

Dubai Esports Festival to be launched in November 2022

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Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) has announced that the city will host the inaugural Dubai Esports Festival (DEF 2022) from 9 – 20 November 2022 at Dubai Exhibition Centre at Expo City Dubai.

DEF 2022, which will be hosted in partnership with VSPN, a global leader in esports total solutions, will be the first international leisure event to be held at the Dubai Exhibition Centre following the hugely successful Expo 2020, and is in line with the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to position Dubai as a global city at the forefront of innovation and a leading events destination.

Starting with DEF 2022, DET and VSPN will roll out a series of events and activities, as part of the strategy to further elevate Dubai's standing as a global hub for esports and interactive tech-driven entertainment. The festival will have a diverse offering, including a top-tier international esports tournament featuring world renowned professional esports players, the launch of a school tournament, a concert featuring high-profile artists, an immersive GameExpo, as well as an industry networking event for domestic, regional and international stakeholders and partners.

The Initiate Summit will bring together the whole esports and gaming business ecosystem, including esports stars, experts, and industry establishments, providing them with a unique opportunity to exchange best practices, develop a strong network for accelerating momentum and growth, benchmark technologies and invest, both in the world's fastest growth market, MENA, and in a safe and inclusive esports culture. At the GameExpo, visitors can experience a variety of activities, whether they're enjoying classic games at the Retro section, getting their hands on the latest game drops, shopping for creative one-offs of their favourite fan fiction, to participating in competitions at a Cosplay stage, where they could win fabulous prizes. Both the Initiate Summit and GameExpo will be organised by DET in collaboration with Dubai World Trade Centre.

Ahmed Al Khaja, CEO, Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (DFRE), commented: "We are pleased to partner with VSPN in hosting the Dubai Esports Festival, further reinforcing Dubai's position as the top regional hub for esports, inspired by our visionary leadership's goal to make Dubai the best city in the world to visit, live in, work and play. With this region being one of the world's fastest-growing gaming markets, DEF will be a new annual festival that will build a legacy for esports and interactive entertainment

companies, paving the way for high quality innovative content that will allow esports enthusiasts from around the world to enjoy the ultimate gaming experience.

"With the continuous support of our stakeholders and partners enabling a world-class esports ecosystem in Dubai, the launch of DEF will also build momentum across multiple mobile and digital platforms, help us tap into the vast market potential for esports and gaming and inspire the next generation of esports talent, all while highlighting the city's position as a safe international events destination."

Dino Ying, CEO of VSPN, said: "VSPN is committed to partnering with Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism to establish Dubai as a global hub in the burgeoning market of esports. DEF will serve as the cornerstone of a new esports ecosystem, an enduring cultural phenomenon and industry benchmark."

"We will expand VSPN's groundbreaking global esports ecosystem model alongside Dubai by setting up a comprehensive network of professional and amateur tournaments. Meanwhile, by bringing the world's top esports IPs to Dubai, we can bring this unique industry ecology into a new era," he further added.

As MENA's leading esports hub, Dubai has developed a world-class esports ecosystem by investing heavily in technology, infrastructure, education and a new regulatory framework, alongside a buoyant tech start-up environment and a thriving, internet-savvy talent pool. DEF 2022 will further enable Dubai to tap into, unlock and leverage the vast potential that exists in the MENA region for esports.

Apart from engaging the growing community of esports enthusiasts and showcasing Dubai as a year-round destination for gamers, DEF 2022 with its exciting slogan, 'Play Beyond' is also designed to attract esports companies and game studios to establish a base in the city. VSPN recently launched its new regional headquarters in Dubai, further highlighting the city's position as the preferred destination for entrepreneurs, multinationals and investors.