

New training, licensing plan for Sharjah guides

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Sharjah, which gets more than 1.5 million tourists every year, has launched a new training and licensing programme for tourist guides' operation in the emirate, the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) has said.

Sheikh Sultan bin Ahmed Al Qassimi, Chairman of SCTDA, said: "In co-operation with Skyline University College, SCTDA has launched a tourism guidance programme in 2009 for all interested corporate entities and individuals."

He said: "The programme will later be made compulsory for all tourism agencies in Sharjah. All tour guides operating in Sharjah must be licensed by SCTDA, and we will follow up and oversee the implementation of this regulation. Complying with the laws that regulate



the practices of tourism agencies will be essential for the achievement of public-private partnerships."

Al Qassimi said: "The tourism industry is a significant contributor to the economic growth in Sharjah, and that it has become one of the emirate's most rapidly growing industries.

"According to recent statistics," he said, "the number of tourists visiting Sharjah in 2008 was 1.5 million – a significant increase from

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The sector is a key contributor to the growth of Sharjah

Sheikh Sultan bin
Ahmed Al Qassimi,
SCTDA

600,000 visitors in 2001. In order to accommodate the increasing number of tourists visiting Sharjah, the emirate is gearing up to increase hotel capacity, with 28 new hotels soon to be added to the current 107, and is continuing to attract world-renowned hotel brands. The emirate is planning to add over 5,000 new hotel rooms in the next two years, increasing the total number of hotel rooms to 12,000 by 2010."