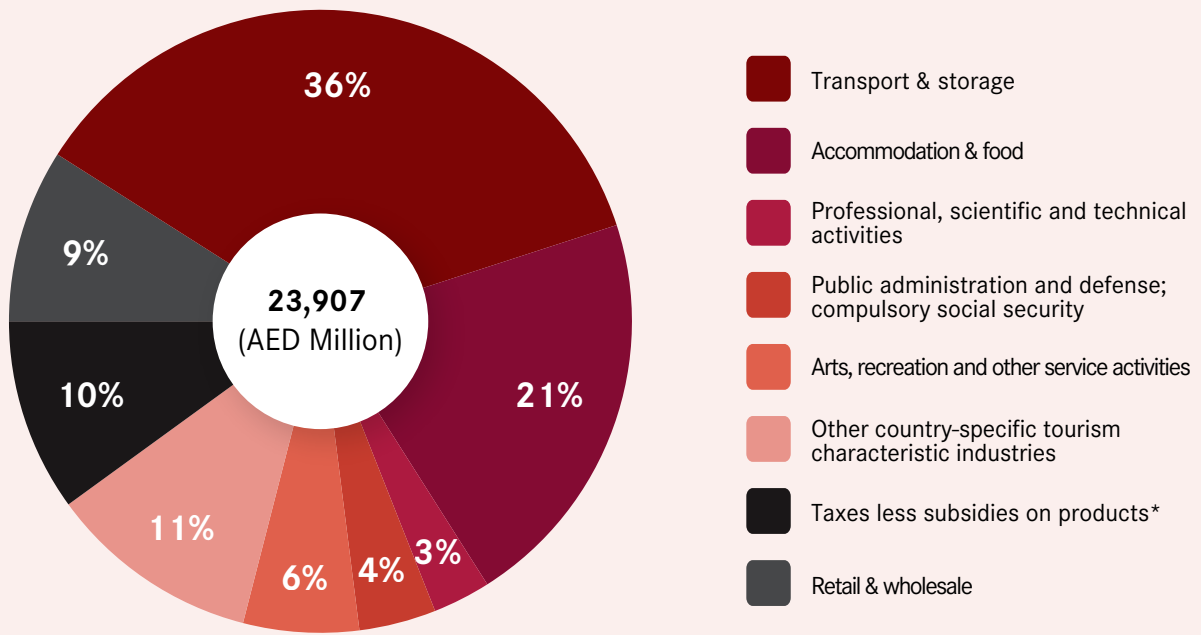
Abu Dhabi Tourism Contribution to GDP Growth, 2020-2024 (AED Billion)



Following a swift recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, Abu Dhabi recorded over 26.6 million visitors in 2025. Looking ahead, Abu Dhabi’s Tourism Strategy 2030 projects **annual visitor growth of 8.1 percent**, reaching 39.3 million by 2030. International overnight stays are also set to experience significant growth, climbing from 8.4 million in 2025 to 12 million by 2030, reflecting an annual increase of 7.4 percent.

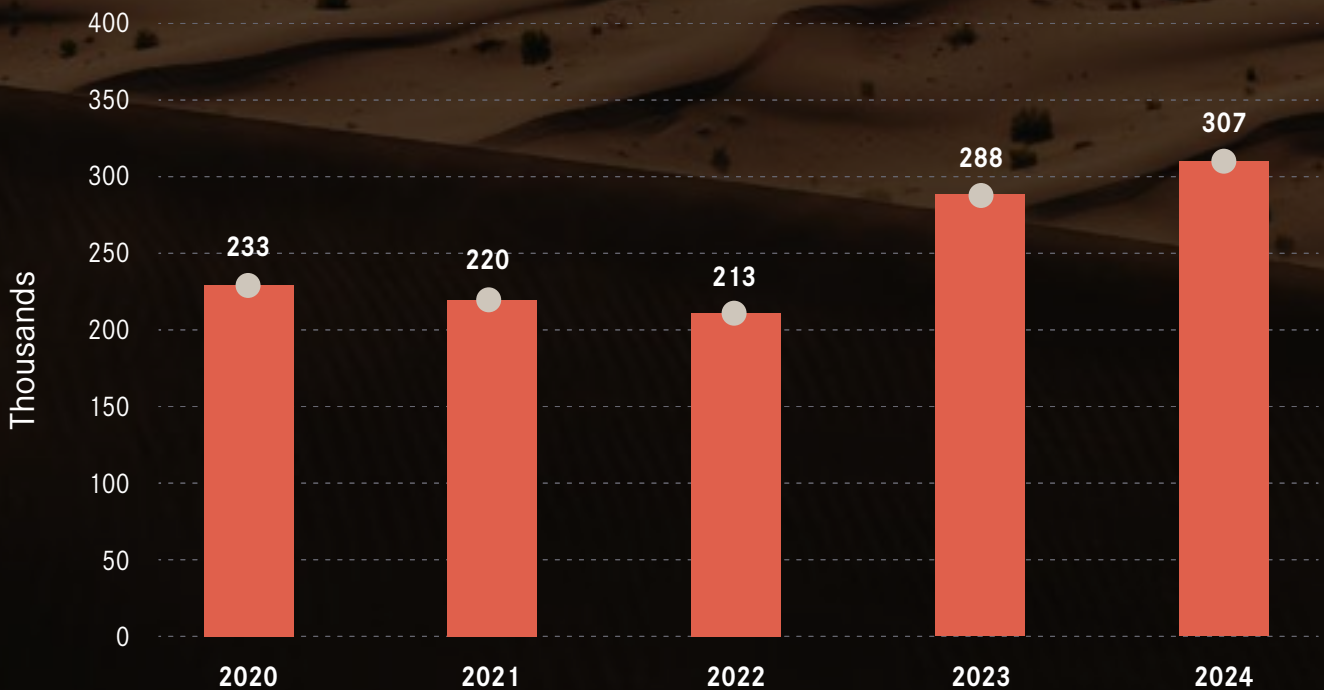
This growth has helped galvanize many related sectors. Accommodation and food services recorded a 20 percent increase between 2022 and 2024, wholesale and retail rose by 45 percent; real estate advanced by 38 percent, and arts, recreation, and other services experienced a surge of 89 percent.

Tourism GDP by Sector, 2024 (Real GDP in AED Million at 2014 Prices)



Abu Dhabi Tourism Impact on Jobs, 2020-2024

(Total Number of Direct, Indirect, and Induced Job Opportunities Created)



The tourism sector in Abu Dhabi plays an important role as a major employment driver. **In 2024, the sector supported nearly 307,000 job opportunities (including direct, indirect, and induced), with total employment targeted to reach 366,000 by 2030.**

26.6M

Total Visitors in 2025

AED 61.8B

(USD 16.8B) Total Economic GDP Impact of Tourism in 2024

AED 35B*

(USD 9.5B) Total Visitor Spending in 2024

+13%

Total Tourism Spending Growth in 2024

154K

Direct Jobs in 2024

AED 25.7B

(USD 7.0B) Abu Dhabi Tourism Sector Investment per Year

81%

Hotel Rooms Occupancy Rate in 2025

8.8M

Transit Passengers in 2025

+2%

Increase in Overnight Hotel Guests in 2025 (vs 2024)

2.2M

Delegates across 6,626 MICE Events in 2025

83%

International Visitor Satisfaction in Key Source Markets in 2025

4.2 Exceptional Tourist Experiences and High Satisfaction Levels

Abu Dhabi places a strong emphasis on delivering exceptional tourism services, ensuring that the growing number of visitors does not compromise the quality of their experience. Consistently high ratings in satisfaction surveys underscore this commitment, with 83 percent of international visitors expressing satisfaction and 71 percent of respondents stating that their experience “exceeded expectations”. Moreover, 84 percent of visitors expressed a desire to return, highlighting the emirate’s appeal.

Domestic tourism in Abu Dhabi is driven by both leisure and business travel, with leisure accounting for

34 percent of domestic visitors and business for 31 percent, with the remainder split across visiting friends and family, transit, and other purposes. However, their travel patterns differ significantly; most business travelers typically make same-day visits, while leisure travelers predominantly stay overnight.

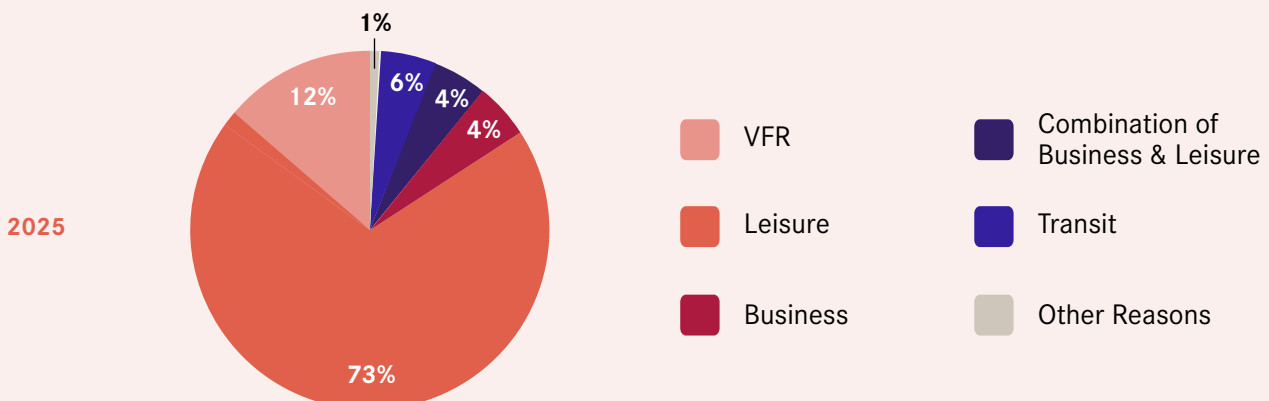
Among international visitors, 73 percent travel to Abu Dhabi for leisure, while 12 percent come to visit friends and relatives (VFR). Cultural attractions and “sun and sea” experiences are the main draws for leisure tourists, whereas business visitors primarily attend meetings and events.

Main Reasons for Visiting Abu Dhabi, 2025

Two-thirds of international visitors (73 percent) came to Abu Dhabi for leisure purposes during 2025.

Cultural, General Sightseeing and Sun & Sea Motivations were the key reasons attracting leisure visitors to Abu Dhabi. However, there was a significant increase in the proportion of leisure visitors traveling to Abu Dhabi for a broader mix of purposes, rising from 21 percent to 36 percent.

Business visitors traveled to Abu Dhabi primarily to attend meetings. The city’s strong business infrastructure and global connectivity also attracted professionals for networking, deal-making, and industry exhibitions.

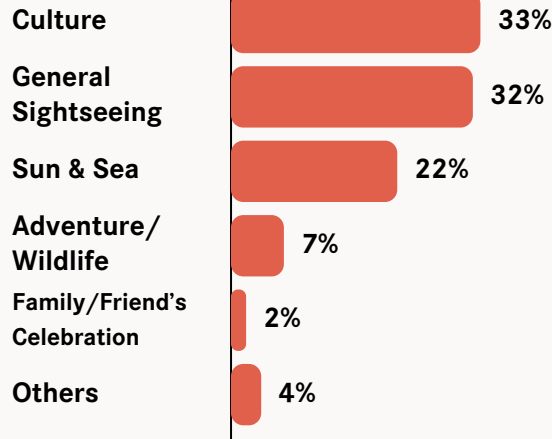


Detailed Reasons (2025)



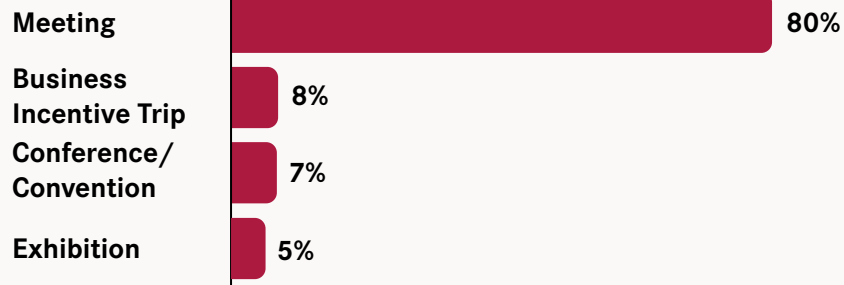
73%

Leisure
Visitors



4%

Business
Visitors



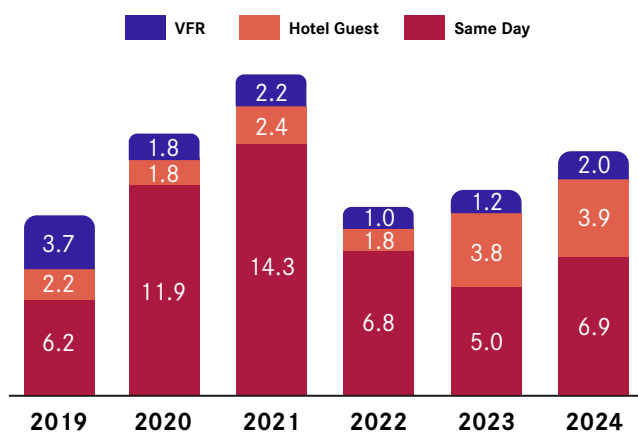
4.3 Positive Dynamics in Visitor Spending

Visitor spending in Abu Dhabi shows a robust pattern, with international tourists contributing significantly to the emirate's economy through hotel stays, day trips, and visits to friends and family. Despite global economic uncertainties, Abu Dhabi has seen a consistent rise in tourist spending in recent years, reflecting a sustained and growing interest in its diverse

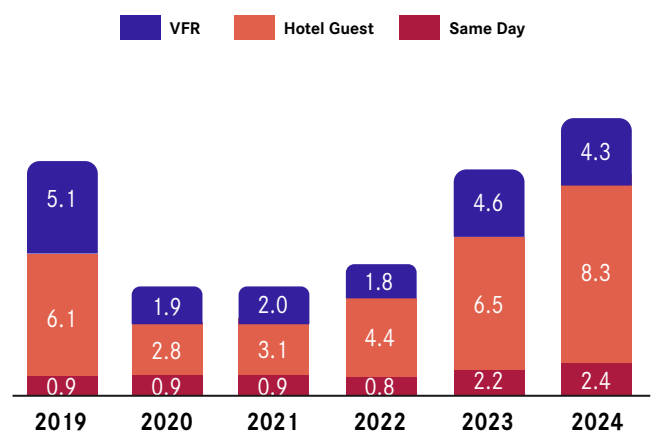
attractions, from cultural landmarks to upscale hospitality and leisure experiences.

Domestic and international visitor spending in Abu Dhabi has made a strong recovery following the downturn during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and it is projected to grow at an annual rate of 10 percent.

Domestic Visitors Spend in Abu Dhabi, 2019-2024 (AED Billion)



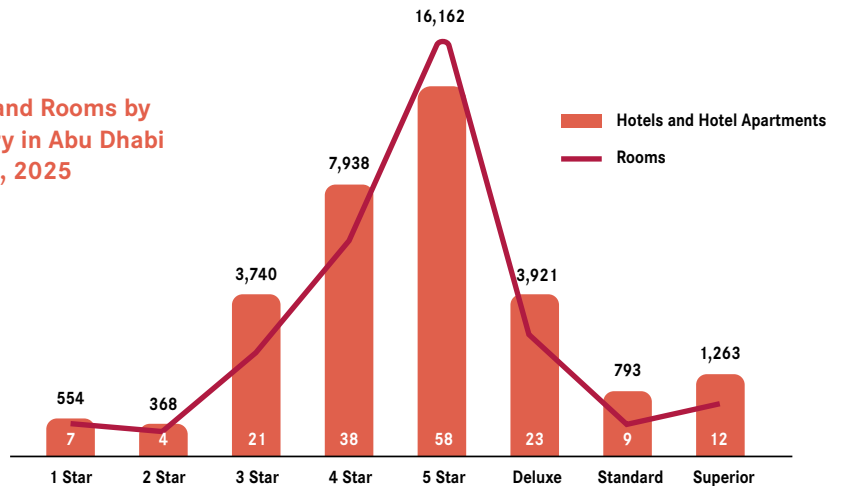
International Visitors Spend in Abu Dhabi, 2019-2024 (AED Billion)



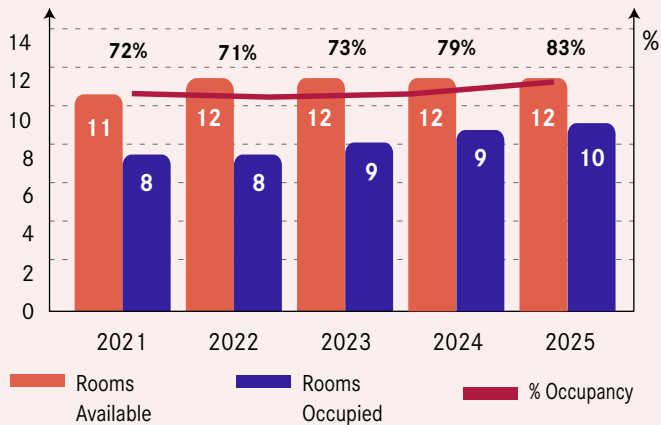
4.4 Setting New Benchmarks in Hospitality Excellence

By the end of 2025, Abu Dhabi boasted a total of 172 hotels and hotel apartments, offering 34,739 rooms, of which, 58 were five-star establishments. The upcoming years hold strong growth potential, with plans to add 39 hotels and 5,395 rooms between 2026 and 2030.

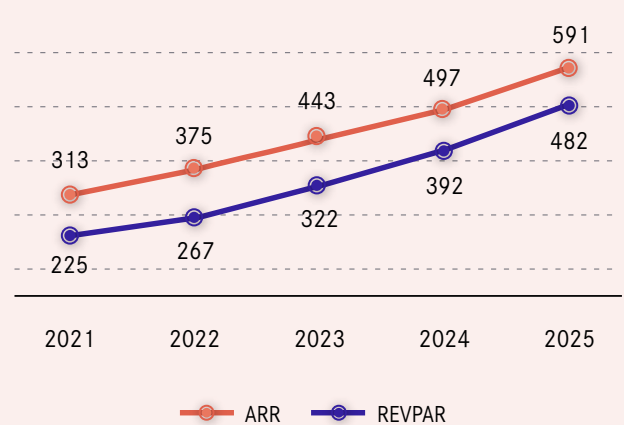
Hotels and Rooms by Category in Abu Dhabi Emirate, 2025



2021–2025 Hotel Rooms Available vs. Rooms Occupied (Mn Room Nights) and Average Occupancy Rate (%)

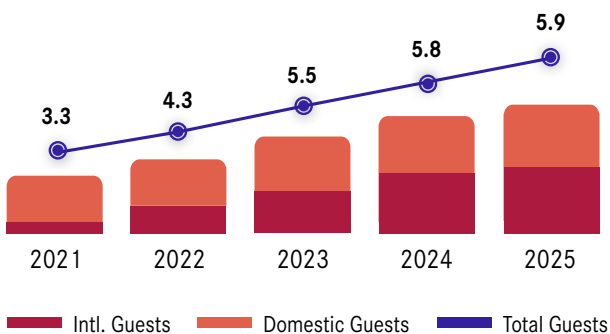


Average Room Rate and Revenue per Available Room Growth, 2021-2025 (AED)

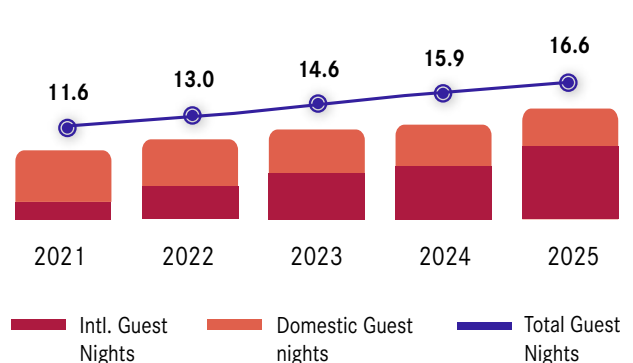


Abu Dhabi achieved strong results in hotel occupancy rates, with an average of 83 percent throughout 2025. Tourists stayed an average of 2.8 days, while revenue per available room (RevPAR) reached AED 482 (USD 131). In 2025, the number of guests in paid accommodation rose by 2 percent to 5.9 million, with a target of 8.9 million by 2030. Additionally, in 2025, the annual hotel guest night reached 16.6 million.

Annual Guests in paid accommodation, 2021-2025 (Million Guests)



Annual Hotel Guest Night Projection, 2021-2025 (Million Nights)

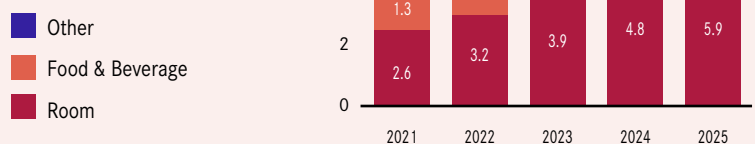


Abu Dhabi's food and beverage (F&B) sector has witnessed exceptional growth. The Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ADCCI) announced that active memberships in the sector reached 24,594 by the end of September 2025; a clear indication of investor confidence and a thriving business environment in the Emirate.



Abu Dhabi has recently implemented key updates to regulate and expand its holiday homes market. The new policy allows property owners, including those with farmhouses, caravans, and RVs, to convert their properties into holiday homes. Furthermore, landlords and owners of residential units can now acquire multiple holiday home licenses if they own more than one unit.

Hotel Revenues by Stream, ~21% Annual Growth, 2021-2025 (AED Billion)



4.5 A Global Healthcare Hub with World-class Medical Facilities and Services

Abu Dhabi has established itself as a prominent healthcare destination, featuring state-of-the-art infrastructure, including 65+ hospitals and over 8,900+ beds. The emirate's healthcare network is further strengthened by more than 3,300 health facilities. World-renowned institutions, such as Cleveland Clinic, have set up in Abu Dhabi, bolstering the emirate's position as a global leader in medical testing and innovation.

Annually, more than 15,000 medical tourists are drawn to Abu Dhabi²², attracted by its exceptional healthcare services. **Abu Dhabi ranks ninth globally in the 2020–2021 Medical Tourism Index, positioning the emirate as the second-highest ranked destination in the region²³.**

4.6 Venture Capital Investments Fuelling Innovation in Tourism

Abu Dhabi's tourism sector benefits from a significant annual investment of AED 25.7 billion (USD 7.0 billion)²⁴. A key driver of growth and innovation in this sector is the active presence of venture capital firms, particularly

focused on Abu Dhabi's thriving startup ecosystem. Incubators like Hub71 and accelerators like Plug and Play offer vital support and resources to emerging entrepreneurs in the tourism industry.

²² UAE Times (GlobalData), 2023

²⁴ Abu Dhabi Investment Office

²³ Medical Tourism Association, 2020

Abu Dhabi Tourism Key Milestones



- Tourist attractions built
- Upcoming developments
- Government entities
- Policies developed
- Accommodation and airways
- Rulers/ Crown Princes

4.7 Diversified Tourism Offerings across a Variety of Asset Classes

Embracing Natural Splendour and Iconic Landmarks

Architectural Marvels and Cultural Icons

With 14.2 million visitors to its cultural sites in 2025, representing a 12 percent increase compared to 2024, Abu Dhabi takes pride in its iconic landmarks, which include **Louvre Abu Dhabi and Qasr Al Watan. The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, ranked as the world's eighth-favourite landmark** on TripAdvisor, holds three Guinness World Records. Reflecting its commitment to openness and religious diversity, Abu Dhabi is also home to the Abraham Family House, which features a mosque, church and synagogue, serving as a bridge for people from major faiths.

Beaches and Resorts

Abu Dhabi visitors can indulge in its pristine beaches, luxurious resorts and a wide range of leisure activities. The emirate's extensive coastline features world-renowned beachfront resorts, particularly in areas like Saadiyat Island and Yas Island, with occupancy rates averaging over 79 percent throughout the year. Abu Dhabi's Corniche Road, stretching an impressive eight kilometres along the waterfront, attracts 30,000 to 50,000 visitors each month.

Oases and Islands²⁵

The Abu Dhabi archipelago consists of 215 islands, each blessed with abundant natural beauty and diverse marine life. The region is home to a variety of endangered species, including 4,000 migratory flamingos, the largest population of Indian Ocean humpback dolphins, and the second-largest population of dugongs in the world. Abu Dhabi is home to approximately 75 percent of the UAE's mangroves, while nearly 47 percent of the Arabian Gulf's mangroves are located along the southern UAE coastline²⁶. Sir Bani Yas Island features a renowned wildlife reserve, sheltering over 17,000 free-roaming animals. Meanwhile, Delma Island stands as one of the UAE's earliest sites of human settlements, once a thriving pearl-diving community.

²⁵ Escape to Sir Bani Yas Island – Abu Dhabi's Wildlife Reserve, 2024

²⁶ The National

A World of Experiences: From Unforgettable Adventures to Premier Business Events

Adventures and Experiences

Abu Dhabi offers a wide array of attractions for both adventure lovers and nature enthusiasts. Yas Island is home to thrilling theme parks, including Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, Yas Waterworld Abu Dhabi, and Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi. The Heritage Village offers a glimpse into the emirate's rich history and traditions, drawing over approximately 708,000 visitors in 2025. Food lovers can indulge in high-end dining in restaurants like Zuma and Cipriani, while shoppers can explore luxury destinations such as The Galleria Mall and Yas Mall for a premium retail experience.

Festivals and Events

Abu Dhabi's vibrant calendar of events and festivals reflects the emirate's dynamic cultural scene and world-class events infrastructure, attracting more than 4.2 Mn visitors from 245 events in 2025. From arena shows featuring international artists and comedians at Saadiyat Nights and Abu Dhabi Comedy Week, to homegrown celebrations such as MOTN and Al Hosn Festival, the city offers a wide range of entertainment. Abu Dhabi also hosts globally recognised sporting events, including UFC and NBA fixtures. Moreover, the emirate was honoured as the Middle East's Leading Wedding Destination from 2020 to 2022²⁷.

Business Conferences and Meetings

Abu Dhabi, named the Middle East's Leading Business Travel Destination for 2021-2024, ranks as the third most popular city for events and conferences in the MENA region²⁸. It serves as a key hub for the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE) industry. In 2025, the city marked a major achievement, hosting over 2.2 million delegates across 6,626 events.

Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque

The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi is one of the largest mosques in the world, showcasing the grandeur of modern Islamic architecture. Serving not only as a prominent place of worship, but also as a major tourist destination, the mosque welcomes millions of visitors annually. In 2025, it was reported to have drawn over 4.3 million people²⁹ from around the world, making it one of the UAE's most visited landmarks.



An aerial photograph of a mangrove forest. A long, narrow wooden boardwalk with metal railings winds through the dense green mangrove trees and shallow water. The water reflects the sky and the surrounding foliage. The boardwalk starts from the bottom right and curves towards the top left of the frame.

Mangrove National Park

Spanning over 19 square kilometres, Abu Dhabi's **Mangrove National Park** is an ecological gem that highlights the UAE's commitment to preserving its natural landscapes and biodiversity. This coastal sanctuary, home to thriving mangrove forests, supports a wide range of marine and bird species, while offering activities like kayaking and bird watching. Essential for wildlife conservation, coastline protection, and environmental purification, the park offers a striking contrast to the city's urban scenery.

Saadiyat Island

Saadiyat Island, a key pillar of Abu Dhabi's urban and cultural vision, seamlessly blends luxury, culture, and nature. At its heart lies the expanding Saadiyat Cultural District, a global cultural hub that is home to iconic attractions, including Louvre Abu Dhabi and the upcoming Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and Zayed National Museum. The Saadiyat Grove project is envisioned to serve as a “connective fabric”, linking these cultural landmarks while integrating residential, retail, and leisure spaces. The island is also known for its pristine beaches, luxury resorts like Jumeirah and St. Regis, and upmarket residential areas. Developments like the Mandarin Oriental Residences are setting new standards of luxury living on the island. In addition, Aldar Properties is bringing innovative projects to life, such as Mamsha Gardens, a refined resort-style community, and Saadiyat Lagoons, an eco-friendly villa enclave, both featuring state-of-the-art amenities and breathtaking designs.



Louvre Abu Dhabi

A symbol of cultural and architectural excellence, Louvre Abu Dhabi was created from a groundbreaking intergovernmental agreement between Abu Dhabi and France. Located in the Saadiyat Cultural District, the museum has become a major cultural landmark since its opening in 2017. The museum has recorded more than 1.4 million visitors in 2025, marking its highest attendance since its grand opening and bringing the total visitor count to more than 7.9 million³⁰.

4.8 Vibrant Living Heritage and a Unique UNESCO World Heritage Site

Abu Dhabi strikes the perfect balance between future-focused innovation and thoughtful preservation of its rich cultural heritage. The UAE's **intangible cultural heritage encompasses a wealth of traditions that are fundamental to the Emirati identity and history**, from intricate handicrafts to the customs and cultural expressions that define Bedouin life. These include Al-Taghrooda, the poetic chants of camel riders, the warm hospitality symbolised by Arabic coffee ('Gahwa'), the Majlis, pivotal for social and political dialogue, and the traditional art of Al-Sadu weaving.

Other key examples include the Al-Ayyala performance, a symbol of dignity and unity, Al-Azi's powerful poetry, and the esteemed tradition of falconry. In collaboration with other nations in the Gulf and across the region, Abu Dhabi and the UAE have worked to **inscribe these**

and many other intangible cultural heritage elements onto the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, underscoring a commitment to safeguarding the UAE's rich ancestral legacy.

Al Ain, often referred to as the Garden City, is home to a remarkable series of sites that collectively form the Cultural Sites of Al Ain, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This includes the region's six oases and the archaeological sites of Bida Bint Saud, Hafit, and Hili. These locations offer a glimpse into the emirate's ancient history, with evidence of human habitation dating back to the Neolithic period. They highlight the region's early agricultural practices, social structures, and distinctive cultural traditions that have shaped its identity through the ages.

UNESCO World Heritage Site: Al Ain Cultural Sites – Al Ain Oasis

Al Ain Oasis, one of the largest oases in the Arabian Peninsula, was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2011 and opened to the public in 2016. Covering over 1,200 hectares and home to more than 147,000 date palms of various species, the oasis offers a window into traditional Emirati life. It showcases the ingenious falaj irrigation system, which has been vital to sustaining life in the desert for centuries. In addition, the oasis supports around 100 different varieties of vegetation, with many areas functioning as working farms.

The Jebel Hafit Tombs

The Jebel Hafit Tombs, located at the base of Jebel Hafit mountain in Al Ain, offer a fascinating glimpse into the ancient history of the UAE. Dating back over 5,000 years to the Bronze Age, these well-preserved beehive-shaped tombs are among the oldest burial sites in the region. Recognised for their archaeological significance, the tombs provide valuable insights into the burial practices and social structures of the early desert dwellers. Excavations have unearthed pottery, metal artefacts, and other items, shedding light on the trade links and everyday lives of these fascinating ancient communities.



Hili Archaeological Park

Hili Archaeological Park, located on the outskirts of Al Ain, offers a fascinating glimpse into the ancient civilisations that thrived in the region over 4,000 years ago during the Bronze Age. One of its most remarkable features is the Hili Grand Tomb, a testimony to the advanced construction techniques and artistic achievements of the Umm Al Nar culture. The site also holds a wealth of other archaeological treasures, including remnants of ancient settlements, innovative falaj irrigation systems, and petroglyphs.










4.9 The Future of Abu Dhabi's Tourism Industry is Bright

Abu Dhabi is set to significantly grow its tourism GDP, with a projected increase from **AED 61.8 billion (USD 16.8 billion) in 2024 to AED 90 billion (USD 24.5 billion)** by 2030. This growth is expected to generate over 216,000 direct jobs by 2030. By the end of the decade, the number of visitors is expected to increase to 39.3 million, with 18.8 million staying overnight. As demand increases, room capacity is forecasted to expand to 52,000.



2030 Ambitions Summary

	Baseline	2030 Ambitions
 Tourism GDP	AED 61.8 billion (USD 16.8 billion) (2024)	AED 90 billion (USD 24.5 billion)
 Total Jobs	307k (2024)	366k
 Number of Visitors	25.7M (2024)	39.3M
 Overnight Visitors	12.9M (2024)	18.8M
 Hotel Rooms	34k (2025)	52k

Ease of Doing Business

5.1 One of the Easiest Places to Do Business Globally

A hub for regional commerce, the UAE hosts a wide range of businesses and regional headquarters, including leading tech giants such as Google, Apple, IBM, Meta and Booking.com, along with prominent hospitality, retail and transport entities, including Marriott, Hyatt, Wego, Lulu, Parsons, and Sobha. In Abu Dhabi, the number of enterprises has grown significantly over the last three years. New economic licenses issued

in 2025 increased by 29 percent year-on-year across all regions, sectors, and licenses categories. Notably, New Tajar Abu Dhabi licenses grew by 24 percent, from 7,187 in 2024 to 8,901 in 2025, supporting entrepreneurs to establish businesses across more than 1,200 activities without requiring a physical premises during the first three years.

Business Processes Simplification

Significant progress has also been made in improving the ease of doing business in Abu Dhabi, including simplifying business setup, licensing, and operations, which has helped establish one of the most investor-friendly environments globally. Due to the more streamlined and transparent procedures, foreign investors now find it easier to establish and

expand their businesses. Today, over 93 percent of economic activities can secure a commercial licence within just six minutes³¹. Over 20,000 (71 percent) elements from the original requirements for business setup have been eliminated, significantly speeding up the process and reducing complexity.

Digitalization of all Processes

Abu Dhabi's strategic investments in digital infrastructure have enabled businesses to benefit from largely streamlined operations. Services such as electronic registration, licensing, and digital judicial processes now allow businesses to complete essential legal formalities without the need for physical visits to government offices.

This shift to electronic systems reduces paperwork, saves time, and improves overall convenience. Moreover, the introduction of digital judicial processes, including electronic case filing, virtual court sessions, and online access to legal documents and rulings, has further enhanced the accessibility of legal services.

Case Study: TAMM a Single Gate for all Investor Licensing

The Abu Dhabi government embarked on an ambitious digital transformation journey with the launch of TAMM, **a user-friendly platform designed to unify government services by centralising over 1,100 services from over 90 public and private partners**. This strategic move was designed to streamline processes, enhance operational efficiency, and significantly improve the accessibility and quality of government services for citizens and

residents. The consolidation has led to a marked improvement in government service delivery, with a reported increase in user satisfaction rates to over 90 percent. Moreover, the platform reduced the average processing time for government services by up to 50 percent. The application caters to 3.2 million Abu Dhabi citizens, residents, and businesses, who made more than 12.7 million transactions annually.

Exit Story: Abu Dhabi Golf Club Complex

On 31 December 2020, Aldar Properties announced the sale of the Abu Dhabi Golf Club Complex, which includes the prestigious Westin Hotel and the renowned Abu Dhabi Golf Course, to a financial investor for AED 180 million (USD 49 million)³². This transaction resulted in a notable 13 percent increase in value compared to the initial investment. The complex, acquired from the Tourism Development Investment Company (TDIC) in 2018, also includes land designated for the development of residential properties, covering a gross floor area of 46,543 square metres. The Westin Abu Dhabi Golf Resort and Spa, a luxury property within the complex, features 172 rooms, six restaurants, extensive conference facilities spanning 2,256 square metres, two swimming pools, and a high-end spa, underscoring Aldar's commitment to enhancing its portfolio through strategic divestitures and investments.

Infrastructure

6.1 Offering World-Class Infrastructure and Connectivity

Abu Dhabi's world-class infrastructure is the outcome of pioneering advancements in critical domains, including transportation, digital connectivity, energy, and urban development. The emirate's state-of-the-art airport and expansive road networks highlight its dedication to modern, cutting-edge transportation solutions. At the same time, the city's digital infrastructure, marked by widespread 5G deployment and smart city projects, places Abu Dhabi at the forefront of technological innovation.

Plan Abu Dhabi 2030 - Urban Structure Framework Plan was created to address both current and future development needs, fostering a planning culture and establishing clear guiding principles for new developments. It offers conceptual solutions to guide Abu Dhabi's growth, tackling key urban challenges related to the environment, land use, transportation, open spaces, and the overall image of the capital city.



1st

Internet Penetration, Ratio of Individuals Using internet, % Population, 2024³³



1st

5G Speed, 2024³⁶



4th

Active Mobile Broadband Internet Subscriptions, 2024 ³⁴



1st

Level of Overall Safety, 2017-2025³⁷



1st

Air Transport and Infrastructure Quality, 2024³⁵



1st

Adequate Protection for Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2021

³³ Global Competitiveness Report by World Economic Forum, 2020 ³⁴ DataHub, 2025

³⁵ Travel and Tourism Development Index, 2024 ³⁶ Speedtest Global Index by Ookla, 2024

³⁷ Numbeo, 2025

6.2 State-of-the-art Infrastructure, Connectivity, and Easy Access to Regional and Global Markets

Major Infrastructure



Road Network

Abu Dhabi boasts a **technologically advanced transportation system, providing seamless connectivity throughout the emirate**. Its road network features major highways that link key destinations within Abu Dhabi and extend to neighbouring emirates.



Airports

Zayed International Airport serves as the primary gateway to Abu Dhabi, with Al Ain International Airport offering access to the garden city. The exclusive Al Bateen Executive Airport caters to business aviation in the heart of the capital. Additionally, Sir Bani Yas Island Airport on the nature reserve island and Delma Island Airport provide vital connections to remote communities.



Railways

The Etihad Rail network, once completed, will span around 1,200 kilometres across the UAE, with connections extending to Saudi Arabia and Oman. This ambitious project is expected to **facilitate the transport of over 60 million tons of cargo and carry more than 36 million passengers annually by 2030³⁸**. The first phase of the network began operations in 2016, connecting the gas fields of Shah and Habshan to the port of Ruwais in Abu Dhabi.



Public Transportation

Abu Dhabi provides free shuttle buses for tourists, **offering comfortable seating, air-conditioning, wheelchair access, and Wi-Fi**. These buses operate across eight key routes, linking popular destinations such as Yas Island, Jubail Island, Saadiyat Island, the city centre, and the Grand Canal area.

Abu Dhabi started the commercial operations for fully driverless, Level 4 autonomous vehicles, becoming the first city in the Middle East and North Africa to do so³⁹.



Taxis

The emirate provides transportation services through 6,146 taxi vehicles, of which 88% operate in Abu Dhabi City. Additionally, water taxis are available in popular areas such as Yas Bay, Yas Marina, and Al Bandar.



Ports

Abu Dhabi's maritime infrastructure encompasses state-of-the-art ports such as Khalifa Port, Zayed Port and Mussafah Port, which serve as key hubs for global commercial and trade activities. To mention a few others, the Free Port accommodates smaller vessels, Mugharraq Port supports offshore operations, and Sila Port plays a key role in enhancing connectivity in the western region.

In 2025, Abu Dhabi earned multiple cruise accolades: **World's Best Cruise Destination and Middle East's Best Cruise Destination**. It remains the region's busiest cruise destination, with the 2024/2025 season recording over 596,886 visitors and 129 ship calls⁴⁰. The Sir Bani Yas Cruise Beach is particularly renowned, offering outstanding cruise stopover experiences, superior facilities, luxury accommodations, and a wide array of other activities.

Abu Dhabi continues to advance a significant infrastructure pipeline, with ADIO and ADPIC launching 24 new public-private partnership projects valued at AED55 billion across transport, infrastructure, and social sectors during 2026–2027. The pipeline includes major road developments spanning more than 300 km, alongside dams, water storage and drainage systems, healthcare and education facilities, and sports infrastructure, further reinforcing the emirate's long-term infrastructure and economic diversification agenda.

Connectivity

Abu Dhabi stands at the forefront of digital connectivity, ranking fifth in the IMD's 2025 Smart City Index globally and second in the MENA region⁴¹. Overall, the UAE offers cutting-edge connectivity options, excelling in ICT readiness and smartphone internet use. **As a global leader in high-speed fibre connectivity⁴², the UAE has maintained a remarkable 100 percent internet penetration rate**

among adults since 2020⁴³. Furthermore, with Etisalat's significant AED 3.7 billion (USD 1.0 billion) investment in 5G technology and major tech companies like Microsoft and AWS actively operating in the region, Abu Dhabi continues to solidify its position as a leading hub for technology and connectivity.

Digital Infrastructure

Abu Dhabi has embraced smart infrastructure technology, integrating AI, Internet of Things (IoT), big data, cloud technology, e-commerce, and smart manufacturing. For example, smart traffic management systems have helped reduce congestion,

while AI in healthcare has streamlined patient care, cutting down wait times. Platforms like TAMM provide centralised channels for digital transactions for major government services, highlighting the growing shift towards digital-first services for citizens.

Banking and Finance

Abu Dhabi's financial landscape is built on stability, with the UAE Dirham pegged to the US Dollar, offering a secure environment for financial activities. In 2025, the UAE demonstrated remarkable economic resilience, with an inflation rate of just 1.25 percent⁴⁴, well below global averages. This highlights the effectiveness of its monetary policies and strong price stability. Furthermore, a fiscal surplus forecast of 5.5 percent of GDP in 2024⁴⁵ underscores efficient fiscal management and provides a solid foundation for strategic investments.

The banking sector reflects the UAE's financial strength, as seen in the 17.9 percent annual increase in gross credit, which reached AED 2,570 billion (USD 700 billion) by the end of December 2025⁴⁶. With 162⁴⁷ Financial institutions registered with the UAE Central Bank the country's financial ecosystem is both diverse and dynamic. Abu Dhabi, as a leading international financial centre, hosts the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX), the largest stock exchange in the UAE by market capitalisation, as well as the dedicated crude oil commodity derivatives exchange at ICE Futures Abu Dhabi.

Access to Capital

Abu Dhabi offers a wide range of financing options for investors, including government grants, debt and equity. Capital market instruments in the emirate include Islamic financing, with products and services such as Murabaha and Sukuk catering to diverse investment needs. Additionally, yield companies enable investors to manage assets and raise capital through

share issuance. Abu Dhabi also embraces green and sustainable investment, with opportunities such as Masdar Green Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT), which focuses on co-financing eco-friendly properties in Masdar City. For those interested in ocean-related initiatives, blue bonds offer support exclusively for investments that benefit marine environments.



⁴¹ Smart City Index, 2024

⁴³ World Bank, 2024

⁴⁵ Trading Economics, 2024

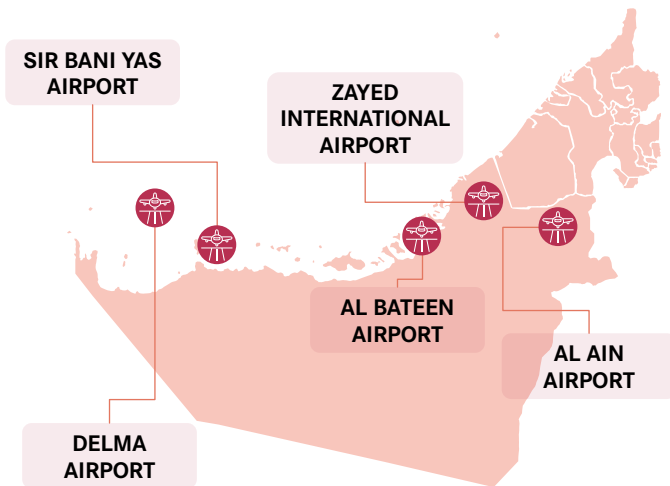
⁴⁷ CBUAE

⁴² WAM, 2022

⁴⁴ Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Center

⁴⁶ Central Bank of the UAE, 2025

Connecting the Region to the World



Abu Dhabi airports traffic highlights⁴⁸
2025 vs. 2024

 **32.4 million** Passengers
(+13%)

Zayed International Airport

- As of December 2025, Zayed International Airport serves **135 destinations across 41 airlines**.
- New Terminal A, which opened in February 2024, more than **doubled the airport's capacity** handling up to 45 million passengers annually.
- **Over 15.5 million passengers served** during H1 2025, a 13 percent increase from the same period last year.

- **133,533 flights recorded** during H1 2025, a 9.2 percent rise compared to the same period of the previous year.
- The world's first airport to implement a **comprehensive biometric system** with nine passenger touchpoints.
- **Advanced Smart Travel System**, featuring Self Check-In, Self-Bag Drop, E-Registration, E-Border Gate, and Self Boarding facilities, streamlining the passenger journey.

Al Ain International Airport

- **Serving four destinations** with four airlines (2024).

Delma Island Airport

- Offers **convenient short flights** to Abu Dhabi and Al Ain.

Al Bateen Executive Airport

- **Capable of accommodating up to 50 private jets** with fast, efficient turnarounds, no holding patterns, and short taxi times.

Sir Bani Yas Airport

- Designed for tourists visiting the island.



Government Vision and Policies

7.1 Strategies for Supporting Tourism into the Next Decade

▲ The UAE Tourism Strategy 2031

The UAE Tourism Strategy 2031 focuses on four key pillars:

- Strengthening the unified national tourism identity.
- Developing and diversifying specialised tourism products.
- Building tourism capabilities and encouraging the contribution of national cadres in the tourism sector.
- Increasing investments in all tourism sectors.

The strategy aims to:

- Raise the tourism sector's contribution to the GDP to AED 450 billion (USD 123 billion), with an annual increase of AED 27 billion (USD 7.4 billion).
- Strengthen the position of the UAE as one of the best destinations in the world for tourism.
- Boost competitiveness by attracting

AED 100 billion (USD 27 billion) in additional tourism investments.

- Welcome 40 million hotel guests.

Among the 25 initiatives and policies to support the four pillars, notable ones include:

- Affordable Luxury Tourism, targeting the middle market segment and promoting new offerings such as heritage, adventure, desert, MICE, agritourism, and other speciality products.
- Policy and Legislation Support, designing new mechanisms to strengthen national tourism development plans, and engaging incubators and accelerators with a strong focus on tourism and logistics.
- Infrastructure Investments and Diversification of Tourism Offerings, focusing on culture, adventure and sustainable tourism.

▲ Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030

The Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030 charts a course towards sustainable growth by shifting focus from oil to knowledge-based sectors, with tourism being a key component. Priorities include the creation of an integrated business environment, the implementation of responsive fiscal policies, and the maintenance of stable financial markets with controlled inflation. Improving labour market efficiency, advancing

infrastructure and enhancing workforce skills are also central goals. The Vision **aims to foster business expansion, boost competitiveness, retain talent, streamline government processes, and facilitate efficient investment.** Ultimately, Abu Dhabi is setting the stage for a diversified and competitive economy.

▲ Abu Dhabi's Tourism Strategy 2030

The strategy aims to unlock economic opportunities, showcase the UAE's unique cultural heritage, and strengthen the emirate's value proposition. The strategy outlines 26 initiatives across four pillars, set to be realised through collaboration between key government and private sector stakeholders:

- **Offering and City Activation:** Enhancing visitor experience, from cultural sites to new hotels and retail offerings.

- **Promotion and Marketing:** More than doubling international reach from 11 to 26 markets and working closer with partners.
- **Infrastructure and Mobility:** Increasing room availability, flight seat capacity, and connectivity within the emirate.
- **Visa, Licensing, and Regulation:** Enhanced platforms and processes to speed up applications and permits.

The UAE Strategy for Domestic Tourism

The strategy aims to **unify local and federal efforts** to leverage the UAE's diverse tourism resources and strengthen the role of domestic tourism in the national economy. As part of the strategy, the government will take a coordinated approach to showcasing the UAE's key natural, cultural, heritage and historical attractions. It will be implemented through several initiatives, including:

- Building capabilities and diversifying resources.
- Supporting the growth of domestic tourism companies.
- Driving investment in local tourism projects.
- Developing policies and plans to promote domestic

- tourism in the UAE under a unified tourism identity.
- Unifying local tourism legislation.
- Building private-public partnerships.
- Encouraging winter tourism across the UAE.

The tourism sector is supported by a wide range of initiatives aimed at enhancing attractions, enriching visitor experiences, and developing key infrastructure. These include efforts to improve access to tourism facilities, host world-class events, provide training and licensing for tour guides, and further establish Abu Dhabi as a premier global destination for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions.

The UAE National Sports Strategy

The UAE National Sports Strategy 2031 sets a clear path for strong growth in the sports sector, **featuring 17 targeted initiatives aimed at boosting community sports, achieving competitive sports excellence, and enhancing sports infrastructure.** This forward-thinking strategy encourages all UAE residents to participate in national competitions, aiming to nurture and diversify talent across a wide range of sports. The strategy also seeks to establish the UAE as a leading global sports destination by attracting prestigious international sports events and upgrading sports facilities to meet world-class standards.

In alignment with the national vision for sports, Abu Dhabi has established itself as a prominent player, earning the prestigious title of **World's Leading Sports Tourism Destination from the World Travel Awards for ten consecutive years (2013-2022).**

In line with the rise of the global e-sports industry, initiatives like Abu Dhabi Gaming have positioned the emirate as a leading hub for gaming, with major events such as the BLAST for Counter-Strike tournament held in Abu Dhabi, further enriching its diverse sports tourism portfolio.

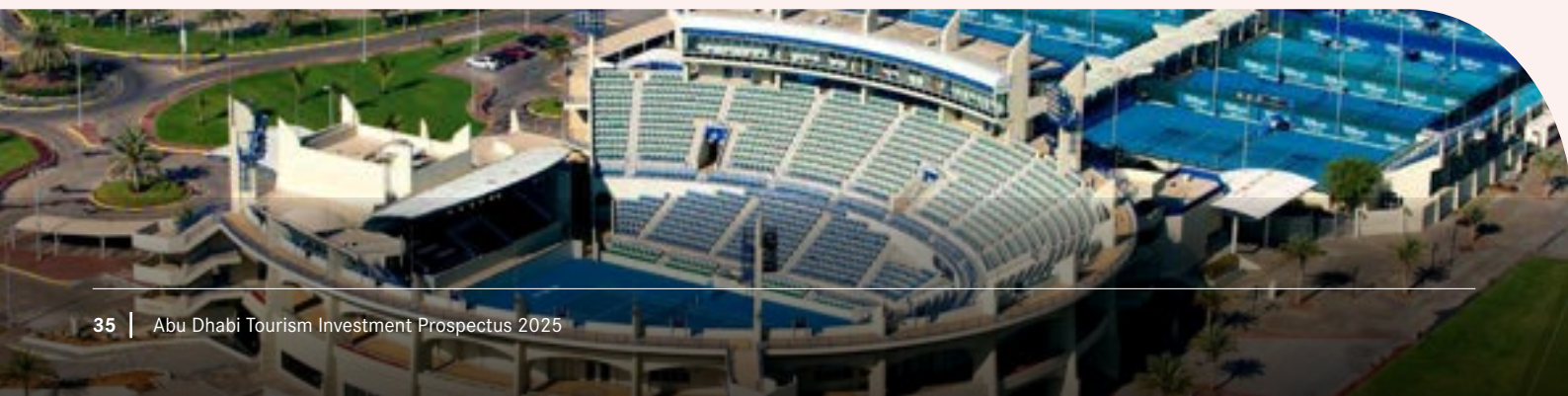
Other Commitments and Developments

In addition to the ongoing initiatives, several major plans and initiatives are underway to further enhance Abu Dhabi's tourism sector. The Surface Transport Master Plan (STMP) and the Abu Dhabi Transportation Mobility Management Strategy (TMM) aim to create a sustainable and efficient transport system. These plans focus on reducing pollution and promoting eco-friendly transport options, while meeting the needs of residents, visitors, and businesses alike.

As part of the Plan Abu Dhabi 2030 - Urban Structure Framework Plan, the introduction of a light rail and metro system will connect the city centre with key destinations,

linking with the Dubai Metro, other UAE cities, and even neighbouring GCC countries. In addition, the Green Bus Programme aims to transform Abu Dhabi Island into a public transport green zone by 2030, promoting sustainable urban mobility.

Alongside initiatives to boost tourism contribution to the economy, Abu Dhabi is intensifying its global marketing and promotion efforts, diversifying its tourism source markets, and collaborating with aviation stakeholders to increase capacity and improve connectivity to key global destinations, such as China and India.





7.2 Growth-Oriented Government Commitments

In 2021, marking the UAE's 50th National Day, **the government launched a series of ambitious initiatives aimed at attracting AED 551 billion (USD 150 billion) in foreign investment over the next decade.** Moreover, the UAE unveiled its National Investment Strategy 2031, targeting a tripling of FDI to AED 2.2 trillion (USD 599 billion) by 2031. Central to this drive was the UAE's Federal Decree Law No. 32/2021, which significantly liberalised the business landscape by allowing 100 percent foreign ownership in almost all sectors, with the exception of activities

considered strategic, such as defence and communications. In addition, Abu Dhabi took bold steps to stimulate business growth by reducing startup fees by an impressive 94 percent.

The momentum continued in 2022, with a series of **regulatory changes designed to ease the establishment of foreign businesses**. These included updates to commercial agency requirements and the introduction of flexible corporate structures, such as Special Purpose Acquisition Companies (SPACs) and Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs).



Ownership Policy

100% foreign ownership of companies, except for defense, communications and other sectors.



Land Policies

The Land Rebate Incentive Programme, offering rent rates as low as AED 5 (USD 1.36) per square metre and long-term lease contracts for new industrial investments that are eligible to register in this program.



Favourable Taxation

- **137 Double Taxation Agreement** (DTAs) with major trading partners⁴⁹
- **0% corporate tax and a low VAT rate of 5%** for businesses with profits under AED 375,000 (USD 102,000), 9 percent income tax for businesses exceeding that profit.
- **Zero-rated sectors**

International transportation, certain investment-grade precious metals, newly constructed residential properties, supplies of certain sea, air and land means of transportation, supply of essential/designated education services, supply of essential/designated healthcare services and exports of goods and services outside the GCC.



Access to Capital

- Home to some of the world's largest sovereign **wealth funds**.
- **Availability of capital** through equity/debt via local market – venture funds, banks, family offices, private equity funds, and sovereign wealth funds.



Residential/ Citizenship Incentives

- **Golden Visas** for international investors and top talent from around the world, valid for 10 years.
- **Pathway to citizenship** for exceptional international talent pool working, creating, studying, excelling, and investing in Abu Dhabi.



Access to Infrastructure

- **Readily available capital** for state-of-the-art technology.
- **Electricity generation** capability and affordable energy.
- **Attractive leasing options** for office and warehouse space, along with competitive prices for land and utilities.
- **Assistance with accessing** land, office space, and other facilities.
- **The Energy Tariff Incentive Programme**, offering reduced rates on electricity and gas consumption.



Financial Incentives

- **Special economic zones** offering up to 100 percent profit repatriation.
- **No minimum requirements** for company setup.
- **The Financial Ecosystem Programme**, encouraging banks to provide financing services to businesses in key economic sectors across the emirate.
- **Reduced fees for licence issuance** renewal, and business setup by 94 percent to AED 1,000 (USD 272).
- **Rebates and grants** to support investments in innovation.
- **Potential exemptions for select government fees and requirements**, e.g., reduced service and community charges for owners and investors in jointly owned properties.



7.3 Economic Free Zones Offering Alternative Business Setups

Free Trade Zones (FTZs) in the UAE provide attractive investment platforms for global investors, offering incentives such as full foreign ownership, competitive operating environments, full repatriation of capital and profits, and favorable tax and customs regimes. FTZs also offer multi-year lease agreements and a range of support services, such as visa sponsorship and accommodation for workers.

Since 1st of June 2023, businesses within FTZs engaging with the mainland UAE are subject to corporate tax. Managed by independent authorities, these zones facilitate business establishment and licensing, with the added advantage of dual licensing in Abu Dhabi and several FTZs in Dubai. This dual licensing option allows FTZ-based companies to operate onshore within the emirate without the need for a local partner or additional facilities, streamlining processes for investors and simplifying operations.



Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM)

Located on Al Maryah Island, ADGM is a **financial-free zone offering a unique and independent judiciary and regulatory framework**. Specialising in banking, financial services, and legal sectors, it supports professional services, corporates, family businesses, startups, and retail enterprises.



Khalifa Industrial Zone Abu Dhabi (KIZAD)

Designed for the industrial and manufacturing sectors, KIZAD provides **easy access to logistics and transportation facilities**, including Khalifa Port. It is ideally suited for heavy industries, trade, and logistics operations.



twofour54 Media Free Zone

As a state-owned media and entertainment production hub, twofour54 stands at the heart of **Abu Dhabi's vibrant media industry**. It encompasses a wide range of disciplines, including TV, film, radio, music, publishing, animation, and gaming.



Abu Dhabi Airport Free Zone (ADAFZ)

Operated by Skycity, a subsidiary of Abu Dhabi Airports, **ADAFZ offers office units, warehouses, and light industrial units**. It caters to a broad range of sectors, including aviation, airport services, logistics, transportation, marketing, events and technology.



Masdar City Free Zone

Focused on clean technology and renewable energy, Masdar City is a unique economic zone specialising in research and development, particularly in technology infrastructure. It is a hub of sector knowledge and talent, making it the perfect launchpad for businesses looking to enter local, regional, and global markets.



Industrial City of Abu Dhabi

Managed by ZonesCorp, **ICAD is a 40 km² integrated industrial zone dedicated to advancing Abu Dhabi's manufacturing sector**. Comprising five specialised clusters, it supports a wide range of industries including heavy-to-medium manufacturing, engineering, technology, automotive, and light industries.

Legal Landscape

8.1 Bilateral Treaties Between UAE and Other States to Foster Collaboration



125

**Bilateral Investment
Treaties Signed (89 in force)⁵⁰**

In 2015, the United States and the UAE formalised their partnership by signing an intergovernmental agreement under the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA). **This agreement facilitates reciprocal information exchange, enabling compliance through local government channels.** The UAE is highly regarded by UNCTAD for having 125 bilateral⁵¹ investment treaties and continues to expand its global economic relationships. Recent milestones include normalising ties with Israel and signing Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPA) with several countries to boost trade. Notably, CEPAs have been

signed with India, Israel, and Indonesia, aiming to substantially increase non-oil trade and bolster bilateral economic connections.

The UAE's active role in global commerce is further emphasised by its memberships in key international bodies, such as the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Economic and Social Council of the Arab League, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 1996.** Additionally, the UAE is a member of the United Nations, the World Bank, the IMF, the Arab League, and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. These affiliations, along with key trade agreements such as the GCC-European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Free Trade Agreement and the GCC-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (GSFTA), solidify the UAE's position as a pivotal player in both regional and global economies.

8.2 Investor-Friendly Legal System

Throughout 2021, **the UAE took significant steps to enhance its business-friendly legal environment,** with the goal of attracting more foreign investment and safeguarding investors against various risks. One such example is Abu Dhabi Law No. 13 of 2017, which regulates judicial fees within the emirate. It introduces caps on fees for specific cases, aiming to reduce litigation costs and improve access to justice for both businesses and individuals. Additionally, Abu Dhabi Executive Council Resolution No. 15 of 2019, which established the Abu Dhabi Unified Real Estate Registration System, **simplifies property registration, enhances transparency, and protects property rights,** further instilling investor confidence in the real estate sector.

The UAE federal legal framework includes key legislation such as the Commercial Companies Law, Bankruptcy Law, and others, all designed to regulate and support the business landscape, particularly the growing tourism sector.

Laws such as the Competition Law and the Labour Law ensure a fair, competitive, and secure environment for both local and international enterprises. The UAE federal legal framework also includes robust provisions for electronic transactions and digital commerce, as well as import/export regulations and strict measures to combat money laundering and terrorism financing, which are critical for businesses in the digital era. In a recent development, the UAE was removed from a global watchdog's list of countries deemed at risk for illicit financial flows⁵², further enhancing the country's reputation as a secure environment for investment.

For the tourism sector specifically, the Department of Culture and Tourism Abu Dhabi has **introduced a Tourism Quality Standards and Licensing Framework.** This includes 10 detailed quality manuals covering areas such as amusement parks, events, cultural sites, tourist transport, accommodation, and outdoor and adventure facilities and services, ensuring that high standards are maintained across the sector.

Investment Opportunities

9.1 Surge in Foreign Investment, Especially in Tourism



Foreign Direct Investment

In 2025, foreign investments in Abu Dhabi **increased by 6.8 percent**⁵³ compared to the same period in the previous year, reaching over **AED184 billion (USD 50 billion)**.⁵⁴ This growth can be attributed to the emirate's strategic location, its business-friendly economic policies, and its world-class infrastructure.



Hospitality and Accommodation

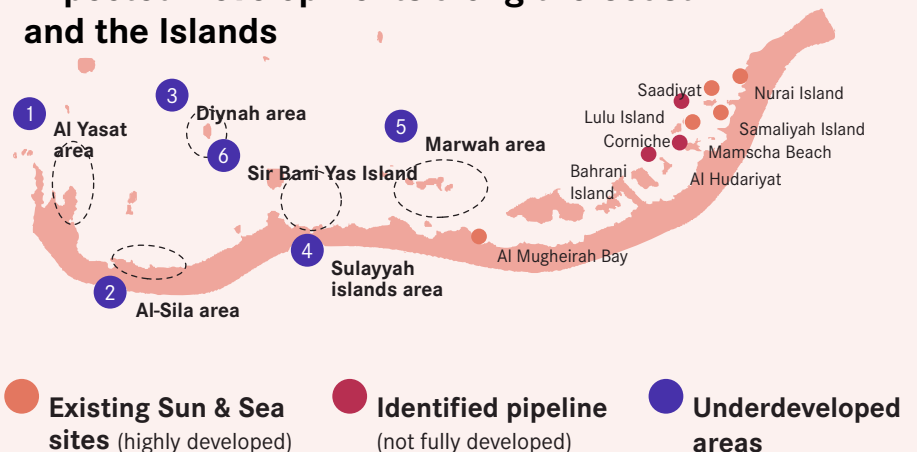
As part of Abu Dhabi's strategy to increase tourism's contribution to GDP by 2030, there is a **growing demand for a wide range of accommodation options**, including luxury resorts and budget-friendly sites, to cater to diverse visitor preferences. Currently, there is a shortfall of **10,000 to 15,000** rooms to meet this growing demand.



Entertainment, Cultural, and Leisure Attractions

The Saadiyat cultural district includes the newly opened Zayed national museum alongside other cultural landmarks like the Louvre, the upcoming Guggenheim and the Grove, presenting significant investment opportunities in cultural tourism. Abu Dhabi is also focusing on enhancing its leisure tourism offerings and diversifying packages beyond its key attractions.

Expected Developments along the Coast and the Islands



⁵³ SCAD

⁵⁴ SCAD, 2024



Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions

Abu Dhabi is committed to strengthening its status as a global MICE destination, with increasing space available for small-scale events and permanent exhibitions. The launch of the Advantage Abu Dhabi Meetings & Incentives 2.0 programme⁵⁵ and the establishment of a dedicated fund to support the MICE industry underline the emirate's focus on growing this sector. These initiatives present valuable investment opportunities in business tourism, particularly in conference and exhibition facilities, along with their related services.



Food and Beverage

Abu Dhabi's vibrant food and beverage scene includes **811 licensed tourism restaurants and continues to offer significant potential for further investment**. The emirate presents opportunities across a wide range of dining concepts, including fine dining, casual dining, and family and couple friendly experiences, supported by growing consumer demand. Home to three Michelin starred restaurants, Abu Dhabi is also strengthening its position as a regional culinary destination. Initiatives such as the Abu Dhabi Culinary Fund encourage multi regional culinary brands to establish a presence in the emirate, while institutions including the International Centre for Culinary Arts, Ecole Ducasse, and the upcoming Le Cordon Bleu support talent development through recruitment, training, and staffing across the sector.



Travel and Destination Management

Abu Dhabi aims to enhance point-to-point connectivity to meet the growing demand for international visits. The launch of programmes such as 'Tourism 365' by ADNEC⁵⁶ aims to elevate Abu Dhabi's global tourism profile and sustain activity throughout the year, reducing reliance on peak seasons. This initiative offers investment opportunities in destination management services and travel operations that cater to the unique needs of tourists visiting Abu Dhabi.



Ecotourism and Community Tourism

Abu Dhabi promotes community, heritage, and ecotourism by **allowing farmers to reserve land for tourism activities**. This creates investment opportunities in sustainable tourism projects that respect and preserve the local environment and culture.



Infrastructure and Services

Investments in tourism infrastructure, including transport, digital services, and utilities, are essential for supporting the sector's growth. **Opportunities exist to develop services that enhance the visitor experience**, such as digital apps providing tourist information and specialised tour operator services.

Yas Island: A Prime Example of Investment Potential

Yas Island stands out as a premier destination for tourism investment, hosting world-renowned attractions and luxury accommodation. The island showcases impressive investment metrics, including above-average rental yields, significant capital appreciation, high occupancy rates, and escalating sales volumes. Some key amenities include:

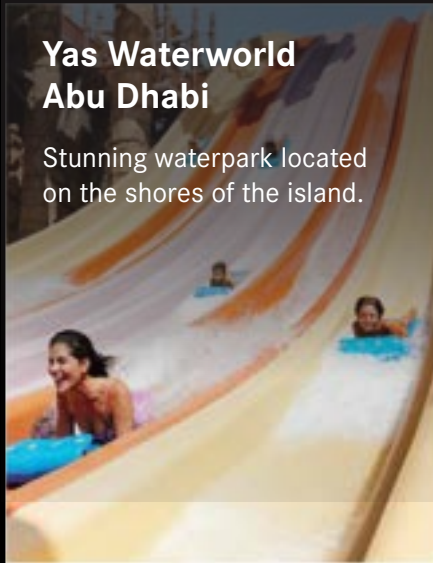
Ferrari World

Indoor theme park dedicated to the Ferrari brand.



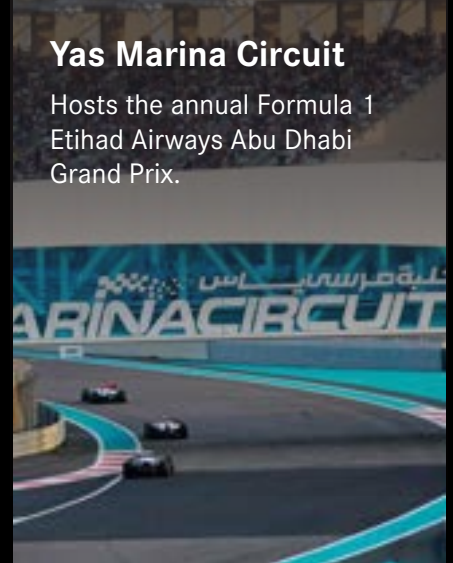
Yas Waterworld Abu Dhabi

Stunning waterpark located on the shores of the island.



Yas Marina Circuit

Hosts the annual Formula 1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.



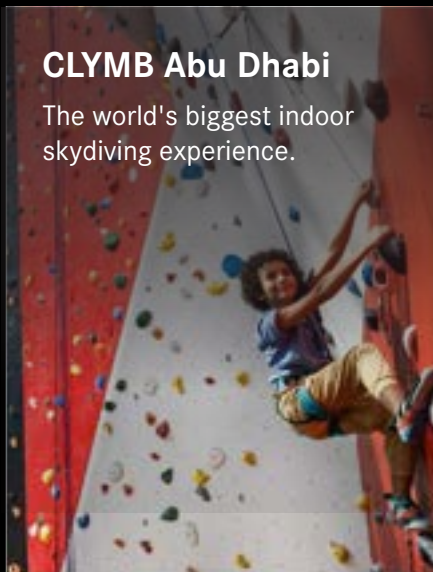
Cinemas & Shopping

Multiplex cinemas and Yas Mall for enjoyable shopping escape.



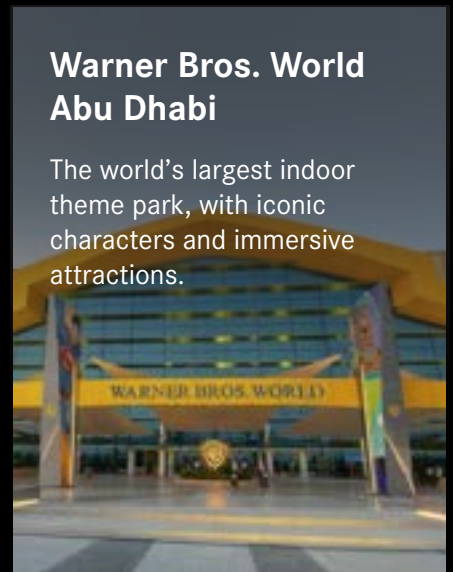
CLYMB Abu Dhabi

The world's biggest indoor skydiving experience.



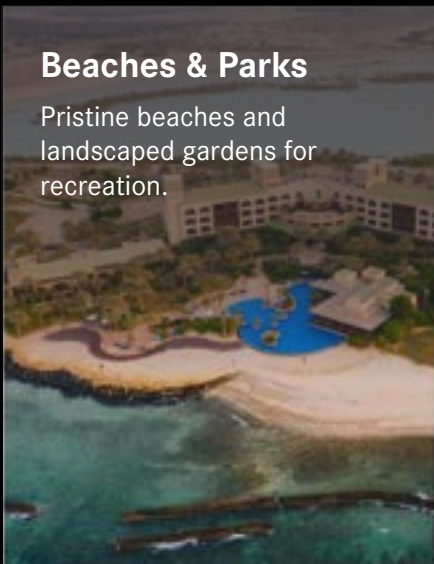
Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi

The world's largest indoor theme park, with iconic characters and immersive attractions.



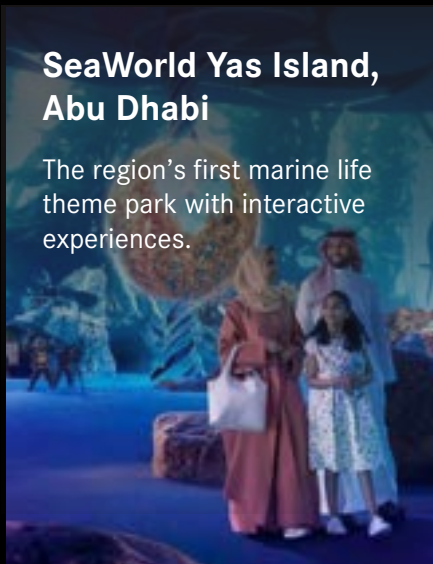
Beaches & Parks

Pristine beaches and landscaped gardens for recreation.



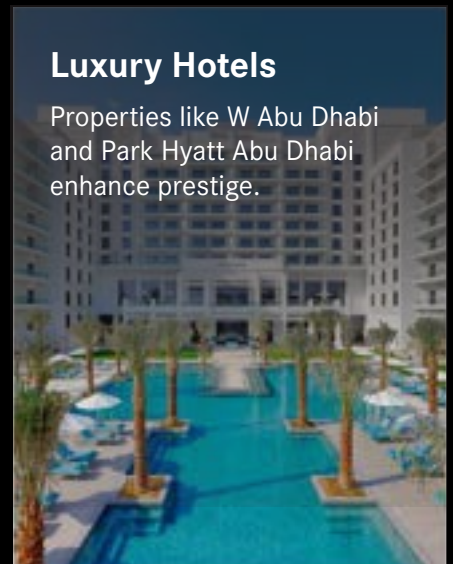
SeaWorld Yas Island, Abu Dhabi

The region's first marine life theme park with interactive experiences.



Luxury Hotels

Properties like W Abu Dhabi and Park Hyatt Abu Dhabi enhance prestige.



Yas Island has proven to deliver **excellent returns on investment**⁵⁷, with metrics that speak to its sustained growth:

■ **Rental Yields**

Luxury apartments on the island **offer rental yields of 5-8 percent**, surpassing the UAE's average of 5 percent. Villas and townhouses show yields of 4-6 percent.

■ **Capital Appreciation**

Property prices on Yas Island saw a **5.8 percent**⁵⁸ **increase over the past year**, with premium locations seeing an even stronger growth.

■ **Occupancy Rates**

Rental properties on the island enjoy high occupancy, **regularly exceeding 96 percent**.

■ **Sales Volumes**

Annual property sales have seen significant growth, from AED 3 billion (USD 0.8 billion) in 2019 to more than AED 9.2 billion (USD 2.52 billion) in 2025.

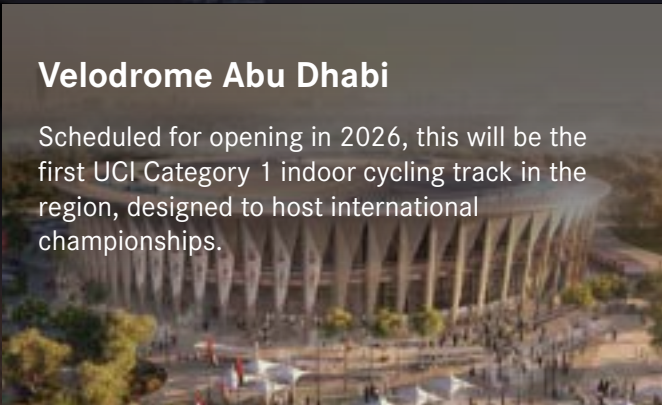


Completed and Ongoing Projects

10.1 Ongoing Projects with Interim Success Cases

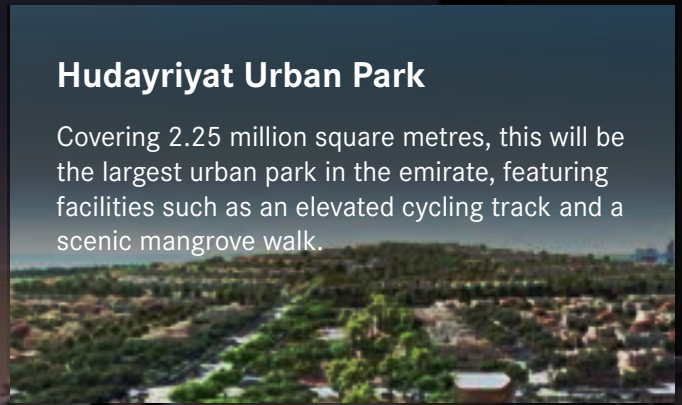
Velodrome Abu Dhabi

Scheduled for opening in 2026, this will be the first UCI Category 1 indoor cycling track in the region, designed to host international championships.



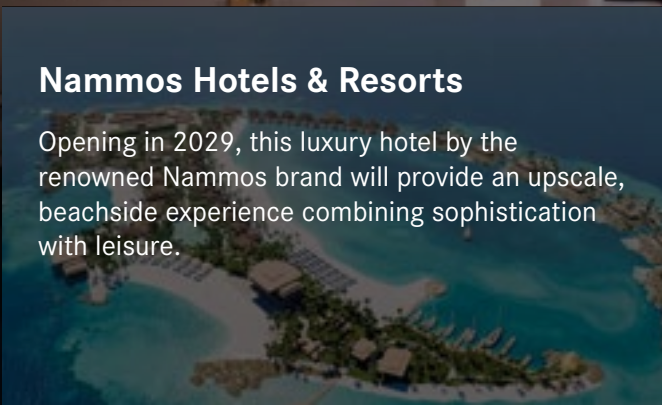
Hudayriyat Urban Park

Covering 2.25 million square metres, this will be the largest urban park in the emirate, featuring facilities such as an elevated cycling track and a scenic mangrove walk.



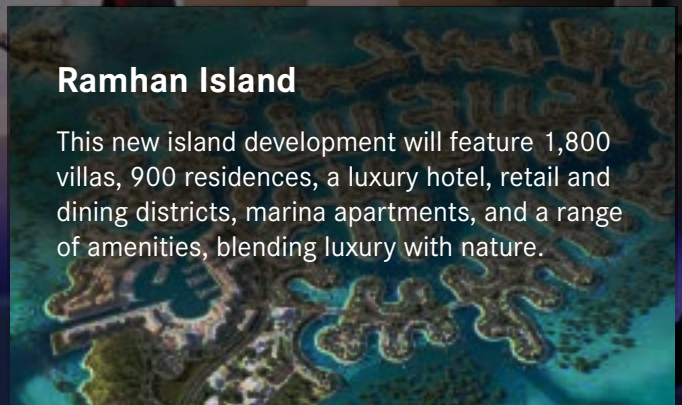
Namos Hotels & Resorts

Opening in 2029, this luxury hotel by the renowned Namos brand will provide an upscale, beachside experience combining sophistication with leisure.



Ramhan Island

This new island development will feature 1,800 villas, 900 residences, a luxury hotel, retail and dining districts, marina apartments, and a range of amenities, blending luxury with nature.



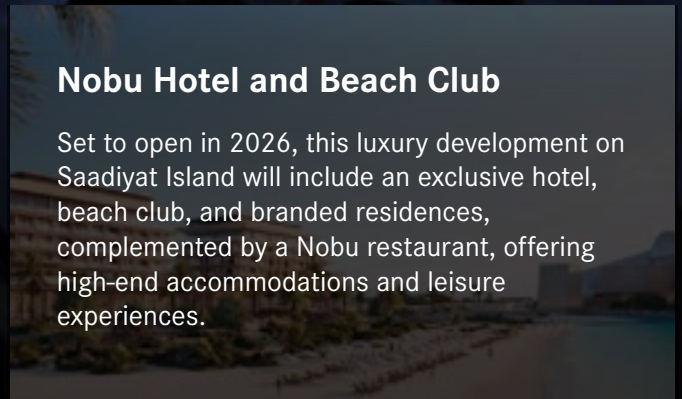
Jubail Island Project

A significant AED 10 billion (USD 2.7 billion) redevelopment initiative, this project will integrate luxurious, sustainable living within the natural beauty of Jubail Island.



Nobu Hotel and Beach Club

Set to open in 2026, this luxury development on Saadiyat Island will include an exclusive hotel, beach club, and branded residences, complemented by a Nobu restaurant, offering high-end accommodations and leisure experiences.



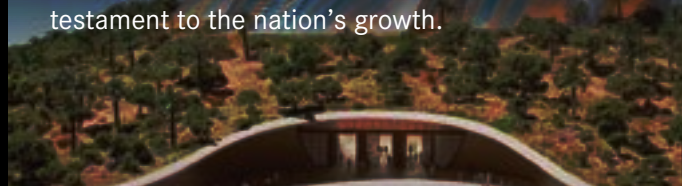
Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi

Opened on Saadiyat Island in 2025, this museum explores the history of life on Earth and the origins of our universe. It also features a scientific research centre dedicated to advancing knowledge in this field.



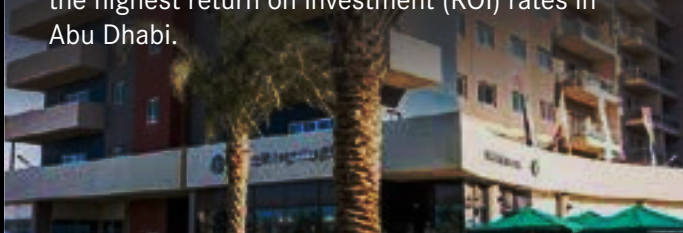
Zayed National Museum

Opened in December 2025, Celebrating the legacy of the UAE's founding father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, this museum features exhibitions on the country's history, culture, and socio-economic development, serving as a testament to the nation's growth.



Al Reef

Located near Zayed International Airport, Al Reef offers exceptional convenience for frequent travellers. Properties in the area offer some of the highest return on investment (ROI) rates in Abu Dhabi.



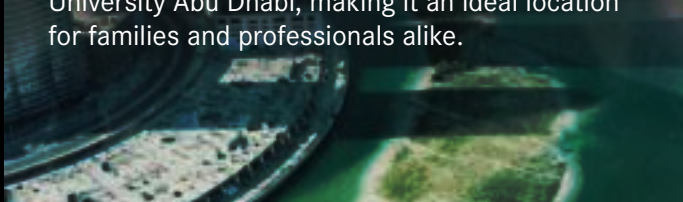
teamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi

Opened in April 2025, teamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi is a large-scale immersive digital art experience, blending art, technology, light, sound, and nature through interactive, ever-evolving installations.



Al Reem Island

One of the most sought-after waterfront communities in Abu Dhabi, this island is home to the white-sand Al Reem Beach and the prestigious educational institution Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, making it an ideal location for families and professionals alike.



Guggenheim Abu Dhabi

Scheduled for completion in 2026, this museum will become a leading institution for modern and contemporary art, hosting a diverse collection of global artworks and promoting cultural dialogue and exchange.



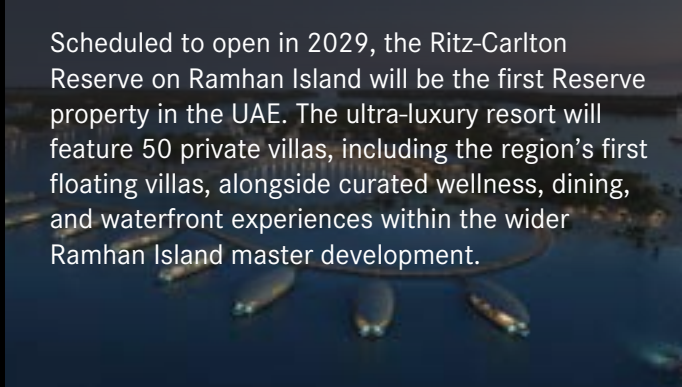
Disneyland Abu Dhabi

Announced in 2025, Disneyland Abu Dhabi will be the first Disney theme park resort in the Middle East. Located on Yas Island, the project is expected to be completed between 2030–2032, further strengthening Abu Dhabi's position as a leading global tourism and entertainment destination.



Ritz-Carlton Reserve – Ramhan Island

Scheduled to open in 2029, the Ritz-Carlton Reserve on Ramhan Island will be the first Reserve property in the UAE. The ultra-luxury resort will feature 50 private villas, including the region's first floating villas, alongside curated wellness, dining, and waterfront experiences within the wider Ramhan Island master development.



Map of Abu Dhabi with Key Completed and Ongoing Assets and Developments

1 Al Ain & Outer Abu Dhabi Garden City

- Al Ain Oasis
- Al Wathba Camel Racetrack
- Al Ain Camel Market
- Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital
- Hili Archaeological Park
- Al Jahili Fort
- Al Qattara Arts Center
- Qasr Al Muwajji
- Bait Mohammed bin Khalifa
- Shri Swaminaryan Mandir
- Jebel Hafeet
- Al Ain Adventure
- Al Mubazzarah
- Jebel Hafit Desert Park
- Lulu Island
- Bahrani Island
- Al Ain Zoo
- Al Jurf (Sha Wellness)

2 Al Dhafra Liwa Oasis & Mirfa

- Mezzaira'a palace
- Mezzaira'a Fort
- Dhafeer
- Qutuf Tower
- Mougatb Fort
- Umm Hosn
- Al Edd
- Hayla Tower
- Al Yabbana Fort
- The Empty Quarter
- Sir Bani Yas Area
- Al Marzoom Reserve
- Mamsha Al Mugheirah
- Bateen Liwa
- Tal Muraab
- Al Mugheirah Bay
- Jananah/ Fiyay/ Salah Islands
- Dalma/ Diynah Islands
- Al Bazm Al Gharbi
- Al Yasat/ Al-sila
- Marawah Reserve/ Al Fiyay
- Al Yasat Marine Protected Area

3 The Palaces The Nation

- Qasr Al Watan
- Observation Deck (Etihad Towers)
- Emirates Palace
- The Founder's Memorial
- Marina Mall

6 Saadiyat Island Cultural District

- Saadiyat Beach
- Nurai Island
- Mamsha Beach
- Louvre Abu Dhabi
- Natural History Museum
- Saadiyat Grove
- Abrahamic House
- Zayed National Museum
- Guggenheim Abu Dhabi

9 Yas Island Entertainment District

- Ferrari World
- Yas Mall
- Yas Marina Circuit
- Yas Bay Plaza/Marina
- Etihad Arena
- Warner Bros World
- Yas Water World
- Science Museum
- Clymb
- Sea World
- Disneyland
- Topgolf

4 Al Hosn Old Town

- AD Cornice
- Qasr Al Hosn
- Cultural Foundation
- Central Market
- House of Artisans
- Night Market
- Al Manhal Palace
- Al Ittihad Square
- W6

7 Al Reem Island Natural District

- Mangrove Park
- Al Reem Mall

5 Hudariyat Recreation District

- Sports Village
- Glamping Tent
- Walk of Life
- Adventure Park
- Surf Park

8 Al Maqta Historical District/ Soul of the City

- Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque
- Wahat al Karama
- Al Qana Aquarium
- Al Maqta Tower
- Traditional Souq
- Khalifa Park
- Police museum

- Core purposes**
- Sun & Sea
 - Nature & Adventure
 - Culture
 - Entertainment
- Other purposes**
- Shopping
 - Sports
 - Wellness

Living Opportunities

11.1 A Lifestyle of Comfort and Convenience, with Comprehensive Support Services

▲ A Lifestyle of Comfort and Convenience

Abu Dhabi is renowned for its exceptional quality of life, offering a blend of luxurious housing options, world-class healthcare, and top-tier international educational

institutions. The emirate's commitment to safety and security creates an ideal environment for families, ensuring peace of mind and tranquillity.



1st

Most Liveable City in the Region 2025⁵⁹

▲ Cultural Richness

The cultural fabric of Abu Dhabi is diverse and vibrant, offering residents a wide breadth of experiences. World-class museums house global masterpieces and invaluable artefacts, while cultural festivals bring together traditions from

across the globe. The emirate's culinary scene is equally diverse, featuring an exciting mix of global cuisines alongside traditional Emirati dishes, promising a rich culinary journey for all.



The UAE has appointed a Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, as well as a Minister of State for Happiness to promote community wellbeing and foster a positive, harmonious environment

▲ Comprehensive Support Services for Expatriates

Abu Dhabi is a welcoming city for expatriates, providing comprehensive support services designed to ease their transition and to help them

settle comfortably. These services cater not only to residents but also to those planning to relocate, fostering a strong sense of belonging.



5th

The UAE, for Best Place for Expatriates to Live and Work⁶⁰

▲ Integration and Support

Upon arrival, expatriates have access to orientation programmes, language classes, and social clubs that facilitate integration into the community. Initiatives such as those run by the Abu Dhabi Residents Office ensure that newcomers can easily navigate their new

surroundings and build connections. From legal advice and relocation services to mortgage consultancy and educational assistance, these services help ensure that expats feel supported every step of the way.

Next Steps Investors

12.1 A List of Actions to Incorporate a Business in Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi invites global investors to seize the golden opportunity arising from the emirate's exceptional growth and development. As a gateway to innovation and prosperity, Abu Dhabi offers a unique platform for investors to fill vital gaps and help elevate the emirate's tourism sector to new global heights. The journey towards investment in Abu Dhabi is a bespoke one, tailored to the individual aspirations of each investor, yet a streamlined pathway awaits exploration. **Investors are encouraged to choose their preferred setup** – whether in the bustling mainland or within the strategically designed free zones – each promising distinct advantages and exclusive incentives.

For those seeking to make a mark on Abu Dhabi's tourism landscape or align their ventures with the emirate's ambitious vision, the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi) provides comprehensive support. With a presence in over 20 countries worldwide, DCT Abu Dhabi is a trusted partner in this thriving industry, offering valuable insights, unveiling lucrative opportunities, and facilitating strategic partnerships.

To embark on this exciting venture, investors are guided through a series of carefully designed steps:

- 1 Business activity:** Determining the nature of your business activity is the first step to getting your business legally recognized under one of the six types of licenses available: industrial, commercial, professional, tourism, agricultural or occupational.
- 2 Legal form:** Next, you need to select one of the legal forms that suits your business activity and ownership. This includes general partnerships, limited liability companies, public joint stock companies and more.
- 3 Trade name:** Remember to choose a unique name that resonates with your business and register it with ADDED.
- 4 Initial approval:** Simultaneously, you must apply for an initial approval from ADDED which will help you proceed further and launch your business faster
- 5 Contractual agreements:** Depending on your legal form and ownership criteria, you may need to draft a Memorandum of Association (MOA) or a Local Service Agent Agreement (LSA).
- 6 Business location:** Next, you must find a suitable business location and obtain a tenancy contract. Learn more about Office Space and Renting.
 - **Find a premise:** choosing a location and office space is a vital decision to ensure smooth operations and growth of your business
 - **Verify requirements:** Ensuring that the location and premises you choose complies with business requirements in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi
 - **Obtain rental agreement:** obtaining a rental agreement or tenancy contract validates and legalizes your right to operate on the premises
 - **Operate online:** if your business does not need physical premises, you can get a license to operate online instantly through TAMM
- 7 Additional Approvals:** Depending on your activity and location, you may need additional approvals from other entities, such as the Abu Dhabi Municipality, the Department of Health, the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority, etc.
- 8 Business (Economic) license:** Submitted all the required documents and paid the fees? Congratulations, you're ready to obtain your final business license.

12.2 The Hotel Development and Licensing Journey

Developing a hotel in Abu Dhabi follows a clear and structured pathway, with the relevant government entities guiding investors at every stage. The journey unfolds across three phases, from securing land and approvals, through construction and compliance, to classification and opening day.

Phase 1 – Secure & Plan (Before Construction)

- 1 Land Allocation / Site Acquisition** – Obtain land through the [Department of Municipalities and Transport \(DMT\)](#) for mainland, [Abu Dhabi Global Market \(ADGM\)](#) for free zone, or the private market.
- 2 Land Use & Zoning Approval** – Secure zoning and land use approval from DMT.
- 3 Concept Approval** – Submit and obtain concept approval from the [Department of Culture and Tourism \(DCT\)](#).
- 4 Environmental & Infrastructure Clearances** – Receive required clearances from the [Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi \(EAD\)](#) and relevant utility/infrastructure authorities.
- 5 Design Approval** – Get hotel architectural and engineering plans approved by [DCT](#).
- 6 Civil Defence Design Approval** – Acquire Civil Defence design approval from the [Abu Dhabi Civil Defence Authority \(ADCDA\)](#).
- 7 Building Permit Issuance** – Obtain building permit from the [Department of Municipalities and Transport \(DMT\)](#).

Phase 2 – Build & Comply (During Construction)

- 8 Construction & Regulatory Inspections** – Undergo inspections conducted by DMT and ADCDA during the build phase.
- 9 Building Completion Certificate** – Secure completion certification from DMT.
- 10 Final Civil Defence Approval** – Obtain final approval from ADCDA.

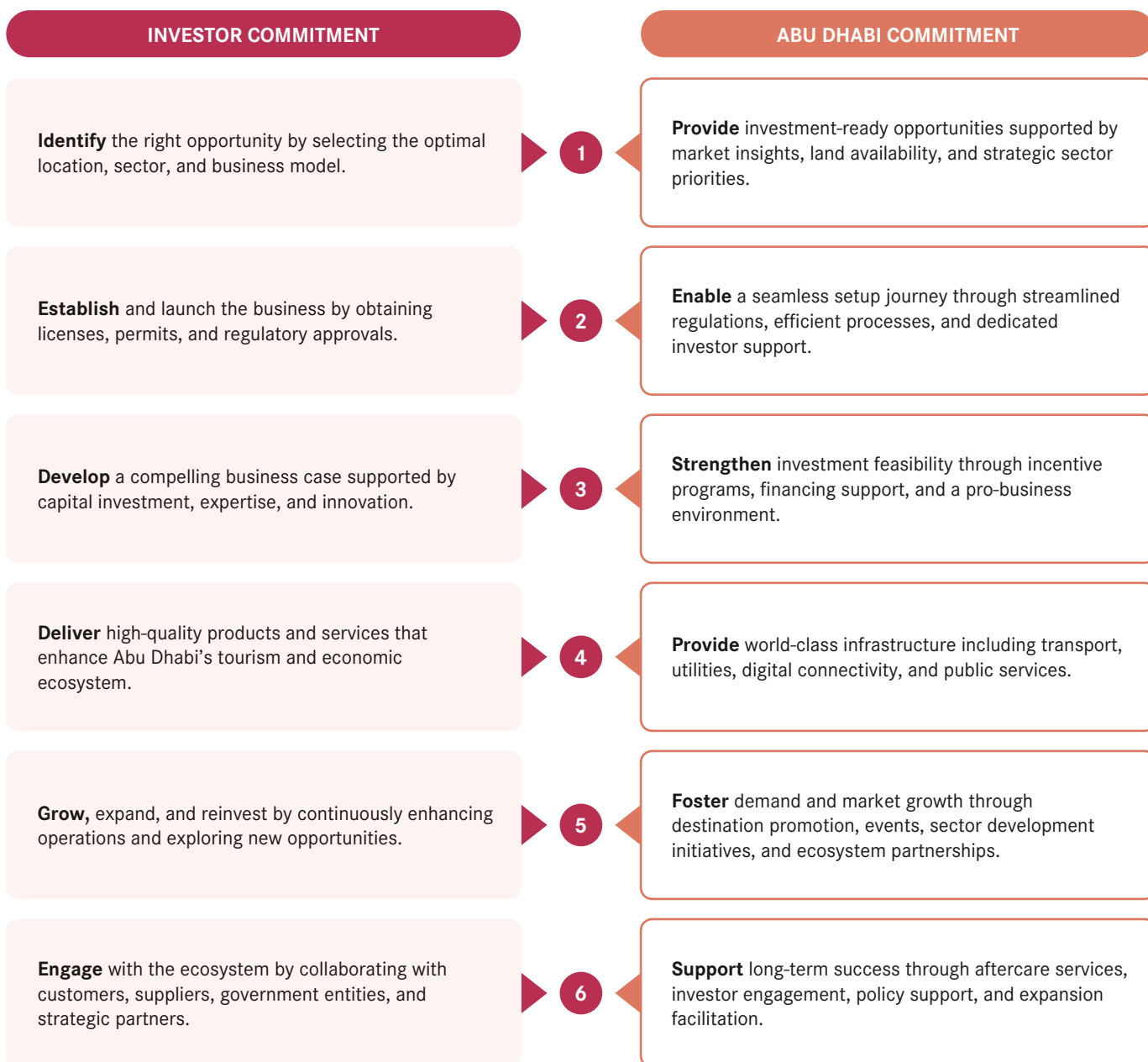
Phase 3 – Classify & Open (Ready for Operations)

- 11 Hotel Classification Assessment** – Complete classification assessment conducted by [DCT](#).
- 12 Tourism Operating Licence Issuance** – Acquire tourism operating licence from DCT, with the Department of Economic Development (DED) issuing the corresponding commercial licence.
- 13 Commercial Opening & Commencement of Operations** – Receive opening approval, classification plaque, and commence operations as approved by DCT.

Disclaimer: The licenses, permits, and approvals outlined herein are indicative and intended solely to facilitate and simplify the investor journey. Actual requirements, prerequisites, procedures, timelines, and applicable conditions are determined by the respective issuing authorities and may be subject to change. Detailed and up-to-date information should be obtained through **TAMM** or directly from the relevant government entity.

12.3 An Investor Journey to Success, Backed by Abu Dhabi's Commitment to Growth

Each commitment an investor makes is met by a matching commitment from Abu Dhabi at every stage.



Explore the following resources:



Abu Dhabi Investor Guide

A comprehensive overview for starting a business in Abu Dhabi.

GO TO THE DOCUMENT



The Ministry of Economy's Investor Pathway

A detailed guide for conducting activities across both the mainland and free zones in the UAE.

GO TO THE DOCUMENT

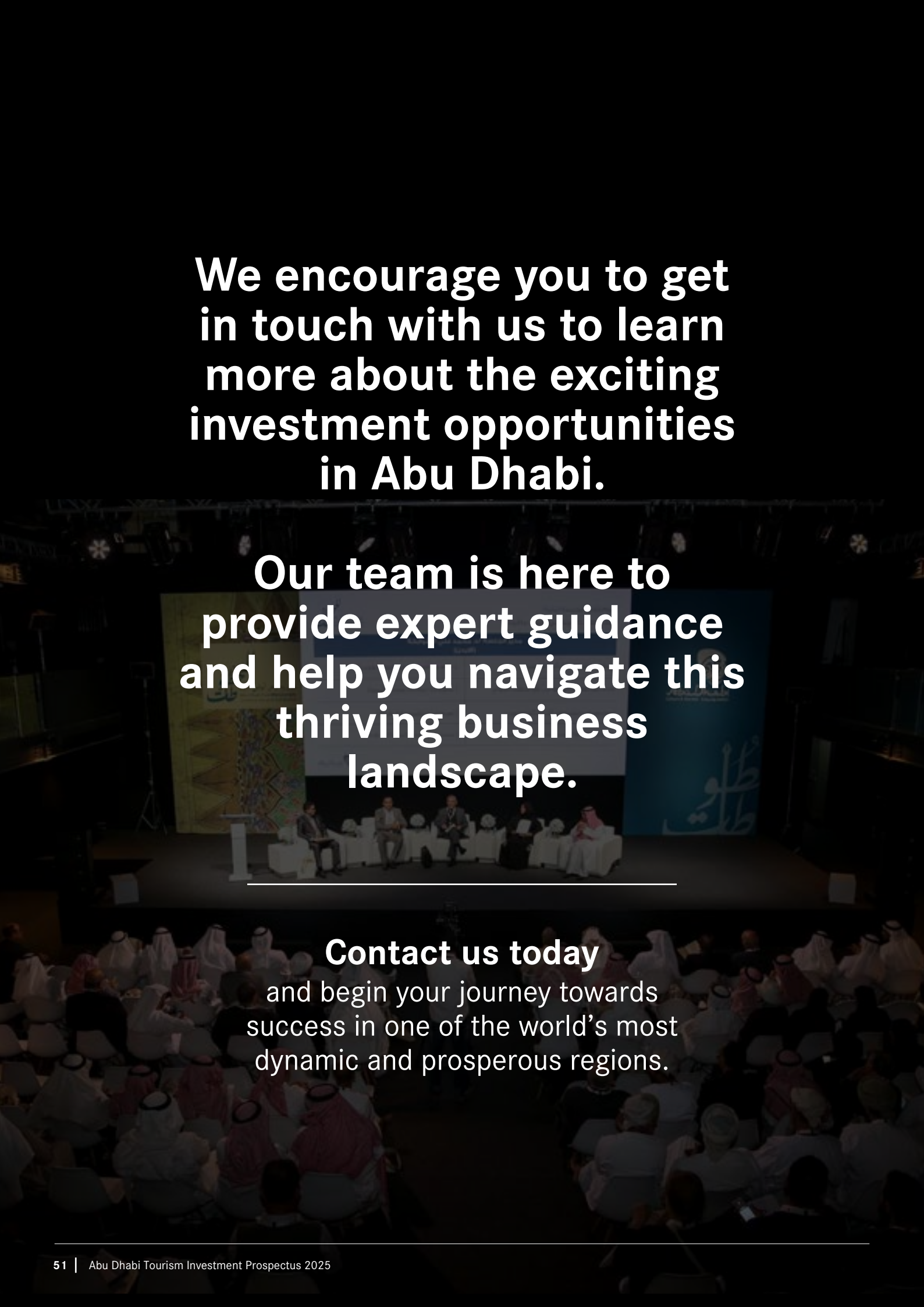


Establishing a Business in Abu Dhabi Guide

A step-by-step guide to establishing and licensing a business in Abu Dhabi.

GO TO THE DOCUMENT





**We encourage you to get
in touch with us to learn
more about the exciting
investment opportunities
in Abu Dhabi.**

**Our team is here to
provide expert guidance
and help you navigate this
thriving business
landscape.**

Contact us today
and begin your journey towards
success in one of the world's most
dynamic and prosperous regions.

12.4 The Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO) as a Central Entity for Investment

The Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO) is dedicated to supporting investors through a comprehensive range of services and resources. From government support and business setup assistance to regulatory guidance and networking opportunities, ADIO ensures a smooth and empowering investment experience. With a strong focus on fostering innovation and sustainable development, ADIO is committed to facilitating investments that contribute to Abu Dhabi's economic diversification efforts and its vision for the future.

Information Access

Providing detailed insights on all aspects of doing business in Abu Dhabi, including data on the economy and sector-specific information.

Investor Stakeholder Linkage

Connecting innovation-focused businesses to the Abu Dhabi ecosystem and its investment opportunities.

Facilitation

Supporting businesses during their launch phase, offering expert advice and leveraging ADIO's large network.

Site Selection

Identifying the most suitable location for business operations, arranging site visits, facilitating meetings, and providing first-hand information.

Settling In

Helping investors and their families to relocate to Abu Dhabi, supporting them with information about residency, laws, school programmes, healthcare, living, and more.

After Care

Offering continuous support after business set-up, assisting with expansion, mitigating obstacles, providing workshops, training, and expert consultations.

ADIO support extends through TAMM, the Abu Dhabi centralised digital services platform, where investors can access additional support services, including but not limited to:



Public-Private Partnership Programme

Collecting information about ADIO's current PPP pipeline, discussing proposals, and exploring partnership opportunities.



ADIO Innovation Rebates

Requesting consultations about the specialised incentives granted to innovative firms operating within sectors such as ICT, FinTech, Eco-Tourism, Healthcare & Biopharma, and AgTech.



Investment Opportunities

Discovering opportunities across all sectors and locations within the emirate, gaining insights on Abu Dhabi's value propositions, and advice on market entry, business partnerships and optimal setup locations.

ADIO is strategically present in eight key markets, actively promoting Abu Dhabi as a premier investment destination. As you embark on your investment journey in Abu Dhabi, the emirate is committed to supporting your venture at every step of the way, offering a welcoming business environment, strategic guidance, and a partnership approach to ensure mutual success. Abu Dhabi looks forward to being part of your journey and witnessing your investment's impact on the emirate's flourishing landscape.

Contacts

دائرة الثقافة والسياحة
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE
AND TOURISM



مكتب أبوظبي للاستثمار
ABU DHABI INVESTMENT OFFICE

The Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi

(DCT Abu Dhabi) is the government body responsible for sustainable growth of Abu Dhabi's culture and tourism sectors, fuelling economic progress and helping achieve the UAE capital's wider global ambitions.

The Abu Dhabi Investment Office

The Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO) is the government's investment promotion body responsible for accelerating Abu Dhabi's growth and enabling the Emirate's economic transformation.



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Business hours

Monday – Thursday: 8:00AM - 4:00PM
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For more information

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