



Flanders

State of the Art

Flanders International
**Business
Weeks** /2023



The growing entertainment hubs in the GCC

How to approach this innovative market?

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Entertainment Sector - Saudi Arabia

FIT Riyadh

- Jurisdictions
- Saudi Arabia
- Oman
- Bahrain
- Yemen

- Our office



- We're two - we also host Interns from Flanders

Saudi Arabia - from zero Entertainment to a hero Entertainment hub

- Lifting the long-standing ban on cinema
- Ban on gender segregation
- Film Making and Film festivals
- Musical concerts
- Cultural, heritage and season festivals
- Gaming and e-sports events
- Sport to be big business

In Saudi-Arabië zijn ze gek van de 'Barbie'-film



In Saudi-Arabië wordt de Barbie-film in ongecensureerde versie vertoond. — © Reuters

Entertainment Key players



Direct

- The Public Investment Authority - PIF
 - The General Entertainment Authority – GEA
 - Saudi Entertainment Ventures – SEVEN
 - Qiddiya Investment Company (QIC)
 - Diriyah Gate Development Authority (DGDA)

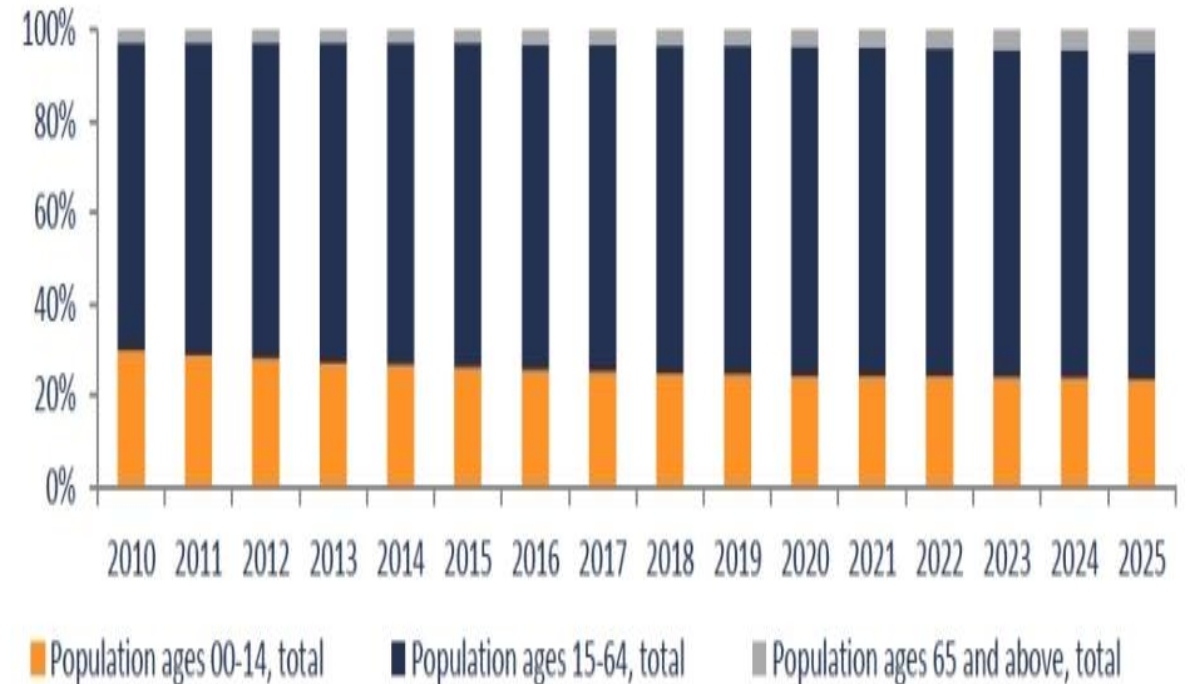
Indirect

- Ministry of Tourism
- Saudi Tourism Authority
- Ministry of Culture ⊂ Cultural Commissions
- Ministry of Sport
- Sports Authority
- Saudi Sport Federations

Why Entertainment?

- Transformation
- Young society
- Income Generation
- Preserving money spend abroad
- To attract tourists
- Improve quality of life
- Jobs creations
- Attract FDIs
- Ensure the private sector participation

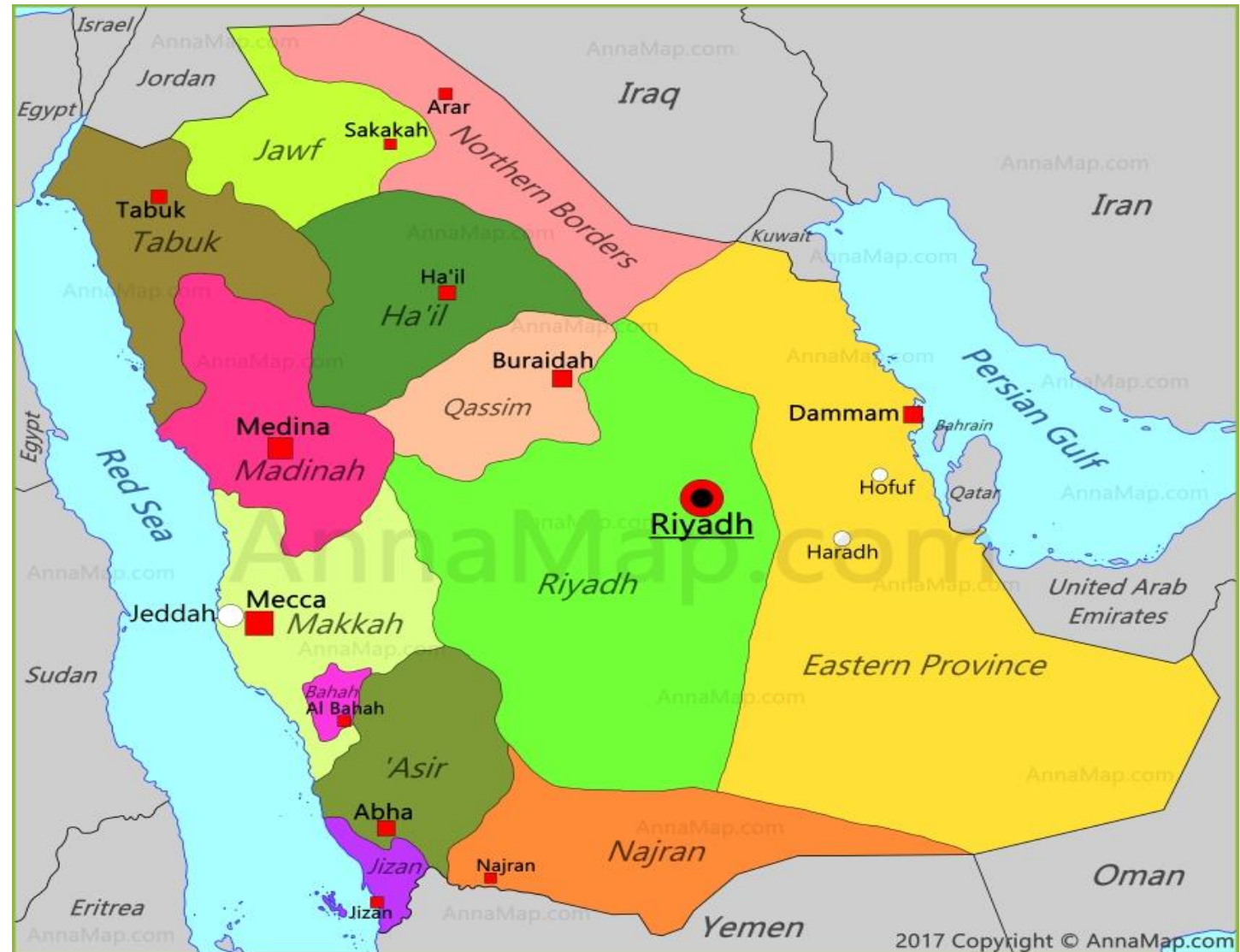
Population growth & Demographic Profile – Saudi Arabia



Source: World Bank

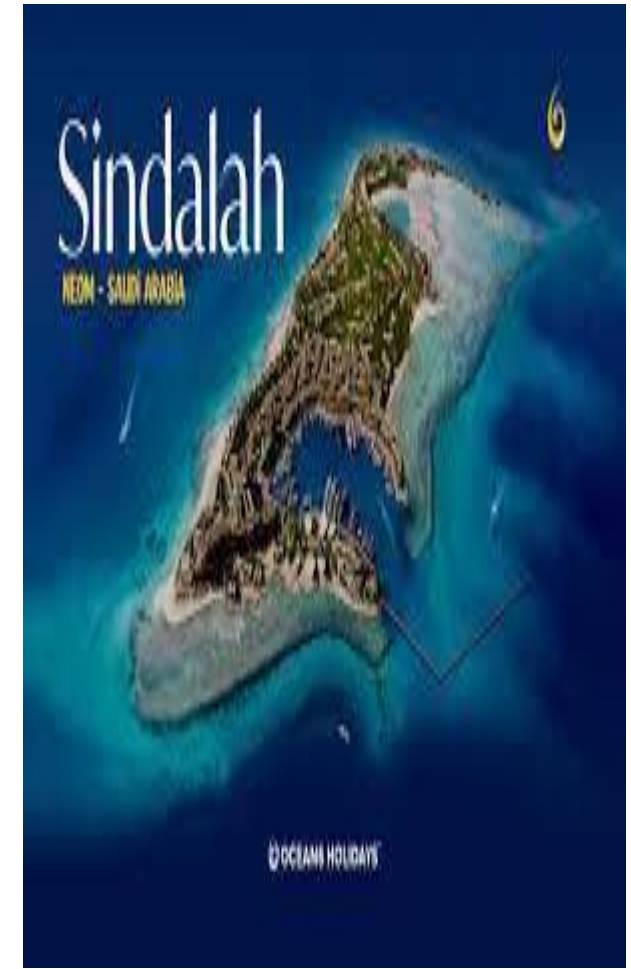
Where?

- **The Central Province**
 - Riyadh
 - Qiddiya
 - Diriyah
- **The West Cost**
 - The Red-Sea Project
 - Amalaa
 - Jeddah
- **Asir Region**
 - Al Soudah
- **The Eastern Province**
 - The Rig
- **Tabuk**
 - Alula
 - Neom



Neom

Trojena



Entertainment segments at Giga Projects



Qiddiya



Trojena - Neom



Coral Bloom - The Red Sea

- **Qiddiya** - theme parks, water parks and a sport.
- **Diriyah** – arts, dining, hotels, museums and shopping, sports.
- **Neom** - skiing, yachting, watersports, biking wellness resorts, hotels and a nature reserve.
- **The Red Sea & Amaala** - water sports, snorkeling, scuba diving, hiking, air sports, hospitality, Spa & wellness resorts and climbing.

How to approach the market

challenges

- PIF projects
- Competition
- The weak role of the private sector
- Technical regulations
- Licenses and permits

Ways to go

- collaborate with project owners
- collaborate with local contractors
- collaborate with events organizers
- set-up a company in Saudi
- participate/visit fairs

Potential Opportunities

- gaming industry
- theme parks & family entertainment centers
- museums building and technologies
- hospitality; hotel build, furniture, spa, fitness equip
- Events and live shows
- Studio engineering & tech for film production, audiovisual equip
- Training
- Sports events

events to participate/visit

Entertainment events

- Saudi Entertainment & Amusement Expo – SEA
- Saudi Seasons
 - Riyadh
 - Jeddah
 - Alula
 - Alhasa
- Noor Riyadh
- Riyadh Art
- Riyadh Expo 2030 ????

Sports Events

- Global e-sport Games – Dec 23
- Formula 1 Grand Prix
- Formula A – Jeddah Rack
- Rally Dakar
- Saudi Sports Show – June 2024





**FLANDERS
INVESTMENT
& TRADE**

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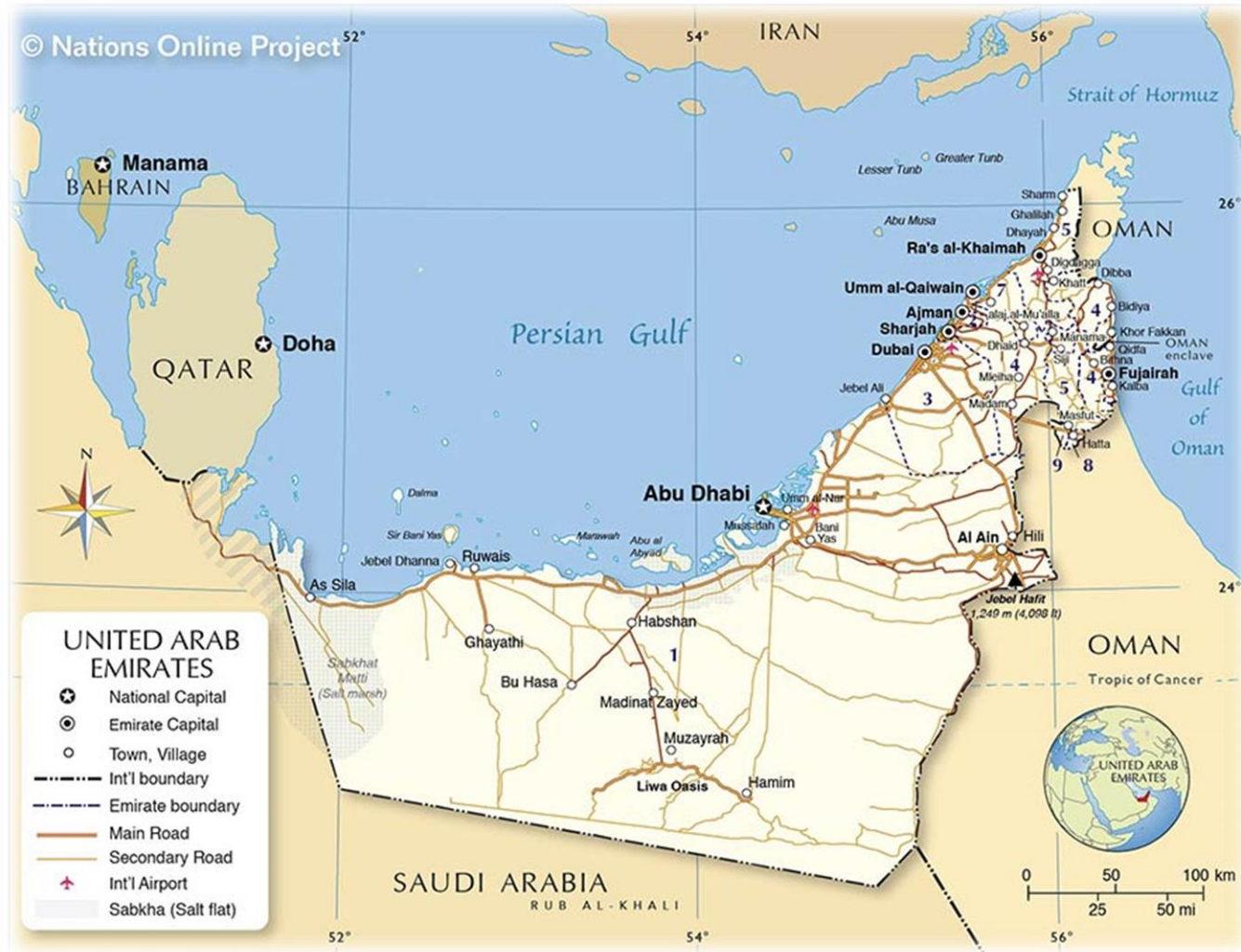
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Entertainment Industry – UAE



Source: www.nationsonline.org

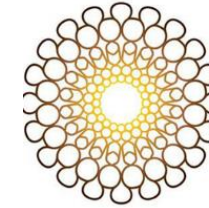
FIT Dubai (UAE consists of 7 emirates)

DUBAI - ABU DHABI - SHARJAH - FUJAIRAH - RAS AL KHAIMAH - UMM AL QUWAIN - AJMAN

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Entertainment in the UAE

- A **global** tourism and leisure hub
- Host of the World Expo
- **USD 6 billion by 2026**
 - Launch **new creative zones** and increase the number of companies from **8,000 to 15,000**
- The **first Middle Eastern Country** to host an EXPO
- **Harness its history and culture:** inspiration from their past as they build their entertainment industries of the future



إكسبو 2020
دبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



Source: www.bayut.com

Mega entertainment projects in the UAE



Source: www.khaleejtimes.com

SPORT

Abu Dhabi - Hudayriyat Island

A getaway for sports and entertainment - 2.25 million sq m

A one-stop destination from sports facilities to restaurants and glamping

Football fields - running tracks - basketball and tennis courts - bike parks - cycling tracks - skate parks - water sports

Mega entertainment projects in the UAE



THEME PARKS - ENTERTAINMENT - EVENTS

Abu Dhabi - Yas Island

Entertainment destination including Ferrari World, Warner Bros world, and SeaWorld

F1 - Grand Prix Abu Dhabi and concerts

Concerts - ticketing - audio-visual entertainment opportunities

Source: www.shafaradvertising.com

Mega entertainment projects in the UAE



Source: www.viptours.ae

CULTURE AND ARTS

Abu Dhabi - Saadiyat Island

Louvre Abu Dhabi and Manarat Al Saadiyat.
Showcases in Louvre AD by Belgian Company

Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and Zayed National
Museum are being built

Art exhibitions - event ticketing - music
production services - cultural events - sound
design - film industry

Gaming as a form of entertainment



Source: www.teknosassociates.com

GAMING AND E-SPORTS

The Gaming sector is the fastest-growing sector of the media industry

60% of the UAE population are game enthusiasts

The UAE government forecasts **AR** and **VR** will contribute up to USD 4.1 billion to the UAE economy by 2030. The government recognizes its potential and has implemented strategies to attract gaming companies

E-sports - game publishers - hosting of gaming events

Entertainment Industry UAE

TRADE FAIRS

Tips & tricks to do business in the UAE

<https://www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com/export/landen/verenigde-arabische-emiraten/zakendoen-verenigde-arabische-emiraten>

WhatsApp mentality

Persistence is a must

A local presence is an extra asset

First friends, then business attitude

Source: www.teknosassociates.com



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The Entertainment & Sports Segment in Kuwait

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The GCC Office of Kuwait

Kuwait Office

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Kuwait
- Deputy Trade: Laurence Heyblom
- Assistant: Nala Heloui



Kuwait Office Territory

Kuwait (Hub, Awex, Fit)

Bahrain (Hub, Awex)°

Qatar (Hub, Awex)

Dubai (Hub)



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The Entertainment Segment in the GCC

The Middle East has emerged as the fastest-growing regional market for cinema over the past four years, even as pandemic-fueled closures slashed box office sales. The region recorded \$743m in revenue in 2019 and recovered to \$558m in 2021. Four Arab countries were among the top-10 countries in the world in terms of the share of premium cinema screens in 2021, according to a report by research firm Omdia: Saudi Arabia ranked fourth, followed by the UAE at sixth, and Kuwait and Oman at eighth and tenth, respectively.

According to global consultancy PwC, cinema box office revenue in the Middle East are projected to grow to \$1bn by 2024.

Beyond box office sales, **many emerging markets see investment in entertainment as a path to diversification and increased global reputation**, as the global entertainment industry becomes more multi-polar with the emergence of new trends and sources of investment.



A number of countries are investing in entertainment as part of their diversification plans

– either to build a domestic film industry or gain shares in international media companies – most notably in the MENA region.

Both public funds and private companies are working to acquire shares in global entertainment activity, with a number of Gulf countries exploring electronic sports as part of their diversification plans. Qatar-based broadcaster BeIN Media bought filmmaker Miramax in 2016 and retained a 51% stake in the company following a deal with Paramount Global, who bought the remaining shares for \$375m in 2020.

In January 2023 Kakao Entertainment, the entertainment subsidiary of South Korean internet giant Kakao, raised \$966m from sovereign wealth funds, including Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund.


The Kingdom's strategy to boost its standing in the entertainment industry involves developing a local industry through investment in studios and theatres, as well as drawing the interest of foreign producers and media companies through high-profile events such as the Red Sea International Film Festival, with the first iteration held in Jeddah in 2019.

The festival's financing arm, the Red Sea Fund, has assets totaling more than \$14m to fund over 100 film projects. At this year's Cannes Film Festival the Kingdom's Cultural Development Fund announced the debut of two funds for film industry investment valued at \$180m.

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The Entertainment Segment in Kuwait



Main highlights of Kuwait government's action plan

kuwaittimes Kuwait's government on Sunday announced its action plan for 2023 - 2027 with the goal of turning [#Kuwait](#) into an investment-driven financial hub where the private sector leads economic activity. Swipe left to see some of the key projects included in the plan, and read the full coverage on kuwaittimes.com (link in bio).

Action Plan with 5 main Topics



2/10

Kuwait's government on Sunday announced its action plan for 2023 - 2027, which focuses on five main topics:

- 1- Financial stability.**
- 2- Economic agenda.**
- 3- Creating jobs**
- 4- Sustainable welfare and strong human capital.**
- 5- Productive government.**

The plan includes 107 projects. Key highlights include:

 @kuwaittimes

Entertainment City



Entertainment City

Kuwait plans to reopen the Entertainment City with high global standards. The estimated KD 160 million - KD 200 million project with a 200,000 square-meter theme park is expected to attract up to 1 million visitors by 2030.

📷 @kuwaittimes

Failaka Island



Failaka Island

Kuwait plans to rebuild Failaka Island into a touristic destination with a luxury resort, chalets, a public park and other facilities. It is estimated to receive around 300,000 visitors by 2030 and create up to 3,000 job opportunities by 2035.

📷 @kuwaittimes

Professional Sports



Pro sports

Kuwait plans to launch a general framework for professional sports within the next two years, and regulate the private sector's contributions to support clubs and athletes. Furthermore, Kuwait plans to build three international stadiums within the next four years.

📷 @kuwaittimes

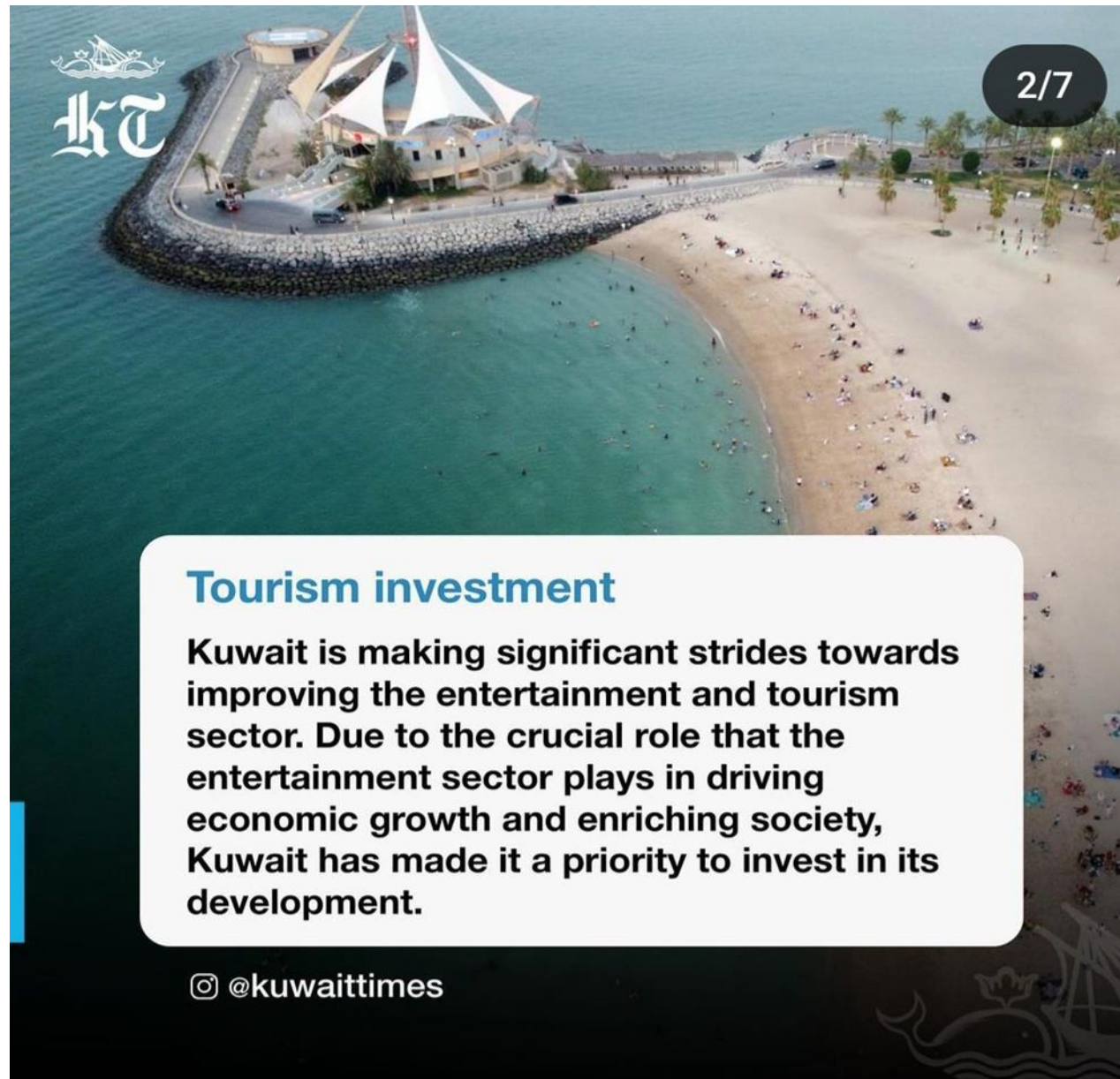


Kuwait gears up for future entertainment projects

kuwaittimes Over the past few months, Kuwait's #entertainment landscape has witnessed a remarkable upswing. While progress has undeniably been made, #Kuwait's progression towards realizing its 2035 Vision for the entertainment sector is not yet complete, as some challenges still need to be addressed. Yet, Kuwait's commitment to driving growth in this sector ensures that these goals will be realized in the coming years.



Tourism Investment



KT

2/7

Tourism investment

Kuwait is making significant strides towards improving the entertainment and tourism sector. Due to the crucial role that the entertainment sector plays in driving economic growth and enriching society, Kuwait has made it a priority to invest in its development.

📷 @kuwaittimes

Entertainment City and Failaka



Entertainment City and Failaka

The government has emphasized on the need for relevant government entities to overcome all obstacles that may hinder the establishment of Kuwait Entertainment City, one of Kuwait's most significant amusement parks expected to cost KD 200 million to attract tourists as part of an economic diversification strategy. The government has also emphasized the importance of the development of Failaka Island, going as far as including the project in its work plan. It's also called on implementing the two projects as quickly as possible.

Instagram icon @kuwaittimes

Winter Wonderland 2023



Winter 2023

Last year, the Touristic Enterprises Company launched seasonal entertainment projects in winter 2022, such as Winter Wonderland and Green Island. The company's projects do not stop here, as more is coming for both seasonal and permanent entertainment projects. In winter 2023, the Touristic Enterprises Company will be working on the South Subahiya Park project, the Water Front Project and the Balajat project, all of which have been officially announced by the company's official accounts on social media platforms.

📷 @kuwaittimes

Historical Sites



Historical sites

The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters' (NCCAL) strategy for 2023- 2028 aims to preserve Kuwaiti heritage and history in line with Kuwait Vision 2035. The strategy includes maintenance and restoration of historical sites, such as 'Sheikh Khazaal's Diwan', Al-Mubarakiya School, and Mishref Castle. NCCAL has plans to revamp some museums and theaters and reopen public libraries after maintenance and restoration work.

📷 @kuwaittimes

Al-Mubarakiya Development

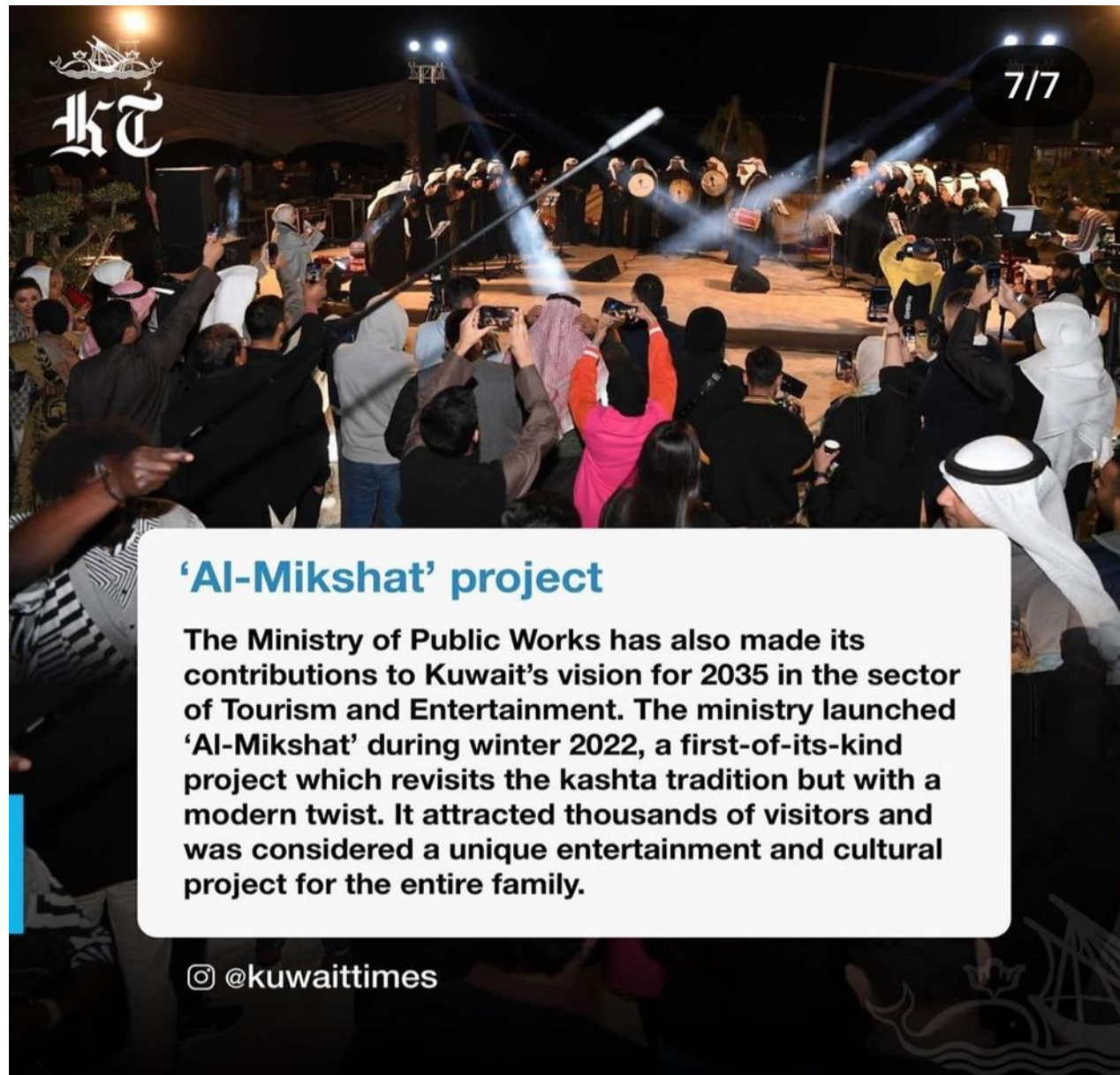


Al-Mubarakiya development

Kuwait Municipality has recently approved a KD 55 million to develop Al-Mubarakiya area and address the existing drawbacks to find possible solutions. The project aims to utilize all areas in Al-Mubarakiya and the nearby municipality park as it has experienced a period of stagnation due to a lack of visitors. According to the plan, unused spaces will be utilized to add modern components and features to the area, including a hotel, mosque, museum, and several commercial buildings.

📷 @kuwaittimes

Al-Mikshat Project



'Al-Mikshat' project

The Ministry of Public Works has also made its contributions to Kuwait's vision for 2035 in the sector of Tourism and Entertainment. The ministry launched 'Al-Mikshat' during winter 2022, a first-of-its-kind project which revisits the kashta tradition but with a modern twist. It attracted thousands of visitors and was considered a unique entertainment and cultural project for the entire family.

📷 @kuwaittimes

Mall of the Avenues

Owner:
Shomoul Holding Company,
a Saudi limited liability company
established in 2014

The Avenues covers
a gross land area of 360,000 sqm
with over 1,100 stores
and a spacious multi-level parking lot
with a capacity for 13,000 cars





Mall of the Avenues – Tek zone & Fun zone



Mall of the Avenues – KidZania & VRMania



Kuwait Bowling Sporting Club



Cultural Centres



Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Center



Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre

Kuwait National Day 2023



Full **LSE production** with lasers, lights, 10 laser drones, 1500 light drones, fireworks, water screen, video and sound over 3km long

The whole show was designed, produced and programmed in only a month

TV Senyar (with Dreamwall)



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Remark about Entertainment Project in Belgium

Vlaanderen bouwt entertainmentcampus rond Tomorrowland in de Rupelstreek

Vlaanderen gaat een entertainmentcampus met bedrijven en scholen bouwen rond de terreinen van de Schorre in buurgemeente Boom waar elk jaar Tomorrowland wordt georganiseerd.

Het moet volgens de Vlaamse regering de Europese hotspot voor onderzoek, innovatie en creatie in de entertainmentsector worden.

Het wordt een campus, waar Howest uit Kortrijk, Imec uit Leuven, Thomas More uit Antwerpen en We Are One World, het bedrijf achter Tomorrowland de krachten bundelen.

Tomorrowland in the Desert



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The Sports Segment in the GCC



POMEPS
STUDIES

48



Politics of Sports in the Middle East

June 2023



جامعة جورجتاون قطر
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY QATAR
Center for International and Regional Studies

The Politics of Sports in the Middle East

Zahra Babar, Georgetown University-Qatar

Marc Lynch, The George Washington University



First, there is a long history of the political implications of sports.

Second, while acknowledging the continuities of sports' histories and legacies in the Middle East, there is something qualitatively new about the investment by Gulf states—especially—in global sport.

Third, the essays in this collection show especially clearly how football represents a critical vector into local identity politics.

Fourth, different levels of performativity shine through in these essays. One level is global.

Fifth, moving from the disembodied global level to the local, existing work has highlighted the importance of stadiums themselves as a site for the study of sports and politics, and has emphasized how these venues serve as both practical and symbolic spaces. Stadiums provide a platform for fostering national identity and unity, reinforcing national narratives, and creating a shared national experience.

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Football



The Rise of Gulf States' Investments in Sports: Neither Soft Power nor Sportswashing?

*Majd Abuamer, Doha Institute: The Arab Center For Research and Policy Studies and
Yara Nassar, Doha Institute: The Arab Center For Research and Policy Studies*

Mansour bin Zayed of the United Arab Emirates (**UAE**) owns Manchester City; Nasser al-Khulaifi of **Qatar** owns Paris-Saint Germain (PSG); Abdullah bin Masaad of **Saudi Arabia** owns Sheffield United; Infinity Capital of **Bahrain** owns Córdoba Club de Fútbol; Qatar Airways partners with numerous soccer clubs, most famously with PSG; **Emirates Airlines** has partnered with Manchester City and Real Madrid; and Hamad bin Khalifa al-Nahyan of the UAE recently proposed to buy a fifty percent stake in Beitar Jerusalem Football club, which has been linked to the far right in Israel.

Reporting on these partnerships, Brand Finance noted that **“half of the top 10 football club brands are benefiting from Arabian Gulf investment in sponsorship and ownership.”**



Mohammed AlQahtani · 2nd
 CEO at Saudi Arabia Holding Company
 1h · Edited · 🌐

+ Follow

The deal is complete ✓

Officially, **#Neymar** signs with **#AlHilal** club 🏆
 .. and the player will arrive in Riyadh within the next two days ..

Al Hilal is the most title-winning club in Asia as well as Saudi Arabia, earning it the title of the "Asian Club of the Century".

And Neymar isn't the only big name to join the Saudi league this transfer window. So far, we've seen:

- **#CristianoRonaldo**: **#ManchesterUnited** to **#AlNassr**
- **#KarimBenzema**: **#RealMadrid** to **#AlIttihad**
- **#NGoloKante**: **#Chelsea** to **Al Ittihad**
- **#RiyadMahrez**: **#ManchesterCity** to **#AlAhli**
- **#JordanHenderson**: **#Liverpool** to **#AlEttifaq**
- **#Malcom**: **#Zenit Saint Petersburg** to **Al Hilal**
- **#RobertoFirmino**: **Liverpool** to **Al Ahli**
- **#MarceloBrozovic**: **#InterMilan** to **Al Nassr**
- **#AlexTelles**: **Manchester United** to **Al Nassr**
- **#EdouardMendy**: **#Chelsea** to **Al Ahli**
- **#KalidouKoulibaly**: **#Chelsea** to **Al Hilal**
- **#RubenNeves**: **#Wolves** to **Al Hilal**
- **#SergejMilinkovicSavic**: **#Lazio** to **Al Hilal**
- **#KylianMbappe**: **#ParisSaintGermain** to **Al Hilal** (pending)

In recent years, the Saudi league has become one of the most attractive destinations for world-class players, thanks to the high salaries, tax benefits, and competitive level of football. The Saudi league is also gaining more exposure and popularity worldwide, being broadcasted in over 100 countries. The 2023/24 season of the Saudi league kicks off on August 13, featuring 16 teams competing for the title.

Which team are you supporting? 😊 Please say Al Hilal.



By examining the rising interest in sports among Gulf states, mainly Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia, this study argues that intra-Gulf competition, soft power, sportswashing, and economic diversification have all been motives of Gulf states' investments in local and international sports. However, as this study has demonstrated, investing in sports, especially international sports, does not always guarantee profit, soft power, or a positive reputation. Soft power concerns are often used to explain Gulf investments in sports, but the effects of such power can be limited.

While **Gulf states' sports investments are intended to raise the profile of these countries**, their interests in sports have often been harshly criticized by fans and the international media. Despite these challenges, investing in sport has raised the international profiles of Gulf states and given them significant influence in the arena of international sports. These investments also play **a key role in strengthening national prestige and national identity** when a Gulf state successfully organizes a championship or achieves a sporting victory.

The Qatar World Cup and the New Islamic Approach to Football in the Middle East

Dag Tuastad, University of Oslo

Sports spectatorship in the Middle East is among the most politicized in the world. Where arenas for political participation are few, **football matches represent a rare alternative in which political messages can be publicly expressed.**

Moreover, in conservative religious societies, football represents a rare occasion, especially for youth, to break free from the disciplined power structures of daily life.

1 For some religious conservatives, however, when people go to have fun at the football stadium rather than the mosque to pray, this potentially **threatens the moral order** prescribed by religious authorities.

2 This is why a number of Islamic religious leaders in the Middle East have continued to **denounce football.**

Football has served as a site of tensions between the more conservative and practical politics in the Middle East. Throughout the various antfootball campaigns waged by some Islamic groups, there were always other Islamic scholars who regarded obstructing peoples' access to football as a violation.

The 2022 World Cup in Qatar reinforced the latter, demonstrating the benefits of being in a position to control and enforce moral norms within the football sphere, and, at the same time, exhibit public joy and pleasure within a Muslim framework.

Today, **the main forces of Islamism have largely adjusted to and increasingly endorsed the game.**

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Cyclism

Arabische oliesjeiks en prinsen veroveren **de wielersport**

Flanders International
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instellingen

MO, June 8, 2023
FLANDERS INVESTMENT & TRADE

Arabische olijesjeiks en prinsen veroveren de wielersport

De Qatarese sjeiks waren pioniers in hun regio, met **de ronde van Qatar**: de eerste editie daarvan vond al plaats in 2002. 'Er stonden meer kamelen te kijken dan mensen', zegt sportjournalist Hans Vandeweghe.

Sjeik Khalid Bin Ali Al-Thani, neef van de Qatarese emir, wilde **met een wielerronde van hoog niveau vertrouwen wekken in het belangrijkste Qatarese product: gas en olie. De ronde werd georganiseerd door het Franse bedrijf achter de Ronde van Frankrijk, Amaury Sports Organisation (ASO), samen met Eddy Merckx.**

Op sportief vlak sprong Qatar in een gat op de wielerkalender. Terwijl het in grote delen van Europa eind januari nog koud en regenachtig is, konden de renners in de Golfstaten dan in aangename temperaturen fietsen. De Ronde van Qatar werd zo de ideale voorbereiding voor de Vlaamse klassiekers.

Sinds 2016, na het Wereldkampioenschap wielrennen in Qatar, werd ze niet meer georganiseerd. Maar de blauwdruk voor wielerrondes in het Midden-Oosten was getekend.

Arabische oliesjeiks en prinsen veroveren de wielersport

De ploeg van de prins van Bahrain, Bahrain-Merida (voorloper van het huidige Bahrain Victorious), is 'een klassiek voorbeeld van sportwashing, het verbeteren van het imago van een land door middel van sport', zegt Jonas Creteur, journalist bij Sport / Voetbalmagazine. 'Maar het is evengoed een persoonlijk prestigeproject van de prins. Hij wil uitpakken met een eigen speeltje, een wielerteam met de beste coureurs ter wereld.'

Bahrein was de eerste Golfstaat die een eigen wielerploeg sponsorde. 'De sterke band van het team met het Koninkrijk Bahrein is weerspiegeld in de trotse steun van de Bahrain Economic Development Board en Bahrain Petroleum Company', stelt de website van de ploeg. De naamsbekendheid van het land via wielersponsoring moet het aantrekkelijk maken voor investeerders. Want Bahrein probeert zijn economie te diversifiëren, weg van afhankelijkheid van olie-export.

Prins Nasser kon geen bestaand team overnemen, maar moest van nul beginnen. Fietsensponsor Merida, een groot Taiwanees fietsenmerk, toonde interesse. Zo zag het team Bahrain-Merida het levenslicht, met een jaarlijks budget tussen 15 en 18 miljoen euro. Sponsor Merida lobbyde mee bij de Internationale Wielervereniging om een WorldTour-licentie te krijgen, zodat het nieuwe team kon deelnemen aan de grote internationale koersen. Maar ook de komst van de Italiaanse Tourwinnaar Vincenzo Nibali was belangrijk. Prins Nasser had met Nibali gefietst, en de rest was geschiedenis.

Arabische oliesjeiks en prinsen veroveren de wielersport

Het team, UAE Team Emirates, vervelde van de Italiaanse wielerploeg Lampre-Merida tot een Emiratische, nadat de Italiaanse sponsor Lampre in 2016 besloot ermee op te houden. Sportdirecteur Giuseppe Saronni moest op zoek naar nieuwe geldschieters. Hij dacht die gevonden te hebben bij een Chinees staatsbedrijf, maar die deal sprong op het laatste moment af. Saronni kwam uiteindelijk terecht bij een vastgoedmakelaar van de Emiraten.

Niet veel later kwam ook luchtvaartmaatschappij Emirates, eigendom van de regering, aan boord. ‘UAE Team Emirates is gewoon de Italiaanse Lampre-Meridaploeg’, zegt Creteur. ‘Saronni bleef directeur en werkte verder met het nieuwe geld uit de Emiraten. Aan het roer staan dus hoofdzakelijk Italiaanse ploegleiders, managers en mecaniciens. Ze konden meteen in de WorldTour starten.’

‘Als managers hun renners en personeel aan boord kunnen houden, en zeker als ze dan ook nog eens ruimte krijgen om te groeien, is politiek het laatste waar ze aan denken.’ Wim Lagae, professor Sportmarketing (KUL)

‘Het is een bewuste strategie om bij bekende ploegen sponsordeals te zoeken. In het voetbal gaan ze ook geen vierdeklasser sponsoren en opwerken tot de Premier League. Ze kopen direct Arsenal’, zegt Lars Van Densen.

Arabische oliesjeiks en prinsen veroveren de wielersport

Het nieuwe oliegeld was ook extra geld: in 2016 was Lampre-Merida een relatief kleine ploeg geworden, maar sindsdien steeg het budget van ongeveer 7 miljoen naar een geschatte 40 miljoen euro. ‘Saronni sprong waarschijnlijk een gat in de lucht toen zijn financiële gat gedicht werd’, zegt professor Sportmarketing Wim Lagae.

‘Als managers hun renners en personeel aan boord kunnen houden, en zeker als ze dan ook nog eens ruimte krijgen om te groeien, **is politiek het laatste waar ze aan denken**. Met landensponsors zijn ze bovendien langer financieel veilig: voor het eerst in de geschiedenis van de wielersponsoring is de tijdshorizon van een sponsordeal vijf jaar. Het contract van renners als Pogacar is al tot 2027 verlengd. Normaal gebeurt dat voor twee jaar, wegens de onzekerheid van het rendement.’

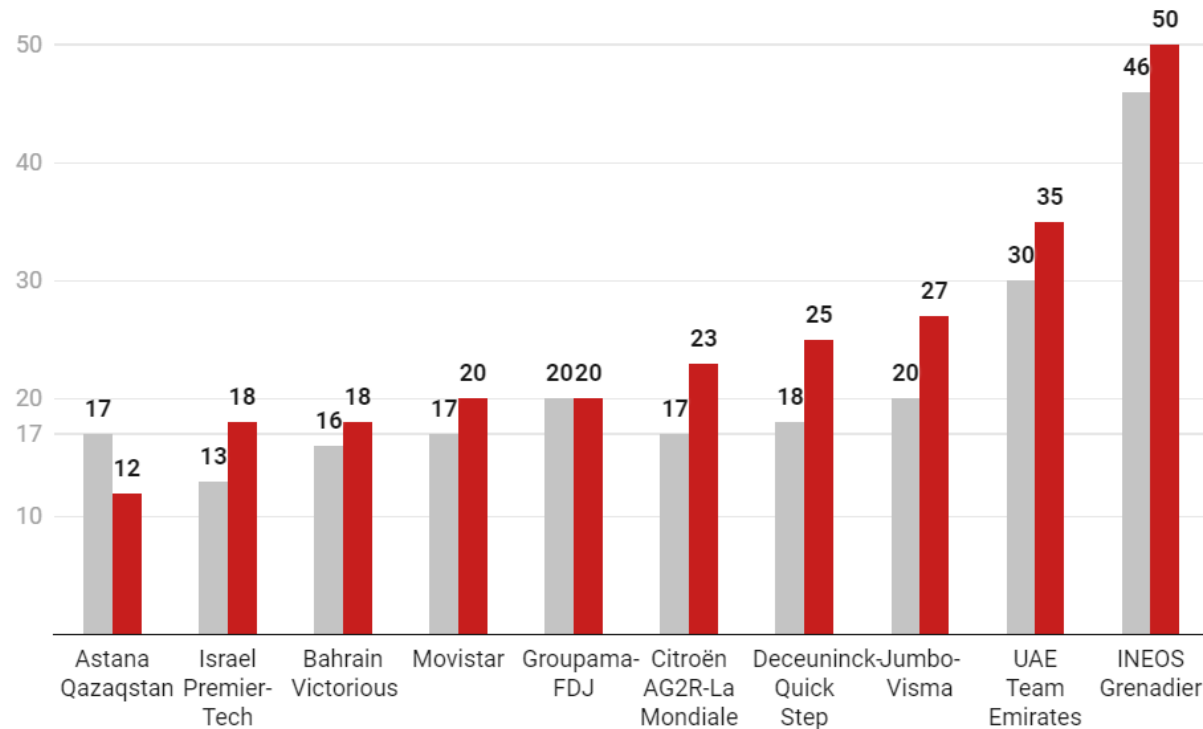
Team UAE Emirates stelt een team samen rond wielervonderkind Tadej Pogacar en met toprenners die elders kopman zouden kunnen zijn, maar bij hen moeten ‘knechten’. Dat heeft één doel: de Ronde van Frankrijk domineren en winnen. Want die ene grote ronde betekent voor een wielersponsor 95 procent van zijn volledige zichtbaarheid in de sport. ‘Ze bieden hun renners de allerbeste omkadering. Zo trekken ze langzaam maar zeker alle grote talenten aan’, zegt Yves Brokken, hoofdredacteur van WielerVerhaal. Aanvankelijk zat er minder kwaliteit in het team, maar elk seizoen speuren ze de transfermarkt af op zoek naar toprenners van wie het contract afloopt.

Arabische oliesjeiks en prinsen veroveren de wielersport

Top 10 budgetten van wielerploegen (in miljoen euro)

Het gemiddelde budget van alle UCI World Tour teams bedraagt 17 miljoen euro

■ 2020 ■ 2021



[Gegevens ophalen](#) · Gecreëerd met [Datawrapper](#)

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Formula 1

Formule 1 in Bahrein? Geen Grand Prix voor de mensenrechten



MO, June 14, 2023
FLANDERS INVESTMENT & TRADE

Formule 1 in Bahrein? Geen Grand Prix voor de mensenrechten

Het Bahrain International Circuit, ook bekend als het Sakhir-circuit, heeft geld gekost, zoals alle formule 1-circuits. Op dit circuit in de kleine Golfstaat Bahrein werd in 2004 de eerste formule 1-wedstrijd van het Midden-Oosten gereden. Sindsdien is Bahrein de jaarlijkse gastheer van de Bahrein Grand Prix en bekleedt het land een belangrijke plaats in het wereldwijde F1-seizoen.

Correctie: 'bijna jaarlijkse' gastheer, want in 2011 zag de Golfstaat de F1-boot aan zich voorbijgaan. De race werd toen om politieke redenen afgelast. De internationale autosportfederatie FIA gaf daarmee gevolg aan de oproep van topcoureurs Damon Hill en Mark Webber tot een boycot. Vooral Hill vond het niet kunnen om te racen in een staat die de mensenrechten van zijn burgers met de voeten treedt.

Het jaar nadien, in 2012, riepen mensenrechtenactivisten op om de grand prix van Bahrein opnieuw te annuleren. Toch gaf de FIA dit keer wel groen licht om de race in Bahrein gewoon te laten plaatsvinden. Ook de daaropvolgende jaarlijkse oproepen tot een boycot van de Bahrein Grand Prix, door mensenrechtenorganisaties en een enkele coureur, vielen bij de FIA in dovemansoren.

In 2021 zette de toenmalige formule 1-wereldkampioen Lewis Hamilton zijn handtekening onder een oproep om een onderzoek te bestellen over de mensenrechten in Bahrein. Een vraag die werd weggewuifd door Stefano Domenicali, algemeen directeur van de Formula One Group. Die is verantwoordelijk voor de promotie en exploitatie van het FIA-formule 1-kampioenschap.

Formule 1 in Bahrein? Geen Grand Prix voor de mensenrechten

90 Europese Parlementsleden onderschreven hun bezorgdheid in een brief, voorafgaand aan het formule 1-seizoen van dit jaar. **'We zijn bezorgd dat formule 1 en de FIA actief "sportswashing" faciliteren in de Golfstaten.** FIA en F1 falen continu om de misstanden van deze regimes aan de kaak te stellen.'

De brief was gericht aan de directeur van de FIA, Mohammed ben Sulayem. De ondertekenaars waren scherp over de halfslachtige houding van de formule 1 tegenover racelanden Bahrein, Saoedi-Arabië en de Verenigde Arabische Emiraten.

Hoe komt het dat het piepkleine Bahrein wegkomt met dit alles en dat mensenrechtenactivisten in het ijle lijken te roepen? 'De belangrijkste reden is dat Bahrein belangrijke bondgenoten heeft: Saoedi-Arabië, de Verenigde Staten, het Verenigd Koninkrijk', meent Zaynab Al Khawaja.

Er is in de eerste plaats de goede band met het invloedrijke Saoedi-Arabië. De twee staten onderhouden naast goede economische ook sterke religieuze banden. Ook Amerikaanse en Britse belangen spelen in Bahrein een rol. Bahrein huisvest in de Perzische Golf de vijfde vloot van de Amerikaanse marine.

Formule 1 in Bahrein? Geen Grand Prix voor de mensenrechten

Er is natuurlijk de sportwereld zelf, die meedraait in een mondiale politieke context. De formule 1-industrie is in elk geval niet meteen van plan om zijn houding tegenover Bahrein te veranderen. En dat blijkt eens te meer uit de recente contractverlenging met Bahrein. De Golfstaat tekende begin dit jaar de langstlopende racedeal ooit in de geschiedenis van deze sport: het kwam met de FIA overeen om maar liefst tot 2036 formule 1-races te blijven organiseren.

Er zijn 25 racecircuits in de wereld. Gemiddeld betaalt zo'n circuit ongeveer 40 miljoen Amerikaanse dollar per jaar aan de F1 om een grand prix te organiseren. Bahrein betaalde tot vorig jaar 45 miljoen dollar aan de Formule 1 voor zijn contract, aldus het Britse F1-magazine Racing News365. Formule 1 is een dure zaak: van de bouw en het onderhoud van een circuit tot de jaarlijkse contractbijdrage aan de FIA.

Formule 1 in Bahrein? Geen Grand Prix voor de mensenrechten

Maar ondanks de kosten, kan investeren in de sport ook een goede zaak zijn, in termen van toerisme, vastgoed en reclame-inkomsten. Dat geldt zeker voor Bahrein. Daar is de investering voor de bouw van het Sakhir-circuit een goudmijn gebleken, schrijft Julian Roche, econoom bij Cavendish Maxwell, een vastgoedconsultancygroep met vestigingen in de Golfstaten.

Die effecten laten zich vooral de laatste jaren voelen. Volgens Roche groeide het toerisme in Bahrein met meer dan 10% tussen 2015 en 2019, zo schrijft hij in een opiniërend artikel op de website van de groep. Het aantal hotels in die periode steeg van 10.488 in 2016 naar bijna 20.000 in 2020. Op lange termijn betekent het volgens Roche ook ontwikkelingskansen voor Sakhir, het district waarin het circuit ligt, op zo'n 30 kilometer van de hoofdstad Manama.

Maar het grootste profijt, zegt Roche, is de reputatiewinst voor Bahrein. Bahrein organiseerde in 2020 twee races in één seizoen, een enorme investering en verwezenlijking. Het zette zich daarmee neer als grote speler in een belangrijke sporttak. Dat mensenrechten niet de eerste bekommernis zijn in de miljardenindustrie van formule 1, schrijft hij er niet bij.

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NBA

Qatar's entry into NBA

The Qatari Investment Authority's bid to purchase stakes in Washington's professional basketball and hockey teams could boost Qatar's image and influence in the United States.

Qatar's sovereign wealth fund is close to acquiring a stake in three US sports teams in a significant move that will potentially alter US sports, increase Qatari influence in Washington and more. The US news outlet Sportico reported on June 22 that the Qatar Investment Authority is buying a roughly 5% stake in Monumental Sports & Entertainment as part of a \$4.05 billion deal. Monumental is the parent company of the Washington Wizards, Capitals and Mystics in the National Basketball Association (NBA), the National Hockey League (NHL) and the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), respectively.



All three teams play in the US capital. As a result, some observers view the move as Qatar seeking to gain further influence in the United States. “I can envision the teams' partial Qatari owners letting prominent politicians, officials, lobbyists, business leaders and their kids from DC and along the northeast corridor **meet basketball and hockey stars**, hosting the fans in their luxury suites at games **and then discussing**, by the by, **the latest weapons order from the US, bilateral energy deals, visas on arrival for Qatari nationals** and any other number of desires,” Justin D. Martin, an associate professor of journalism at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, told Al-Monitor. “And it will probably work.”

Marty Conway, a professor of sports management at Georgetown University, tweeted on June 22 that the pending Qatar deal to buy the Wizards is **an example of foreign direct investment moving from the East to the West**, as opposed to the other way around in the past.

“If you're not comfortable with the investment trail being East-to-West, well, get over it,” he said on the social media platform.

Money from Qatar and the Gulf is already all over association football (soccer) in Europe. Qatar Sports Investments bought a majority stake in Paris Saint-Germain in 2011. Qatar Airways also sponsored Bayern Munich in Germany for several years, though the club announced in June that it is ending the partnership amid protests from fans. Qatari royal Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani is now seeking to buy Manchester United. In 2021, the Saudi Public Investment Fund acquired Newcastle United in the English Premier League. Emirates airlines sponsors Arsenal FC in the same league.



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Thank you

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Entertainment Industry - Qatar



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- Since 2012, Qatar has prepared for the World Cup
- What's next after such a massive and successful event?



Is there a plan after the World Cup?

- Qatar is not a touristic country but:
 - Business trips: meetings, exhibitions, etc.
 - Cruises: 151% increase in the Dec. 22-Mar. 23 season (100,500 visitors)
- Sport events are still being organized, but they are bringing a very limited number of people – e.g., World Championship of judo (**Exception: F1 Grand Prix**)
- Family activities organized in malls
- Small concerts and festivities
- Exhibitions: Agriteq, Project Qatar,
- **Horticultural Expo 2023/24**



- Qatar Tourism: centralized governmental authority for tourism
- Malls and hotels: shows and exhibitions,
- Theme Parks: water parks, amusement parks
- Al Maha Island: amusement parks, hospitality



Success Story: Launching of Vogue Arabia – Museum of Islamic Art (BARCO)





- Trust is the foundation for any business interaction
- Communication style: not an email culture, calling or WhatsApp is more effective
- Pace: patience is key!
- Hierarchical decision-making processes



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Thank you!