



**An Exploration of the Growth, Development
and Significance of the MICE Industry in Qatar**

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Qatar in recent years has become a global focal point with the awarding of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Any country hosting an event of this size and scale, must look to consider the leverage that it brings in helping to grow and develop a wider events remit for the national economy. This case study will consider specifically the Meetings, Incentive, Conference & Exhibition (MICE) industry within Qatar. It will discuss the economic benefits that are brought about as a result of staging the events along with the business tourism they can attract. The study finds that the region is in a strong position of growth for MICE events with the number of business events helping Qatar to strengthen its global positioning as a leading destination. It also highlights how business tourism has been recognised by the Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA) as an area of strategic importance for the future.

Qatar firmly put itself on the world map when they were successful in their bid to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Being chosen as a host country has allowed Qatar the opportunity to showcase themselves on a global stage and highlight the diversification of the nation from Gas and Oil to a wider vision which ensures economic and social progress for the nation.¹ As a nation they are currently enjoying an unwavering fortune with unrivalled economic progress, yet despite this the state has maintained its cultural underpinning and traditional values.

Sporting mega events are often regarded highly for their capacity to help generate income, taxation revenue and further jobs.² However, the ability of how these mega events can be used as a catalyst for other areas of the event industry, more specifically the MICE industry is often forgotten. Event leveraging is now used extensively by countries who host

1. *Qatar National Vision 2030*, Accessed July 2008, https://www.mdps.gov.qa/en/qnv/Documents/QNV2030_English_v2.pdf.

2. Joan C. Henderson, "Hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup: Opportunities and Challenges for Qatar," *Journal of Sport & Tourism* 19, No: 3-4 (2014): 281-98.

major and mega events in order to take advantage of further development opportunities that can found in areas such as tourism, environmental, economic etc.³ The events industry within the state is still growing and maturing despite the numerous major events in recent years (see *Appendix*

1 – List of Major Events) specifically there was more than 150 business conferences held in 2016 helping with its global positioning.⁴ The unprecedented infrastructure build which is taking place for the 2022 World Cup and other events benefits greatly the development of the MICE Industry and MICE tourism. Such investment is made to ensure that Qatar is the world's first choice for doing business,⁵ its welcoming nature along with its convenient location for global travellers helps to achieve this goal. On a global scale, business tourism is a vital step for economic development with expenditures in the area being forecast to exceed US\$ 1.12 trillion by 2019, with MICE tourism in particular being one of the fastest growing sectors.⁶

Hamad Al Abdan, ex-Director of Exhibition for the Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA) stated:

“The successful hosting of the 2022 World Cup will provide Qatar with the knowhow and experience to stage similar large scale events in the future. Together with the existing and planned enhancements to the MICE infrastructure, Qatar's strategic location and other advantages, this expertise will stand the country in good stead in reinforcing its stature as a global centre of excellence in the events industry.”⁷

3. Kyriaki Kaplanidou (Kiki) et al, “Business Legacy Planning for Mega Events: The Case of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar,” *Journal of Business Research* 69, No: 10 (2016): 4103-111.

4. Peter Alagos, "Qatar Maintains Strong Foothold in Global MICE Industry: OBG," *Gulf Times*, 14 August 2016, Accessed 20 November 2018, <https://www.gulf-times.com/story/507121/Qatar-maintains-strong-foothold-in-global-MICE-ind>.

5. "Qatar Becomes Leading MICE Destination," Business Destinations (website), Accessed 20 October 2018, <https://www.businessdestinations.com/acte/qatar-becomes-leading-mice-destination/>.

6. Ammar Abulibdeh and Esmat Zaidan, "Empirical Analysis of the Cross-cultural Information Searching and Travel Behavior of Business Travelers: A Case Study of MICE Travelers to Qatar in the Middle East," *Applied Geography* 85 (2017): 152-62.

7. Emma Channon, “Qatar Ready for Kick Off,” June 2016, www.meetpie.com.

This case study aims to give the reader an insight into the MICE industry and how it is proving to be of strategic importance as Qatar continues to develop itself as a business event destination of choice. It will consider how the country can use other events for leverage as well as how it fits with the National Vision 2030.

Qatar has the highest capita income of any nation in the world and while it has a population of 2.6 million, of these only 313,000 are Qatari nationals.⁸ It is widely regarded as one of the most advanced Arab states for human development but does rely heavily on an expatriate workforce for most industries. The nation is a popular one for people to relocate to due to its year-round climate and location in the Persian Gulf, and so generally speaking, they do not have an issue attracting the required workforce numbers. Currently known for being an oil and gas state, the Government knows that the nation is reaching a crossroads which will present formidable challenges, with oil and gas being finite and non-renewable resources. The natural resources that have been its economic mainstay for many years will not be sustainable in the longer term and as such there is a recognised need to create a dynamic and diversified economy.⁹ Qatar has begun heavily investing in its infrastructure to have world-class facilities and have also encouraged the private sector to play a prominent role in helping to progress the nation. As part of the QTA's tourism strategy for 2030, they have stated that Qatar's business events tourism sector is set for success with:¹⁰

1. Growing event management services;
2. Exhibition capacity of almost 70,000 square metres, including world-class venues such as Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) and the recently opened Doha Exhibition and Convention Center (DECC);

8. "Qatar Population 2018 – Total Population by Country 2018," World Population Review (website), Accessed 4 November 2018, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/qatar-population/>.

9. Qatar National Vision 2030.

10. Visit Qatar (website), Accessed 4 November 2018, <http://www.visitqatar.qa/>.

3. An expanded transport network;
4. Exceptional accessibility via the award-winning national carrier, Qatar Airways, which connects Doha to 150 destinations worldwide.

In recent years Qatar has built a number of venues capable of hosting large scale events but in particular two main conference and exhibition centres have been built in the last seven years, which gives Qatar a greater capacity to hold international business events.

The Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) was opened in December 2011, in 'Education City' and is part of the Qatar Foundation Campus. It was built with the concept of bringing a new world standard of venue to Qatar, where the world's leading and inspirational research and knowledge based conference and exhibitions could be hosted. The venue has established itself as world leader in a short space of time having been nominated and won numerous awards over the last few years. They have won the prestigious World Travel Awards 'World's Leading Meetings & Conference Centre' in both 2015 & 2016, as well as the 'Middle East's Leading Exhibition & Convention Centre' in 2012, 2014, 2015 & 2016.¹¹

It was designed using the leadership in energy and environment design (LEED) certification, which is a voluntary environmental system covering areas such as design construction, operation of venue and its maintenance. The system is developed by the US Green Building Council and used by venues to demonstrate their commitment to the environment whilst also helping to save on costs. The QNCC was awarded a gold LEED rating helping to validate the commitment made by the design team. The venue is argued to be operating 32 per cent more efficiently (water conservation, energy efficient fixtures, renewable energy sources etc.) than other similar venues around the world and produces 12.5 per cent of its energy from the 3500sqm of solar panels located at the venue. The design of the building itself uses the iconic Qatari cultural heritage symbol of the Sidra tree. The tree is

considered to represent strength, courage, learning and growth, and as such was used as the focal point for bearing the weight of the venue's exterior canopy. This was symbolic as the tree was traditionally a place for people to find shade in the desert and where poets and scholars would meet to share knowledge, thus ensuring a key principle of the Qatar foundation for knowledge sharing was visually represented.¹²

The Doha Exhibition & Conference Centre (DECC) was opened in 2015, and is more centrally located than the QNCC in the West Bay area of Doha. Like its counterpart, it has a focus on being able to deliver high quality services in a design-led environment. The building itself allows for flexibility in its space use with the main exhibition space being column free and with the ability for it to split into a variety of size requirements. Further uniqueness of the venue is that it has the highest and widest exhibition space in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), thereby offering something with no competition in the region. The venue has a high finishing specification with circular skylights throughout the exhibition space allowing for natural lighting, something with most exhibition spaces in the region do not offer. Like the QNCC, DECC has used a sculpture piece to convey some of the symbolism of what they are trying to portray. In 2016, an iconic art piece by Tony Smith entitled 'SMOKE' was installed. The geometric sculpture is seen to be open and inviting yet still serene.

The two conference and exhibition centres together offer almost 70,000sqm of exhibition space, with the ability to host 20,000 delegates at a single event in DECC. Both offer a wide variety of facilities including breakout space, prayer rooms, onsite parking and multi-use rooms so that a single conference can achieve a variety of objectives. Both facilities are equipped with state of the art technology that allows the events to be unique and creative with what they would like to achieve. The capacity of the venues not only allows then to

11. Qatar National Convention Centre (website), Accessed 19 November 2018, <https://www.qncc.qa/>.

12. Doha Exhibition & Convention Centre (website), Accessed 20 November 2018, <http://www.decc.qa/>.

attract business events, but also host events from other areas of the events industry such as banqueting, concerts, consumer shows and product launches.

Qatar National Vision 2030

Qatar published a 'National Vision for 2030' in 2008, as they recognised the need to have a clear vision and plan which would help to ensure economic and social progress in the nation. The vision sets out how the country will work towards progressing the country and ensuring prosperity for their current citizens and future generations. The national vision aims at *'transforming Qatar into an advanced country by 2030, capable of sustaining its own development and providing for a high standard of living for all of its people for generations to come'*.¹³

The vision rests on four pillars (See Appendix 2):

- **Human Development** – Considering the people to sustain a prosperous society.
- **Social Development** – Having a just and caring society with high moral standards.
- **Economic Development** – Maintaining a competitive and diversified economy.
- **Environmental Development** – Ensuring harmony between economic growth, social development and environmental protection.

The MICE Industry and business tourism help to form a core part of achieving the national vision. While there is argument that the industry can aid with all four pillars, it is Human Development and Economic Development in particular that will benefit from an increased presence of MICE events.

13. Qatar National Vision 2030.

Qatar and the Gulf Region

Although Qatar as a nation has a similar cultural offerings and activities as its neighbouring countries, it has not been as popular to tourists as some, such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE). There has been some consideration that the nation would prefer to attract business tourism from other Islamic countries so that visitors would be more sensitive to the cultural foundations of the state.

Both Qatar and the UAE have taken an active leading role of developing tourism related initiatives and understanding the need for clear policy development in order to increase the positive reputation of the industry.¹⁴ These strategies will help to boost the arrival numbers of international visitors in Qatar from 1.2 million in 2012 to an estimated 7 million by 2030.¹⁵ Other nations in the GCC have also in recent years started to understand the additional visitors that hosting events can generate; however by far it is Qatar and UAE that lead the way.

Arguably Qatar still has some way to go until it can match UAE on visitor numbers; however both nations are growing year on year both in terms of development and what they can offer and on attracting events/people to the countries. UAE is often the more attractive of the pair, due to the perception that it has a more western liberal view, but with Qatar, due to the 2022 FIFA World Cup, there is a likelihood this will change. The last World Cup staged in Russia attracted more than 2.9 million foreign visitors for the event, many of whom came from nations that had not even qualified, such was the reach of a single event. Not only will this help boost Qatar over other GCC nations in that single year, it is hoped that the event legacy will continue to attract visitors in the years after.

14. Abulibdeh and Zaidan, "Empirical Analysis of the Cross-cultural Information Searching and Travel Behavior of Business Travelers."

15. Ibid, 152-62.

The Meetings, Incentives, Conference & Exhibitions (MICE) Industry

First, in order to be able to consider what the MICE industry is, it is important to define what is meant by each aspect of the acronym:¹⁶

- Meeting: An event where the primary activity of the attendees is to attend educational sessions, participate in meetings/discussions, socialise, or attend other organised events. There is no exhibit component to this event. See also Convention, Exhibition, Trade Show, and Consumer Show explained in the following paragraphs.
- Incentive: Recognition program or a loyalty program, which is a business tool designed to change consumer behavior to improve profit, cash flow, employee engagement and customer engagement.
- Conference: (1) A participatory meeting designed for discussion, fact-finding, problem solving, and consultation. (2) An event used by any organisation to meet and exchange views, convey a message, open a debate, or give publicity to some area of opinion on a specific issue. No tradition, continuity, or periodicity is required to convene a conference. Although not generally limited in time, conferences are usually of short duration with specific objectives. Conferences are generally on a smaller scale than congresses.
- Exhibition: An event at which products, services, or promotional materials are displayed to attendees visiting exhibits on the show floor. These events focus primarily on business- to-business (B2B) relationships (same as Exposition or Trade Show).

16. George G. Fenich, *Meetings, Expositions, Events, and Conventions: An Introduction to the Industry*, NY, (Pearson, 2019).

- Event: An organised occasion such as a meeting, convention, exhibition, special event, gala dinner, and so on. An event is often composed of several different yet related functions.

MICE travellers can be defined as *'people who undertake personal or employer funded trips to attend meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions, both at home and overseas (pg. 104).¹⁷* While MICE trips are considered to be *'trips where the main purpose is business and in which generally large groups are brought together for a particular purpose'.¹⁸*

Within the MICE industry it is the ability for individuals to meet and conduct business in person which is one of the most important characteristics, allowing for a higher level of communication. Individuals learn, interact, exchange knowledge and make decisions much better when they are able to have the physical interaction with others.¹⁹ Traditional style of events in the MICE industry rarely support people meeting beyond the basic areas of meals and social events. While this will suffice on a basic business level in order to ensure a richer value to the event it is vital that the consideration of networking is made early in the design process of the event and fits the needs of the event and audience profile.²⁰ Humans regardless of where they are from share a longing for closeness and community feeling yet we are used to trying to suppress this when planning a meeting. The best MICE events take an approach that is built around attendee interactions, and work to build a community.²¹ This

17. Che-Chao Chiang, Brian Edward King, and Thu-Huong Nguyen, "Information Searching and the Travel Behaviours of MICE Travellers: A Cross-cultural Study," *International Journal of Tourism Research* 14, No: 2 (2011): 103-15.

18. Abulibdeh and Zaidan, 152-62.

19. Mike Van Der Vijver and Eric De Groot, *Into the Heart of Meetings: Basic Principles of Meeting Design*, (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013).

20. Adrian Segar, *Conferences That Work Creating Events That People Love*, Marlboro (Booklocker.com, 2010).

21. Segar, *Conferences That Work*.

approach is often helped by event organisers working with industry associations (such as MPI, APBCO, IFEA, ILEA, ICCA) who have a priority of building a community of like-minded professionals who are all working with a similar goal in mind. Business networking has also been identified as one of the potential legacies which is leveraged from hosting mega-events;²² this is something Qatar should take note of with being the host nation of the next FIFA World Cup.

David Scowsill, president and CEO of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), explained that "Business travel is a vital part of the sector, and it is a key catalyst for global growth. It drives the relationships, investments, supply chains and logistics that support international trade flows."²³

There are many reasons for meetings and events to take place, often it is due to the economic value that it will help to bring to the region or that there is an internal business need for it. It has been suggested that for a meeting or event to take place, the reason will fall into one of the following 12:²⁴

1. An analysis was conducted to determine need.
2. A regulation requires it.
3. It appears to be addressing a serious problem.
4. Management requests it.
5. It focusses on a change that is needed.
6. Other organisations in industry have conducted similar meetings.
7. The topic is a trend.

22. Kaplanidou et al., "Business Legacy Planning for Mega Events."

23. "UAE braces for surge in business travel," *Travel Wire News*, <https://travelwirenews.com/uae-braces-for-surge-in-business-travel-242035/>.

24. Jack J. Phillips, M. Theresa Breining, and Patricia Pulliam Phillips, *Return on Investment in Meetings and Events: Tools and Techniques to Measure the Success of All Types of Meetings and Events*, Amsterdam (Butterworth-Heinemann: 2008).

8. It supports new policies and practices.
9. The meetings and event management thought it was needed.
10. It supports new equipment, procedures, or technology.
11. It supports other processes such as Six Sigma, transformation, continuous process improvement etc.
12. A bestselling book has been written about the topic.

Having a lack of initial business alignment will bring into question the reason or need for the new meeting or event. Considering the categories, there is scope for being able to have a clear strategy for the event need.

Strategic value of MICE to Qatar

Currently Qatar is very much an emerging destination for the MICE industry and is seen as a regional hub for conferences and exhibitions. Business events have seen an average annual growth rate of 36 per cent over the past five years²⁵ with Travel & Tourism being directly responsible for the creation of 2.25million jobs during 2014, in the Middle East region.²⁶ Most business individuals come to the area for a conference meeting or an exhibition.²⁷ Already, a reputation for quality and excellence in the meeting industry has been developed and this looks set to continue further as more world-class events are attached to the region.

‘Qatar is taking steps towards positioning the country as an attractive destination for business events in the region, capitalising on its easy access, growing event management

25. Keith Chan, "Qatar and Austria Are Rising Star Locations for Business Visitors from Asia," *South China Morning Post*, 20 April 2018, Accessed 20 November 2018, <https://www.scmp.com/magazines/style/people-events/special-reports/topics/mice-biz/article/2142109/qatar-and-austria-are>.

26. Abulibdeh and Zaidan, 152-62.

27. "Meetings, Exhibitions and Incentive Travel Services in Doha Qatar," Qatar Travel Tours, Accessed 4 November 2018, <http://qatar.travel-culture.com/mice/>.

services and expanded exhibition capacity'. Ahmed Al Obaidli, Director of Exhibitions, Qatar Tourism Authority.²⁸

Qatar is in a fortunate position to have many venues at their disposal for MICE activity, all of which offer a variety of space, size and design (The Doha Exhibition Centre, The Doha Exhibition & Convention Centre, Qatar National Convention Centre, The Aspire Zone, The Sheraton Exhibition Centre, The Doha Opera House, to name a few), of course, this also does not then include the variety of hotels and unusual venues in the region that also have MICE facilities. The Qatar Tourism Authority are investing US\$17billion in the tourism infrastructure of the country, which includes meetings facilities, helping to demonstrate the importance of these and the expected return they will bring for the economy.²⁹

The investment of Qatar to support the development and growth in the state over recent years has not just been for sporting events. The wider MICE industry has also benefitted as a result, both in terms of attracting new standalone events, but also the range of MICE events that link with major sporting events.³⁰ The Qatar Tourism Authority has worked on developing a range of strategies to ensure that the state is an attractive destination for international events, positioning itself as a regional hub for knowledge and in attracting high value service activities. They have recognised the value in business tourism understanding that by bringing international business people to the area there is a high likelihood they will bring repeat business or that spouses/family will travel with them, thereby spending more money while in the country.³¹ When Qatar's overall tourism (from GCC states) is considered it was estimated that in 2015, 67 per cent of these visitors are for

28. Keith, "Qatar and Austria Are Rising Star Locations for Business Visitors from Asia."

29. Visit Qatar.

30. Lee Forde, "Qatar 2022, the Wider Impact of the MICE Industry," 25 May 2017, Accessed 4 November, 2018, <http://www.leeforde.com/qatar-2022-mice-industry/>.

31. Visit Qatar.

business tourism purposes,³² although there is an expectation that this figure will drop as leisure tourism to the region becomes more popular in the coming decade (See Appendix 3 – Projected breakdown of tourist arrival in Qatar). These current figures appear to buck the trend of what is happening globally where it is an average of 17 per cent of tourists that are there for business purposes.

The opening of the QNCC in 2011 meant a new era for Qatar, one that understood the need for diversification and encouraged the development of education, research and innovation. With this the understanding was there that standard tourism practices were also not to be relied on but that business tourism would be a key to future visitor numbers. Mr Ahmed Al Hajjaji, Chief Executive Officer of QNCC states, *‘The economic benefit of exhibition tourism is always three times greater than leisure tourism.’*³³

There is a need though to consider all aspects of the MICE industry and as it stands currently the incentive travel market is quite a way behind the other divisions, and as such working to increase this is of strategic importance in 2019.³⁴ In order to ensure some focus on this development it is part of the high-impact programs that have been identified in the Qatar National Tourism Strategy 2030 as part of identifying what Qatar has to offer MICE Tourists. Some may argue that part of the reason for this area not being so popular in the country is that incentive trips are often seen as both business and reward, and as such delegates undertaking these trips want the opportunity to socialise in a country where there is less restrictions or laws to abide by.

32. Abulibdeh and Zaidan, 152-62.

33. Koray Korkusuz, “Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC),” YouTube, 24 December 2011, Accessed 4 November 2018, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yS17flq5Gao>.

34. Keith, “Qatar and Austria Are Rising Star Locations for Business Visitors from Asia.”

While the above does paint a positive picture of the strategic worth of hosting MICE events, it should also be remembered that any event needs to consider what the return on investment (ROI) will be. Venturing into and growing a market segment can be dangerous economically if the entry into the market is not carefully planned.³⁵ From an ROI perspective, some of the main reasons that meetings (and events) fail to deliver a positive ROI are:³⁶

- They are not needed.
- They are not focussed on goal orientated results.
- They are not connected closely enough to a business issue to overcome the cost of the meeting.

Staffing of MICE

Due to the high rates of population growth within Qatar, there is a large expatriate workforce. In particular, there has been a sharp increase in unskilled workers. It is vital that Qatar works to maintain a balance in the workforce so that all job roles in any industry can be covered. Within the MICE industry there is a need for both skilled positions (Event Manager, Exhibition Director, Project Manager, etc.) as well as those that need minimal/no skills (Information assistant, F&B porter, Conference room assistant, etc.). In order for the nation to be competitive on a global scale and deal with the new international business then the workforce needs to be knowledge based with people being the driving engine, an area that is acknowledged in the National Vision 2030. Within the MICE industry there is a need for workers at all levels and it is important with any industry going through a growth period that the suitability of the growth rate is considered to make sure the balance of nationals and expatriate workers is considered. The National Vision 2030 further states that there needs to

35. Forde, "Qatar 2022, the Wider Impact of the MICE Industry."

36. Phillips, Breining, and Phillips, *Return on Investment in Meetings*.

be thought given to the balance of cultural rights, housing and public service availability while also taking into account the potential negative impact on national identity. A realistic pace and set of expectations must be developed to ensure that there is long-term sustainability in the workforce.

A need for training and education in the region has clearly been identified if you consider the growth in the number of educational establishments in the country; indeed many overseas institutions are creating a base to offer courses within Qatar (Carnegie Mellon University, Georgetown University, Texas A&M University etc.). Qatar has been working hard to establish advanced education systems. One such provider is Josoor Institute, a centre for excellence in sports and events, who has recognised this need specifically in the area of events management and has, in conjunction with subject experts from Europe, developed and delivers a certificate and diploma in Major Events Management. Doing so not only aligns with the National Vision 2030 to have a developed workforce, but also ensures the development of the Qatari workforce prior to staging the World Cup 2022, thus helping to address the balance with expatriate workers.

One consideration with staffing of the industry is to not just ensure staff have qualifications, but that these qualifications are relevant to the industry. Many people working in the business event context will already have achieved their degree level qualifications. As such Qatar needs to look to develop its support of professional industry qualifications. Having these allows the industry workforce to show that they have demonstrated an elevated level of professional standards along with a set of knowledge domains that establishes the individuals' professional practice within the industry.

Within the event context there are a number of such professional qualifications:

- Certified Meeting Professional (CMP)
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- Certificate in Meeting Management (CMM)
- Certified Special Events Professional (CSEP)
- Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME)
- Certified Association Executive (CAE)
- Healthcare Meeting Compliance Certificate (HMCC)

Within the region, there is also a lack of Professional Associations for the MICE Industry. Worldwide although there are many associations, there is little standardised practice amongst them to ensure that the needs of the industry are being met, with many of the associations being based in North America or Europe. Currently much of the professional qualifications are being delivered by them which makes the content very industry focussed, but not nationally focussed. For example, the CMP qualification is based on North America standards (Meeting & Business Event Competency Standards (MBECS)), and so much of the qualification would not currently be as relevant for those based in Australia or Asia (although this is under review). Local providers such as the Josoor Institute are therefore in an ideal place to lead the development in helping to change and professionalise the MICE workforce in Qatar by offering both educational and professional qualifications alongside building the association standing in the region.

Within the MICE industry globally, there is still a gender imbalance on the types of roles offered and the numbers of women playing key roles within it.³⁷ Women are still the predominate force within the events industry, yet it is men who hold the majority of the higher management roles. The imbalance is no different in the MENA region and it has been acknowledged in Qatar by looking to offer incentive for Qatari nationals to enter professional

37. Johnny Martinez, "The Elephant in the Room: Gender Inequality in the Events Industry," *Conference News*, Accessed 4 November 2018, <http://www.conference-news.co.uk/blogs/elephant-room-gender-inequality-events-industry>.

management roles in business sectors with increased opportunities and support being offered to women.³⁸

Conclusion

Qatar is highly likely to take over the crown as the hub for business tourism from Dubai in the near future. The country has a very clear vision and strategy of how they need to progress and diversify resources as their traditional industries slow down. They understand that one of the biggest commodities they have is in human development, and area which is sustainable in the longer term. The knowledge base of the population is to be used and celebrated to ensure that the country continues to prosper in the decades to come. They have the platform to shine on a global stage with the hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, something which as a country they are capitalising on by building new infrastructure and using the mega-event as leverage to attract for further events and in particular MICE events to the country.

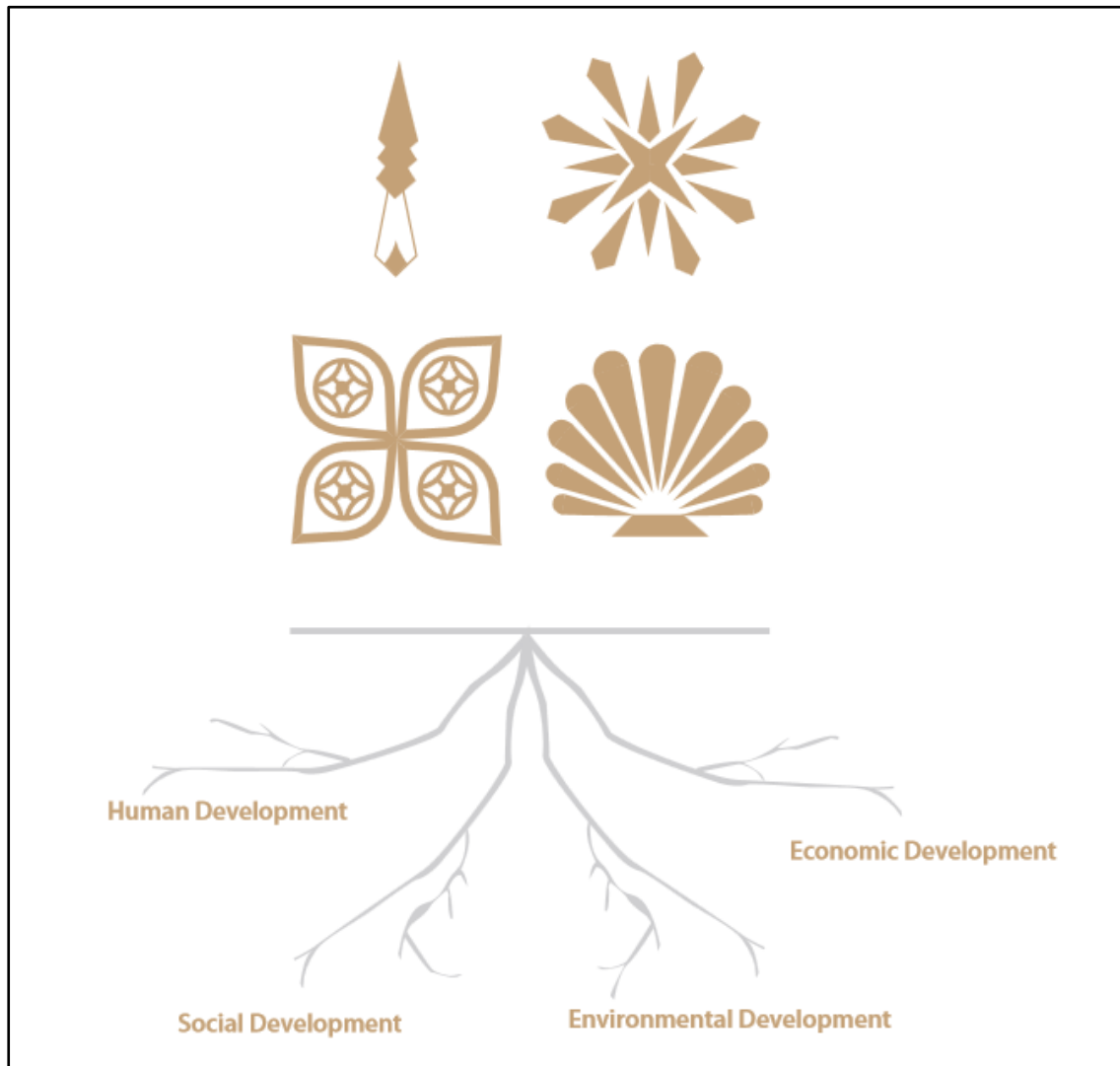
³⁸ Qatar National Vision 2030.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Major Events Staged in Qatar

| Event | Date |
|--|-------------|
| Asian Games | 2006 |
| World Petroleum Congress | 2011 |
| UN Climate Change Conference (COP18) | 2012 |
| World Handball Championships | 2015 |
| World Cycling Championships | 2016 |
| World Academic Congress of Emergency Medicine | 2018 |
| The World Innovation Summit | 2018 |
| Gymnastics World Championships | 2018 |
| Times Higher Education Emerging Economies Summit | 2019 |
| Doha International Trade Fair | Yearly |
| Qatar International Boat Show | Yearly |
| Qatar ExxonMobil Open | Yearly |

Appendix 2: Qatar National Vision 2030 – Four Pillars



Appendix 3: Projected breakdown of tourist arrival in Qatar

| | 2012 | 2015 | 2020 | 2022 | 2025 | 2030 |
|----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Business | 73% | 67% | 54% | 46% | 42% | 36% |
| Leisure | 27% | 33% | 46% | 54% | 58% | 64% |

Source: Qatar National Tourism Sector Strategy 2030

Teaching Questions

1. What opportunities are available for the MICE industry in Qatar?
 - a. How do these opportunities fit in with the Qatar National Vision 2030?
2. What are the challenges for the MICE industry in Qatar with trying to diversify from traditional gas and oil industries?
3. In what ways can Qatar use the 2022 FIFA World Cup to further leverage the development and growth of the MICE industry?
4. What are some of the strategic considerations Qatar should make at this point whilst planning for the future in a developing industry?
5. How would you consider marketing Qatar as a MICE destination in the Middle East to a global audience?
6. How can the region ensure that Qatari nations feel part of the industry and make it a 1st choice career path?

Teaching Notes

Case study learning objectives:

- To gain an understanding of the terminology of MICE events.
- Explore the context of using MICE events as a strategic tool for growth.
- Understand the current position and future vision of Qatar as a nation.
- Examine the specific staffing needs for the MICE industry

The area of 'MICE' Events is an ever changing domain as countries become more aware of the power they can hold. From a teaching context this can make it hard to find literature that is not only up to date but also has the level of detail needed, often the topic is only one small part of writings on the wider event industry. Students interested in the area should ensure that they remain up to date on reading industry based reports as many of the key statistics will be presented in these and at the leading trade shows that take place for the industry each year (such as International Confex, IBTM, World Travel Market, IMEX). Students should be aware of how multifaceted the MICE industry is and that while it is global in nature different approaches are taken in different areas of the world.

The recommendation is for this case study to be approached as a discursive tool to allow students to explore the meaning and value of MICE events to different countries in the MENA region.

It is suggested that this case study would suit students at both undergraduate and postgraduate level on event management and tourism programmes. It can also be used with professionals from the industry to allow thought and exploration of how other areas of an industry can benefit from the leverage of major and mega events.

Recommended Reading

The following sources would be recommended for further reading on MICE and business events along with region specific industry periodicals:

- Beech, J., Kaiser, S. & Kaspar, R. 2014. *The Business of Events Management*. Pearson, Harlow.
- Bowdin, G.A.J et al. 2011. *Event Management*. Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford
- Davidson, R. 2018. *Business Events*. Routledge, London

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