



Date: March 5, 2024

Media Contact: Sunhee You, +82-44-203-2040, sunheeyou@korea.kr

Korea to foster a Muslim-friendly tourism environment together with the private sector

**Launching of “A’alam Arabi Korea” on Feb 28 attended by Minister YU In Chon,
Second Vice Minister JANG Mi Ran, and ambassadors from 5 GCC countries**

**31 companies across 6 sectors including accommodation, medical services, beauty,
shopping, food and beverage, and K-culture, pledge membership**

On February 28, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (Minister YU In Chon, MCST) and the Korea Tourism Organization hosted the launching ceremony for the “A’alam Arabi Korea” public-private partnership at the Yeong Bin Gwan, the Shilla Seoul. The title “A’alam Arabi Korea” means the “Arab World inside Korea” in Arabic, reflecting the partnership’s goal to position Korea as an appealing and convenient travel destination within the Arab World. The launching ceremony was attended by Minister YU In Chon, Second Vice Minister JANG Mi Ran, and ambassadors from five Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries: the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait, in addition to 31 companies across sectors such as accommodation, medical services, beauty, shopping, food and beverage, and K-culture.

Targeting the Middle East, a high-value market, with high travel demand driven by the popularity of K-culture, beauty, and medical services

Last year, the number of visitors from the six GCC countries to the Republic of Korea reached 31,029, 90% recovery compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019 (34,868 visitors).¹ As the region to lead tourism recovery, the Middle East is recently gaining attention as a high-value market in tourism, since the visitors tend to spend more, stay longer, and travel in large groups with their extended families. Moreover, the popularity of K-pop and K-dramas among the Middle East’s younger generation has significantly enhanced the region’s affinity toward Korea. Especially, the growing interest in K-beauty, wellness, and medical tourism among Middle Eastern women is expected to further increase the tourist flow between Korea and the Arab world.

¹ Six GCC countries: United Arab Emirates, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain

Creating a welcoming tourism environment, offering customized tourism experience, and providing adequate information to Arab tourists

The public-private partnership launched by the MCST, in collaboration with the KTO, aims to create a Muslim-friendly tourism environment in Korea and develop tourism products tailored to visitors from the Middle East together with 31 companies across 6 key sectors that are vital in high-value tourism in the region: high-end accommodation, medical services, shopping, beauty, food and beverage, and K-culture. The MCST will share Middle Eastern tourism trends with member companies, including customer demographics, demand on luxury visits and business tourism, while providing training and consulting services to help the industry better understand culture of the Arab World. In addition, the support will be extended for the development of customized tourism products leveraging Muslim-friendly tourism services and infrastructure. These products will be actively promoted at Korean tourism events, such as the Culture and Tourism Festival in Doha (May 2024) and the K-Tourism Roadshow in Dubai (November 2024).

“A’alam Arabi Korea” will develop customized services, create infrastructure, and enhance information accessibility for Middle Eastern tourists, considering food diversity and facilities catered to Middle Eastern cultural preferences, as these are crucial factors for Middle Eastern tourists when choosing travel destinations. To facilitate easy access to services and facilities that Middle Eastern visitors need, multilingual information on restaurants, medical facilities, and tourist sites will be provided on Visit Korea (www.visitkorea.or.kr), the official Korean tourism promotion website, as well as on locally favored online map services and tourist applications.

Minister YU In Chon stated, “There’s an Arab proverb that says, ‘Pick your traveling companion before picking the route.’ To befriend the Arab World, we are taking a significant first step in the journey to promote Korea as the next travel destination to Middle Eastern tourists by partnering with companies in the sectors of accommodation, medical services, beauty, shopping, food and beverage, and K-culture to create tourism services that are respectful of Arab culture.”

□ List of member companies in the first half of 2024 (31 companies)

Category	Selected Member Companies
Accommodation (11)	JW Marriott Hotel Seoul
	Grand InterContinental Seoul Parnas
	RYSE Autograph Collection
	LOTTE HOTELS & RESORTS
	The Shilla Seoul
	SOFITEL AMBASSADOR SEOUL
	ANDAZ SEOUL GANGNAM
	JOSUN HOTELS&RESORTS
	Park Hyatt Seoul
	Fairmont Ambassador Seoul
	Hotel Naru Seoul MGallery
Medical Services (9)	Korea Medical Institute (KMI)
	GANGNAM JS HOSPITAL
	Samsung Miracle Eye Center
	St. Mary's JIN Eye Center
	WONJIN PLASTIC SURGERY
	LEEMOONWON Korean Medicine Clinic
	JASENG HOSPITAL OF KOREAN MEDICINE
	JK Plastic Surgery Center
	CHA Hospital / Chaum
Beauty (3)	Korea Cosmetic Industry Institute, Beauty Play
	Park Jun Beauty Lab / Ecojardin
	Jennyhouse
Shopping (3)	Shinsegae Duty Free
	Hyundai Department Store Co.,ltd
	Lotte Duty Free Shop

Food and Beverage (1)	Gorilla F&D Inc.
K-Culture (4)	Daehan Hanbok
	MONOLITH INC. (9.81 Park, Jeju)
	World K-POP Center
	Ktown4U Co., Ltd.

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