

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **DUBAI CLOSES FIRST QUARTER WITH RECORD 4.7 MILLION INTERNATIONAL OVERNIGHT VISITORS SETTING THE STAGE FOR CONTINUED GROWTH IN 2018**

- *India increases by 7 per cent, Russia posts 106 per cent rise and China up 12 per cent*
- *Germany, France and Italy all post impressive double-digit growth*

**Dubai, UAE; 25 April 2018:** Dubai's tourism sector rallied strongly, steadily picking up pace through the first three months of 2018 in light of growing currency pressures as it continued to retain and grow share across global markets. Welcoming 4.7 million international overnight tourists from January-March 2018, the emirate posted a stable 2 per cent increase in traffic versus the same period last year, as reported by Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism).



Leading source markets continued to highlight their affinity for Dubai as the top three retained their positions versus 2017. Recording an impressive 7 per cent year-on-year increase to deliver 617,000 visitors, India helped level out the relatively stable second-placed KSA (-1%) and the steeper decline in visitation from third-placed UK (-8%). Russia ended the quarter in fourth place, continuing its upward trajectory by topping the growth charts with a stellar 106 per cent increase over Q1 2017, delivering 259,000 tourists,

benefiting from availability of visa-on-arrival facilities for Russian citizens from early last year. Similarly, fifth-placed China also continued to leverage its visa-on-arrival status, delivering 258,000 Chinese visitors, up a strong 12 per cent.



Posting double-digit increases in most countries, Europe made particularly strong contributions in the first three months of the year, with Germany in seventh place up 13 per cent with 194,000 visitors, France up 17 per cent with 103,000 in 12<sup>th</sup> place, and 14<sup>th</sup>-placed Italy up 20 per cent with 80,000. In a record first appearance, Sweden featured among Dubai's top 20 source markets, delivering 42,000 visitors, up 9 per cent.

Rounding off the top 10 feeder markets, sixth-placed Oman ended Q1 down 4 per cent, showing signs of recovery after challenging economic conditions that dominated 2017, resulting in significant reductions in tourist arrivals to Dubai. Travellers from eighth-placed US increased by a moderate 2 per cent, while declines were witnessed by both ninth-placed Iran and 10<sup>th</sup>-placed Pakistan at 19 and 22 per cent respectively.



From a regional perspective, Western Europe retained pole position, contributing an unprecedented 23 per cent of overnight visitor volumes, ahead of the GCC and South Asia, both with 17 per cent shares. The proximity markets across the MENA region continued to deliver sustained volumes at 11 per cent share, while North and South-East Asia drove 10 per cent of the volumes. Meanwhile, Russia, the wider CIS and Eastern Europe collectively delivered 10 per cent of total visitation and contributed an impressive 50% increase in visitation for the first quarter. Rounding off the regional mix and reflecting the sustained diversity of Dubai's visitation base, the Americas contributed a consistent 6 per cent in volumes while Africa grew traffic volumes by 15 per cent to contribute a total of 5 per cent, and Australasia the final 1 per cent of the regional mix for Q1 2018.

**His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General, Dubai Tourism,** commented: "The first quarter of the year has yielded stable performance supporting strong growth for all adjacent sectors like hotels and airlines. We expect to build on this strong base of 4.7 million visitors, to accelerate momentum through the summer and beyond – on the back of our strategic investments, partnerships, and policy enablers that are geared to collectively drive strong growth in 2018. With a number of major new attractions and leisure destinations having recently come on line and due to open later in the year, the breadth and depth of Dubai's tourism proposition continues to expand and evolve, increasing our city's attractiveness among the target visitor segments across all our key markets and segments. Our investments are prudently prioritised to ensure we create the most effective amplification of our appeal to both first-time and repeat audiences, as well as deliver the most efficient conversion outcomes across our diversified base. Through our growing

networks across the digital, social and mobile-led marketing channels, we expect to further our outreach and advocacy organically as a strong complement to our annual programme of global integrated campaigns. As we move forward, the steadfast support we receive from our government, public and private sector partners is invaluable, and together we can look forward to delivering our Tourism Vision target of welcoming 20 million annual visitors by 2020.”

### **Hotel supply**

At the end of March 2018, Dubai’s growing hotel room inventory stood at 108,807 spread across 689 hotel and hotel apartment establishments, representing year-on-year increases of 4 and 1 per cent respectively. Occupied room nights also rose compared to the end of Q1 2017, totalling 8.27 million versus 7.96 million, while the average occupancy rate across all hotel and hotel apartment categories stood at an impressive 87 per cent. These figures indicate that the city continues to present a hugely attractive investment opportunity for hoteliers and developers, with the sector successfully balancing demand and capacity to produce positive results.

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### **About Dubai’s Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism)**

With the ultimate vision of positioning Dubai as the world’s leading tourism destination and commercial hub, Dubai Tourism’s mission is to increase the awareness of Dubai among global audiences and to attract tourists and inward investment into the emirate. Dubai Tourism is the principal authority for the planning, supervision, development and marketing of Dubai’s tourism sector. It markets and promotes the Emirate’s commerce sector and is responsible for the licensing and classification of all tourism services, including hotels, tour operators and travel agents. Brands and departments within the Dubai Tourism portfolio include Dubai Business Events, Dubai Calendar, Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment, and Dubai College of Tourism.

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