

TRAINING FOR MUSLIM FRIENDLY TOURISM IN THE GAMBIA



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BACKGROUND



- The Gambia's Ministry of Tourism and Culture's strategy for 2015 to 2020 recommends the development of Muslim friendly Tourism Products as well as attract investment in Muslim friendly Tourism.
- This will make The Gambia the first country in the sub region to introduce Muslim friendly tourism on a mixed bases.
- However, such introduction will present both opportunities and challenges. Prominent among the challenges is providing the potential hotel industry workers with the skills and knowledge required to operate Muslim friendly hotels.

RATIONALE



- Increasing number of visitors from the subregion (Nigeria, Seirra Leao, Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Gunea Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Niger and other muslim countries in Africa and other parts of the world) staying in hotels and needing muslim friendly accommodations and services,
- there is a need to build the capacities of potential hotel workers in Muslim friendly tourism service provision.
- A recent interview of hotel staff conducted by Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute for the purpose of writing this proposal presented a growing need for Hotel workers and opartors to undergo a training in Muslim Friendly hotel operation

RATIONALE



- It makes economic sense to be different from the almost similar and very competitive sub regional tourism products
- As an OIC member country this could be the ideal location for the international Muslim traveler within the sub region offering PEACE and Tranquility
- The emerging and rapidly growing market of Muslim travel will place high requirement for qualified talent.
- Acquiring and retaining talent is a key challenge amongst business and organizations in the travel therefore need for training and assessment conducted for the tourism and hospitality Institutions in The Gambia highlighted the need for building the capacity of tourism and hospitality Trainers and Trainees in Muslim friendly Tourism.

FUNDING AND SUPPORT



- Funding will soon be received from COMCEC
- Trainers will be coming from Malaysia
- Trainees from Gambia, Senegal and Nigeria
- Trainers will be training on the development of a curriculum for the hospitality institutes who will then train the hospitality sector in their individual countries

CONSTRAINTS



- Funding from COMCEC is pre-financed and makes it quite difficult for funds to be raised
- The funding is usually training but after training the implementation of the training is quite impossible without the necessary funds.
- No follow up funding available after the training
- Sometimes there is a need for small infrastructures or equipment to go with the training
- No Muslim friendly Banking and Finance for the development of the MFT products after the training

EXPECTATIONS



- Training program in Muslim Friendly Tourism developed, validated and used for training of Hospitality industry trainees.
- 20 trainers from Gambia, Nigeria and Senegal trained and certified to deliver training programs in Muslim Friendly Tourism
- Trainers' knowledge and experience enhanced through a study visit to a Muslim Friendly Tourism destination in Turkey or Malaysia

EXPECTATIONS



- Muslim Friendly Tourism service excellence achieved by service staff at hotels, travel agents and tour operators, Destination Management Companies (DMC), airports, airlines, attraction, and other hospitality related services.
- Training materials will include manuals that contain operating procedures, instructions and supporting notes that are specific to the training. The training manuals that will also serve as reference material for trainees to use even after the training.

CONCLUSION



- The response from the interview together with the recommendations of Ministry of Tourism and Culture's strategy for 2015 to 2020 and the increasing number of muslim visitors to the Gambia as stated above shows the importance for conducting this training
- We will have developed a Muslim Friendly Tourism curriculum
- This will therefore enhance cooperation and collaboration between OIC member countries in sharing ideas and best practices in Muslim Friendly tourism

THANK YOU

