



**AL AIN...A FUTURE TOURISM  
DESTINATION IN THE EMIRATE OF  
ABU DHABI**

**Al Ain ... A Future Tourism Destination in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi**

Department of Economic Development | Planning & Studies Division | Studies Directorate | Economic Studies Section - July 2010

## Executive Summary

The tourism sector is one of the most vital economic sectors, due to its distinguished role in diversifying sources of income, attracting many investment projects and its increasing contribution to GDP.

Tourism has assumed a prominent position among other economic sectors within the “Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030”, and “Plan Al Ain 2030”, which aim at the development of this sector, and the provision of necessary infrastructure, hotels, resorts, recreation and entertainment cities and parks, to attract tourists and encourage local and foreign investors to invest in this sector.

This study looks into tourism sector’s present and potential capabilities in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in general, and the city of Al Ain in particular, with emphasis on turning into an attractive destination.

### Results:

1. Three-star hotels in Al Ain constituted 3 out of 7 Hotels in 2009.
2. The similar and close prices of accommodation in Al Ain hotels, reduces the opportunities of choice for visitors to the region, and increases pressure on the (five stars) category to provide excellent services at reasonable and prices, compared to other groups with low level services.
3. Hotel apartments in the city of Al Ain accounted for 6% of the total number of hotel apartments in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in 2009.
4. The contribution of the activity of hotels and restaurants in the GDP of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi is very low, as it did not exceed 1.18% in 2009.
5. The average annual growth rate of the number of hotel guests in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi was 3.4% during the period 2006-2009. The number of guests reached 1.54 million in 2009.

6. The number of hotels in the city of Al Ain is low, as it comprises 7 out of 63 hotels in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi accounting for 11% of the total number of hotels in the Emirate.
7. The role of the Al Ain International Airport in the development of tourism in the city is still not very effective. In 2008 the airport received 2786 flights.
8. Abu Dhabi Council for Urban Planning expected that Al Ain population will reach one million people in 2030. This requires increasing the number of hotels; and improving tourism facilities.
9. Although Dubai occupies less 5% of the total area of the State, but it was able to acquire an international position in re-export, trade and tourism as a city famous for tourist attractions.

**Recommendations for improving the role of the tourism sector:**

1. Statistical data must be developed and a tourism expenditure survey must be carried out to measure the amount and the level of spending all of tourists coming to the emirate.
2. The need to highlight the role of domestic tourism and develop of information programs for the promoting domestic tourism.
3. The establishment of a center for training and qualifying national cadres in the field of tourism, under the supervision of Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority.
4. The need to organize tourism festivals and cultural activities on regular basis in the city of Al Ain, as most of the cultural activities and festivals are held in the city of Abu Dhabi.
5. Adopting and the best practices in investment and management of hotels, tourism facilities, and introducing different methods and sources for financing tourism projects.
6. Encouraging the private sector to participate in the establishment of new hotels and exhibition and conferences centers.