



ABDUL RAHMAN/Gulf News

Proud moment

Awad Seghayer Al Ketbi, executive director of the Dubai Convention and Heritage Division, accepts the award for the Middle East's Leading Business Destination from Miss World Tatana Kucharova.

UAE wins in 43 sectors in World Travel Awards

DUBAI IS THE LEADING REGIONAL BUSINESS DESTINATION

By AHMED A. ELEWA
Staff Reporter

Abu Dhabi The UAE won 43 of the 65 awards presented at the first edition of the World Travel Awards (WTA) in the Middle East and Africa, which took place in Abu Dhabi.

Dubai was ranked the leading business destination in the Middle East in recognition of its business-friendly environment and international standards of regulations.

Abu Dhabi's tourism promotion plans were also recognised, winning it the award for the leading new destination.

"This is the first time ever that WTA has taken place in a Middle Eastern country, and the selection of Abu Dhabi as the leading new destination does reflect the increasing importance of this new and growing tourist destination," Mubarak Al Muhairi, Director of the Abu Dhabi

Tourism Authority, told *Gulf News*.

The WTA, which was launched in 1993, relies on the votes of travel agencies, tour and transport companies, and tourism organisations.

Hundreds of thousands of votes cast for the Middle East and Africa awards by travel professionals from 167,000 institutions in more than 163 countries were recorded for the first edition.

Graham Cooke, WTA's president, said the awards cover all sectors of the global travel industry and the Middle East and Africa awards winners have a major impact on regional and global tourism.

The regional winners are automatically nominated for the global awards. The global winners will be announced at the global WTA ceremony in Providenciales Turks and Caicos in the Caribbean late this year.

MIDDLE EAST

The winners

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| Leading Airline | Etihad Airways |
| Leading Airport | Dubai |
| Leading Beach Resort | One & Only Royal Mirage |
| Leading Business Class Airline | Qatar Airways |
| Leading Business Destination | Dubai |
| Leading Business Hotel | Jumeirah Emirates Towers |
| Leading Business Travel Agency | Kanoo |
| Leading Car Hire | Europcar |
| Leading Conference Centre | Dubai World Trade Centre |
| Leading Conference Hotel | Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi |
| Leading First Class Airline | Etihad Airways |
| Leading Golf Resort | Jebel Ali Golf Resort & Spa |
| Leading Hotel | Burj Al Arab, Dubai |
| Leading Hotel Brand | Rotana Hotels |
| Leading Hotel Investment Co | Kingdom Hotel Investments |
| Leading New Destination | Abu Dhabi |
| Leading Resort | Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi |
| Leading Spa Resort | Le Royal Meridien Beach Resort & Spa, Dubai |
| Leading Suite | Palace Suite, Emirates Palace |
| Leading Tour Operator | Emirates Holidays |
| Leading Tourism Project | Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi |
| Leading Tourism Property Co | Nakheel |
| Leading Tourist Office | Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority |
| Leading Travel Agency | Regency Travel & Tours, Qatar |
| Leading Travel Agency Assoc. | Dubai Travel and Tour Agencies |
| Leading Travel Management Co | Dnata, Dubai |