



Standing Committee
for Economic and Commercial Cooperation
of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC)

COMCEC

Muslim Friendly Tourism: Regulating Accommodation Establishments In the OIC Member Countries



COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE
February 2017



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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction and Methodology	10
1. Market Landscape of Muslim-Friendly Tourism	13
1.1 Global, the OIC and Muslim-Friendly Tourism Market Sizing.....	13
1.2 Muslim-Friendly Tourism Accommodation Sector.....	14
2. Conventional Tourism Quality Standards and Regulations	17
2.1 Current Global and Regional Initiatives for Standardization of Services.....	18
2.1.1 Certification Process	24
2.1.2 Renewal Timeline.....	26
2.1.3 Compliance Measures.....	26
2.1.4 Role of Star Rating System in Standardizing Services.....	26
2.2 Development Process for Tourism Quality Standards and Regulations.....	27
2.3 Effects of Standards on the Accommodation Sector.....	33
3. Muslim Friendly Tourism Standards and Regulations	35
3.1 Need for MFT Standards and Regulations.....	35
3.2 Development Process of MFT Standards	39
3.3 Responsible Bodies for Developing and Implementing MFT Regulations	42
3.4 Current MFT Standards/Regulations and their Components	44
3.5 Main challenges	47
3.6 Lessons Learned.....	48
4. Case Studies	51
4.1 Malaysia	51
4.1.1 Standard Development Process	52
4.1.2 Requirements of the Standard	53
4.1.3 Certification Process and Regulations	54
4.1.4 Standards' Effects on the Accommodation Sector	54
4.1.5 Challenges and Lessons Learned	55
4.2 Turkey.....	58
4.2.1 Standard Development Process	58
4.2.2 Certification Process and Regulations	59
4.2.3 Standards' Effects on the Accommodation Sector	60
4.2.4 Challenges and Lessons Learned	61
4.3 Croatia	62
4.3.1 Standard Development Process	62
4.3.2 Requirements of the Standard	62
4.3.3 Certification Process and Regulations	63
4.3.4 Standards' Effects on the Accommodation Sector	66
4.3.5. Challenges and Lessons Learned	67

5. Basic Principles for MFT Accommodation Services and Standards	68
5.1. MFT Services and Facilities.....	68
5.1.1 MFT Services and Facilities for OIC Countries with Modest MFT Ecosystem	68
5.1.2 MFT Services and Facilities for OIC Countries with Advanced MFT Ecosystems	70
5.1.3 MFT Services and Facilities for the non-OIC Countries with Limited MFT Ecosystems	71
5.1.4 Family-Friendly and Ethical Positioning	72
5.2. MFT Standards	73
5.2.1 Government Standards	73
5.2.2 Private Standards	77
6. Policy Recommendations	80
6.1. Recommendations for the OIC Countries with No MFT Regulations	82
6.1.1. Develop MFT Strategy	82
6.1.2. Enhance MFT Accommodation Sector Products & Services.....	82
6.1.3. Adopt/Develop Standard	83
6.1.4. Campaign for stakeholder buy-in	86
6.1.5. Implement and Monitor	87
6.1.6. Measure benefits.....	87
6.1.7. Gather industry and consumer feedback	87
6.1.8. Re-assess Standard	87
6.2. Recommendations for the OIC Countries with Existing Regulation	87
6.2.1 Improving Standard	88
6.2.2 Improving Implementation of Standard.....	89
6.2.3 Improving Adoption of Standard	89
6.3. Recommendations for International Cooperation	89
6.3.1 The OIC Cooperation	90
6.3.2 International Cooperation	91
7. Appendix.....	93
7.1. Hotelstars Quality Standard	93
7.2. Croatia’s Standard	107
7.3. Draft COMCEC MFT Guideline for Regulating Accommodation Establishments...	112

List of Figures

Figure 1: MFT Accommodation Establishments Segmentation.....	15
Figure 2: Conventional Hospitality Standards Matrix – Regional Scope and Setter.....	19
Figure 3: Conventional Hospitality Standards Matrix – Measurement Criteria and Frequency.....	20
Figure 4: Percentage Weight of Criteria for Selected Standards	23
Figure 5: Assessment of Certification in ASEAN Green Hotel Standard	25
Figure 6: Key Steps for Setting a Quality Standard	31
Figure 7: Muslim Travelers' Destination Selection Criteria	35
Figure 8: Regulation by an MFT Accommodation Standard Importance Rating.....	36
Figure 9: Importance of MFT Standard Adoption.....	38
Figure 10: Muslim Travelers' Awareness of MFT Standards	45
Figure 11: Accommodation Sector Survey - Awareness of MFT Standards.....	45
Figure 12: Accommodation Sector Survey - Challenges in Adopting MFT Standards.....	48
Figure 13: Islamic Economy Standard Development Stakeholders	49
Figure 14: The Process of Halal Certification in Croatia	65
Figure 15: the OIC Countries Segmentation - MFT Ecosystem.....	68
Figure 16: MFT Services for Modest Ecosystems	69
Figure 17: MFT Services for Advanced Ecosystems	70
Figure 18: MFT Services for Limited Ecosystems.....	71
Figure 19: MFT Standards Adoption/Development Decision Tree.....	81
Figure 20: Policy Recommendations Framework	82
Figure 21: Recommended MFT Products and Services Priorities	83
Figure 22: Steps for Setting up a Standard	84
Figure 23: Recommendations for the OIC Countries with Existing Regulations	87
Figure 24: Recommendations for International Cooperation	90

List of Tables

Table 1: Top Markets for OIC International Tourism Receipts (2015).....	13
Table 2: Muslim Visitor Arrivals in the OIC Countries (2014-2020).....	13
Table 3: Top Markets for Muslim Outbound Tourism Expenditure (2015)	14
Table 4: Number of Hotels in the OIC Countries (2015).....	16
Table 5: Attributes of Selected Quality Standards.....	17
Table 6: Key Features from Selected Conventional and Alternative Standards	22
Table 7: Hospitality Standards' Common Measured Criteria	23
Table 8: Development Process for Selected Standards	28
Table 9: WTO Process for Developing Tourism Quality standards.....	29
Table 10: Planned MFT Regulations.....	42
Table 11: Selected List of Current MFT Standards.....	44
Table 12: Common Elements of selected MFT standards	46
Table 13: MFT Standard Development – Turkey	59
Table 14: MFT Standard Certification - Turkey.....	60
Table 15: Package A Certificated Hotels.....	66
Table 16: Family-Friendly and Ethical MFT Services and Facilities	73
Table 17: Steps for Establishing Government Standards	74
Table 18: Measurement Criteria for Government Standards	76
Table 19: Certification Process Steps for Government Standards.....	77
Table 20: Steps for Establishing Private Standards.....	78
Table 21: Measurement Criteria for Private Standards	78
Table 22: Certification Process for Private Standards.....	79

List of Abbreviations

AA	The Automobile Association (UK)
AAA	American Automobile Association (USA)
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CAA	Canadian Automobile Association
COMCEC	The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation
DSM	Department of Standards Malaysia
EU	European Union
F&B	Food and Beverage
Fam Trips	Familiarization Trips
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HOTREC	The Confederation of National Associations of Hotels, Restaurants, Cafés and Similar Establishments in the European Union and European Economic Area
IH&RA	International Hotel and Restaurant Association
INHART	International Institute for Halal Research and Training
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITC	Islamic Tourism Centre of Malaysia
JAKIM	The Department of Islamic Development Malaysia
# k	Thousand (units)
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MFHS	Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services
MFT	Muslim Friendly Tourism
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Malaysian Standard
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NTO	National Tourism Organization
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OTA	Online Travel Agency
SCTAA	Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities
SIRIM	Scientific and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia
SMIIC	The Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries
TC	Technical Committee
TSE	Turkish Standards Institution
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNWTO	The World Tourism Organization (also, WTO)
US	United States of America (also, USA)
USD	US Dollars
UK	United Kingdom

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Halalinn.com – a Turkey-based portal that lists halal hotels, villas, apartments and hostels in Turkey, and provides a filtering tool by Halal facilities offered.

Tripfez.com – an online booking platform for Muslim-friendly hotels, tours and activities.

Executive Summary

Study Purpose and Methodology: The purpose of this study is threefold. The first objective is to enable all Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT) stakeholders to examine the status of MFT regulations (standards, guidelines or other regulations) for accommodation establishments in the OIC member countries and compare them with conventional tourism quality standards. The second is to identify challenges in the current implementation of MFT regulations and lessons learned from current practices, and the third is to draft guidelines for accommodation establishments and policy recommendations for the OIC member countries seeking to establish MFT standards. The Study combines primary and secondary research tools and sources to fulfill its objectives. Primary research used includes a global Muslim Traveler Survey to ascertain consumer needs and expectations in terms of MFT regulation for accommodation establishments as well as interviews with government officials to identify current and planned government policies related to MFT regulation in the accommodation sector. It also includes an accommodation sector survey to identify current and planned MFT regulations in the accommodation sector, the challenges accommodation establishments face due to inconsistencies in MFT regulations as well as the difficulties encountered, if any, in setting and implementing MFT regulations. Three country case studies were selected to provide insights into current MFT regulations and standards' development. The secondary sources used include previous market studies, trade and sector reports, academic articles and research papers, government, international organizations and press publications.

Market Landscape of MFT: Muslim-friendly accommodation establishments are defined as accommodation establishments that address some of the needs of Muslim travelers. Muslim-friendly accommodation establishments could be further segmented into those with focused offerings targeting Muslims and addressing the full range of Muslim lifestyle needs, and those with mixed offerings attempting to accommodate Muslims, however, their core consumers are non-Muslims and as such they do not address the needs of Muslim guests to the same extent as Muslim-friendly accommodations with focused offerings. There is currently no published estimate for the total number of Muslim-friendly accommodation establishments globally. To estimate the number of Muslim-friendly accommodations, data was collected from a number of sources including both online travel booking sites and offline Muslim-friendly tourism operators, Halal certification organizations, and other travel content-related sources. The sources used include HalalBooking.com, HalalTrip, Tripfez, Serendipity Travel, BestHalalHoliday.com, Luxury Halal Travel, Instituto Halal, HolidayME, Bali Halal Tour, Islamiotel, Islamitayerleri.net, Islamioteldetatil.com, Islamitatil.com, Islami-oteller.de, and JAKIM. While the estimate of the number of Muslim-friendly accommodation establishments is not exhaustive, it is built on a robust coverage of the market. **680** Muslim-friendly travel accommodation establishments have been identified with either focused or mixed offerings in 2015. This estimate includes certified hotels and hotels that identify themselves as Muslim-friendly without external verification. The countries with the largest number of Muslim-friendly accommodation establishments are Malaysia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Indonesia. Malaysia and Turkey alone account for nearly 88% of the total number of Muslim-friendly accommodations identified.

Conventional Tourism Quality Standards and Regulatory Frameworks: Hotels have been subject to evaluation and rating for many decades. While the hospitality sector does not have



a unified global accommodation standard, many hotel quality standards have successfully emerged over the years. Attempts at international quality standards have had limited success. More recently, online booking platforms have developed hotel ratings that are used globally alongside or instead of traditional quality standards by aggregating the personal feedback of millions of guests. Overall, conventional quality standards typically measure criteria related to: lobby/reception, hotel services, guest rooms/bathrooms, leisure amenities, food and beverages, and exterior. While alternative quality standards measure a more varied set of criteria than conventional standards. They often measure criteria such as management and communication, building design/construction, housekeeping and waste management, water and energy conservation, and food and beverage operations.

The certification processes of conventional and alternative quality standards for accommodations have a number of common elements. Key elements of most certification processes include application for evaluation, hotel assessment and evaluation, scoring and feedback to accommodation provider, publication of assessment/certification, periodic audits, and recertification. Sometimes, an initial self-evaluation may also be included in this process, or as part of the application. Inspections are the most common method for standard organizations to monitor compliance. Inspections may be scheduled or unannounced i.e., “mystery guests”. The frequency of such inspections can range from once annually to once every five years or more, depending on the standard. The standard setter or the hotel pays the cost of compliance monitoring depending on the standard.

According to a recent WTO study, accommodation providers reap a number of important benefits from following hospitality standards. They help small and independent hotels in their positioning efforts. Standards also serve as both expectation indicators and quality assurance for guests and lead to increased destination attractiveness and guest satisfaction. They facilitate comparability and add credibility to hotel offerings. Standards also help motivate staff and increase hotel rates and margins. Other research studies also indicate that hospitality standards have a number of positive effects on accommodation establishments adopting them, including signaling quality to consumers, increasing customer satisfaction levels, and achieving higher operational efficiency.

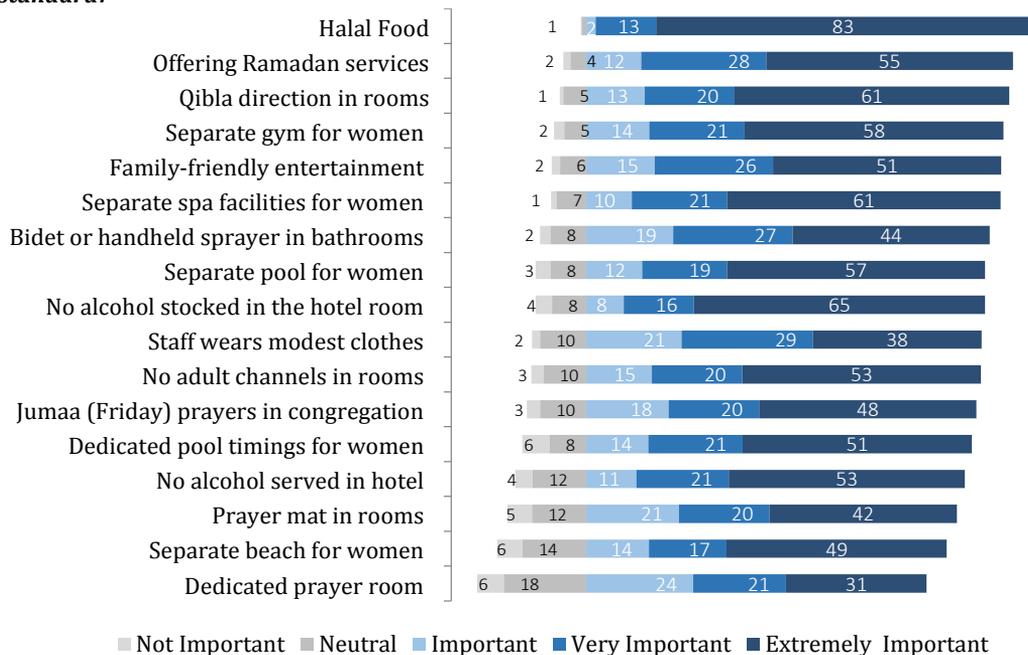
Muslim-Friendly Tourism Standards and Regulations: In recent years, the tourism industry has started to grasp and address the distinct needs of Muslim travelers. Muslim-Friendly Travel is seen as a promising niche market by many accommodation providers. Research has indicated that Muslim travelers have specific faith-related needs; some of which may even clash with the needs of non-Muslim travelers, such as the absence of alcohol from hotel premises. In the framework of the current study, a second traveler survey was conducted to establish the relative importance Muslim travelers assign to including different MFT services in an MFT standard. The survey responses, shown in the following graph, clearly highlight that Muslim travelers value a variety of MFT features, and believe that many of these features should be included in a possible MFT accommodation standard.

Respondents were asked to rate, using a 5-point scale, the importance of Muslim-friendly services being regulated by a Muslim-friendly accommodation standard (that the hotel is certified to offer these services). The services rated included seventeen items outlined in the graph below. The scale used included the following categories: extremely important, very

important, important, neutral and not important. The following graph shows the distribution of responses.

Regulation by an MFT Accommodation Standard Importance Rating (in percentages)

How important is it for various Muslim-friendly services to be regulated by an MFT accommodation standard?"



Source: DinarStandard

The process of developing MFT standards: It is similar to the process used to develop conventional quality standards, with steps including; engaging stakeholders, defining scope, building awareness, and developing inspection and certification capabilities. MFT standards can build on the successes of other “Halal” sectors, such as Halal food. A few MFT standards have emerged to date. Within the OIC countries, governments typically develop the MFT standards, as in the case of Malaysia. In the non-OIC countries, Islamic organizations have led the MFT standards’ development efforts, as in the case of Croatia. In some instances, MFT standards are set by private organizations, such as the CrescentRating standard. The following section presents a general review of MFT standards.

Responsible Bodies for Developing and Implementing MFT regulations: There are different players involved in the process of development and implementation of existing MFT standards, including government bodies, local, regional, and international organizations, and private entities. The following table summarizes the efforts of the various bodies that have created MFT standards.

Selected List of Current MFT Standards

Standard	Country	Standard Releasing Body	Type of Body	Criteria Measured	Examples of Establishments Implementing Standard
MS 2610:2015	Malaysia	Standards Malaysia	Government	Various MFT elements (food, prayer, wellness, training) at hotels, tour operators	Grand Seasons Mandarin Oriental
TS 13683¹	Turkey	TSE (Turkish Standards Institution)	Government	Various elements beyond basic MFT (management, offerings, design, operations, conduct)	Ikbal Thermal Hotel (application in process)
Rulebook of Certifying and Categorization of Hospitality Services, ...	Croatia	Center for Halal Quality Certification	NGO ²	Various MFT elements (food, prayer, wellness, recreation)	Esplanade Westin
Crescent Rating³	Global	CrescentRating	Private	4 main criteria with 20 elements (related to food, prayer, Ramadan, and recreation)	Grand Blue Wave (Malaysia); Nouvo City Hotel (Thailand); Aljawhara Gardens (Dubai)
Salam Standard	Global	Lagitasu Travel	Private	More of a directory with MFT attributes than a standard	>10 k hotels, incl. Archipelago Hotel Group, chains ⁴
Taiwan MFT certification	Taiwan	China Muslim Association	Government-backed, NGO-run	(standard n/a; likely elements are prayer and food related)	Ambassador Hotel Taipei ⁵
Sofyan Standard⁶	Regional (from Indonesia)	Sofyan Hotels	Privately	Full standard n/a, but covers operation, offerings	Radana (Bali)
Instituto Halal internal standard⁷	Spain	Instituto Halal	NGO-run	Basic MFT elements (Quran availability, prayer rug, Halal food, Qibla, prayer time tables, prayer room)	Alanda, Hotel El Palace, Tryp Meliá Córdoba

Source: DinarStandard

¹ Turkey. TÜRK STANDARLARI ENSTİTÜSÜ. *TURKISH STANDARD TS 13683: Halal Management System - Hotels*. Ankara: TSE, 2016. Print. ICS 03.080.30; 03.200.

² Empowered by government to have exclusive authority on "Halal" issues

³ "CrescentRating Overview for Hotels." *World's Leading Authority on Halal Travel* & "CrescentRating". Crescent Rating, 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁴ "Muslim-friendly Hotel Standard Portal Goes Live." *ITB Asia*. TTG Asia Media, 29 Oct. 2015. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁵ "Dining and Accommodation for Muslim." *Taiwan: The Heart of Asia*. Tourism Bureau, Republic of China, 2 Sept. 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁶ Telephone interview for MFT Standards. 10 Oct. 2016.

⁷ E-mail interview for MFT Standards. 27 Sept. 2016.

There are a number of common elements measured by current MFT standards, such as having Halal food, Qibla sign, and the inclusion of a bidet or hand spray in toilets. Other elements, such as a separate beach for women or supplying guests with lists of mosques and nearby eateries, are measured by a few MFT standards. It is important to note that some MFT standards may have a scoring system with various levels while other have only a single level certification. All of the current MFT standards seem to acknowledge the importance of certifying Halal food, which is a major concern for Muslim travelers as previous research studies have indicated.

The main limitations of existing MFT standards is the low level of awareness of MFT standards in general as illustrated by the results of the consumer survey in addition to the low level of involvement of the various stakeholders in developing the standards, which affects the level of adoption. The main drawback of some of the private standards is their self-reporting model as they can lose credibility with consumers in case of inconsistencies between the expected and actual MFT services provided.

Main Challenges: Challenges facing the development of MFT standards include the different interpretations of “Halal” in the accommodation context according to madhabs and level of practice as well as the different needs of Muslim and non-Muslim guests. The conflict between MFT and conventional quality standards requirements in some cases, and the complexity of evaluating Halal elements in the hospitality industry due to its wide range of constantly evolving products, also pose a challenge to MFT standards’ development. Furthermore, the shortage of experienced inspectors, who are well versed in the accommodation sector, poses a serious challenge to implementing the standards once they are developed.

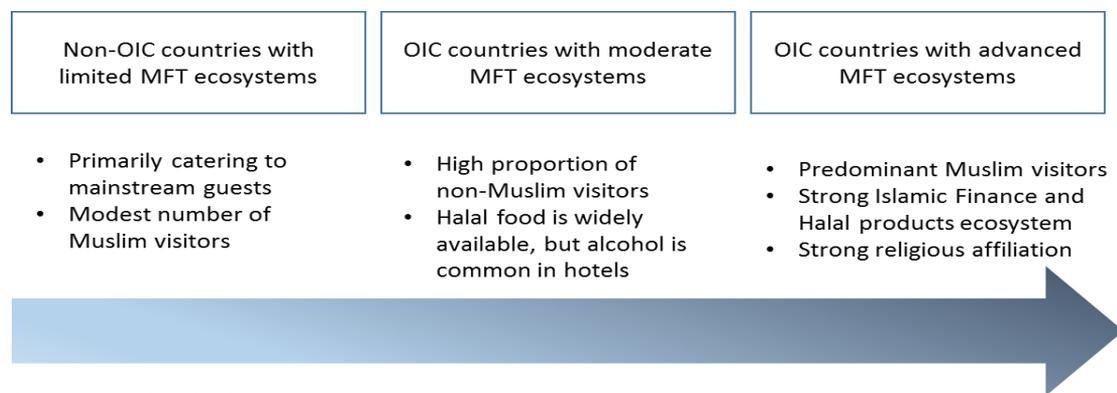
In terms of standard adoption, MFT standards, especially if voluntary, have a low adoption rate by accommodation providers. Many hotel operators are reluctant to adopt out of fear of alienating non-Muslim guests. Cost of adding MFT services that certain standards are measuring deter some hotels from adopting an MFT standard. The complexity of the procedures for adoption, implementation and inspection also pose a challenge for hotels seeking to become MFT certified. The emergence of multiple MFT standards could also be a hindrance to the development of the MFT sector, as the consumer survey indicated that a large percent of Muslim travelers (61%) would find the presence of multiple standards to be confusing which would negate the marketing benefits that hotels seek in adopting MFT standards.

Lessons Learnt: Some of the current MFT standards have employed a number of successful strategies to deal with the challenges facing the development, implementation and adoption of the standards. In developing standards, feedback is collected from many key stakeholders in “Halal” and accommodation sectors and all MFT key terms are consistently defined, as in the case of Malaysia. To facilitate implementation, training on standards is provided. To increase standard adoption, standards are simplified and self-evaluation is allowed as an initial step. There are also some important lessons to be learned from Muslim-Friendly standards in other areas of the Islamic Economy, including Halal food. These include mutual recognition of different regional standards, benefiting from the valuable know-how of existing accreditation and certification players, avoiding potential conflicts of interest between accreditation and certification roles, engaging stakeholders through consultation and coordination and training, and minimizing the cost of accreditation and certification.

Additional lessons from other “Halal” sectors include; ensuring certification, accreditation, and enforcement mechanisms are in place when standard is issued, requiring certifiers to present “scheme document” or standard operating procedure for its inspections for accreditation in new areas, adding new expertise to “Halal” certification, inspection, accreditation, and standard-setting entities if missing, differentiating between accredited and non-accredited certifiers especially in the non-OIC markets, and avoiding conflicts of interest such as in the case of certifiers acting as consultants.

Basic Principles for MFT Accommodation Services and Standards -MFT Services and Facilities: The following segmentation is used for recommendations for the OIC countries with varying levels of MFT ecosystem development.

Country Segmentation - MFT Ecosystem



Source: DinarStandard

There are three practical MFT services that are important to Muslim guests, easy to implement and have low impact on mainstream guests, which accommodation facilities in the OIC countries with modest MFT ecosystems should incorporate. These three services are offering exclusively Halal certified food (with a consideration to have the hotel kitchens Halal certified), providing prayer mats in rooms, and accommodating for Ramadan meal timings and menu items.

For countries with advanced ecosystems, an even higher level of MFT services and facilities is recommended. For example, hotel kitchens must be Halal certified, no alcohol should be available or allowed inside the hotel, *Wudu*-friendly facilities should be available in public bathrooms and room bathrooms, congregational prayers should be held at the mosque “musalla/masjid” including Friday prayers, and the call to prayer should be broadcasted on the speaker system. In Ramadan, in addition to providing *iftar* and *suhoor* meals, shuttle transportation should be provided to local mosques and halal certified products should be extended to wellness products. In terms of leisure activities, there should be gender-separated wellness facilities including gyms, pools, spas, and beaches, either by having separate facilities, or by allocating certain hours for women. In terms of managing the business, all financing should adhere to Shariah-compliant principles. The accommodation’s employees should be treated fairly and receive a living wage and businesses should have eco-friendly processes in place and have an environmental certification.

For the non-OIC countries, establishments can attract Muslim consumers in a practical way by offering low cost basic services that accommodate the needs Muslim guests and have low impact on mainstream guests. The services and facilities include offering some Halal food options, prayer mats and schedule, Qibla direction in rooms and removing alcohol from minibar for Muslim guests as well as providing them with a list of Halal eateries and mosques.

Policy Recommendations for the OIC Countries with No MFT Regulations: the OIC member countries should develop a government-led MFT strategy, which involves building internal stakeholder awareness, establishing a dedicated MFT body or committee, and developing and implementing an MFT market growth strategy. The tourism ministry should work with accommodation facilities to ensure they provide all basic MFT requirements. the OIC countries that do not currently have MFT regulation in place are advised to adopt an existing MFT standard that is suitable for the OIC countries with their level of development. For a new MFT regulation to succeed it is important to ensure buy-in from all stakeholders including accommodation facilities, industry associations, tourism boards, as well as travelers. Promotion campaigns, specific industry events, and incentives, such as tax breaks, are required to ensure wider adoption. It is critical that MFT regulation is implemented effectively and is closely monitored to ensure success. It is important to articulate clear benefits of MFT regulation nationally, in terms of Muslim tourist receipts, as well as on the individual hotel level. An increase in sales due to certification will build confidence and encourage other hotels to become certified. After the standard has been implemented, collect feedback from the accommodation sector, regulators, and consumers. Continue monitoring and periodically gathering feedback. Based on the level of benefits that have been realized and the feedback that has been gathered from all stakeholders, reassess the standard and revise if necessary.

Existing standards can be rather than developing a new standard. However, if the currently available standards are not suitable for a country's unique requirements, it is recommended to follow the steps, outlined in the following figure, based on findings from the case studies, interviews, and research on existing standards.

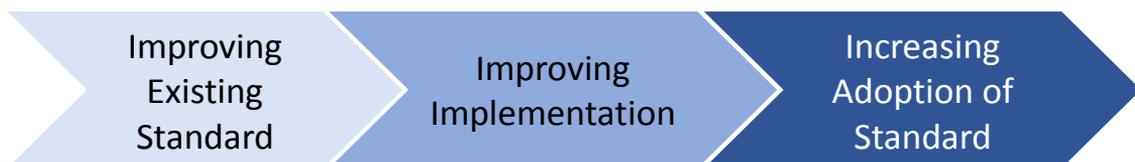
Steps for Setting up a Standard



Source: DinarStandard

Policy Recommendations for the OIC Countries with Existing MFT Regulations: In looking to improve their MFT standard, the OIC countries should revisit their MFT strategy. They should review their MFT tourism growth targets, reassess their domestic destinations for the MFT market, re-identify and prioritize source MFT markets, plan for improved MFT products and services, and revisit their MFT marketing strategy. If an update is required, a similar process as that adopted when developing the standard can be followed. It is vital that MFT regulation is properly implemented and is closely monitored on an on-going basis. Countries should conduct promotion campaigns to encourage adoption of the standard by the accommodation sector. Other strategies include issuing press releases, holding conferences; scheduling industry seminars to educate the sector, launching awards for MFT certified hotels that provide exceptional service and MFT facilities and promoting their efforts.

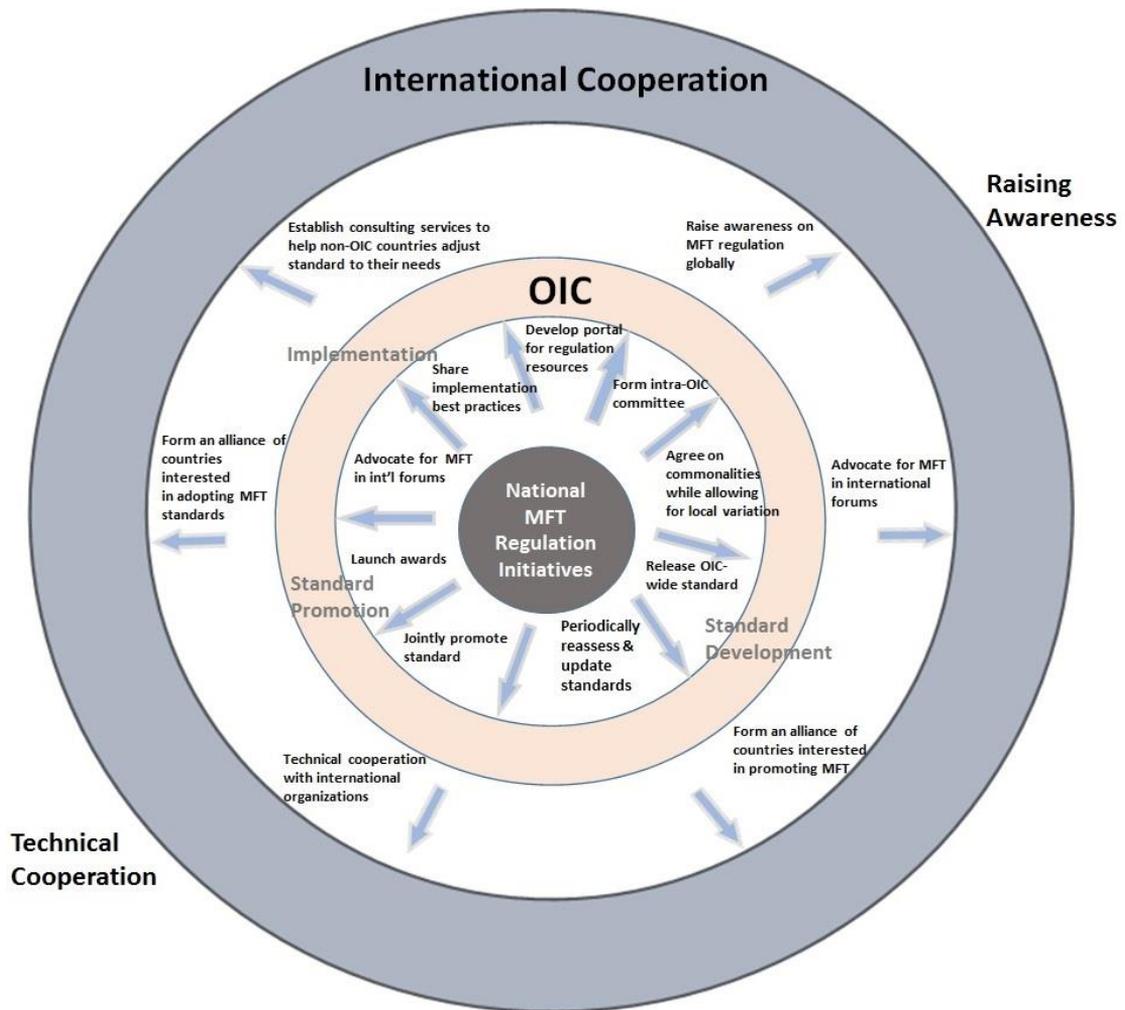
Recommendations for the OIC Countries with Existing MFT Regulations



Source: DinarStandard

Recommendations for International Cooperation: There are key areas where international cooperation is needed for MFT regulations: developing, promoting, and implementing standards as well as raising awareness. The following figure illustrates the various areas and strategies where international cooperation is key.

Recommendations for International Cooperation



Source: DinarStandard

Introduction and Methodology

Project Objectives

The objective of this Study is to enable all Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT) stakeholders to:

- Examine the status of MFT regulations (standards, guidelines or other regulations) for accommodation establishments in the OIC member countries and compare them with conventional tourism quality standards.
- Identify challenges in the current implementation of MFT regulations, and the lessons learned from current practices.
- Draft guidelines for accommodation establishments and policy recommendations for the OIC member countries seeking to establish MFT standards.

Methodology

The study combines primary and secondary research tools and sources to fulfill its objectives:

- *Primary Research:* A number of tools/strategies were used including;
 - *Consumer Survey:* The Survey was conducted in 2016 from September 9th to October 8th to ascertain consumer needs and expectations in terms of MFT regulations for accommodation establishments. The survey received 514 responses from 44 countries; slightly more than a third of the sample (35%) resided in GCC countries, 28% resided in Southeast Asia, and 17% resided in Europe and North America. The sample consisted of;
 - 68% female and 32% male respondents.
 - 44% of respondents were aged less than 30, 31% were aged from 31-40, 15% were aged from 41-50 and the rest were aged over 50.
 - 49% of respondents were married with children, 35% were single, 10% were married without children and the rest were engaged, divorced or widowed.
 - 53% of respondents completed university/college, 29% held a postgraduate degree, 14% had a school degree and the rest completed trade or technical schools.
 - A third of the sample (34%) were private sector employees, 18% homemakers, 14% students, 12% government employees, 9% unemployed, 7% business owners, 4% freelancers and 2% were retired.
 - Half of the respondents reported earning less than \$20,000 a year, 22% earned between \$20,000 and \$39,999 and the rest earned more than \$40,000 annually.
 - *Government Officials Interviews:* Interviews were conducted online in 2016 from September 9th to November 8th to identify current and planned government policies and challenges related to MFT regulation in the accommodation sector. Government officials from the following countries provided responses for the online interview questions: Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Malaysia, Mali, Turkey, Uganda, and

the United Arab Emirates (UAE). All interviewees worked in the management of the tourism ministries of their countries with the exception of Mali's interviewee who worked for in the management of a national regulatory body.

- *Accommodation Sector Survey:* The survey was conducted in 2016 from September 9th to November 25th to identify current and planned MFT regulations in the accommodation sector as well as the challenges accommodation establishments face due to inconsistencies in MFT regulations as well as the difficulties encountered, if any, in setting and implementing MFT regulations. The survey responses were collected both online and through phone interviews with 163 respondents working for MFT accommodation establishments in 30 different countries; 33% of the respondents were from GCC countries, 25% from Asia, 24% Europe and North America, 15% from the MENA region (non GCC), and 2% from Africa. The sample consisted of;
 - 47% junior or mid management, 40% senior management and the rest were either owners or board members of accommodation establishments.
 - 73% of respondents categorized their establishments as hotels, 13% as resorts, 10% aparthotels, 9% bed and breakfast, and 5% motels.
 - 44% of the accommodation establishments surveyed had less than 50 rooms, 42% had from 50 to 99 rooms and only 14% had a hundred rooms or more.
 - 33% of the accommodation establishments surveyed had an income of less than \$1 million, 30% had an income from \$1to less than \$10 million, and the rest reported an income of more than \$10 million.
 - 58% of the accommodation establishments surveyed had cited Muslims consisting more than 50% of their total guests while 32% reported they were less than 50% of their total guests and 10% were not able to provide an estimate.
- *Case Studies:* Two OIC countries and one non-OIC country were selected to provide insights into MFT regulations for accommodation establishments. The countries covered were Malaysia, Turkey, and Croatia. Both field visits and in-depth interviews with accommodation sector representatives and policy makers were used to collect data and details about the various aspects of regulations including facilities, services, and physical infrastructure in the case study countries.
- *Secondary Research:* A number of secondary sources were used including;
 - Previous Market Studies: Market research on Muslim tourism and MFT regulations including COMCEC's "Muslim Friendly Tourism: Developing and Marketing MFT Products and Services in the OIC Member Countries" 2016, State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2016/2017, and Muslim-friendly Beach Resorts: Opportunities and Trends 2016.
 - Trade and Sector Reports: Information was gathered from the reports published by the International Hotel & Restaurant Association and Quo Global.
 - Academic Articles and Research Papers: Information was gathered from the Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Cornell Hospitality Quarterly, International Journal of Tourism Research, and Tourism Management.



- Government Data: Data was collected from various government publications and websites including ministries and official tourism promotion entities websites.
- International Organizations Publications: including the UNWTO, UNCTAD, UNDP, World Economic Forum, International Trade Center, World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)
- Press Publications: including press releases from various MFT market players as well as articles covering MFT market in various publications and news websites including CNN, Haaretz, Aquila Style, and Tour Egypt.

1 Market Landscape of Muslim-Friendly Tourism

1.1 Global, the OIC and Muslim-Friendly Tourism Market Sizing

Global international tourism receipts have reached \$1.26 trillion in 2015, up from \$1.25 trillion in 2014, according to UNWTO's Tourism Highlights 2016 report statistics. Global international tourism arrivals have reached 1.19 billion in 2015, which is expected to grow by a 3% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) to reach 1.8 billion in 2030.

The OIC countries represent 10.3% of global international tourism receipts, which was estimated at \$129.7 billion in 2015, according to UNWTO statistics available between 2013 and 2015.⁸ As the following table shows, the five largest OIC markets for international tourism receipts in 2015 were Turkey, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. The OIC inbound tourism arrivals were also estimated to reach 171 million in 2015, according to UNWTO statistics aggregated between 2013 and 2015.⁹

Table 1: Top Markets for OIC International Tourism Receipts (2015)

Country	Total International Tourism Receipts (in USD billions)
Turkey	26.6
Malaysia	17.6
United Arab Emirates	16.0
Indonesia	10.8
Saudi Arabia	10.1

Source: UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2016

Muslim inbound tourism arrivals in the OIC countries were estimated to reach 49.5 million in 2015, according to DinarStandard analysis. Muslims were estimated to account for 29% of the OIC inbound tourism arrivals in 2015.

Table 2: Muslim Visitor Arrivals in the OIC Countries (2014-2020)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	CAGR
The OIC Muslim Visitor Arrivals	45.6	49.5	53.8	58.4	63.4	68.9	74.8	8.59%

Source: DinarStandard Analysis and UNWTO Statistics

Global outbound tourism expenditure was estimated to reach \$1.35 trillion in 2015, up from \$1.31 trillion in 2014, and is expected to grow by a 6.6% CAGR to reach \$1.98 trillion in 2021, according to World Bank and national bureau data provided by Business Monitor International.

⁸ According to the UNWTO statistics available for the period between 2013 and 2015 for inbound tourism expenditure for 41 OIC countries and assuming inbound tourism expenditure for the latest year available is constant between 2013 and 2015. Inbound tourism expenditure for each of the 41 OIC countries was aggregated based on the statistics available between 2013 and 2015.

⁹ According to UNWTO statistics available for the latest period between 2013 and 2015 of inbound tourism arrivals for 44 OIC countries and assuming inbound tourism arrivals for the latest year available are constant between 2013 and 2015. Inbound tourism arrivals for each of the 41 OIC countries were aggregated based on the latest statistic available between 2013 and 2015.

The largest outbound tourism expenditure markets globally include China at \$168 billion, the United States at \$147 billion, and Germany at \$112 billion in 2015. The OIC outbound tourism expenditure was estimated at \$154.5 billion in 2015, up from \$148.4 billion in 2014, and is expected to grow by 8.8% CAGR to reach \$255.8 billion in 2021.

Global Muslim outbound tourism expenditure was estimated at \$151 billion in 2015, up from \$144 billion in 2014, and is expected to grow by 8.2% CAGR and reach \$243 billion in 2021. Muslim outbound tourism expenditure from the OIC countries was estimated at \$108.8 billion in 2015, up from \$104.8 billion in 2014, and is expected to grow by 8.7% CAGR and reach \$179.5 billion in 2021. Muslims accounted for over 70% of the total outbound expenditure from the OIC countries in 2015. The top the OIC markets for Muslim outbound tourism expenditure include Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Kuwait, with \$19.2 billion, \$15.1 billion, \$11.7 billion, and \$9 billion respectively in 2015. The MENA GCC region accounts for the largest amount of Muslim tourism outbound expenditure, valued at \$54.4 billion in 2015. The top 10 markets for Muslim outbound tourism expenditure are presented in the following table.

Table 3: Top Markets for Muslim Outbound Tourism Expenditure (2015)

Country	Muslim Outbound Expenditure (in USD billions)
Saudi Arabia	19.2
United Arab Emirates	15.1
Qatar	11.7
Kuwait	9.0
Indonesia	9.1
Iran	7.2
Malaysia	6.7
Russia	6.6
Turkey	5.3
Nigeria	4.8

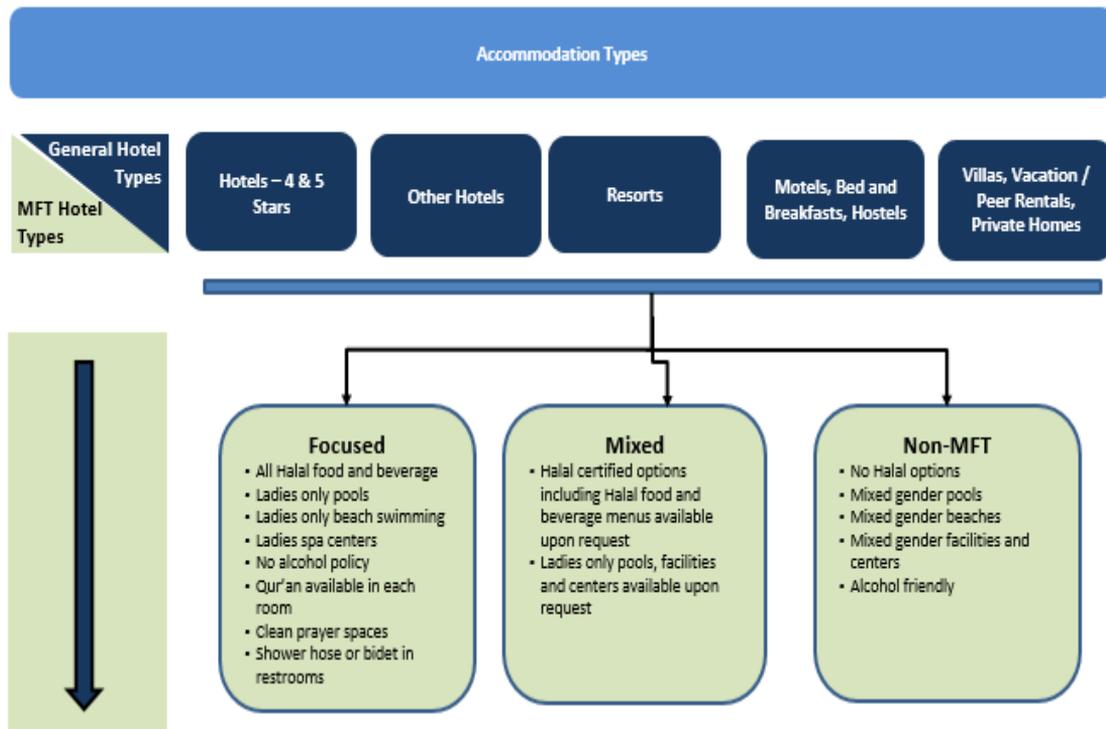
Source: DinarStandard Analysis and Business Monitor International Statistics

1.2 Muslim-Friendly Tourism Accommodation Sector

Muslim-friendly accommodation establishments are defined as accommodation establishments that address some of the needs of Muslim travelers. Muslim-friendly accommodation establishments could be further segmented into those with focused offerings targeting Muslims and addressing the full range of Muslim lifestyle needs, and those with mixed offerings attempting to accommodate Muslims, however, their core consumers are non-Muslims and as such they do not address the needs of Muslim guests to the same extent as Muslim-friendly accommodations with focused offerings. There is currently no published estimate for the total number of Muslim-friendly accommodation establishments globally.

The following diagram outlines the segmentation Muslim-friendly accommodation establishments by type of offering whether focused or mixed and by type of accommodation.

Figure 1: MFT Accommodation Establishments Segmentation



Source: DinarStandard

In the above chart, accommodation establishments are first segmented according to type; 4 or 5 star hotels, other hotels, resorts, motels, bed and breakfasts, hostels, villas, vacation/peer rentals, and private homes. Accommodation establishments are then segmented according to their offerings. Muslim-friendly hotels with mixed offerings include Halal certified options from Halal kitchens that provide Halal food and beverage menus, and gender separated facilities upon request. Muslim-friendly hotels with focused offerings target Muslim consumers and provide Halal certified food and beverages, gender separated facilities, alcohol free premises, Qur'ans, prayer mats in rooms and bidets in restrooms throughout the accommodations. Non-MFT Accommodations do not market or publicize any Muslim-friendly offerings; this segment includes mainstream accommodations.

To estimate the number of Muslim-friendly accommodations, data was collected from a number of sources including both online travel booking sites and offline Muslim-friendly tourism operators, Halal certification organizations, and other travel content related sources. The sources used include HalalBooking.com, HalalTrip, Tripfez, Serendipity Travel, BestHalalHoliday.com, Luxury Halal Travel, Instituto Halal, HolidayME, Bali Halal Tour, Islamiotel, Islamitayerleri.net, Islamioteldetatil.com, Islamitatil.com, Islami-oteller.de, and JAKIM. While the estimate of the number of Muslim-friendly accommodation establishments is not exhaustive, it is built on a robust coverage of the market.

According to STR Global, the total number of hotels globally under the organization's consensus database was estimated to be 156,000 hotels, with 14.5 million rooms in 2015. The

total the OIC share for hotels and rooms of the global market was estimated at 10.3% in 2015.¹⁰ The estimated number of the OIC hotels, based on STR Global estimates and DinarStandard analysis using UNWTO statistics, was 16,000 establishments in 2015, with 1.5 million rooms.¹¹ As the table below shows, the OIC countries with the largest number of hotels are Turkey, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia.

Table 4: Number of Hotels in the OIC Countries (2015)

Country	No. of Hotels	No. of Rooms
Turkey	3,295	306,295
Malaysia	2,178	202,505
United Arab Emirates	1,985	184,564
Indonesia	1,332	123,836
Saudi Arabia	1,254	116,575

Source: DinarStandard Analysis

We have identified **680** Muslim-friendly travel accommodation establishments with either focused or mixed offerings in 2015.¹² This estimate includes certified hotels and hotels that identify themselves as Muslim-friendly without external verification. The countries with the largest number of Muslim-friendly accommodation establishments are Malaysia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Indonesia. Malaysia has 368 accommodation establishments that have been Halal-certified by JAKIM. There are 140 Muslim-friendly accommodations with mixed and focused offerings identified in Turkey, 36 identified in the United Arab Emirates and 35 identified in Indonesia. Malaysia and Turkey alone account for nearly 88% of the total number of Muslim-friendly accommodations identified.

An estimated 60% of Muslim-friendly accommodations are 4 and 5 star hotels, namely 403 establishments. The remaining accommodation establishments represent other hotels, resorts, motels, bed and breakfasts, hostels, villas, vacation/peer rentals, and private homes. Only 58 accommodation establishments fit the focused offerings criteria; they are certified Halal, serving Halal food only as well as providing Halal products and services targeting Muslim consumers.

¹⁰ The total share of hotels and rooms in the OIC countries of the global market was estimated using the percentage of the OIC countries inbound travel expenditure out of the global market from UNWTO Tourism Report 2016 statistics.

¹¹ To calculate the total number of OIC hotels and rooms, we have used the OIC inbound travel expenditure as a share of the global market estimated at 10.3 % and applied this to the STR Global estimates to calculate the number of hotels and rooms in the OIC countries, which represent 16,000 hotels and 1.5 million rooms. We have assumed STR Global estimates are satisfactory and we have applied the inbound travel spend for each country by UNWTO statistics as a relative percentage to estimate the number of rooms across each country. As a result, we have assumed the domestic tourism numbers, which are not included in our approach are consistent with the inbound proportion for all countries and this is a limitation to our estimates as domestic tourism impact varies by country.

¹² The estimate provided underestimates the complete MFT accommodations market size as the methodology does not include MFT accommodations that do not advertise Muslim-friendly tourism offerings online through the sources we have listed. The total number of MFT accommodations we have estimated only includes MFT accommodations we have identified through the following sources: HalalBooking.com, HalalTrip, Tripfez, Serendipity Travel, BestHalalHoliday.com, Luxury Halal Travel, Instituto Halal, HolidayME, Bali Halal Tour, Islamiotel, Islamitayerleri.net, Islamioteldetatil.com, Islamitatil.com, Islami-oteller.de, and JAKIM.

2 Conventional Tourism Quality Standards and Regulations

Hotels have been subject to evaluation and rating for many decades. While the hospitality sector does not have a unified global accommodation standard, many hotel quality standards have successfully emerged over the years. These standards exhibit best practices at the country, regional, and international levels, which can guide the development, propagation, and implementation of MFT standards and certification processes.

Various conventional quality standards have emerged in different markets. National governments and regional associations have set official quality standards in many markets, typically through governmental bodies such as a department of tourism or a tourism ministry. National associations of accommodation establishments also set local standards in some cases. In markets like the US, independent third parties (e.g. auto associations) have developed and maintained widely accepted but “unofficial” quality standards for decades.

Attempts at international quality standards have had limited success, though several countries have simply adopted the standards of neighboring leaders or agreed on adopting regional standards. More recently, online booking platforms have developed hotel ratings, which are used globally alongside or instead of traditional quality standards by aggregating the personal feedback of millions of guests.¹³ Some multi-national hotel chains are also now using an internal rating system for their own hotels to signal quality in more than one country.¹⁴

Table 5: Attributes of Selected Quality Standards

Quality Rating System	Standard Setter	Standards	Certification and Auditing
National hotel star rating systems (e.g., AA, Egypt NN)	Government hospitality-related agency/ National associations	Quality (attribute, feature) focus; Typically published	Yes
Global online rating systems (e.g., TripAdvisor)	Online booking or review sites	Quality and experience focus; Details n/a	No (continuous reviews)
Regional star rating systems (e.g., Hotelstars)	Regional tourism associations	Quality (attribute, feature) focus; Typically published	Yes
Alternative specialized ratings (e.g. environmental, ISO 14001)	Industry bodies / Private operators	Alternative (e.g., environment) focus; Typically published	Yes

Source: DinarStandard

¹³ *The Joint WTO & IH&RA Study on Hotel Classification*. Rep. World Tourism Organization and IH&RA, 16 Apr. 2004. Web. 4 Oct. 2016.

¹⁴ "Marriott Rewards Points Grid." Marriott.com. Marriott, 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.



The diversity of approaches to conventional quality ratings suggests that flexibility may be a key success factor for MFT standards. However, while there is no single “correct” approach to developing quality standards for accommodation establishments, what follows is an attempt to obtain some insights from the conventional standard landscape to guide future MFT standard development and implementation.¹⁵

2.1 Current Global and Regional Initiatives for Standardization of Services

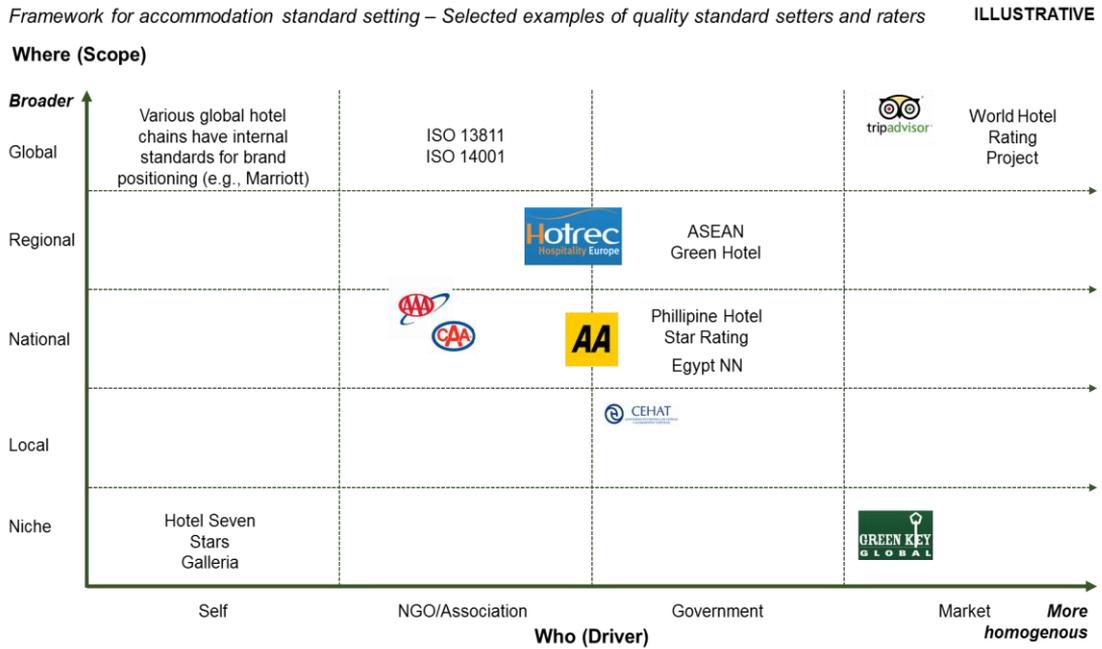
The global landscape for hotel quality standards is fragmented with many variations between standards in terms of measured criteria, certification, and whether it is mandatory or not for accommodation establishments to follow these standards. As for certification and audit processes, where required, they typically follow several common steps that include application, fee payment, auditor visit, feedback, certification, and periodic re-visits. Recently, a number of alternative accommodation standards have emerged to cater to various niches, such as environmental standards and faith-based standards. It is worth noting that the presence of standards does not necessarily result in the standardization of services, as many standards simply evaluate physical attributes or characteristics.

The following figure shows a segmentation of selected conventional hospitality quality standards categorized according to the geographic area they cover as well as the entity that has set the standard.¹⁶

¹⁵ *The Joint WTO & IH&RA Study on Hotel Classification*. Rep. World Tourism Organization and IH&RA, 16 Apr. 2004. Web. 4 Oct. 2016.

¹⁶ Online booking and rating sites (e.g., Priceline, TripAdvisor) may apply internal/global standards to generate a hotel’s quality classification and also generate a quality rating based on user input

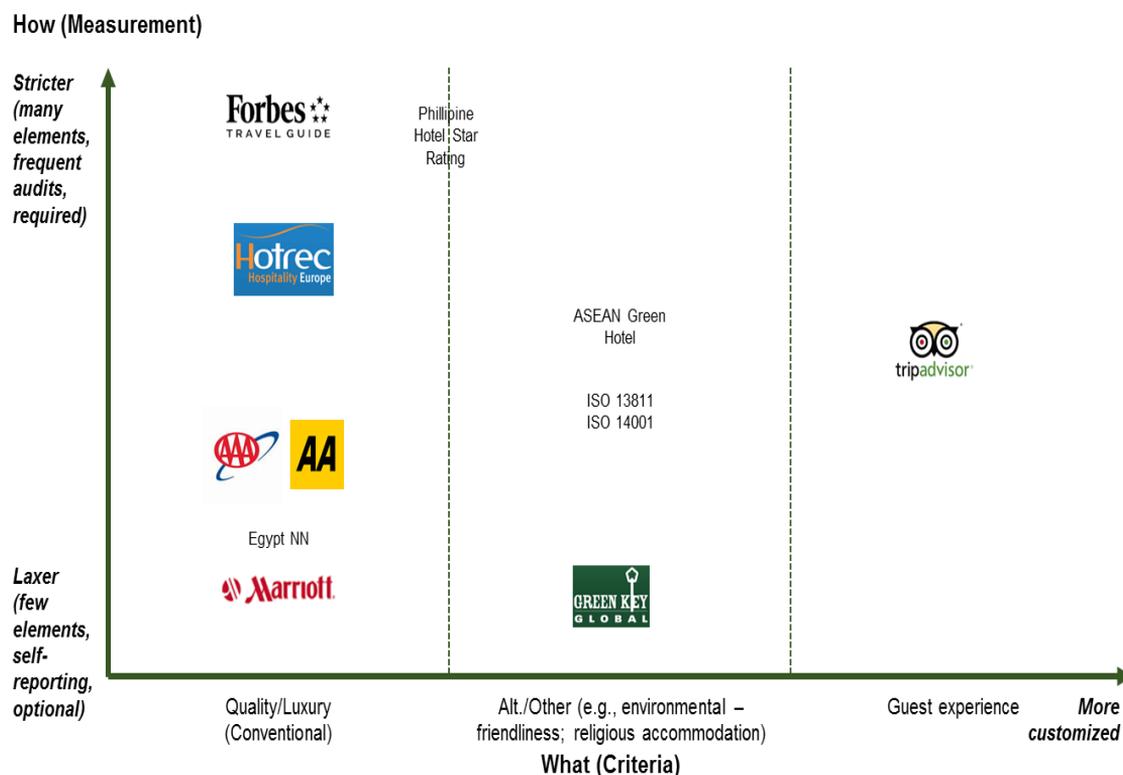
Figure 2: Conventional Hospitality Standards Matrix – Regional Scope and Setter



Source: DinarStandard

The following figure shows a segmentation of selected conventional hospitality quality standards categorized according to the elements they measure and the frequency and method of auditing.

Figure 3: Conventional Hospitality Standards Matrix – Measurement Criteria and Frequency



Source: DinarStandard

Hospitality quality standards typically measure a range of features, which are published so that hotels can work toward improving them. Elements such as physical features and available services are commonly measured among various standards. Standards help hotels differentiate themselves from competition and communicate a certain level of quality. On the other hand, conventional¹⁷ and alternative¹⁸ hotel standards have different focus areas. Governments or hotel associations usually lead in setting the former, while independent organizations or startups have typically taken the leadership role in the latter. Conventional standards are sometimes required, while alternative standards are less prevalent.

Overall, conventional quality standards typically measure criteria related to: lobby/reception, hotel services, guest rooms/bathrooms, leisure amenities, food and beverages, and exterior. For example, the HOTREC Hotelstars¹⁹ standard considers 270 criteria across seven categories: general hotel information, reception and services, rooms, gastronomy, event facilities, leisure, and quality and online activities²⁰. According to this standard, a 1-star hotel would receive anywhere from 90-170 points, while a 5-star hotel would receive anywhere from 600-700 points. For some criteria, a certain minimum requirement is set to attain a

¹⁷ Measuring hotel quality

¹⁸ Measuring hotel attributes other than conventional “quality”

¹⁹ Hotelstars criteria is available in the appendix.

²⁰ Hotelstars Union. Criteria 2015-2020. Vienna: Hotelstars Union, 2015. Hotelstars.eu. Hotelstars Union, Feb. 2015. Web. 5 Oct. 2016.

specific rating. For example, a 5-star hotel must have staff at the reception 24 hours a day (worth 6 points). However, other criteria have no minimum set requirement, but may be worth more such as average room size of >14 sqm (worth 10 points). The AAA standard in the US considers similar criteria, but uses a somewhat different approach. The AAA requires a hotel to meet 36 basic criteria across five categories, including cleanliness, management, exterior and public areas, guest room, and bathroom, to be “approved” for further rating.²¹ The AAA Diamond rating evaluates dozens of other elements across similar categories (exterior, lobby, other public areas, guest room, and bathroom) to award up to Five Diamonds.²²

Alternative quality standards measure a more varied set of criteria than conventional standards. They often measure criteria such as management and communication, building design/construction, housekeeping and waste management, water and energy conservation, and food and beverage operations. For example, the ASEAN Green Hotel Standard considers 29 criteria across 11 major categories. These categories are environmental policy and actions for hotel operation, use of green products, collaboration with the community and local organizations, human resource development, solid waste management, energy efficiency, water efficiency and water quality, air quality management (indoor and outdoor), noise pollution control, wastewater treatment and management (water quality), and toxic and chemical substance disposal management²³. In the case of the ASEAN Green Hotel Standard, hotels must meet minimum scores across all 11 categories and must comply with various mandatory requirements to achieve certification. Hotels can achieve up to 80 points across the categories.

The following table illustrates key features from a list of selected conventional and alternative standards. The table highlights the criteria being measured, and whether the standards are mandatory or voluntary.

²¹ AAA Tourism Information Development. Approval Requirements & Diamond Rating Guidelines. Heathrow, FL: AAA Tourism Information Development, 2012. AAA Publishing, June 2012. Web. 5 Oct. 2016.

²² AAA Tourism Information Development. Approval Requirements & Diamond Rating Guidelines. Heathrow, FL: AAA Tourism Information Development, 2012. AAA Publishing, June 2012. Web. 5 Oct. 2016.

²³ ASEAN Green Hotel Standard. Rep. Jakarta: ASEAN, 2016. ASEAN Green Hotel Standard. ASEAN, Jan. 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

Table 6: Key Features from Selected Conventional and Alternative Standards

Standard	What It Measures	Required/ Voluntary	Additional Information
HOTREC Hotelstars Union²⁴	Conventional quality; 270 criteria	Voluntary overall (required in some countries)	16 members, expanding; Publicly run or privately run; Periodic revisions
American Automobile Association (AAA)	Conventional quality; 36 minimal requirements plus Diamond criteria ²⁵	Voluntary	US-specific, with Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) for Canada
Automobile Association (AA)	Conventional quality	Voluntary	UK-specific; Harmonized with government standards (Common Quality Standards) ²⁶
Philippine Star Rating System	Conventional quality; 7 dimensions; 175-200 indicators	Required ²⁷	Recent (2009) update, replacing policies from 1991
Egypt New Norms²⁸	Conventional quality; focus on both physical attributes and service levels; 297 items evaluated ²⁹	Voluntary	Recent (2006-2012) updates, replacing policies from 1982 ³⁰
Green Key Global	Alternative standard; Focus on sustainability (14 dimensions)	Voluntary	Self-assessment followed by audit
ASEAN Green Hotel³¹	Alternative standard; 11 major criteria; Focus on environment	Voluntary	Regional standard; Re-evaluation every 3 years
ISO 13811	Alternative standard; Focus on environmental sustainability	Voluntary	Limited adoption to date; Leading sustainability groups engaged
ISO 14001	Alternative certification; Focus on environmental management system standard	Voluntary	More widespread adoption; Not specific to hotel industry

Source: DinarStandard

The selected conventional standards, which are presented in the table above, are mainly perceived as signals of quality to consumers as well as comparison tools, while environmental standards signal improved environmental impact and sustainability and can be used by hotels as differentiation tools.

²⁴ De Barrin, Christian. "HSU Slovenia." HOTREC, June 2014. Web. 5 Oct. 2016.

²⁵ AAA Tourism Information Development. Approval Requirements & Diamond Rating Guidelines. Heathrow, FL: AAA Tourism Information Development, 2012. AAA Publishing, June 2012. Web. 5 Oct. 2016.

²⁶ "AA Hotel Services." AA. Automobile Association Developments, 2016. Web. 05 Oct. 2016.

²⁷ Arnaldo, Ma. Stella F. "DOT Releases New Hotel Ratings System." ABS CBN News. Business Mirror, 28 June 2012. Web. 5 Oct. 2016.

²⁸ *Project Summary: Review and Implementation of the New Hotel Classification System*. Rep. UNWTO, 9 May 2013. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

²⁹ Dunn, Jimmy. "A New Hotel Ranking System for Egypt." *Tour Egypt*. Tour Egypt, 2012. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

³⁰ Dunn, Jimmy. "A New Hotel Ranking System for Egypt." *Tour Egypt*. Tour Egypt, 2012. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

³¹ *ASEAN Green Hotel Standard*. Rep. Jakarta: ASEAN, 2016. *ASEAN Green Hotel Standard*. ASEAN, Jan. 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

Hotel quality standards typically evaluate factors across a number of common parameters. The number of factors varies and can reach up to several hundred. Each standard places a different weight on each factor. The following figure³² illustrates the variation of weights in categories across a set of global classification standards.

Figure 4: Percentage Weight of Criteria for Selected Standards

Room	32	21	22	33	34	30	30
Bathroom	18	10	12	15	18	21	16
F&B	11	17	15	13	6	8	12
Services	18	19	13	8	12	11	11
Front Desk	11	14	7	6	8	9	8
Public Areas	1	6	6	10	9	10	8
Access	1	6	12	5	2	4	5
Exterior & General	2	0	0	3	9	4	3
Communication	4	0	0	1	1	1	1
Temperature Control	1	5	2	0	2	2	1

Source: World Tourism Organization

In some instances, standards may set a minimum to be achieved for a number of factors to obtain a certain rating. There are common measured criteria across most hotel standards. The table below highlights some of the most common elements measured for 4 and 5-star hotel standards within several key categories³³.

Table 7: Hospitality Standards' Common Measured Criteria

Category	Top Criteria
Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Telephone with external line ✓ Desk/work table with chair ✓ One seat per bed
Bathroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number of bathroom amenities ✓ Number of bathrooms ✓ Bathroom rug
F&B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Dinner service restaurant ✓ Room service breakfast ✓ Room service offered
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fax available ✓ Wake up service ✓ Laundry service
Front desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Front desk hours of operation ✓ Lounge in lobby area ✓ Parking

Source: World Tourism Organization

³² Hotel Classification Systems: Recurrence of Criteria in 4 and 5 Star Hotels. Rep. Madrid: World Tourism Organization, 2015. Hotel Classification Systems: Recurrence of Criteria in 4 and 5 Star Hotels. UNWTO, 2015. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

³³ Hotel Classification Systems: Recurrence of Criteria in 4 and 5 Star Hotels. Rep. Madrid: World Tourism Organization, 2015. Hotel Classification Systems: Recurrence of Criteria in 4 and 5 Star Hotels. UNWTO, 2015. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.



2.1.1 Certification Process

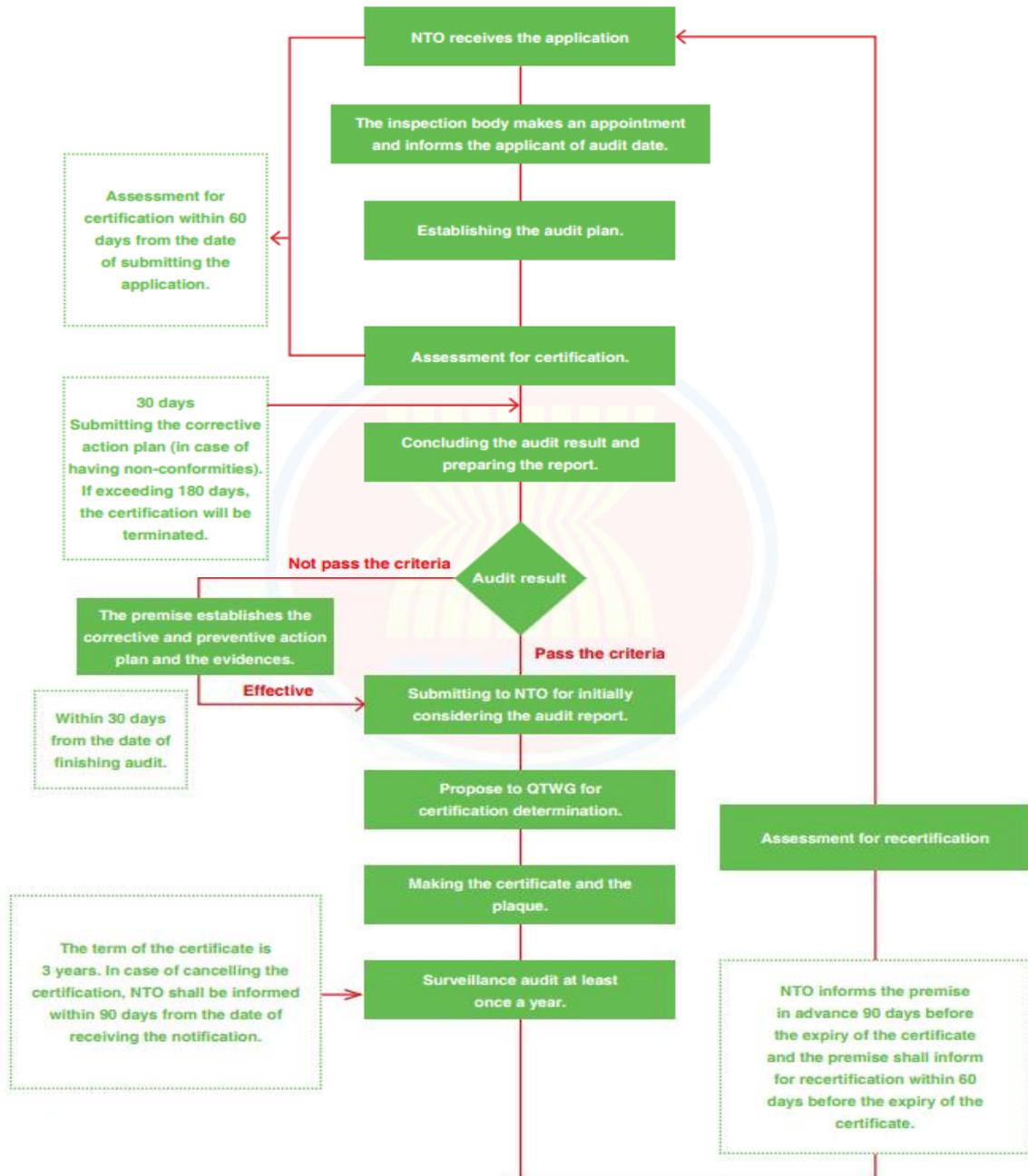
The certification processes of conventional and alternative quality standards for accommodations have many common. Key elements of most certification processes include application for evaluation, hotel assessment and evaluation, scoring and feedback to accommodation provider, publication of assessment/certification, periodic audits, and recertification. Sometimes, an initial self-evaluation may also be included in this process, or as part of the application.

The AAA certification process is straightforward.³⁴ A hotel applies for inspection, becomes AAA “approved” if it meets the basic requirements, and receives its AAA Diamond rating after inspection. More specifically, a hotel would review eligibility, submit application for evaluation, pay a fee if selected for evaluation, undergo unannounced inspection (introduction, interview, property tour and assessment, and feedback), receive Diamond rating status and summary of findings, and undergo periodic follow up evaluations. The following figure³⁵ highlights many of the common elements in the alternative ASEAN Green Hotel Standard’s certification process.

³⁴ AAA Tourism Information Development. Approval Requirements & Diamond Rating Guidelines. Heathrow, FL: AAA Tourism Information Development, 2012. AAA Publishing, June 2012. Web. 5 Oct. 2016.

³⁵ *ASEAN Green Hotel Standard*. Rep. Jakarta: ASEAN, 2016. *ASEAN Green Hotel Standard*. ASEAN, Jan. 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

Figure 5: Assessment of Certification in ASEAN Green Hotel Standard



Source: ASEAN Green Hotel Standard

2.1.2 Renewal Timeline

Certification renewal timelines vary by standard. Some standards are renewed annually, while others are renewed every two, three, or five years, depending on the standard.³⁶

2.1.3 Compliance Measures

Inspections are the most common method for standard organizations to monitor compliance. Inspections may be scheduled or unannounced i.e., “mystery guests”. The frequency of such inspections can range from once annually to once every five years or more, depending on the standard.³⁷ The standard setter or the hotel pays the cost of compliance monitoring depending on the standard.

2.1.4 Role of Star Rating System in Standardizing Services

In many markets, the conventional star rating system is still more focused on physical attributes (infrastructure that can be quantitatively evaluated) of a hotel rather than services that might require qualitative evaluation. Hotel trade groups may prefer this, as it allows more freedom in competing on service, within a classification band denoted by the star rating. However, newer standards, such as Philippine’s Star Rating System Hotelstars, place more emphasis on evaluating services.

A star rating system in itself may not contribute to standardized services. The previous Egyptian quality certification system, while star-based, forced hotels with vastly different standards to compete on price i.e. better hotels to compete with lesser hotels at the same star level. The New Norms were developed in part to ensure that a star-level corresponded with a certain standard in infrastructure and service³⁸.

While conventional rating systems may help standardize some services within a geography, they have not contributed to standardization across the global accommodation industry.³⁹ Expert Zoe Chan of Hotels.com notes, “There is no universal star rating system. Each country has its own [star rating system] and in some cases more than one [system], [leading to a] possible disparity of standards and facilities in different countries.”⁴⁰ Christopher Elliott, author of “How to Be the World’s Smartest Traveler,” goes further, suggesting that “...most ratings systems are poorly or completely unregulated, rendering them almost completely worthless.”⁴¹

³⁶ *The Joint WTO & IH&RA Study on Hotel Classification*. Rep. World Tourism Organization and IH&RA, 16 Apr. 2004. Web. 4 Oct. 2016.

³⁷ *The Joint WTO & IH&RA Study on Hotel Classification*. Rep. World Tourism Organization and IH&RA, 16 Apr. 2004. Web. 4 Oct. 2016.

³⁸ Dunn, Jimmy. “A New Hotel Ranking System for Egypt.” *Tour Egypt*. Tour Egypt, 2012. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

³⁹ Hu, Claire. “Do Hotel Star Ratings Mean Anything Anymore?” CNN. Cable News Network, 6 May 2014. Web. 05 Oct. 2016.

⁴⁰ Hu, Claire. “Do Hotel Star Ratings Mean Anything Anymore?” CNN. Cable News Network, 6 May 2014. Web. 05 Oct. 2016.

⁴¹ Hu, Claire. “Do Hotel Star Ratings Mean Anything Anymore?” CNN. Cable News Network, 6 May 2014. Web. 05 Oct. 2016.

2.2 Development Process for Tourism Quality Standards and Regulations

Legal requirements for national accommodation quality standards vary from one country to another. However, conventional standards are generally developed through a number of common steps, which include: forming a body to set the standard, reviewing the context, collecting stakeholder input, developing and issuing a draft, revising the draft based on feedback, publicizing and issuing the new standard, developing inspection capacity, conducting initial ratings, revisiting and recertifying periodically.

Many accommodation rating standards require no special legal steps to be proposed or adopted, especially those established by industry associations or independent third parties, such as in the case of the American Automobile Association [AAA]. However, where the state sets the standards or makes them obligatory, some legislation or government action is enacted, as in the case of the regulations in the Philippines and Egypt. In the case of standards adopted by a regional body such as the ASEAN Green Hotel standard, approval by relevant national ministries may be required. When seven countries from HOTREC established the Hotelstars Union standard in 2009, six were able to adopt the standard without legislative action, as the standard is optionally overseen by local hotel associations. Only in Hungary, where an existing mandatory state standard prevailed⁴², was special government action needed⁴³ to adopt the Hotelstars standard.

Standard setting bodies generally follow some common steps in developing a new standard. While the WTO has not issued official, global hotel quality standards, it is often involved in the development of such standards in various areas. It offers a suite of services to support accommodation stakeholders in the development of standards, which are outlined in the following table. The WTO followed many of these steps during a recent project to help Egypt update its tourism quality standards, which included the review of existing criteria, development of new criteria, training of local inspectors, and communication of new criteria.⁴⁴ The table below also outlines the steps followed to establish the Philippine Hotel Star Rating system.

⁴² Diana Foris. "Comparative Analysis of Hotel Classification and Quality Mark in Hospitality." *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management* 2.1 (2014): 26-39. David Publishing, 29 Apr. 2014. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁴³ Hotel Classification The Founding of the Hotelstars Union to Lead to Harmonised Hotelstars in Europe." *HOTELSTARS - Press Release*. Hotelstars, 14 Dec. 2009. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁴⁴ *Project Summary: Review and Implementation of the New Hotel Classification System*. Rep. UNWTO, 9 May 2013. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

Table 8: Development Process for Selected Standards

	Philippine Hotel Star Rating⁴⁵	WTO Guidelines⁴⁶
Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ National legislation to establish new hotel accreditation system, with basic standards and a star rating system (2009) ✓ MOU with international tourism expert (2010) ✓ Benchmarking review of tourism standards and certification systems (2010) ✓ Industry (private sector) engagement and workshops (2010) ✓ Focus group discussions with relevant sector associations (2010) ✓ Draft standard development (2010-11) ✓ Online and public feedback on draft standards (2010-11) ✓ Revision of draft standards based on feedback (2011-12) ✓ Publication of National Accommodation Standards, in key publications (2012) ✓ Orientation briefings for industry stakeholders (2012-13) ✓ Recruitment, selection, and training of independent auditors (2013) ✓ National deployment of independent auditors (2013-14) ✓ Review and validation of audit reports (2014-15) ✓ Official announcement of star rating results (2015-16) ✓ Further re-inspections and re-evaluations (ongoing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review existing criteria for accommodation ✓ Develop and establish new criteria, with stakeholder engagement ✓ Develop, pilot, and review assessment plan ✓ Train and build capacity of local inspectors ✓ Communicate and publicize standard criteria ✓ Establish controls, documentation, and follow up processes

Source: World Tourism Organization and Philippine Hotel Star Rating

The following table is an excerpt of a WTO document outlining the services they provide and the steps to develop a quality standard and system in 12-18 months.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Philippines. Department of Tourism. *Understanding the Philippine Star Rating System*. N.p.: n.p., 2015. Visit My Philippines. Department of Tourism, 2015. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁴⁶ "Quality Standards in Tourism Services." *World Tourism Organization*. UNWTO, 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁴⁷ "Quality Standards in Tourism Services." *World Tourism Organization*. UNWTO, 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

Table 9: WTO Process for Developing Tourism Quality standards

<p>Objective</p> <p>Improve the overall quality of products and services within the tourism industry (all tourism-related accommodation, restaurants, tour guides, tour operators, and other tourism-related service providers); raise the levels of demand nationally, regionally and internationally; promote competitiveness within the industry; and, provide valuable and reliable information on quality standards for the tourist and the travel industry.</p>	
<p>Duration</p> <p>Module 1: 1 month; Module 2: 3 months; Module 3: 6-12 months; Module 4-6: 12-18 months. All modules can be undertaken as one composite project which spans 12-18 months depending on the nature and scope of the project.</p>	<p>Methodology:</p> <p>Overall strategy: evaluate the current tourism quality standards situation through initial negotiations with government officials and other key stakeholders of the national tourism industry; identify customers' needs and expectations (stakeholders, environment, direction, facilities, resources, overall objectives, challenges); introduce available UNWTO quality products and services (modules); and, provide technical assistance as indicated in the modules below.</p> <p>Module 1: Review of Existing Criteria for Tourism-Related Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing criteria for various facilities and services and evaluate these according to local, regional and global best practices and competitive environment • Identify gaps and constraints • Make appropriate recommendations on modifying and/or upgrading the existing criteria <p>Module 2: Establishment and Formulation of New Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify for which facilities/services/sectors criteria need to be established • Formulate criteria in line with national/regional needs and considering international industry practices and competitive environment • Prepare initial criteria drafts • Introduce criteria drafts to industry stakeholders • Prepare final criteria and support the approval process <p>Module 3: Implementation and Assessment of Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish assessment responsibilities and procedures (pre-post administration, on-site procedures, result reporting) • Plan assessment/inspection tours • Accompany national assessors/inspector visits on site • Guide assessment findings and result definitions
<p>Indicative budget</p> <p>Module 1: € 15,000; Module 2: € 40,000; Module 3: Budget depends on duration and scope of the module; Module 4: Budget depends on duration and scope of the module</p>	
<p>Target beneficiaries</p> <p>National Tourism Administration Private sector Provincial Governments</p>	
<p>Outputs/deliverables</p> <p>Classification system in place and information available to</p>	



stakeholders in the sector. Capacities built among local inspectors to apply classification criteria.

Module 4: Capacity Building of National Criteria Assessors/Inspectors

- Evaluate assessor/inspector capacities, knowledge and expertise levels
- Identify gaps and constraints
- Make appropriate recommendations for most suitable capacity building methods (on-site, off-site)
- Introduce “UNWTO assessor certification” after successful attendance of respective capacity building sessions and/or on-site progress
- Compile and provide assessment supporting tools (knowledge and reference manual, photo library)
- Develop “Train the Trainer” program

Module 5: Communication of Criteria

- Criteria launch press conference
- Industry workshops for key tourism stakeholders (accommodation sector, owners, investors, tour operators, transportation companies, tourism related service partners)
- Presentations to high schools, hotel and catering schools

Module 6: Criteria and Quality Control (Mystery Guest)

- Familiarization of criteria
- Define controlling tools and methods (check-lists, documentation, reports, use of technology, etc.)
- Agree and establish control procedures (reservation, cost coverage)
- Plan time lines and execution

Source: UNWTO

Based on the previous examples, there are several key steps for standard development, which are illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 6: Key Steps for Setting a Quality Standard



Source: DinarStandard

Role of Government, Private Sector, and Other Stakeholders

The role of the government, the private sector, and other stakeholders varies from one standard to another. A recent review of hotel classification standards in EU countries found a mix of markets where quality standards are administered by government and/or trade associations.⁴⁸ As noted earlier, standards can also be developed and administered by third parties, as in the case of the AAA standard in the US. In some markets, such as the UK, third parties namely the Automobile Association [AA] and the government collaborated to harmonize their standards. In Egypt, the government and hotel association jointly oversee the hospitality standard. In cases where the government or private sector do not play an active role in the standard, they may play an advisory role.

International organizations, such as the ISO and the WTO, have a limited role in hotel standard development and deployment. In the face of resistance from stakeholders in the hospitality industry⁴⁹, the ISO has not developed many hotel-related standards since establishing its related technical committee (TC 228) in 2005. Only two of the standards this committee oversees are specifically related to hotels; one related to terminology (18513) while the other is related to improving environmental impact (13811).⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Diana Foris. "Comparative Analysis of Hotel Classification and Quality Mark in Hospitality." *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management* 2.1 (2014): 26-39. David Publishing, 29 Apr. 2014. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁴⁹ HOTREC - *Key European Measures*. Rep. N.p.: HOTREC, n.d. HOTREC, 09 Aug. 2011. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁵⁰ "ISO/TC 228 - Tourism and Related Services." *ISO Standards Catalogue*. ISO, 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

Standard harmonization appeared on the agenda of the World Tourism Organization for many years. Its 2004 study in partnership with hotel associations found that, essentially, global standards are not necessarily desirable. However, the WTO still views quality standards as critical. As noted earlier, the WTO has developed a service offering whereby it supports various constituencies to develop quality standards using a thorough process.

Need for External Approval

In general, countries are not required to have the approval of any international bodies, such as the WTO, ISO, or IH&RA, before adopting hotel quality standards. However, in cases where a country or its hotel association is already a member of a regional or international entity such as the ASEAN or the Hotelstars Union, external approval may be required before significant adjustments are made to the national quality standard. For example, in the case of the Hotelstars Union, a unanimous agreement of members, representing national hotel associations, is required to make decisions⁵¹.

Voluntary vs. Compulsory Standards

Conventional quality standards for accommodations can be either voluntary or compulsory, depending on the standard.⁵² As in any sector, the general preference of the private sector, i.e. hotel operators and their associations, is to avoid obligatory regulation in favor of voluntary measures. In the largest tourism market, the US⁵³, the leading quality standards are optional; hotels apply voluntarily to be rated by AAA.⁵⁴ Hotels in the UK also voluntarily apply to the AA for recognition.⁵⁵ However, in cases where health and safety are a concern, or where the accommodation sector is not yet up to international standards, compulsory regulations can help local hotels become more competitive for the global traveler.⁵⁶ Mature markets often have compulsory quality ratings, even though the key benefits have most likely been realized in the past.

In the case of alternative quality measures such as environmental standards, they are mostly voluntary in nature as of 2015. They provide accommodation providers with an opportunity to differentiate and outperform competition. As these ratings typically have limited direct relation to health and safety, any attempt to make them compulsory would likely face resistance from the private sector which is represented by local hotel associations.⁵⁷ However, the more widely a standard is accepted, the more likely market players will find themselves forced to adopt it for competitive reasons.

⁵¹ De Barrin, Christian. "HSU Slovenia." HOTREC, June 2014. Web. 5 Oct. 2016.

⁵² Diana Foris. "Comparative Analysis of Hotel Classification and Quality Mark in Hospitality." *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management* 2.1 (2014): 26-39. David Publishing, 29 Apr. 2014. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁵³ *UNWTO Tourism Highlights - 2016 Edition*. Rep. 2016 ed. Madrid: UNWTO, 2016. UNWTO, 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁵⁴ AAA Tourism Information Development. Approval Requirements & Diamond Rating Guidelines. Heathrow, FL: AAA Tourism Information Development, 2012. AAA Publishing, June 2012. Web. 5 Oct. 2016.

⁵⁵ *Application for AA Recognition - Hotels*. N.p.: AA Hotel Services, 2016. Print.

⁵⁶ *The Joint WTO & IH&RA Study on Hotel Classification*. Rep. World Tourism Organization and IH&RA, 16 Apr. 2004. Web. 4 Oct. 2016.

⁵⁷ *HOTREC - Key European Measures*. Rep. N.p.: HOTREC, n.d. HOTREC, 09 Aug. 2011. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

2.3 Effects of Standards on the Accommodation Sector

According to a recent WTO study, accommodation providers reap a number of important benefits from following hospitality standards. To begin with, they help small and independent hotels in their positioning efforts. Standards also serve as both expectation indicators and quality assurance for guests and lead to increased destination attractiveness and guest satisfaction. They facilitate comparability and add credibility to hotels' offerings. Standards also help motivate staff and increase hotel rates and margins.⁵⁸ Other research studies also indicate that hospitality standards have a number of positive effects on accommodation establishments adopting them, including signaling quality to consumers, increasing customer satisfaction levels, and achieving higher operational efficiency.

Consumers perceive both conventional and alternative mainstream hotel quality standards as quality signals; which is why many new hotel chains seek certification. For example, Rosen Shingle Creek, an upscale hotel in the United States, applied for the AAA standard as soon as it started operations. After nine months, the hotel was awarded the "Four Diamond" rating by the AAA. The hotel benefited from the immediate publicity it received upon recognition of meeting the standard, it appeared in the AAA list of hotels meeting Four Diamond criteria, and was allowed to use the AAA rating as a shorthand symbol of quality to visitors and potential guests.⁵⁹ Likewise, quality marks, like the privately issued Service Qualität Deutschland in Germany, can signal a level of service that potential guests can expect.⁶⁰ Similarly, user generated ratings are often displayed in conjunction with standard hotel star ratings to provide potential guests with a further level of granular data to refine their decisions (e.g., TripAdvisor). Other standards can also play a role in influencing decision-making for certain niche consumers. For example, some hotels⁶¹ have taken measures to be certified "kosher."

Existing research suggests that some types of standards can affect guest satisfaction at hotels. A recent article published in *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* found that "overall guests rate the hotels with ISO 14001 certification higher than those without the certification,"⁶² based on an evaluation of >6,000 hotels in Spain using guest feedback from Booking.com. However, it is worth noting that the Cornell article found the positive effect of adherence to the ISO 14001 environmental standards on guest satisfaction levels to be muted at the 5-star and 3-star levels, and only prominent as a "distinct market advantage" at the 4-star level. The article could only speculate that environmental standards might not be significantly valued by budget-conscious 3-star customers and might be "lost in a sea of other luxurious amenities" by premium-seeking 5-star customers.

There is a positive relationship between environmental standards and operational efficiency. A recent study by Zhang et al. on the impact of environmental standards on hotel efficiency in

⁵⁸ *Hotel Classification Systems: Recurrence of Criteria in 4 and 5 Star Hotels*. Rep. Madrid: World Tourism Organization, 2015. *Hotel Classification Systems: Recurrence of Criteria in 4 and 5 Star Hotels*. UNWTO, 2015. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁵⁹ Deatrick, Mary. "Rosen Shingle Creek Awarded Prestigious AAA Four-Diamond Status." *Rosen Shingle Creek*. N.p., 22 June 2007. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁶⁰ Diana Foris. "Comparative Analysis of Hotel Classification and Quality Mark in Hospitality." *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management* 2.1 (2014): 26-39. David Publishing, 29 Apr. 2014. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁶¹ Ferber, Alona. "Eight Things You Never Knew Israeli Hotels Do to Be Certified Kosher." *Jewish World Travel*. Haaretz, 06 Nov. 2014. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁶² Peiró-Signes, A., Segarra-Oña, M., Verma, R., Mondéjar-Jiménez, J., & Vargas-Vargas, M. (2014). The impact of environmental certification on hotel guest ratings [Electronic version]. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 55(1), 40-51.

the US found that hotels that earned “eco-certifications” attained higher levels of operational efficiency.⁶³ This suggests that alternative standards such as environmental standards could enhance operational efficiency. For example, the Ambrose Hotel achieved cost savings in many areas through following the requirements of various environmental standards and certifications. The hotel realized 20% savings on its water bill and reduced energy consumption by 30%. The hotel also witnessed improved employee morale and performance through its “green” investments.⁶⁴

There is limited research or evidence to establish the impact of standards on national tourism receipts or rooms booked. In the case of national tourism receipts, many factors may drive this metric, including economic growth, regional stability, and other macroeconomic factors, which makes the direct effects of standards difficult to identify. Hotel rating standards were only adopted by Thailand as an initiative of the Thailand Hotel Association and the Tourism Authority of Thailand⁶⁵. Legislative efforts in 2002 led to the first 84 hotels being certified per the Thailand Hotel Standards in 2004. By 2005, 116 hotels in Thailand participated in the standard/certification.⁶⁶ The standards were refined over the next couple of years, and were finalized by 2011-2012. Tourism in Thailand has grown dramatically during this period with international arrivals increasing from around 10 million in 2001 to around 30 million in 2015⁶⁷, while nominal receipts from international tourism rose from \$9.3 billion in 2001 to \$42.1 billion in the same period.⁶⁸ However, the positive growth in tourism receipts cannot be attributed directly to the adoption of the new standards as they have not yet been widely adopted. To date, only 213 hotels have adopted Thailand’s Hotel Standard⁶⁹, and few of the top⁷⁰ hotels actually participate in the official ratings.⁷¹ However, in the case of mandatory standards, failing to meet the criteria could be detrimental for a hotel’s bottom line. For example, under the new system in the Philippines, venues with very low scores are not granted a business license.⁷²

⁶³ Zhang, Jie J., Nitin Joglekar, Rohit Verma, and Janelle Heineke. "Exploring the Relationship between Eco-certifications and Resource Efficiency in U.S. Hotels." *Cornell Hospitality Report* (2014): 6-16. Cornell Hospitality Report. Center for Hospitality Research, 2 Mar. 2014. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁶⁴ Firmani, Roberto, and Nurit Katz. *The Ambrose Hotel: Eco-labeling Strategies for Sustainable Lodging*. Rep. Los Angeles: UCLA Center for Corporate Environmental Performance, n.d. UCLA Institute of the Environment. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁶⁵ Thailand. Thailand Hotel Standard Foundation. *Thailand Standard Hotels - Directory 2011*. Red Mango, Ltd, 2011. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁶⁶ Thailand. Thailand Hotel Standard Foundation. *Thailand Standard Hotels - Directory 2011*. Red Mango, Ltd, 2011. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁶⁷ Vanhaleweyk, Guido. "Tourism Statistics Thailand 2000-2016." *Thailand Tourism Statistics*. N.p., 30 July 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁶⁸ "International Tourism Receipts (current, US\$)." *Yearbook of Tourism Statistics*. World Tourism Organization, 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁶⁹ Thailand. Thailand Hotel Standard Foundation. *Name List for Thailand Hotel Standard Foundation*. Thailand Hotel Standard Foundation, 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁷⁰ Per TripAdvisor

⁷¹ "IS THE OFFICIAL HOTEL RATING SYSTEM SINKING INTO THE PAST?" *The Contemporary Relevance of the Hotel Star Rating System*. Quo Global, 19 May 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁷² Villareal, Melo. "Department of Tourism Announces the New Philippine Hotel Rating System." *Out of Town Blog*. Out of Town Travel, Food, and Lifestyle Blog, 03 July 2013. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

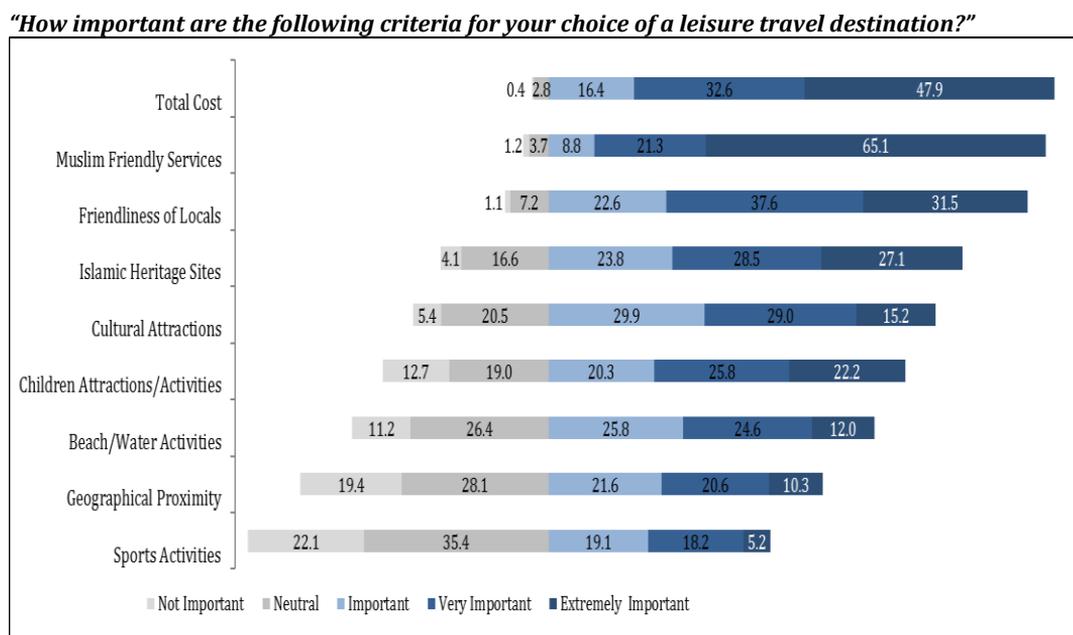
3 Muslim Friendly Tourism Standards and Regulations

3.1 Need for MFT Standards and Regulations

In recent years, the tourism industry has started to grasp and address the distinct needs of Muslim travelers. Muslim-friendly travel is seen as a promising niche market by many accommodation providers. There is no current consensus on which MFT elements to incorporate, however, accommodation establishments make their decision based on the ease of implementation, the cost, and the impact on non-Muslim guests. Previous research studies show that needs of Muslim and non-Muslim travelers do overlap in several areas, such as a hotel’s location and price, which are critical for travelers, regardless of faith. Furthermore, Muslim and non-Muslim travelers alike value many of the characteristics captured by conventional quality standards, including cleanliness, spaciousness and convenience. However, research has indicated that Muslim travelers have specific faith-related needs; some of which may even clash with the needs of non-Muslim travelers, including, for instance the absence of alcohol from hotel premises.

A recent survey of Muslims travelers, undertaken for a previous study “Muslim Friendly Tourism: Developing and Marketing MFT Products and Services In the OIC Member Countries, August 2016” highlights several selection criteria, shown in the figure below, that Muslims might have in common with non-Muslims.⁷³

Figure 7: Muslim Travelers' Destination Selection Criteria (in percentages)



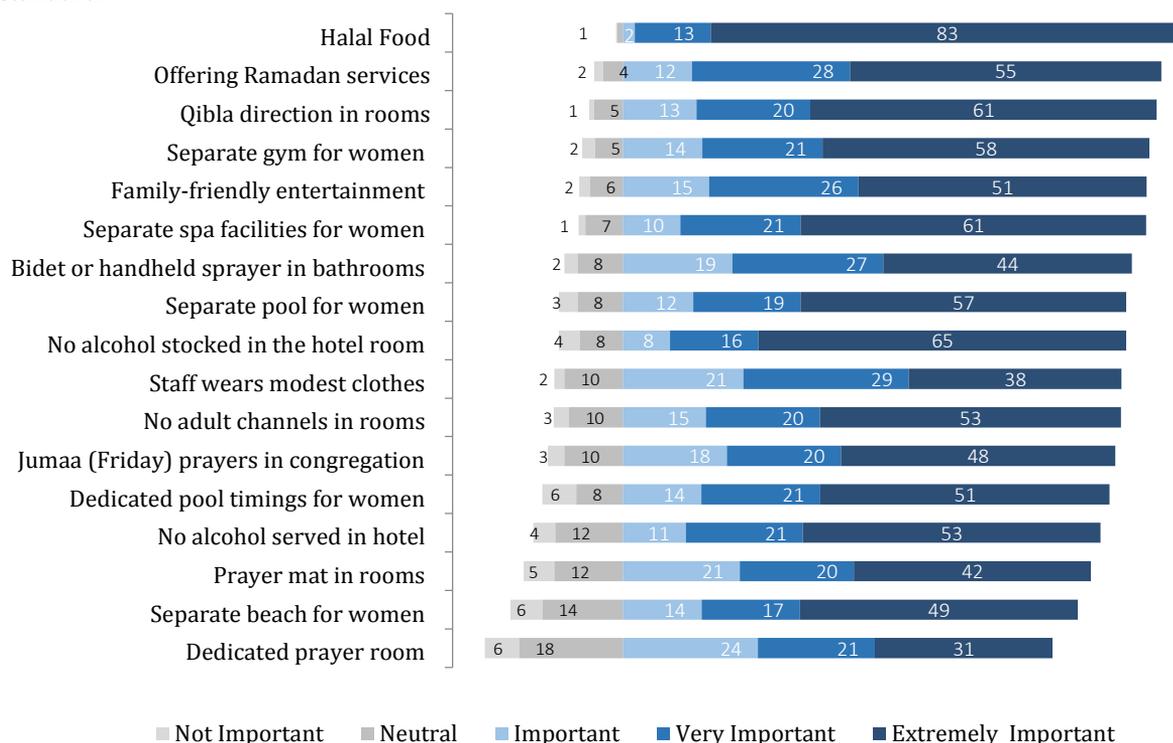
Source: DinarStandard

⁷³ “Muslim Friendly Tourism: Developing and Marketing MFT Products and Services In the the OIC Member Countries Report. 8th COMCEC Tourism Working Group. August 2016. Web.

The Muslim traveler survey, which was conducted within the framework of the previous study, highlighted the importance of several MFT accommodation features for Muslim travelers. This led to the need to understand whether Muslim travelers are keen on having some form of a standard that allows them to compare how different accommodation establishments meet their faith-related needs. In the framework of the current study, a second traveler survey was conducted to establish the relative importance Muslim travelers assign to having the different MFT services within an MFT standard. The survey responses, shown in the following graph, clearly highlight that Muslim travelers value a variety of MFT features, and also believe that many of these features should be included in a possible MFT accommodation standard. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of Muslim-friendly services being regulated by a Muslim-friendly accommodation standard (that the hotel is certified to offer these services). The services, being rated, included seventeen items, outlined in the graph below. A 5-point scale was used to rate the importance of the various Muslim-friendly services being regulated by a Muslim-friendly accommodation standard. The scale included the following categories: extremely important, very important, important, neutral and not important. The graph below illustrates the response to this question.

Figure 8: Regulation by an MFT Accommodation Standard Importance Rating (in percentages)

How important is it for various Muslim-friendly services to be regulated by an MFT accommodation standard?"



Source: DinarStandard

The previous chart clearly shows that respondents attach great importance to Halal food being regulated by a Muslim-friendly accommodation standard, with 99% of respondents

rating it as important (83% rated it as extremely important). Offering Ramadan services, such as breakfast buffets, comes second on the list of important MFT services to be regulated, with 95% of respondents rating it as important, followed closely by having Qibla direction in the hotel room, which was rated by 94% of respondents as important. However, it is worth noting that more respondents rated having Qibla direction in the hotel room (61%) as extremely important than offering Ramadan services (55%).

Including the presence of a separate gym for women, family friendly entertainment and separate spa facilities for women in the Muslim-friendly accommodation standard were rated as important by 92-93% of respondents. However, the inclusion of services for women on the standard was rated by 58-61% of the respondents as being extremely important, compared to only 51% of the respondents rating family friendly entertainment (51%). This can be explained by the fact that 68% of the respondents are female. While both having a separate pool for women and no alcohol being stocked in room (89%) come after having a bidet or hand held sprayer in the bathroom (90%) in terms of importance of being included in a Muslim-friendly accommodation standard, they were rated by more respondents as extremely important than having the bidet.

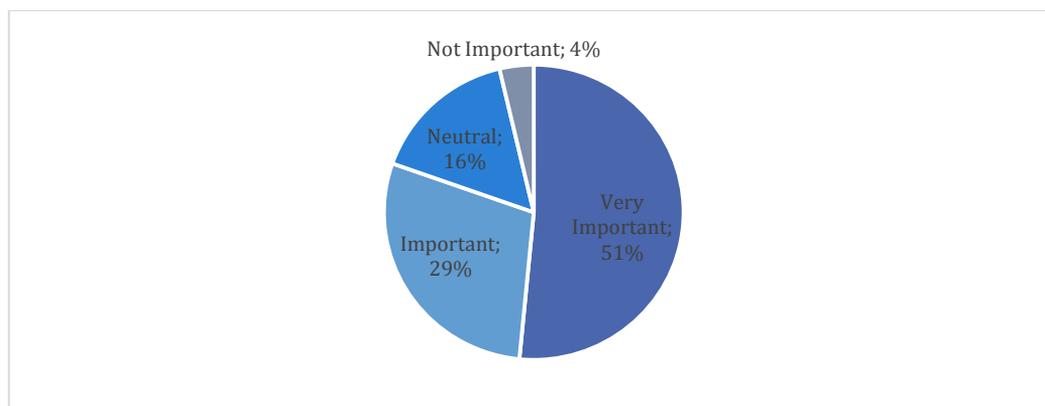
Having staff wearing modest clothes and no adult channels in room were rated by 88% of the respondents as important to include in a Muslim-friendly accommodation standard, followed closely by having Jumaa (Friday) prayers in congregation (87%), dedicated pool timings for women (86%), and no alcohol served in the hotel (84%). However, staff wearing modest clothing had the lowest percentage of respondents rating it as extremely important (38%) among the other services that had a similar importance rating (48-53%).

Including the presence of a separate beach for women in the Muslim-friendly accommodation standard was rated as important by 80% of the respondents (and as extremely important by 49%). However, as mentioned earlier it is worth noting that 68% of the respondents are female. The last item in terms of importance of being included in the Muslim-friendly accommodation standard is the presence of prayer mats in the room, which was rated as important by 76% of the respondents (only 31% rated it as extremely important).

Within the context of the government sector interviews conducted as part of this study, all government sector interviewees agreed that it is important for an establishment seeking to attract Muslim tourists to follow a Muslim-friendly accommodation standard. Even though all interviewees except for one believed that the presence of multiple MFT standards could be confusing to hotel guests and a cause for varied expectations, they were divided as to whether have multiple regional or one global MFT standard, and whether the standard should have one or different levels.

Results from the accommodation sector survey also indicated the importance of MFT standards adoption. As the following graph illustrates, a large percentage of accommodation sector respondents (80%) believe it is important for an establishment seeking to attract Muslim tourists to follow a Muslim-friendly accommodation standard, with more than half of them (51%) classifying it as very important.

Figure 9: Importance of MFT Standard Adoption



Source: *DinarStandard*

Benefits of MFT Regulations and Standards

In the previous section on conventional standards, benefits of hotel standards were discussed. The WTO list of benefits included standards assisting small and independent hotels in their positioning efforts, serving as both expectation indicators and quality assurance for guests, increasing destination attractiveness and guest satisfaction, facilitating comparability, adding credibility to hotel offerings, motivating staff, increasing hotel rates and margins, and being useful as a comparison tool for consumers.

Consequently, MFT standards and regulations can provide a number of additional benefits to accommodation establishments. MFT standards provide a basis for hotels to direct their investments based on the MFT characteristics that are measured by MFT standards and valued by Muslim travelers. MFT standards and certifications also function as quality signals indicating to consumers that the accommodation establishment has the MFT services they are looking for as well as serving as a marketing tool to increase accommodation establishments' recognition in the MFT market and help with marketing efforts.

MFT standards offer also a number of benefits for accommodation establishment guests, including serving as an expectation indicator and a comparison tool. Muslim travelers would have a way to know potential accommodations' MFT features as well as to evaluate the MFT services that are provided at different establishments so that they can choose the one that meets their needs. Having an MFT certification also ensures a family-friendly environment for both Muslim and non-Muslim travelers who would benefit from the adoption of several family-friendly MFT features by hotels, including the banning of gambling and alcohol, as well as having family-friendly entertainment. MFT standards also ensure MFT service quality; Muslim travelers would be assured that the accommodation establishments' claims of MFT features are accurate and verified by a third party.

3.2 Development Process of MFT Standards

The process of developing MFT standards is similar to the process used to develop conventional quality standards, with steps including engaging stakeholders, defining scope, building awareness, and developing inspection and certification capabilities. MFT standards can build on the successes of other “Halal” sectors, such as Halal food. A few MFT standards have emerged to date. Within the OIC countries, governments typically develop MFT standards, as in the case of Malaysia. In the non-OIC countries, Islamic organizations have led the MFT standards’ development efforts, as in the case of Croatia. In some instances, MFT standards are set by private organizations, such as the CrescentRating standard. The following section presents a general review of MFT standards.

Malaysian MFT Standard

MS 2610:2015, a new Malaysian standard defining “Muslim friendly hospitality services – Requirements,” followed a conventional process in its development.⁷⁴ The process started in December 2012, led by the International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART, part of the International Islamic University of Malaysia) and the Department of Standards Malaysia (DSM). Subsequently, the Scientific and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia (SIRIM) was engaged (to lead a Technical Committee on Management System from Islamic Perspectives) and other supporting committees were established to develop the standard.

A draft MFHS document was released in August 2014 for a two-month public comment period. Finally, in January 2015, the standard was published. The Department of Standards Malaysia currently sells the full standard to interested parties for a nominal price. Diverse stakeholders were engaged in the development of the standard, including the Islamic Tourism Center (Ministry of Tourism and Culture)⁷⁵, Tourism Malaysia, the Malaysia Association of Hotel Owners, the Malaysia Association of Hotels, the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents, the Malaysian Tourist Guides Council, the Muslim Consumers’ Association of Malaysia, and various other government ministries and related stakeholders.⁷⁶

CrescentRating Standard

CrescentRating developed and launched its MFT rating system/standard in 2008. It has since been voluntarily adopted by hotels in several countries. CrescentRating has developed its MFT standards as part of a larger Muslim travel products portfolio including apps, a travel portal, consulting services, and travel data. CrescentRating’s Muslim travel products complement each other and help support its MFT standard.⁷⁷ CrescentRating has kept its MFT accommodation standard process simple by allowing hotels to self-evaluate for free without an on-site audit.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ “Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services Standard.” *Discover Malaysia - Your Muslim-Friendly Destination*. ITC Malaysia, 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁷⁵ Zulkifly, Said Md. *Islamic Tourism: Sharing Malaysia’s Best Practices*. Islamic Tourism Centre, 16 Nov. 2015. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁷⁶ Malaysia. Department of Standards Malaysia. *MS 2610:2015 Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services - Requirements*. Kuala Lumpur: Standards Malaysia, 2015. Print.

⁷⁷ Bahardeen, Fazal. Best Practice: *CrescentRating*. CrescentRating, 2015. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁷⁸ “CrescentRating Overview for Hotels.” *World’s Leading Authority on Halal Travel @ CrescentRating*. Crescent Rating, 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.



Croatia's MFT Standard

In Croatia, the Center for Halal Quality Certification has taken the lead on the issue of MFT accommodation standards. Prompted by an initial request from a local hotel to be certified⁷⁹, the Center has formulated specific guidelines for hotels to get Halal certification, while adopting pre-existing Bosnian standards for the Halal food/restaurant side of the hotel.⁸⁰

The Center plays a wide-ranging role; it reviews applications from hotels, trains them, and then inspects them to evaluate whether or not they meet the standard.⁸¹ The Center for Halal Quality Certification is the sole source of MFT standards and certifications in Croatia, having been empowered by an agreement with the government and consumer protection laws that prevent hotels from self-certifying on MFT attributes.⁸²

Salam Standard

The Salam Standard originated in Malaysia in 2015; it was introduced by a travel company, Lagisatu Travel (tripfez.com). Over 50,000 Muslim travelers provided feedback about key MFT criteria to help shape the Salam Standard.⁸³ Salam Standard criteria are relatively easy to measure and adopt. Lagisatu Travel has a large database and pre-existing relationships with thousands of self-reporting accommodation providers. International adoption of the standard appears to be broad, however, there are no inspections of hotels to verify the level of MFT services provided.

Turkey's MFT Standards and Regulations

Both the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Turkish Standards Institution (TSE) are working on the development of MFT sector. The former is focused on developing Turkey's tourism sector, while the latter is acting in response to demand from accommodation providers. TSE developed its voluntary standard over two and a half years by convening a committee with representative stakeholders, developing a draft, soliciting feedback from a broader network of stakeholders, revising and approving the draft, and finally publishing the standard in 2016. The Ministry started its regulations' development process in 2016 by following a similar process.^{84 85}

SMIIC

The Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), which is an institution working under Organization of Islamic Cooperation (the OIC), is also developing an MFT standard in response to requests from the OIC member countries, and from the tourism industry.⁸⁶ SMIIC's TC5 Tourism Related Standard is expected to be launched in 2017. As with other standards that SMIIC has developed, its Standardization Department has established a

⁷⁹ Telephone interview for MFT Standards. 8 Sep. 2016.

⁸⁰ Croatia. Centre for Halal Quality Certification. *Draft Croatian Halal Standard – BAS 1049 :2010*. Zagreb: Centre for Halal Quality Certification, 2013. Print.

⁸¹ Croatia. Centre for Halal Quality Certification. *Regulations on Certification and Categorization: Accommodation Facilities (as Required, Halal Quality)*. Zagreb: Centre for Halal Quality Certification, 2015. Print.

⁸² Croatia. Centre for Halal Quality Certification. *Regulations on Certification and Categorization: Accommodation Facilities (as Required, Halal Quality)*. Zagreb: Centre for Halal Quality Certification, 2015. Print.

⁸³ PTI. "World's First Hotel Standard for Muslim Travellers Launched." *The New Indian Express*. New Indian Express, 21 Oct. 2015. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁸⁴ Personal interview for MFT Standards. 27 Sept. 2016.

⁸⁵ Personal interview for MFT Standards. 23 Sept. 2016.

⁸⁶ Personal interview for MFT Standards. September 2016.

working committee to define the MFT standard.⁸⁷ SMIC has engaged private sector experts and representatives in this process as advisors.⁸⁸

Other MFT Standards Being Developed

Several other countries are also exploring the adoption or possible development of MFT standards, often based on an existing standard. For example, the Mexican Ministry of Tourism is exploring the studies carried out by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey on MFT and conventional tourism market to meet their growing local demand.⁸⁹ Azerbaijan is also developing its own MFT standard based on Turkey's standards. Similarly, Korea has officially approached Malaysian authorities to help develop a local MFT standard similar to Malaysia's.⁹⁰ On the other hand, in Spain, an NGO, Instituto Halal, has taken the lead to develop its own internal MFT standard, building on its experience in Halal food certification.⁹¹

Some of the government officials interviewed within the context of this study have cited that their countries are planning to introduce MFT regulations including; Turkey, Azerbaijan, Uganda, Cameroon and Mali. Interviewees from Burkina Faso and the UAE indicated that they have no plans for introducing MFT regulations. As Malaysia's current and Turkey's planned MFT regulations are presented in detail in their respective case study, the following table outlines the services that are to be regulated by the planned MFT regulations in Azerbaijan, Uganda, Cameroon and Mali.

⁸⁷ Made of up representatives from standardization bodies of SMIC members including Cameroon, Gambia, Iran, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia, and Turkey, with observers from Bangladesh and Mauritania

⁸⁸ Personal interview for MFT Standards. 21 Sept. 2016. SMIC

⁸⁹ Personal interview for MFT Standards. 27 Sept. 2016. General Directorate of Investment and Establishments, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey

⁹⁰ Personal interview for MFT Standards. Islamic Tourism Centre

⁹¹ E-mail interview. for MFT Standards .27 Sept. 2016

Table 10: Planned MFT Regulations

	Azerbaijan	Uganda	Cameroon	Mali
Regulated Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Halal food ✓ No alcohol served in hotel ✓ Qibla direction in rooms ✓ Prayer mat in rooms ✓ Bidet or handheld sprayer in bathrooms ✓ Separate spa facilities for women ✓ Separate gym for women ✓ Staff wears modest clothes ✓ Family-friendly entertainment ✓ Offering Ramadan services, such as Iftar buffets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Halal food ✓ No alcohol stocked in the hotel room ✓ Qibla direction in rooms ✓ Prayer mat in rooms ✓ Bidet or handheld sprayer in bathrooms ✓ Dedicated prayer room ✓ Jumaa (Friday) prayers in congregation ✓ Dedicated pool timings for women ✓ Separate spa facilities for women ✓ Separate gym for women ✓ Staff wears modest clothes ✓ No adult channels in rooms ✓ Family-friendly entertainment ✓ Offering Ramadan services, such as Iftar buffets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Halal food ✓ Qibla direction in rooms ✓ Prayer mat in rooms ✓ Bidet or handheld sprayer in bathrooms ✓ Dedicated prayer room ✓ Jumaa (Friday) prayers in congregation ✓ Dedicated pool timings for women ✓ Staff wears modest clothes ✓ Ramadan services, such as Iftar buffets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Halal food ✓ No alcohol served in hotel ✓ No alcohol stocked in the hotel room ✓ Qibla direction in rooms ✓ Prayer mat in rooms ✓ Bidet or handheld sprayer in bathrooms ✓ Dedicated prayer room ✓ Staff wears modest clothes ✓ Ramadan services, such as Iftar buffets

Source: DinarStandard

3.3 Responsible Bodies for Developing and Implementing MFT Regulations

As shown in the previous section, there are different players involved in the process of development and implementation of existing MFT standards. A different set of stakeholders may participate in the standard development and implementation process depending on whether the standard is local or regional and on whether the standard setter is a governmental or a private entity. This section lists the various bodies/entities that were involved in MFT regulations.

Government Bodies: A local government can play a variety of roles; it may pass legislation introducing an MFT standard, such as in the case of Malaysia. It may also empower a third party with exclusive authority to develop MFT standards, as in the case of Croatia and Taiwan.⁹² Specific government departments or authorities may also play additional, specific roles. Tourism ministries or authorities often take the lead in coordinating the development of local MFT standards, such as in the case of Malaysia. They may also introduce MFT

⁹² Fitriati, Afia. "Taiwan Eyes Muslim Travellers." *Aquila Style*. Aquila Style, 21 Oct. 2013. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

elements into conventional standards, such as in the case of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Local standard setting organizations may set MFT standards as in the case of Standards Malaysia and may also conduct certification in some cases as in the case of the Turkish Standards Institution.

Local/Regional/International Organizations: In several the non-OIC countries, local Islamic organizations often fill a gap in evaluating and certifying MFT offerings, such as in the case of Croatia and Taiwan. In Croatia, the Center for Halal Quality Certification works on developing MFT standards, reviewing applications from hotels, and training and inspecting them.⁹³ Within the the OIC, the Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries [SMIIC] works with the OIC governments and other local and international organizations on harmonizing standards.

Private Entities: Some private enterprises have developed MFT standards, as in the case of CrescentRating and Salam Standard. Both standards are voluntary and rely mainly on hotels' self-evaluations. CrescentRating relies also on third party certification bodies to verify Halal food elements per local standards.⁹⁴

In the context of this study, accommodation sector survey respondents were asked which global/regional bodies should be responsible for setting up a Muslim-friendly hospitality services standard, 31% of accommodation sector respondents believed national bodies should be involved while 19% to 20% cited regional standardization bodies and Islamic countries based bodies. Non-profit hospitality sector organizations and private enterprises were also cited by 11% of the respondents. It is worth noting that 45% of the accommodation sector respondents mentioned that they do not know which body should be responsible for setting up a Muslim-friendly hospitality services standard.

In the framework of the government sector survey, government officials were asked which global/regional bodies should be responsible for setting up a Muslim-friendly hospitality services standard; they were divided mainly between those who preferred national and Islamic countries bodies such as SMIIC. Few preferred regional standardization organizations.

⁹³ Croatia. Centre for Halal Quality Certification. *Regulations on Certification and Categorization: Accommodation Facilities (as Required, Halal Quality)*. Zagreb: Centre for Halal Quality Certification, 2015. Print.

⁹⁴ "Halal Certification Bodies." *World's Leading Authority on Halal Travel â CrescentRating*. Crescent Rating, 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

3.4 Current MFT Standards/Regulations and their Components

As outlined in the previous section, MFT standards and regulations have been developed by government bodies, private entities as well as local, regional and international organizations in both the OIC and non the OIC countries. The following table summarizes the efforts of the various bodies that have created MFT standards.

Table 11: Selected List of Current MFT Standards

Standard	Country	Standard Releasing Body	Type of Body	Criteria Measured	Examples of Establishments Implementing Standard
MS 2610:2015	Malaysia	Standards Malaysia	Government	Various MFT elements (food, prayer, wellness, training) at hotels, tour operators	Grand Seasons Mandarin Oriental
TS 13683⁹⁵	Turkey	TSE (Turkish Standards Institution)	Government	Various elements beyond basic MFT (management, offerings, design, operations, conduct)	Ikbal Thermal Hotel (application in process)
Rulebook of Certifying and Categorization of Hospitality Services, ...	Croatia	Center for Halal Quality Certification	NGO ⁹⁶	Various MFT elements (food, prayer, wellness, recreation)	Esplanade Westin
Crescent Rating⁹⁷	Global	CrescentRating	Private	4 main criteria with 20 elements (related to food, prayer, Ramadan, and recreation)	Grand Blue Wave (Malaysia); Nouvo City Hotel (Thailand); Aljawhara Gardens (Dubai)
Salam Standard	Global	Lagitasu Travel	Private	More of a directory with MFT attributes than a standard	>10 k hotels, incl. Archipelago Hotel Group, chains ⁹⁸
Taiwan MFT certification	Taiwan	China Muslim Association	Government-backed, NGO-run	(standard n/a; likely elements are prayer and food related)	Ambassador Hotel Taipei ⁹⁹
Sofyan Standard¹⁰⁰	Regional (from Indonesia)	Sofyan Hotels	Privately	Full standard n/a, but covers operation, offerings	Radana (Bali)
Instituto Halal internal standard¹⁰¹	Spain	Instituto Halal	NGO-run	Basic MFT elements (Quran availability, prayer rug, Halal food, Qibla, prayer time tables, prayer room)	Alanda, Hotel El Palace, Tryp Meliá Córdoba

Source: DinarStandard

⁹⁵ Turkey. TÜRK STANDARDLARI ENSTİTÜSÜ. *TURKISH STANDARD TS 13683: Halal Management System - Hotels*. Ankara: TSE, 2016. Print. ICS 03.080.30; 03.200.

⁹⁶ Empowered by government to have exclusive authority on "Halal" issues

⁹⁷ "CrescentRating Overview for Hotels." *World's Leading Authority on Halal Travel* â€œ CrescentRating. Crescent Rating, 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

⁹⁸ "Muslim-friendly Hotel Standard Portal Goes Live." *ITB Asia*. TTG Asia Media, 29 Oct. 2015. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

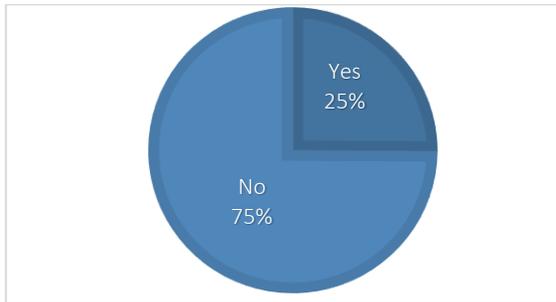
⁹⁹ "Dining and Accommodation for Muslim." *Taiwan: The Heart of Asia*. Tourism Bureau, Republic of China, 2 Sept. 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

¹⁰⁰ Telephone interview for MFT Standards.. 10 Oct. 2016.

¹⁰¹ E-mail interview for MFT Standards.. 27 Sept. 2016.

It is worth noting that only 25% of the respondents of the Muslim Traveler Survey respondents were aware of MFT regulations/standards for the Muslim-friendly hospitality sector; half of those respondents (51%) mentioned being aware of a government standard while 40% were aware of the Salam Standard and 28% were aware of the CrescentRating Standard.

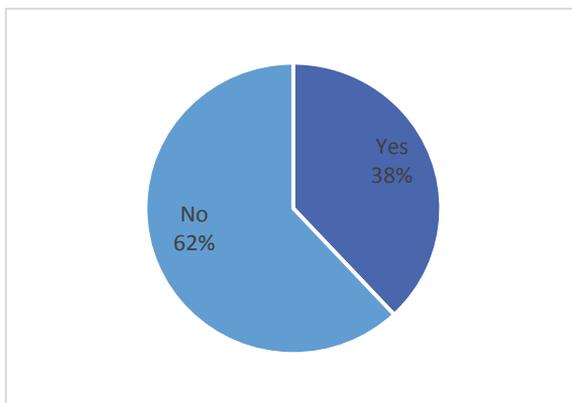
Figure 10: Muslim Travelers' Awareness of MFT Standards



Source: DinarStandard

When accommodation sector respondents were asked if they were aware of MFT regulations/standards for the Muslim-friendly hospitality sector, only 38% of the survey respondents cited that they were. 61% of those respondents mentioned being aware of a government standard while 45% were aware of the Salam Standard¹⁰² and 10% were aware of the CrescentRating Standard.

Figure 11: Accommodation Sector Survey - Awareness of MFT Standards



Source: DinarStandard

There are a number of common elements measured by current MFT standards, such as having Halal food, Qibla sign, and the inclusion of a bidet or hand spray in toilets. Other elements, such as a separate beach for women or supplying guests with lists of mosques and nearby eateries, are measured by a few MFT standards. It is important to note that some MFT standards may have a scoring system with various levels while others have only a single level

¹⁰² It is worth noting that TripFez, which is a sister company to Salam Standard, assisted with survey distribution. 20 responses were collected from their efforts.

certification. The following table lists the common MFT elements that are considered by selected standards.

Table 12: Common Elements of selected MFT standards

Measured Element	Crescent	Malaysia	Turkey	Croatia ¹⁰⁶	Salam
	Rating ¹⁰³	MS 2610 ¹⁰⁴	TS 13683 ¹⁰⁵		Standard ¹⁰⁷
Qibla in room	√	√	√	√	
Bidet/Hose	√	√	√		
Halal food on site	√	√	√	√	√
No pork, etc. on site	√	√	√	√	
No alcohol on site	√	√	√	√	
No casinos, clubs on site	√	√	√		
No adult channels or non-Halal activities on site	√	√	√		
Prayer schedule on request	√	√	√	√	
Prayer rug on request	√	√		√	√
Hijab on request	√	√			
Alcohol-free minibar	√	√	√	√	√
Women –only pools	√	√	√	√	
Women-only beach	√			√	
Suhoor/Iftar provision	√	√	√	√	
Gender-separated wellness facilities and services (physically or by time)	√	√	√	√	
Halal sanitary/ wellness products	√	√	√	√	
List of local mosques	√		√		
List of local Halal eateries	√	√			√
Quran on request	√	√	√		
Transport to local mosque (Ramadan)	√				
Group prayer area	√	√	√		

¹⁰³ "CrescentRating Overview for Hotels." *World's Leading Authority on Halal Travel* CrescentRating. Crescent Rating, 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

¹⁰⁴ Malaysia. Department of Standards Malaysia. *MS 2610:2015 Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services - Requirements*. Kuala Lumpur: Standards Malaysia, 2015. Print.

¹⁰⁵ Turkey. TÜRK STANDARLARI ENSTİTÜSÜ. *TURKISH STANDARD TS 13683: Halal Management System - Hotels*. Ankara: TSE, 2016. Print. ICS 03.080.30; 03.200.

¹⁰⁶ Croatia. Centre for Halal Quality Certification. *Regulations on Certification and Categorization: Accommodation Facilities (as Required, Halal Quality)*. Zagreb: Centre for Halal Quality Certification, 2015. Print.; Score based on level requiring the feature

¹⁰⁷ "The Innovative, New Hospitality Standard Dedicated to Muslim Travellers." *Salam Standard*. Tripfez.com, 2016. Web. 17 Oct. 2016.

MFT processes (admin, training etc.)	√	√	√
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Source: DinarStandard

As the table shows, there are many common elements measured across MFT standards. It is important to mention that there are a number of MFT elements that are only measured by Turkey’s TS 13683, that have not been included in the table above, such as having an internet content filter, anti-noise insulation for room, bathroom and prayer area, public wudu area, reading room with Islamic literature, Friday prayers or transport to local mosque, modest staff attire, Shariah-compliant code of conduct for staff and guests, traditional and Western toilets on site, toilet not facing Qibla, pet management policies, and having Islam-appropriate art, artists, posts, music, entertainment, etc.

All of the current MFT standards seem to acknowledge the importance of certifying Halal food, which is a major concern for Muslim travelers as previous research studies have indicated. Some MFT standards have adopted Halal food standards as part of their requirements, which could be considered practical as well as a way to build on the strength and recognition of well-established Halal food standards.

The basic limitation that all standards seem to share at this point is the low level of awareness of MFT standards in general as illustrated by the results of both the consumer and the accommodation surveys. A major weakness for some of the standards, which affects their level of adoption, is the low level of involvement of the various stakeholders in developing the standards. For voluntary MFT standards, a major flaw is their self-reporting strategy, especially when coupled with a lack of auditing and inspections, since they can lose credibility with consumers in case of inconsistencies between the expected and actual MFT services provided.

3.5 Main challenges

There are a number of challenges facing the development of MFT standards, including the different interpretations of “Halal” in the accommodation context according to madhabs and level of practice, the different needs of Muslim and non-Muslim guests, the variations between MFT and conventional quality standards requirements in some cases, and the complexity of evaluating Halal elements in the hospitality industry due to its wide range of constantly evolving products. Furthermore, the shortage of experienced inspectors, who are well versed in the accommodation sector, poses a serious challenge to implementing the standards once they are developed.

In terms of standard adoption, MFT standards, especially if voluntary, have a low rate of adoption by accommodation providers. Many hotel operators are reluctant to adopt them out of fear of alienating non-Muslim guests.¹⁰⁸ The cost of adding MFT services that certain standards are measuring may also deter hotels from adopting an MFT standard. The complexity of the procedures for adoption, implementation, and inspection can pose a challenge for hotels seeking to become MFT certified.

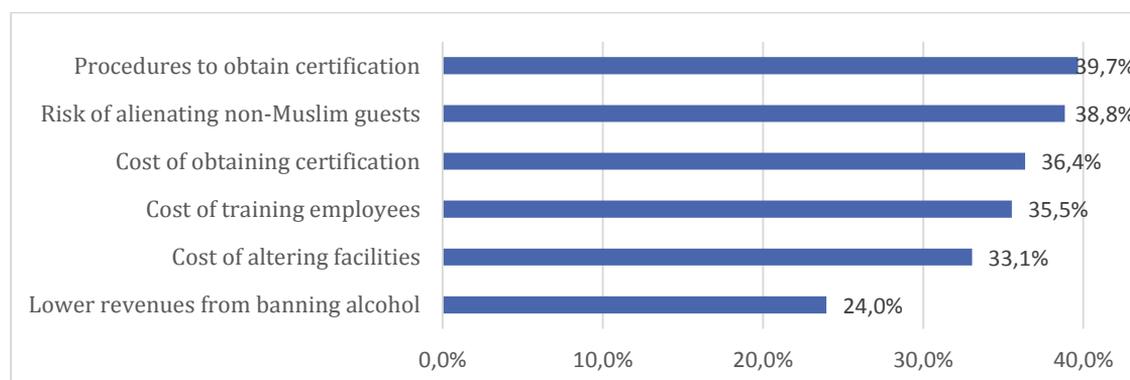
¹⁰⁸ Telephone interview for MFT Standards. 10 Oct. 2016.

It is important to note that the emergence of multiple MFT standards could also be a hindrance to the development of the MFT sector, as the consumer survey indicated that a large percent of Muslim travelers (61%) would find the presence of multiple standards to be confusing¹⁰⁹ which would negate the marketing benefits that hotels seek in adopting MFT standards.

When government officials interviewed within the context of this study were asked about the challenges in increasing the rate of establishments adopting a Muslim-friendly accommodation standard, most interviewees mentioned the cost and the procedures involved in getting MFT certification while many mentioned the risk of alienating non-Muslim guests. The Malaysian government official cited the difficulty of getting industry buy-in and their preference for voluntary standards.

As for accommodation sector survey respondents, when they were asked about the challenges in following a Muslim-friendly accommodation standard, the procedures to obtain certification topped the list of challenges (40%) followed closely by the risk of alienating non-Muslim guests (39%). As shown by the following graph, costs associated with MFT certification, training employees and altering facilities to offer MFT services were also cited by at least a third of the respondents. A quarter of the respondents cited the loss of revenues from alcohol as one of the challenges in following an MFT standard.

Figure 125: Accommodation Sector Survey - Challenges in Adopting MFT Standards



Source: DinarStandard

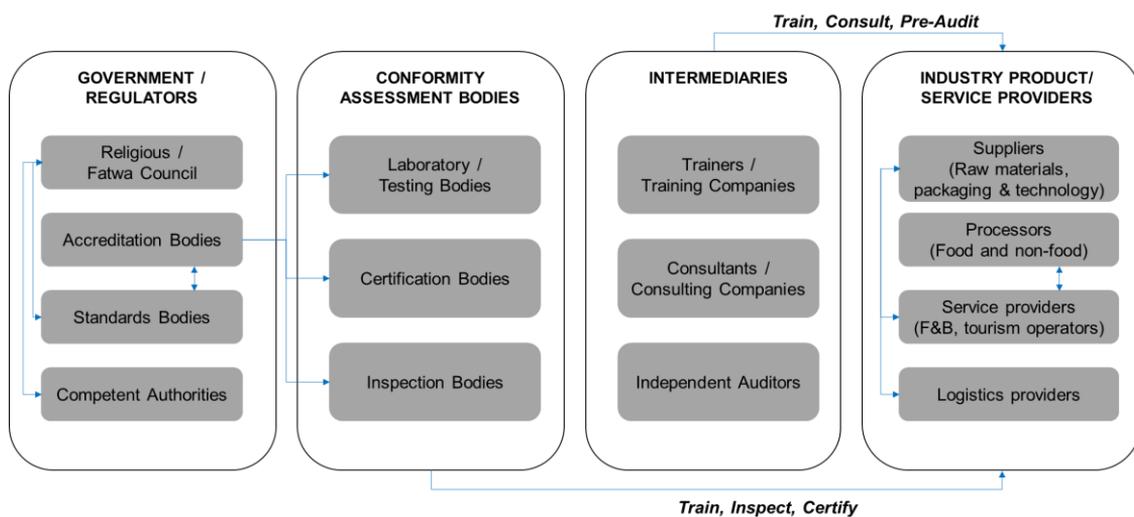
3.6 Lessons Learned

Some of the current MFT standards have employed a number of successful strategies to deal with the challenges facing the development, implementation and adoption of the standards. In developing standards, feedback is collected from many key stakeholders in “Halal” and accommodation sectors and all MFT key terms are consistently defined, as in the case of Malaysia. To facilitate implementation, training on standards is provided. To increase standard adoption, standards are simplified and self-evaluation is allowed as an initial step for basic levels.

¹⁰⁹ “Muslim Friendly Tourism: Developing and Marketing MFT Products and Services In the OIC Member Countries” Report. 8th COMCEC Tourism Working Group. August 2016. Web.

There are also some important lessons to be learned from Muslim-Friendly standards in other areas of the Islamic Economy. While no global “Halal” standard yet exists in any sector, standard development is perhaps most mature in the Halal food industry. Current MFT accommodation standards have built on existent Halal food certification, adopting prevailing “Halal food” standards and certifications to apply to hotel restaurants and kitchens. Still, a review of standard development progress and setbacks in the Halal food sector provides valuable insights for MFT standard development as many of the same issues prevail in standard development across these sectors.¹¹⁰ The following figure illustrates the common stakeholders in standard development across various areas of the Islamic Economy.

Figure 13: Islamic Economy Standard Development Stakeholders



Source: DinarStandard

Some of the key lessons for MFT accommodation standards from the Halal food standard development include: mutual recognition of different regional standards, benefiting from the valuable know-how of existing accreditation and certification players, avoiding potential conflicts of interest between accreditation and certification roles, engaging stakeholders through consultation and coordination and training, and minimizing the cost of accreditation and certification especially for voluntary standards.

Standard development in “Halal” pharmaceuticals can also offer some guidance for MFT. For example, CCM Berhad, a private sector company, took the initiative to draft guidelines for Halal pharmaceutical standards in Malaysia. CCM Berhad then lobbied for the adoption of its draft standard. This initiative bypassed several typical standard development steps and helped shorten the process to six months.¹¹¹ Additional lessons from other “Halal” sectors include: ensuring certification, accreditation, and enforcement mechanisms are in place when standard is issued, requiring certifiers to present “scheme document” or standard operating procedure for its inspections for accreditation in new areas, adding new expertise to “Halal”

¹¹⁰ Latif, Haroon. *Municipal Halal Strategy*. Rep. N.p.: DinarStandard, 2016. Print

¹¹¹ Telephone interview for MFT Standards. 14 Oct. 2016.



certification, inspection, accreditation, and standard-setting entities if missing, differentiating between accredited and non-accredited certifiers especially in the non-OIC markets, and avoiding conflicts of interest such as in the case of certifiers acting as consultants.

4 Case Studies

4.1 Malaysia

Malaysia is one of the top destinations for Muslim tourists. With a large Muslim population of its own, Malaysia is very well equipped to serve domestic and international Muslim tourists. Through the efforts of JAKIM, Malaysia has a strong Halal certification body and through the Halal Development Corporation (HDC) a well-versed agency to promote Halal products and services locally and overseas. Since it has developed one of the first Muslim-friendly hospitality services standards in the world, Malaysia is at the forefront of structuring Muslim-friendly hospitality regulations and is continuously offering its assistance to other countries and organizations who wish to embark on a similar journey.

The Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Services standard - MFHS (MS 2610:2015) is a standard issued by the *Department of Standards Malaysia*. The Department of Standards Malaysia is the national standards and accreditation body of Malaysia under the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MOSTI). Standards Malaysia appointed SIRIM Berhad as the agent to develop, distribute, and sell the standard.

The creation of MFHS follows the Malaysian government's recommendation in the Malaysian Islamic Tourism Blueprint (Strategic Plan for Islamic Tourism Development) to develop a benchmarking and quality assurance mechanism for Islamic Tourism in the country. This government initiative follows the plan to establish Malaysia as one of the major Muslim tourism hubs in the world.

The Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Services standard was developed through consensus by a technical committee, which comprised of a balanced representation of producers, users, consumers, and other relevant stakeholders. The approval of standard is governed by the Standards of Malaysia Act 1996 (Act 549) and every standard is reviewed periodically. The MFHS was published in 2015 and has not been amended since. The use and adoption of MFHS is voluntary.

The main objective of the Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Services standard was to set up an assurance system to preserve the integrity of products and services provided for Muslim travellers. It was developed to ensure that products and services for Muslim travellers follow Sharia principles. The objectives can be summarized as¹¹²:

- Enhancing the ability of an organization or individual to produce and/or manage Muslim-friendly tourism products and services,
- Preserving the protecting the integrity of Muslim-friendly tourism products and services through the application of the standard, and
- Enhancing the customer satisfaction by meeting their needs and requirements.

¹¹² MS2610:2015 – Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services – Requirements, Department of Standards, retrieved September, 2016



MFHS covers the areas of Muslim-friendly accommodation, tour packages and tour guide services.

There is an increasing interest in the Malaysian MFHS standard and in learning from the Malaysian experience in the area of Muslim-friendly regulations. Many governments and associations have approached ITC to help them create their own standards as many countries consider adapting an existing standard like MFHS to their specific national needs. Currently, ITC is officially assisting Korea with the development of a standard for Korean hospitality businesses. ¹¹³

4.1.1 Standard Development Process

For the development of any standard in Malaysia, a technical committee needs to be formed.¹¹⁴ The MFHS standard was developed by the technical committee on Management System from Islamic Perspectives, which comprised of the following representatives: the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), the Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC), the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia, the International Islamic University Malaysia, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, the Muslim Consumers Association of Malaysia, the Research Institute of Standards in Islam, SIRIM QAS International, Yayasan Ilmuwan (Education Foundation) and Sirim Berhad (which also formed the secretariat).¹¹⁵

In addition to the members of the technical committee, representatives, from the industry and associations in Malaysia are also consulted. Industry representatives and associations include representatives from the Bumiputera Travel and Tour Agents Association of Malaysia (Bumitra), the International Halal Integrity Alliance, the International Islamic University Malaysia, the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA), the Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH), the Malaysian Association of Hotel Owners (MAHO), the Malaysian Tourist Guides Council, and the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia (represented by the Islamic Tourism Centre – ITC and Tourism Malaysia).¹¹⁶

The technical committee and industry representatives had their first discussions in 2012. Meetings ensued to outline the needs of the hospitality industry and to formulate the different criteria of the standard. The initial standard was completed by the end of 2014 after a two-month public comment period. An initial version of the standard was released in the beginning of 2015. The official launch of the standard was in December 2015 by the Deputy Minister of Tourism. The overall process of kick-starting the discussion, drafting and publishing of the standard took approximately three years.¹¹⁷

MFHS was not modelled after any existing mainstream standards, but references were made to a few existing Malaysian standards, like the MS1900:2014 (Sharia based quality

¹¹³ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, Islamic Tourism Centre, October 2016

¹¹⁴ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, Islamic Tourism Centre

¹¹⁵ MS2610:2015 – Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services – Requirements, Department of Standards, retrieved September, 2016

¹¹⁶ MS2610:2015 – Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services – Requirements, Department of Standards, retrieved September, 2016

¹¹⁷ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, Islamic Tourism Centre

management systems), MS2393 (Islamic and Halal Principals), Halal Pharmaceuticals and Halal Packaging as well as the Malaysian Tourism Industry Act of 1992, the IHI Alliance of Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Services (first Edition), and the MATTA Code of Ethics and the MTGC Code of Ethics.¹¹⁸

Currently, the standard is not certified by any official body, but acts as a guideline for accommodation providers and tour and travel agents offering Muslim-friendly products. Currently, over 300 hotels in Malaysia are estimated to be Muslim-friendly.¹¹⁹

4.1.2 Requirements of the Standard

The requirements of the standard for an accommodation are divided into two categories: general and specific requirements. General requirements involve management and personnel responsibilities, training, documentation and storage, communication and an MFHS management system while specific requirements cover the accommodation establishment's rooms, food and beverages, public prayer rooms "musalla", public washrooms, and recreational and wellness facilities.

A. General Requirements

- Management has to ensure the establishment of the framework, the execution of all outlined MFHS practices and the commitment to improve MFHS on a continuous basis.
- Management should appoint a trained Muslim officer to ensure the implementation of MFHS.
- The Organization should hire competent and educated personnel and offer training to ensure competence.
- A list of all Muslim-friendly products and services offered should be provided as well as constantly updated to ensure that Muslim guests are able to make an informed decision.

B. Specific Requirements

- The rooms of the accommodation should be suitable for Muslim guests by including the following:
 - Qibla direction sign in the room, placed by JAKIM
 - Ablution facilities in the bathroom (bidet, hand shower or a water hose)
 - Halal personal care products/suitable for Muslims to use
 - No alcohol in the mini-bar of the room
 - Prayer mat is available or can be requested
 - Female Prayer Garment is available or can be requested

¹¹⁸ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, Islamic Tourism Centre

¹¹⁹ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, Islamic Tourism Centre

- Quran is available or can be requested
- Praying timetable is available or can be requested
- The kitchen of the accommodation has to be Halal certified by JAKIM.
- Sohour and Iftar is available during Ramadan.
- A Public prayer rooms is available.
- Muslim-friendly recreational and wellness facilities are available.

4.1.3 Certification Process and Regulations

The Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Services standard can be purchased and downloaded online via the website of SIRIM. It can also be purchased from the Islamic Tourism Centre in Putrajaya and during selected fairs and road shows. All necessary guidelines to follow the standard are described within the document. The current online purchase price is MYR20 (equivalent to approx. 5USD).¹²⁰

The accommodation or travel service provider can voluntarily follow the guidelines set in the standards. There is no certification process currently; it is up to the accommodation or service provider to follow the criteria outlined in the standard. The standard is currently not required. In the future, Malaysia tourism authorities might consider providing a certification process for the standard.¹²¹

To encourage accommodation providers to follow the standard, the Islamic Tourism Centre organizes many road shows and industry sessions to introduce the standard to the hospitality industry and the public and outline the benefits of following the standard. The Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents organizes industry events to inform the stakeholders on the standard and encourage travel agents in Malaysia to promote Muslim-friendly accommodation to their Muslim customers. In the context of these industry events, stakeholders expressed the importance of a wide industry participation in both formulating and implementing the standard, because the acceptance of industry players is crucial in the success of any new standard. As the standard is voluntary, the acceptance of the hospitality industry is much better than if it was required.¹²²

4.1.4 Standards' Effects on the Accommodation Sector

Marketing

The MFHS standard can be used as a marketing tool by accommodation providers in promoting their establishments.¹²³ Businesses, which follow and display Muslim-friendly

¹²⁰ Website of Malaysian Standards Online (www.msonline.gov.my), retrieved October 2016

¹²¹ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, Islamic Tourism Centre

¹²² Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, Islamic Tourism Centre, October 2016

¹²³ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, Perhentian Island Resort, October 2016

standards, see positive effects in market segmentation and target a specific market segment, in this case the Muslim travellers, better.¹²⁴

Increase of Muslim guests

Hotels, which follow MFHS, witness an increase in the number of Muslim guests due to the higher level of service and offering targeting these guests. Thus, hotels see an advantage in selling to guests who are conscious and very particular about their religion.¹²⁵

Favourable Customer Perception and Experience

A Muslim guest feels safer and more comfortable if they know the accommodation they are staying in is Muslim-friendly.¹²⁶ Offering Muslim-friendly services creates an inclusive travel experience for Muslim travellers.¹²⁷

4.1.5 Challenges and Lessons Learned

Standard Formulation

Initially, the formulation of a standard, which incorporates all necessary elements of being Muslim-friendly without being too strict at the same time, is a challenge in itself. Otherwise, most accommodations could not fulfil the criteria, especially in non-Muslim countries. It also needs to be researched, which amenities and services are really needed by the consumer itself. Research by the University Malaya revealed that Muslim travellers see Halal food and the location of a surau/mosque as the most important criteria. Other criteria are an additional benefit for an accommodation, but less important to the consumer. To formulate a standard, it needs wide industry participation and in-depth research to ensure both practicability as well as usability. In the case of the Malaysian standard, this was achieved through continuous industry engagement sessions.¹²⁸

Standard Adoption by the Industry

In general, accommodation businesses and service providers seem to insist that following standards needs to be voluntary. This may lead to low levels of standard adoption by the industry. One way of meeting the challenge of standard adoption is through widespread campaigns, road shows, and industry information sessions. Outlining the benefits of participating in the standard can motivate many businesses to adopt it.¹²⁹ An additional suggestion to motivate the industry to participate can be the implementation of an incentive

¹²⁴ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, University of Malaya, October 2016

¹²⁵ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, Perhentian Island Resort, October 2016

¹²⁶ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, MATTA, October 2016

¹²⁷ Stephensen, M. (2014) Deciphering 'Islamic hospitality': Developments, challenges and opportunities, *Tourism Management* Vol. 40, p 155-164.

¹²⁸ The Readiness of Malaysian Accommodations Towards Shariah-Compliance, unpublished research paper, University of Malaya, 2016

¹²⁹ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, Islamic Tourism Centre, October 2016

system. As an option, it was suggested that accommodation providers who adhere to the MFHS could receive benefits like additional tax breaks, etc.¹³⁰

Non-Muslim Guests' Perceptions

Many accommodation providers mention the potential risk of alienating non-Muslim guests and losing income and bookings as one of their biggest fears in participating in a Muslim-friendly standard.¹³¹ Even though there is conclusive research documenting the effects of adopting Muslim-friendly standards on accommodation establishments' profits, the subjective fears of the industry are widespread.¹³² To overcome this fear, in-depth empirical research need to be conducted to look into the effects of adopting Muslim-friendly accommodation standards on accommodation establishments. Some hospitality industry players also mentioned their apprehension at mixing religion with the general business of providing accommodation.¹³³

Global vs. Regional/National Standards

There is a no consensus on whether one global or several regional/national Muslim-friendly standards would be better. While one global standard has a better recognition potential and can be uniformly promoted¹³⁴, it might be impossible to implement due to cultural differences. Even in the case of Muslim majority countries, it can be quite hard to overcome political and cultural differences to formulate a global standard.¹³⁵ A challenge would also be which organization or international body would overlook the implementation of such a global standard, as it would always make a standard a political tool of some kind.¹³⁶ On the other hand, while regional/national standards would be easier to adapt to national/regional needs, their localized nature would not guarantee the global recognition a uniform standard may have.

Gender Separated Facilities

The separation of swimming pools or gyms for men and women is a big challenge for accommodation providers especially for operational hotels where there are no such facilities in place which can make it quite costly to if not impossible to incorporate them. Some accommodation providers address this challenge by providing different hours for men and women for the use of the swimming pool or gym facilities.¹³⁷ Even though many standards require separated facilities, many travellers expressed their discontent with this practice. Families or groups travelling together, including Muslim guests, may want to enjoy the facilities with each other. The fact that guests are objecting to having only gender separated

¹³⁰ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, University of Malaya, October 2016

¹³¹ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, Perhentian Island Resort, October 2016

¹³² Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, MATTA, October 2016

¹³³ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, Perhentian Island Resort, October 2016

¹³⁴ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, Islamic Tourism Centre, October 2016

¹³⁵ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, Islamic Tourism Centre, October 2016

¹³⁶ Ponte, S. & Gibbon, P. (2011). *Governing through standards: origins, drivers and limitations*. Published by: Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

¹³⁷ Battour, M., et al. (2010). The impact of destination attributes on Muslim tourist's choice, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 16, Issue 6, p. 527-540.

swimming pools may entail having such a feature as optional on a Muslim-friendly standard.
138

Implementation Cost

The cost of implementation in terms of altering existing facilities to become more Muslim-friendly is surely another challenge facing Muslim-friendly standards. Investors need to be willing to change or upgrade existing facilities to be Muslim-friendly. This could be particularly problematic for international chains which have a very strict standardization of their facilities and services and which will not commit to making large if the expected return is not at least equal to the investment.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, University of Malaya, October 2016

¹³⁹ Interview conducted for the Malaysia case study, University of Malaya, October 2016

4.2 Turkey

Turkey is the sixth largest tourism destination, with 36.3 million foreign visitors in 2015. An estimated 5.8 million of those tourists came from Muslim countries and spent a total of \$31 billion.¹⁴⁰ With 11 million domestic Muslim tourists, Turkey's accommodation establishments host more than 15 million Muslims every year. The 4,500 registered accommodation establishments have a total of 1.2 million bed-capacity.¹⁴¹ In the early 2000s, there was less than ten hotels identifying themselves as Halal across Turkey. Currently, there are nearly 140 hotels identifying themselves as Halal or Islamic hotels, from beach resorts to green resorts, and thermal hotels.¹⁴² However, there are no Halal certified hotels in the country. GIMDES, a private Halal certifier based in Istanbul, mostly focused on food certification, has released its Halal tourism standard several years ago. But no hotels have been certified by the standard yet.¹⁴³

According to the Turkish Standard Institute (TSE), the interest in MFT standards was initiated by the tourism industry, namely hoteliers.¹⁴⁴ In response to the industry's interest, TSE launched its MFT standard - TS 13683 Halal Management System-Hotels - in Feb 2016 after two and a half years of preparation. The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism was motivated by the fast developments in MFT market both in Turkey and around the world to start to develop its own MFT regulations this year. The Ministry has monitored the rise of the Halal tourism trend and decided to meet the demands for MFT regulation coming from hotel entrepreneurs.¹⁴⁵

4.2.1 Standard Development Process

The Turkish Standards Institution (TSE) has started to work on developing an MFT standard at the end of 2013. The standard, TSE Halal Management System TS 13683, was completed in Feb 2016. The standard was developed with the help of an academic consultation committee, consisting of 16 experts many of whom are professors from different universities, including theology faculties. It is expected that İkbal Thermal Hotel will be the first hotel granted TSE's Halal Management System Certificate in the Spring of 2017. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism started working on an MFT regulation in 2016. The Board of Tourism Controllers under General Directorate of Investment and Establishments in the Ministry have started to work on an MFT regulation for Turkey's Halal hotels. There is a plan to establish a Halal certification mechanism under the Ministry. This means that the Ministry will develop and implement its own certification. The table below shows the development steps for TSE's standard and the Turkish Tourism Ministry's regulations.

¹⁴⁰ Tourism Statistics. Turkstat. 2016.

¹⁴¹ Number of Registered Touristic Accommodations and Businesses from 1966 to 2014. TÜRSAB. 2016. Web.

¹⁴² "Muslim Friendly Tourism: Developing and Marketing MFT Products and Services In the OIC Member Countries "Report. 8th COMCEC Tourism Working Group. August 2016. Web.

¹⁴³ "GIMDES Standards for Halal Travel." *How Should It Become a Halal Hotel?* GIMDES, 2005-2016. Web.

¹⁴⁴ Interview conducted for the Turkey case study, September 2016.

¹⁴⁵ Interview conducted for the Turkey case study, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, September 2016.

Table 13: MFT Standard Development – Turkey

	TSE's MFT Standard	Ministry of Culture and Tourism Regulations
Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ An Academic Consultation Committee is formed. ✓ Committee prepares pre-draft standard document. ✓ Pre-draft document is evaluated in Halal Committee of TSE. ✓ Draft is sent twice to stakeholders including, tourism sector associations, hotels, and other government departments. ✓ Academic Consultation Committee amends draft based on stakeholders' feedback. ✓ Final draft is evaluated by TSE's Technical Board. ✓ If draft is approved, it is officially put in service by TSE management.¹⁴⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conceptual definition of Muslim-Friendly Tourism/Halal tourism sector was conducted ✓ Meeting with stakeholders of tourism sector were arranged ✓ Experts participated international meetings on MFT. ✓ National and international standards on MFT were examined ✓ Draft regulation was formed. ✓ Legal document was released. ✓ If the draft is released inspections will be carried out by the Ministry.

Source: DinarStandard

4.2.2 Certification Process and Regulations

TSE, which has already developed its own MFT standard, has a Halal Certification Department, which is responsible for implementation and certification. On the other hand, The Ministry's certification and implementation process will be carried on by the General Directorate of Investment and Establishments. It should be noted that the Ministry has not set the certification process yet for legislation on MFT. The five-star certification program that rates the quality is carried out by the Ministry and, the ministry currently follows a specific set of steps that are listed below, for this conventional certification process. Similar process can be applied for MFT certification when the prepared draft is finalized and published in Official Gazette.

¹⁴⁶ Interview conducted for the Turkey case study, September 2016.

Table 14: MFT Standard Certification - Turkey

	TSE's MFT Standard	Ministry of Culture and Tourism Certification
Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hotels should complete an online application from TSE website ✓ Application should include all suppliers of the hotel, (e.g. where they buy food, to understand if they are Halal certified) ✓ Pre-control of the document by TSE management, ✓ Planning of inspector visits, from TSE and Presidency of Religious Affairs, ✓ Inspectors do a field visit and prepare his/her report ✓ If inspection result is enough, the report is presented to the TSE Halal Certification Committee, which includes an expert from Presidency of Religious Affairs ✓ If the Committee approves, the hotel is given a Halal management system certificate. ✓ TSE Halal Certification Department provides the certificates. The certificate is renewed on yearly basis. Inspector gives a visit without prior notice in a year. But the frequency of visits can be more than one based on needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Businesses collect and prepare application documents ✓ Businesses make an official application to the Ministry, ✓ Experts examine the documents, ✓ If the documents are suitable, controllers visits the business for field check ✓ If the business has realized obligations, the controller reports it to the Ministry, ✓ Tourism certification is approved for the business ✓ Controllers visit and check the business regularly ✓ If the business fails maintaining the checklist or gets a lower point in classification form, the certification has to be cancelled. Then, if the business wants to get a new certificate, the process will start from the beginning ✓ Controllers give a visit to the business according to the inspection programme. Other visits are possible within the year upon receiving complaints, demands or for other important reasons.

Source: DinarStandard

4.2.3 Standards' Effects on the Accommodation Sector

As mentioned earlier, there are currently no hotels certified under any of the Turkish MFT standards. İkbal Thermal Hotel is expected to be the first certified hotel by the Spring of 2017 and will possibly be followed by Şah Inn Paradise Hotel. As such, it is not possible to evaluate the effect of the standards on accommodation establishments. TSE officials believe that most establishments will monitor closely the experience of the first applicants and if it proves a success, they will seek to be certificated. The Ministry intends to prepare legislation on Halal certification within the tourism market.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ Interview conducted for the Turkey case study, September 2016.

4.2.4 Challenges and Lessons Learned

Standard Development

A high level of coordination is needed to ensure a smooth process. To develop operationally functional and valid MFT regulations, standard development bodies need support from religious authorities to clarify the parameters of Halal. Accommodation establishments need to be consulted to ensure higher rates of standard adoption.

Complexity of Accommodation Sector

Abiding by MFT regulations can be challenging for hotels due to their complex portfolio of services that include the provision of food and beverages as well as entertainment. Providing necessary information and continuous training is essential. TSE delivers seminars for hotel management.

4.3 Croatia

Croatia's World Halal Day, which was held in November 2016 to promote Halal Tourism, may have brought more attention to its MFT sector but its efforts in this area predate this event by several years. The Center for Halal Quality Certification, which is the only Halal certification body in Croatia, was established by the Islamic community in Croatia as a specialized institution for certifying Halal products and services in the Republic of Croatia. It developed the "Rulebook of Certifying and Categorization of Hospitality Services, Travel Agencies and Health Facilities According to Requirements of Halal Quality" in 2010. Since then there have been two revisions, one in 2012 and another in 2014. The establishment of this Rulebook precedes the establishment of Malaysia's MFHS and SMIC and TSE's Hospitality Standard.

The development of the Rulebook was prompted by the request of one of the hotels to become certified. At that time, the Center for Halal Quality Certification was mainly focused on Halal food certification but not on other aspects of the accommodation business. In addition to hospitality guidelines, the Rulebook also covers travel agencies and includes guidelines on which places agencies can take their Muslim clients to, for example they are required to avoid taking their clients on vineyard tours, and which hotels to accommodate them in, for example in Halal certified hotels.

In order to encourage hotels to become Muslim-friendly and to obtain the certification, the Center for Halal Quality Certification cooperates with the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chamber of Commerce and the Hotel Association. Through the Hotel Association, the Center holds regular seminars to educate hotels on the benefits and requirements of the certification. Currently, there are 14 hotels in Croatia that are certified by this standard, and seven in the process of becoming certified. The standard was established to benefit from the potential of Muslim-Friendly Travel.

4.3.1 Standard Development Process

To develop the Standard, a representative from the Center for Halal Quality Certification visited hotels to observe operations to enable him to prepare the standard based on actual hotel operations. Hospitality services and tourism laws, including the Law of Hospitality Services in Croatia and the Law of Service Provision in Croatia, were referred to in the process of preparing the draft "Rulebook". Croatia's existing Halal food standard, Halal Standard HRN BAS 1049 2010, which is registered with the Croatian Standard Institute was also referred to during the draft's preparation. The development of the Rulebook lasted six months.

The Center for Halal Quality Certification sought the assistance of the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and hotel associations in apprising hotels of the standard and encouraging them to become certified.

4.3.2 Requirements of the Standard

Croatian law does not allow hotels to claim being Halal or Muslim-friendly without certification; consumer protection laws make it illegal for a hotel to claim that it is Halal or

Muslim-friendly without being certified. The Center for Halal Quality Certification has a contract with the government for issuing Halal certification in Croatia. According to this agreement with the government and in accordance with consumer protection laws, hotels are penalized if they claim to be Halal without having proper certification. The “Rulebook of Certifying and Categorization of Hospitality Services, Travel Agencies and Health Facilities According to Requirements of Halal Quality” provides three categories of certification for accommodation facilities.

Halal Package A

For Halal Package A, accommodation facilities must meet the following requirements:

- Have an accommodation license from the Ministry of Tourism
- Must have submitted requests for HACCP system and ISO 22000:2005
- Provide Halal food from approved providers, who have a Halal certificate and are authorized by the Center for Halal Quality Certification
- Store and prepare food according to Halal requirements HRN BAS 1049:2010
- Staff have been educated on Halal by the Center for Halal Quality Certification
- Have a clearly visible sign indicating that they serve Halal food
- Clearly label Halal items on menu
- Have the Halal certificate clearly visible at the reception of the catering facility
- Indicate prayer direction in the rooms
- Provide a prayer rug
- Provide a prayer schedule
- Remove alcoholic beverages from mini bar

Halal Package B

For Halal Package B, accommodation facilities must meet the following requirements:

- Meet all the requirements of Halal Package A
- Not serve alcohol in the facility
- Not serve any haram food in the facility

Halal Package C

For Halal Package C, accommodation facilities must meet the following requirements:

- Meet all the requirements of Halal Package B
- Provide a separate pool for women
- Provide a separate beach for women

Currently, there are no hotels in Croatia certified under Halal Package C.

4.3.3 Certification Process and Regulations

The steps for an accommodation establishment to become certified are outlined below:

- The accommodation establishment applies to become certified by filling a special form.



- A representative from the Center for Halal Quality Certification visits the establishment to review with management the requested programs.
- The Center then conducts the training, focused on Sharia' laws and what Halal means.
- The hotel implements the Halal requirements for the Halal Package category they chose and completes all required documentation and processes, and then conducts an internal audit.
- The accommodation establishment then informs the Center that they have finalized implementation.
- The Center conducts a certification audit following regular ISO 7021 standard as it is part of the requirements for the Center to become accredited by the Dubai Accreditation Center, which they are about to finalize.
- If case of non-conformity, the Center specifies in their report the areas that need to be dealt with to ensure conformity.
- If the establishment meets the criteria, it is granted certification and it receives a Halal Mark to place in the reception.
- Every 3 years, hotels need to renew their certification
- The Center also conducts "mystery shopping" audits for each hotel once a year and may conduct additional unofficial inspections throughout the year. The Center sometimes receives feedback from guests as well. There are penalties in the contract if the hotel fails to meet the requirements.

The following chart illustrates the steps for the certification process and the bodies involved at every step.

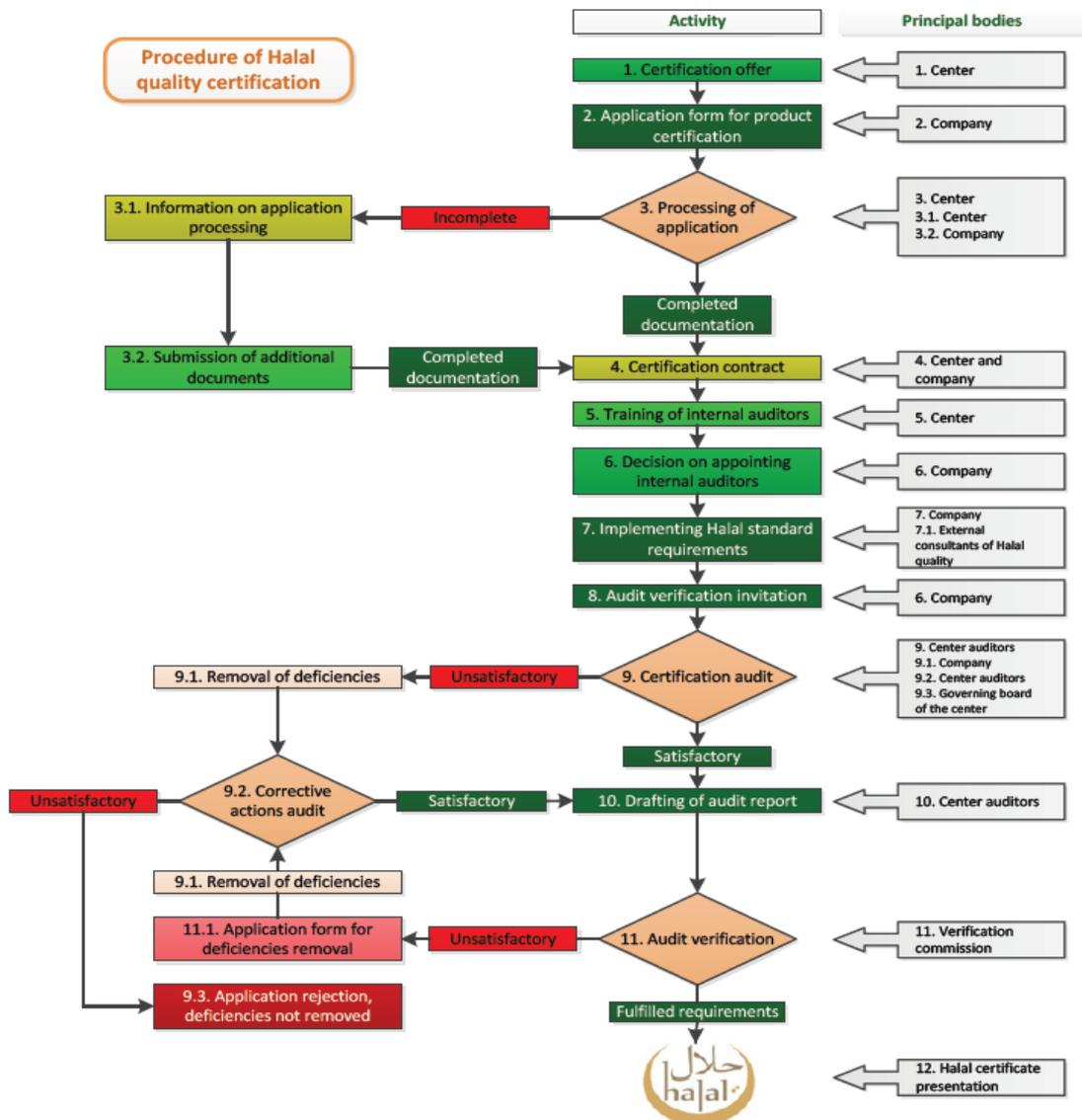


Figure 14: The Process of Halal Certification in Croatia¹⁴⁸

Source: Center for Halal Quality Certification

There are currently 14 hotels that are certified, all under the package A category, by the Center for Halal Quality Certification. A number of other hotels are currently in the process of becoming including Hotel Ilirija, DoubleTree by Hilton Zagreb, Hoteli Milenij Opatija, Hotel Grand Adriatic Opatija, Hotel Monte Mulini Rovinj, Hotel Lone Rovinj, and Hotel Sveti Martin.

¹⁴⁸ Chart is provided by the Center for Halal Quality Certification

The following table lists the hotels that have a “Package A” certification and the date their certification was issued.

Table 15: Package A Certificated Hotels

Hotel Name	Date Issued
HOTELI BAŠKA	Oct, 2010
LIBERTAS RIXOS	Apr, 2014
SHERATON DUBROVNIK RIVIERA HOTEL	Jun,2016
TOPLICE HOTEL	Marc,2014
HOTEL SPAČVA	May, 2012
HOTEL MOZART	Oct, 2014
GRAND HOTEL BONAVIA	May,2014
HOTEL ART	May, 2012
HOTEL SOL UMAG	May,2014
HOTEL TURIST	Feb, 2012
HOTEL ARISTOS	Aug, 2013
ESPLANADE ZAGREB HOTEL	May,2013
SHERATON ZAGREB HOTEL	March, 2015
WESTIN ZAGREB HOTEL	Oct,2012

Source: Center for Halal Quality Certification

Since Croatia is a non-Muslim majority country, there are limitations to what can be required in terms of Halal features, such as for example Halal toiletries, ablution facilities, gender separated wellness facilities, Halal cosmetics. Converting the kitchen to Halal is also a challenge for hotels as there is a lot of pork and alcohol.

The certification cost depends on the hotel size, number of its employees, and its affiliation i.e. whether it is part of a chain. The Center requests that hotels do not increase their prices after becoming certified.

4.3.4 Standards’ Effects on the Accommodation Sector

Increase in Sales

Several hotels that became Halal certified experienced a number of positive effects. Some hotels experienced an increase in sales as in the case of the Esplanade Westin, which experienced a 6% increase in sales after one year of becoming Halal certified.

Efficient Handling of Muslim Guests Needs

Other hotels witnessed an increase in the level of efficiency in dealing with Muslim guests. The non-Muslim staff, as mentioned by both Hotel Sheraton Zagreb and Rixos Dubrovnik, have become more aware and understanding of the needs of Muslim guests.¹⁴⁹

4.3.5. Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Having a standard that includes different levels of compliance encourages accommodation facilities to adopt it since the first level usually covers minimum basic requirements. This even applies to global hotel brands as evidenced by the fact that Sheraton, Rixos, and Hilton were among the hotels that have applied for MFT certification in Croatia.
- The Rulebook is especially appropriate for non-Muslim countries since the first category mainly requires providing Halal food options, providing prayer facilities within the room and removing alcohol from the mini-bar. All of which are steps that are quite easy to implement.
- Government legislation has a role in encouraging hotels to become MFT certified especially if it is illegal for a hotel to claim that it is Halal or Muslim-friendly without an official certification.
- It is important to obtain government support for MFT standards as in the case of the Center for Halal Quality Certification, which has a contract with the government appointing them as the authority responsible for Halal in Croatia.

¹⁴⁹ Interview conducted for the Croatia case study, Center for Halal Quality Certification

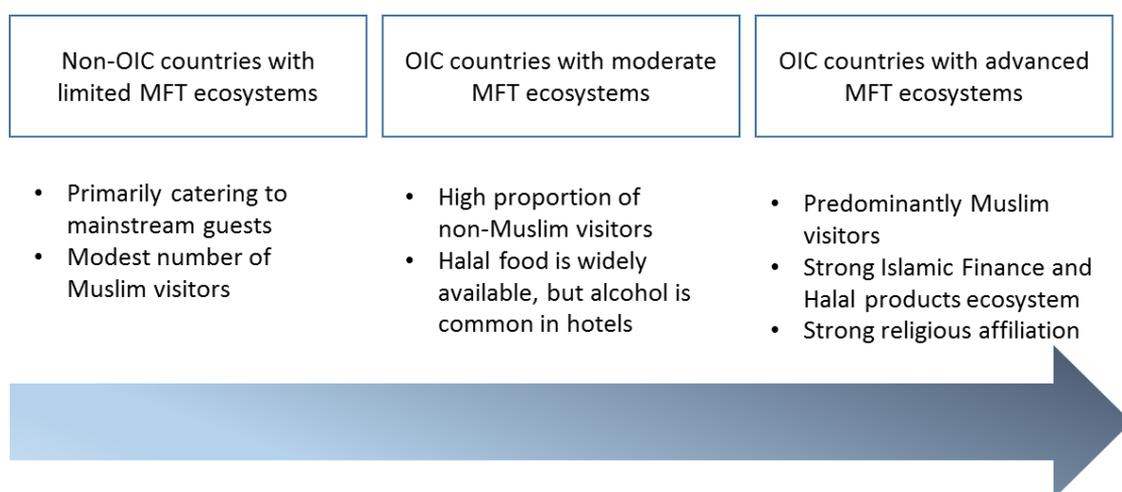
5. Basic Principles for MFT Accommodation Services and Standards

5.1. MFT Services and Facilities

This section outlines a key list of MFT services and facilities that the OIC countries should seek to cover in an MFT hospitality standard. Given that flexibility is key, recommendations have been tailored based on how robust MFT ecosystems are.

In identifying this list, input from case studies, surveys, interviews, existing standards, previous MFT reports as well as DinarStandard’s frameworks and analysis of the MFT sector have been incorporated. The following figure shows the segmentation that is used for recommendations for the OIC countries with varying levels of MFT ecosystem development.

Figure 15: the OIC Countries Segmentation - MFT Ecosystem



Source: DinarStandard

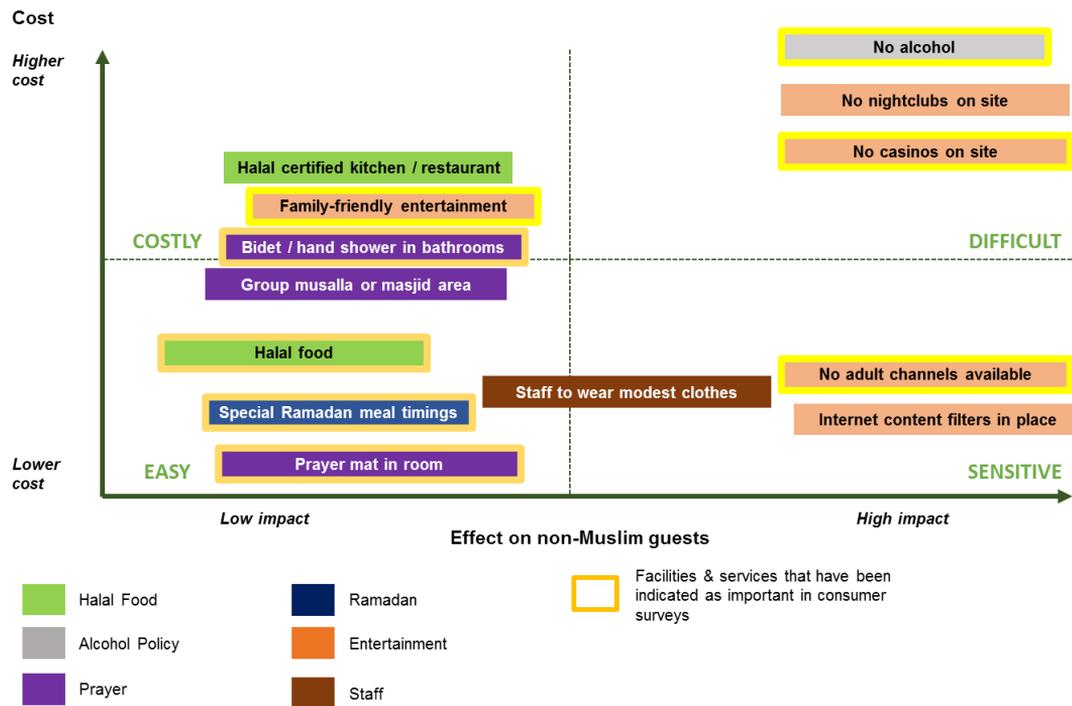
In the next sections, services and facilities for the OIC countries with modest MFT ecosystems will be discussed first, followed by MFT services for the OIC countries with advanced MFT ecosystems. Lastly, the non-OIC countries, which understandably have limited MFT ecosystems, will be addressed.

5.1.1 MFT Services and Facilities for OIC Countries with Modest MFT Ecosystem

There are three practical MFT services that are important to Muslim guests, are easy to implement and have low impact on mainstream guests, which accommodation facilities in the OIC countries with modest MFT ecosystems should incorporate. These three services, as illustrated in the following chart, include offering exclusively Halal certified food (with a consideration to have the hotel kitchens Halal certified), providing prayer mats in rooms, and accommodating for Ramadan meal timings and menu items. All of these services were rated in the survey as important, are easy to implement and have limited impact on mainstream

guests. An additional service that was rated as important and is not costly to provide is having a “*musalla*” or prayer area within the hotel.

Figure 16: MFT Services for Modest Ecosystems



Source: DinarStandard

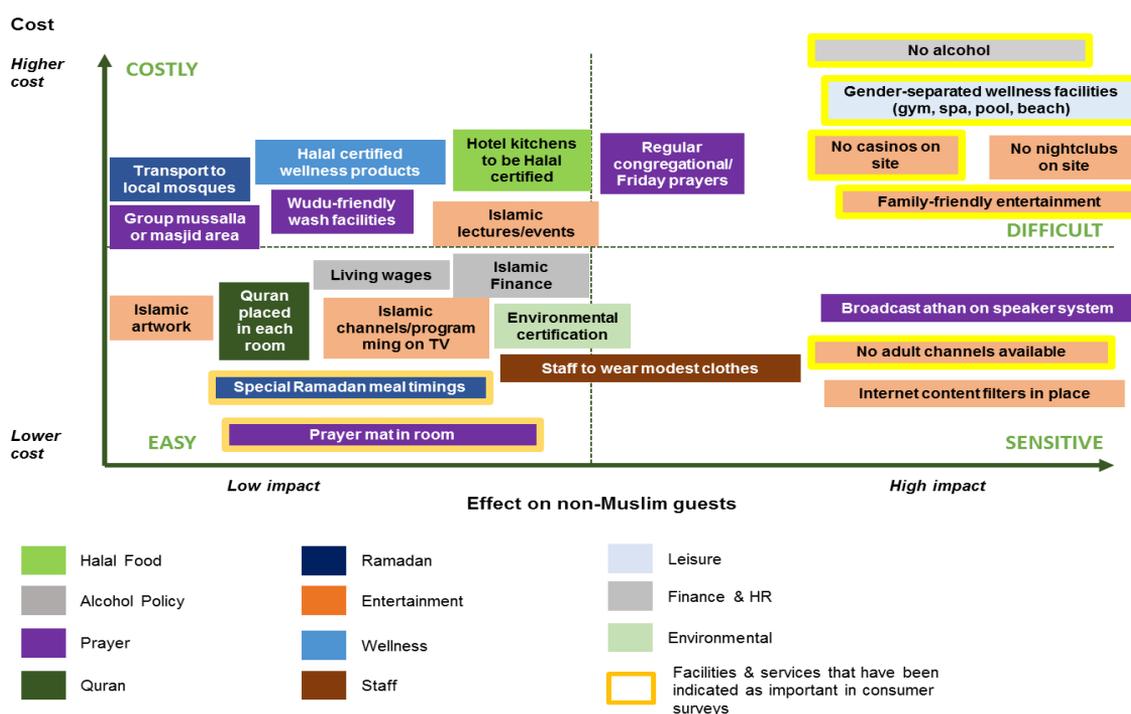
Additional services, which were rated important and are of medium cost to implement and have low impact on mainstream guests, are having a bidet or hand shower in bathrooms, both in guest rooms as well as in bathrooms in public areas, and providing family-friendly entertainment.

Features, which were rated important to Muslim guests but have a high cost in terms of loss of revenue from *haram* (impermissible) activities and a high impact on mainstream travelers, include being alcohol free and having no casinos or nightclubs on site. Furthermore, in terms of entertainment, removing adult channels and placing internet content filters are low cost features, yet may affect mainstream guests. However, all of these features, along with providing family-friendly entertainment and requiring staff to dress modestly, though impacting mainstream travelers, are also family-friendly as well as ethical, and therefore will appeal to other market segments such as families and ethically-conscious consumers. Please refer to section 5.1.4 for a list of MFT services that match a family-friendly and ethical positioning.

5.1.2 MFT Services and Facilities for OIC Countries with Advanced MFT Ecosystems

As we transition to the OIC countries with advanced MFT ecosystems, the range of practical attributes that accommodation facilities should offer increases substantially. For those countries, as shown in the following chart, an even higher level of MFT services and facilities is recommended. For example, hotel kitchens must be Halal certified, no alcohol should be available or allowed inside the hotel, *Wudu*-friendly facilities should be available in public bathrooms and room bathrooms, congregational prayers should be held at the musalla/masjid including Friday prayers, and the call to prayer should be broadcasted on the speaker system. Also, in Ramadan, in addition to proving *iftar* and *suhoor* meals, shuttle transportation should be provided to local mosques and halal certified products should be extended to wellness products.

Figure 17: MFT Services for Advanced Ecosystems



Source: DinarStandard

In terms of leisure activities, there should be gender-separated wellness facilities including gyms, pools, spas, and beaches, either by having separate facilities, or by allocating certain hours for women. In terms of managing the business, all financing should adhere to Shariah-compliant principles. The accommodation’s employees should be treated fairly and receive a living wage and businesses should have eco-friendly processes in place and have an environmental certification.

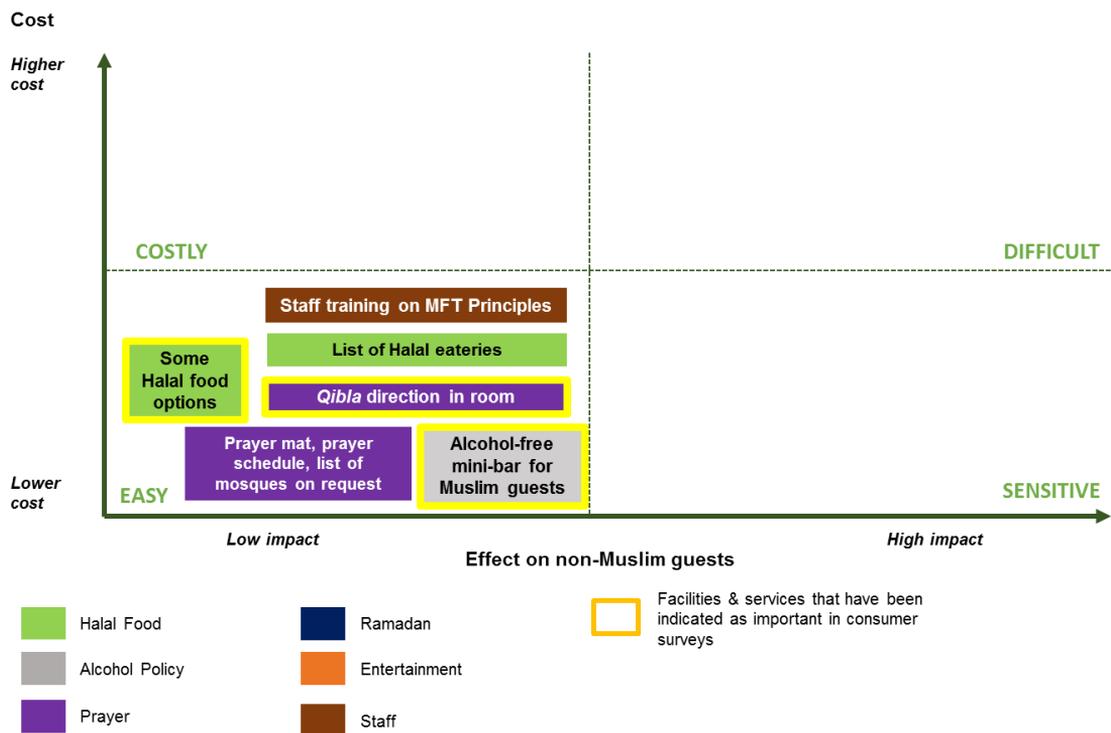
A number of additional services and features range from low cost, such as placing *Quran* in each room; to medium cost such as providing a shuttle service in Ramadan to mosques; and high cost such as providing gender-separated wellness facilities.

Most of the additional features and services do not enhance the hotel’s family-friendly positioning, however, several features such as no-interest financing and adhering to environmentally friendly specifications, enhance the hotel’s ethical positioning. Please refer to section 5.1.4 for a list of MFT services that match a family-friendly and ethical positioning.

5.1.3 MFT Services and Facilities for the non-OIC Countries with Limited MFT Ecosystems

In the non-OIC countries, establishments can attract Muslim consumers in a practical way by offering low cost basic services as illustrated in the following chart. The chart lists basic MFT services and facilities that are suitable for hotels in the non-OIC countries interested in accommodating Muslim guests but want to avoid affecting mainstream guests or spending too much effort, as well as avoid incurring high costs.

Figure 18: MFT Services for Limited Ecosystems



Source: DinarStandard

The recommended services and facilities in the lower left quadrant of the chart indicate that they are low cost and have a low impact on mainstream guests. The requirements include services and features that were rated important in the consumer survey, including the

availability of Halal food, removal of alcohol from the mini-bar, and providing *qibla* (prayer) direction in rooms. While very important to Muslim guests, these services and features have little effect on mainstream guests and are low cost.

Training staff on awareness of MFT principles is the only element that is of medium cost and is important to accommodate the basic needs of Muslim guests. In addition to some Halal food being available at the hotel, guest-facing staff should be able to recommend Halal restaurants in the area as well as provide information on local mosques, and provide a prayer rug and prayer schedule upon request.

5.1.4 Family-Friendly and Ethical Positioning

The level of practicality in introducing MFT features varies by country. Several of the features relating to MFT may be of higher cost and more difficult to implement; however, several MFT features also accentuate the accommodation facility's family-friendly and ethical positioning. For example, the absence of a nightclub or a bar, not only accommodates the needs of Muslim guests, but also strengthens a hotel's family-friendly positioning, since many mainstream families with children would consider such an environment a safer place for their family.

The table below lists MFT services and facilities that strengthen an accommodation facility's family-friendly and ethical positioning across the different MFT ecosystem levels. Having no alcohol, casinos, or nightclubs, in addition to banning adult channels, obscene artwork and placing internet filters, all accentuate an accommodation facility's family-friendly positioning, in addition to being ethical.

Table 16: Family-Friendly and Ethical MFT Services and Facilities

Minimum requirements	
Halal Food	Halal food options
Alcohol Policy	Alcohol-free minibar for Muslim guests
Good to have	
Alcohol Policy	No alcohol: no bar or alcohol served at hotel restaurants
Entertainment	No nightclubs on site
	No casinos on site
	No adult channels available
	Internet content filters in place (for obscenity)
	Family-friendly programming and entertainment on site
Staff	Staff to wear modest clothes
Premium	
Alcohol Policy	No alcohol on site (e.g., at restaurant or on demand)
Entertainment	No obscene, music or artwork, that may contradict Islamic values, displayed
Environmental	Environmental certification and eco-friendly processes in place

5.2. MFT Standards

The importance Muslim travelers place on MFT services exemplify a need for measuring hospitality providers' adherence to providing these services. As the previous section revealed, countries are at varying levels in terms of how developed their MFT ecosystem is; this is also true of their regulatory system for MFT services. In this section, the focus is on the need for establishing MFT standards, and the lessons learned from mainstream government and private standards on how the standards are set up, what they measure and how companies are certified against those standards. For full recommendations, please refer to Section 6 "Policy Recommendations".

5.2.1 Government Standards

A. How standards are developed

There are several key steps, which governments follow in establishing mainstream hospitality standards, which when compared against the steps for establishing MFT standards, highlight a number of gaps and opportunities for improvement for MFT standards.

Table 17: Steps for Establishing Government Standards

	Mainstream Standards E.g. ASEAN Green Hotel, Philippine Star Rating System	MFT Standards E.g. Malaysia’s MFHS, Turkey’s TS 13683	Gaps & Opportunities for Improvement in MFT Standards
Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Form a body to set the standard (with stakeholders represented) ✓ Review existing criteria for accommodations ✓ Gather stakeholder input ✓ Develop a draft standard ✓ Collect feedback from stakeholders and the public ✓ Finalize and publicize the new standard ✓ Develop inspection/auditing capacity ✓ Conduct inspection and rating of hotels that apply for the certification ✓ Conduct periodic audits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establish a committee consisting of main stakeholders ✓ Review existing standards (mainstream and Halal) ✓ Develop a draft standard ✓ Obtain feedback from wider pool of stakeholders. . This is called the “Public Comment” stage. ✓ Revise draft based on feedback ✓ Release standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Engaging all stakeholders including industry associations and consumers ✓ Changing MFT hindering legislation if it exists as well as MFT hindering elements in conventional hotel standards (e.g. requiring hotels to serve alcohol) ✓ Liaising with regional/the OIC governments ✓ Allowing for local variations in case of regional standards ✓ Minimizing conflict of interest between standard setting and certification roles ✓ Training and building capacity of local inspectors ✓ Establishing controls, documentation and follow up processes ✓ Promoting the standard among industry stakeholders and consumers

Source: DinarStandard

As the previous table shows, the process for establishing MFT standards is similar to that of establishing a mainstream standard. Both start with forming a body or a committee consisting of the main stakeholders, then review existing standards. Stakeholders are involved in developing a draft standard, which is subsequently shared with a wider group of stakeholders for review. The draft of the standard is revised based on stakeholder feedback, then the finalized standard is released.

Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement for MFT Standards

Based on the analysis of the steps involved in establishing a mainstream standard as well as those for developing an MFT standard, the following are areas of improvement for MFT standards. While some of the areas may already be partially addressed, they are highlighted below to ensure full adherence.

- **Engaging all stakeholders**

While some stakeholders are involved in the process of establishing MFT standards, involving *all* stakeholders is a gap. Heavily involving accommodation establishments - which can be represented through their industry associations - in addition to

certifying bodies is important. Getting consumer input by conducting consumer surveys is also critical.

- ***Changing “MFT” hindering legislation***

Some countries have what is classified under this study as MFT hindering legislation for the accommodation sector, such as the case in Egypt and the United Arab Emirates where 5-star hotels are required to serve alcohol to maintain their star rating. “MFT” hindering legislation needs to be amended so as not to conflict with MFT standards and to encourage adoption of such standards.

- ***Liaising with the OIC /regional governments and allowing for local variations***

Most of the existing MFT standards are national standards developed without regional cooperation. Liaising with regional the OIC governments would encourage MFT standard adoption on a regional level, which can lead to higher levels of standard awareness and facilitate marketing efforts. With regional cooperation, the MFT standard should make allowances for local variations to meet the unique needs of each country.

- ***Minimizing conflict of interest between standard setting and certification roles***

There is currently a conflict of interest between the role of standard setting and certification as in many cases both roles are played by the same body. Standardization bodies that also provide certification demonstrate a conflict of interest. In many instances, certification bodies also provide training, which is also a conflict of interest.

- ***Training and capacity building of local inspectors***

With respect to auditors/inspectors, in many cases, they come from a Halal food inspection background and lack specialized training in MFT. It is recommended to provide training for inspectors to prepare them for the issues they may encounter in accommodation establishments beyond the area of food and beverages. Training and qualification of these inspectors should follow a separate scheme independent from the certifying organization, in order to ensure impartiality and non-conflict of interest when executing inspections for certification purpose.

- ***Establishing controls, documentation and follow up processes***

Proper documentation, including a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document is often missing in the current development process of MFT standards, as well as control and follow up processes. This needs to be addressed in order to ensure the smooth implementation and the proper application of MFT standards.

- ***Standard promotion among stakeholders and consumers***

The adoption rate of existing MFT standards is low in part due to lack of promotional efforts targeting stakeholders and consumers.

B. What is measured

Naturally, mainstream standards and MFT standards measure distinct criteria. We have already identified the most important MFT services and features to be included in accommodation facilities depending on the ecosystem. However, there are additional MFT features that should be considered including financing and operations being consistent with Shariah-compliant methods and having environmental certifications. Please review the full list under “Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement in MFT Standards” in the table below.

Table 18: Measurement Criteria for Government Standards

	Mainstream Standards	MFT Standards	Gaps & Opportunities for Improvement in MFT Standards
Areas/ Services Measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Physical criteria related to lobby/reception, guest rooms, bathrooms, event facilities, exterior ✓ Hotel services ✓ Leisure facilities ✓ Food and beverages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Halal food ✓ Room cleanliness ✓ Qibla direction and prayer rug in room ✓ Bidet or hand shower in bathroom ✓ Personal care amenities are suitable for Muslims ✓ No alcohol in room ✓ Public prayer room at hotel ✓ Ramadan services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Having quality and environmental certifications ✓ Architecture (e.g. orientation of toilets away from Mecca) ✓ Artwork and decorations (e.g., avoid paintings or sculptures of humans or animals) ✓ Financing and operations to be consistent with Shariah-compliant methods ✓ Code of conduct for employees and guests ✓ On-site congregational prayer and religious programming ✓ Coverage of non-hotel accommodations (e.g., Muslim-friendly “home-sharing”) ✓ Digital platforms (e.g., concierge apps)

Source: DinarStandard

C. Certification Process

There are several key steps, which governments follow in establishing the certification process for mainstream and MFT hospitality standards. However, there are certain gaps and opportunities for improvement for the MFT certification process. They are addressed in full detail in the recommendations section, but are summarized in the table below.

Table 19: Certification Process Steps for Government Standards

	Mainstream Standards	MFT Standards	Gaps & Opportunities for Improvement in MFT Standards
Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Self-evaluation against criteria ✓ Submit application to certifying body ✓ Pay fees ✓ Certifying body audits facility and prepares audit report ✓ If facility passes the audit, it is awarded certification ✓ If accommodation facility does not pass the criteria, it implements corrective action and is re-audited and if it passes receives certification ✓ Mystery guest inspections are administered ad hoc ✓ Certification is renewed annually, every two, three, or five years depending on certificate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Submit application ✓ Complete documentation ✓ Certifier trains internal auditors ✓ Implement Halal standard requirements ✓ Audit verification invitation ✓ Certification audit ✓ If satisfactory, certifier drafts audit report ✓ Audit verification by verification commission ✓ If requirements are fulfilled, Halal certificate is provided ✓ In case audit result is unsatisfactory, hotel removes deficiencies and is re-audited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Standard setting body often also provides certification which is a conflict of interest ✓ Certifiers often also provide training to accommodation facilities, which is a conflict of interest ✓ A Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document for certifiers is often missing ✓ Self-evaluation as an initial step ✓ Administering mystery guest to monitor compliance ✓ Training on internal MFT compliance should be extended to all staff level, with depth suited to each person's responsibility towards MFT. Training should not just be limited to auditors.

Source: DinarStandard

5.2.2 Private Standards

A. How standards are developed

There are several key steps, which private entities follow in establishing mainstream hospitality standards, which when compared to the steps for establishing MFT standards, highlight a number of gaps and opportunities for improvement for MFT standards.

Some of the gaps are similar to the ones identified in developing government standards such as ensuring all stakeholders are involved, while others are unique to private standards such as obtaining government buy-in. The full list of gaps and opportunities in establishing private standards is below.

Table 20: Steps for Establishing Private Standards

	Mainstream Standards E.g. AAA Diamond rating, ISO 13811	MFT Standards E.g. CrescentRating, Salam Standard	Gaps & Opportunities for Improvement in MFT Standards
Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Set up a panel of experts within a technical committee ✓ Develop a draft standard ✓ Share with stakeholders for comments ✓ Release final draft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consumer survey on MFT services and amenities demanded by Muslim travellers ✓ Assessing the current status of hotels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Engaging all stakeholders including industry associations and consumers ✓ Obtaining government buy-in ✓ Minimizing conflict of interest between standard setting and certification roles ✓ Training and capacity-building of local inspectors ✓ Establishing controls, documentation and follow up processes ✓ Promoting the standard among industry stakeholders and consumers

Source: DinarStandard

B. Measurement Criteria

Due to the different nature of mainstream and MFT standards, the services and facilities measured in each of them is distinct. In terms of gaps and opportunities for improvement for MFT standards, listed below are some additional features that can be included in private-sector MFT standards, and which were also suggested for government standards.

Table 21: Measurement Criteria for Private Standards

	Mainstream Standards	MFT Standards	Gaps & Opportunities for Improvement in MFT Standards
Areas/ Services Measured	Star ratings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cleanliness ✓ Management ✓ Guest room and bathroom ✓ Public areas and exterior Environmental standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Energy and water efficiency ✓ Building design/construction ✓ Housekeeping and waste management ✓ Water and energy conservation ✓ Food and beverage operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Halal menu items ✓ Halal certified kitchen ✓ List of restaurants in the area ✓ Prayer mats, Quran, payer time tables, qibla direction ✓ Ramadan services ✓ Separate spa, gym and pool times for men and women ✓ Separate spas, pools and gyms for men and women ✓ No adult channels 	Additional elements that can be included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Architecture (e.g., orientation of toilets away from Mecca) ✓ Artwork and decorations (e.g., avoid paintings or sculptures of humans or animals) ✓ Financing and operations to be consistent with Sharia' ✓ Code of conduct for employees and guests ✓ On-site congregational prayer and religious programming ✓ Coverage of non-hotel accommodations (e.g., Muslim-friendly "home-sharing")

Source: DinarStandard

C. Certification Process

There are several key steps, which private entities follow in establishing the certification process for mainstream and MFT hospitality standards. However, there are certain gaps and opportunities for improvement for the MFT certification process. The key opportunity for improvement is tightening up the process of obtaining certification as in some instances it is lax compared to the steps followed in mainstream private standards, oftentimes allowing hotels to self-audit and depend on guest reviews.

Table 22: Certification Process for Private Standards

	Mainstream Standards	MFT Standards	Gaps & Opportunities for Improvement in MFT Standards
Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Accommodation facility submits application to apply for inspection ✓ Accommodation pays fees ✓ On-site interview by inspector ✓ Property tour and assessment of criteria ✓ Certifying body provides assessment summary ✓ Property receives rating certificate ✓ Property undergoes periodic follow up evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hotel conducts self-assessment based on standard checklist ✓ Consumer reviews are considered ✓ Inspections in some cases ✓ Hotel is provided with rating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Following a rigorous inspection process

Source: DinarStandard

6. Policy Recommendations

This study strongly recommends the regulation of MFT elements within the accommodation sector, given the strong feedback provided by surveys and a clear articulation of the types of services required and the relative ease of providing them.

This section seeks to provide a definitive roadmap for individual countries to better address the needs of Muslim travelers and facilitate growth in their tourism sectors, as well as serve as a starting point for robust coordination across the OIC countries.

Benefits of MFT regulation and standards are detailed in section 3.1. In summary, MFT regulation provides guests with an assurance of authenticity, especially in case of Halal food, provides consistent expectations, and supports a family-friendly ecosystem, which is beneficial to both Muslim guests as well as to mainstream guests traveling with their families.

In the consumer survey that was conducted for the purpose of this study, respondents attached great importance to Halal food being regulated by a Muslim-friendly accommodation standard; 99% of respondents rated it as important (83% rated it as extremely important). This was followed by offering Ramadan services, such as breakfast buffets, which 95% of respondents rated as important, followed by having Qibla direction in the hotel room, which 94% of respondents rated as important.

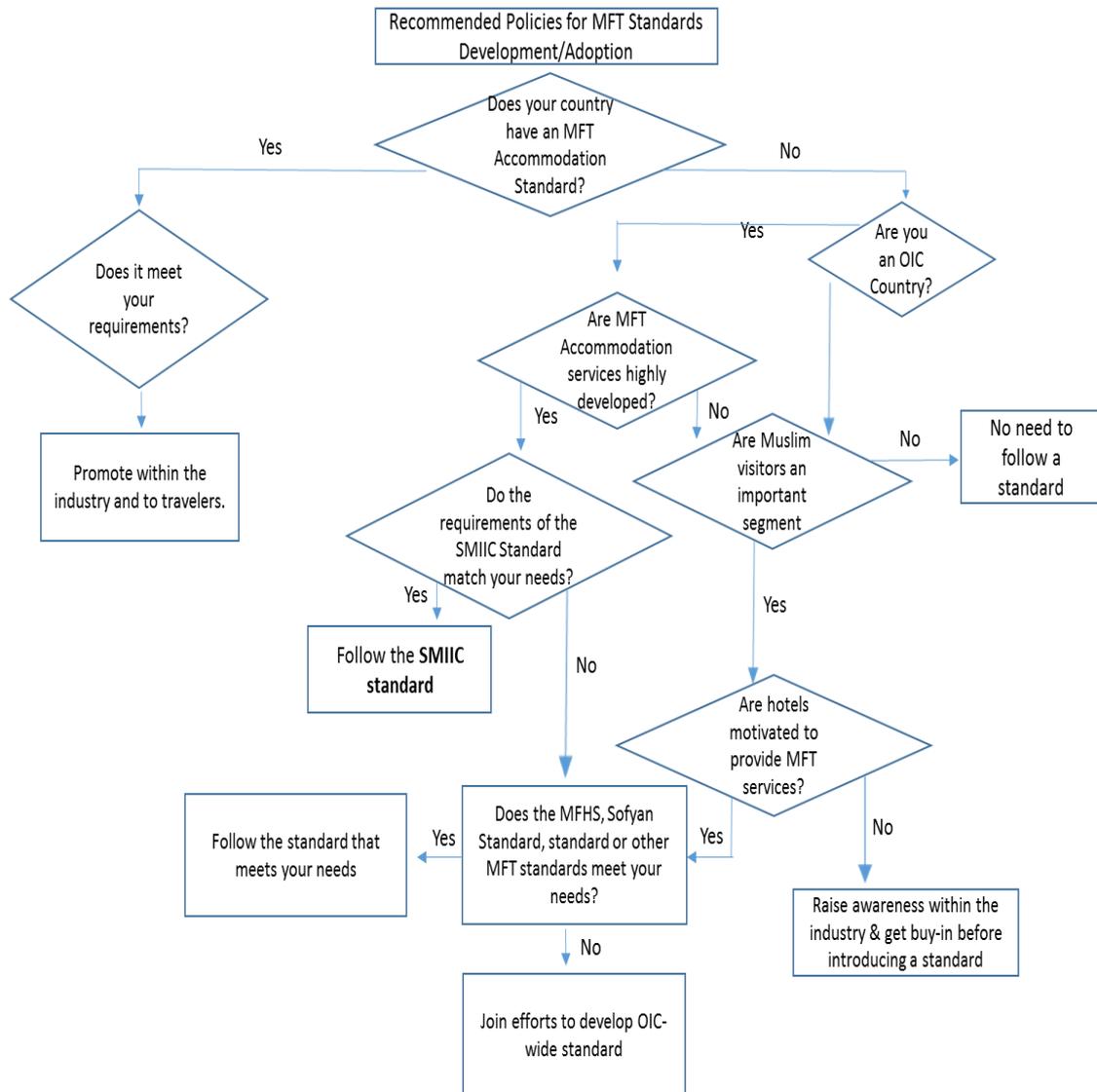
In terms of accommodation facilities, certification provides recognition for the MFT initiatives they have undertaken, and provides a platform to promote their MFT efforts. Standards also provide investors with clear expectations in terms of what facilities need to be part of an MFT hotel.

Options for MFT Standards Adoption/Development

The following decision tree diagram guides countries through their options based on several criteria. If a country already has an MFT accommodation standard that meets the requirements of the industry and guest expectations, then the government should promote it to the industry as well as mention it in its marketing communication to travelers. An the OIC country with highly developed MFT services should consider adopting one of the existing standards, such as SMIIC, once it has been released in 2017. If none of the existing standards meet a country's requirements (which is highly unlikely), it should join efforts to develop an the OIC-wide standard.

If MFT accommodation services are not highly developed, yet Muslim visitors are an important segment, and hotels are willing to provide MFT services and facilities, then consider one of the other available MFT standards such as Malaysia's MFHS standard, Sofyan Standard or others. If none of the standards meets their requirements, which is highly unlikely, they can join efforts to develop an the OIC standard.

Figure 19: MFT Standards Adoption/Development Decision Tree



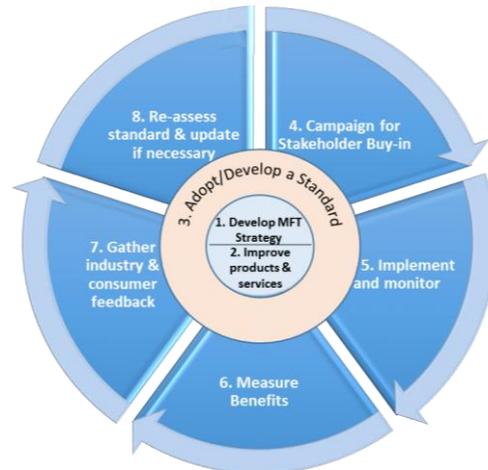
Source: DinarStandard

6.1. Recommendations for the OIC Countries with No MFT Regulations

6.1.1. Develop MFT Strategy

As mentioned in the policy recommendations in the “COMCEC Muslim Friendly Tourism: Developing and Marketing MFT Products and Services In the OIC Member Countries” report, the OIC member countries should develop a government-led MFT strategy which involves building internal stakeholder awareness, establishing a dedicated MFT body or committee, and developing and implementing an MFT market growth strategy.

Figure 20: Policy Recommendations Framework



Source: DinarStandard

6.1.2. Enhance MFT Accommodation Sector Products & Services

Enhancing MFT products and services is discussed in detail in the policy recommendations section of the “COMCEC Muslim Friendly Tourism Developing and Marketing MFT Products and Services in the OIC Member Countries” report.

The figure below taken from the previous MFT report illustrates key services and features that should be developed for the accommodation sector as well as other tourism sectors.

The tourism ministry should work with accommodation facilities to ensure they provide all basic MFT requirements, including offering clear Halal food options, removing alcoholic drinks from rooms, ensuring there is a bidet or hand shower in bathrooms, providing qibla direction, prayer mat, and prayer timings, and offering Ramadan meals.

For hotels that already provide the basic MFT services and facilities, consider offering a more premium level of MFT services and facilities, such as Halal certified restaurants, and gender-separated pools, gyms, and spas.

Figure 21: Recommended MFT Products and Services Priorities

Target segments & themes*					
	Young Muslim Millennials Age: 18-24 Leisure, education, friends & fam	Young Muslim Couples Age: 25-34 Leisure, friends & fam, religious, edxn	Growing Muslim Families Age 35-44 Leisure, friends & fam, religious		
Sector MFT priorities					
	Accommodation	Food & Bev. Services	Travel Services	Activities	Transportation
Basic Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear Halal food options • Ensure bidet sprayer in toilets • No alcoholic drinks in rooms • Ramadan meals • All food at facility to be credibly Halal • Qibla direction in rooms • Family friendly entertainment shows 	Clear Halal food credentials	Muslim-travel themed packages	Prayer/ other facilities at attractions Develop/ promote Islamic heritage sites	Prayer/ other facilities at hubs
Advanced/ Innovative	Muslim-friendly vacation/ beach resorts Muslim-friendly home sharing Muslim-focused concierge apps Culturally themed hotels	Meal sharing platforms	Travel Islamic financing services 'Takaful' based travel insurance MFT focused travel booking websites	Family-friendly cultural entertainment Muslim-lifestyle festivals and theme-parks	Innovative transit services: gender segregated gyms, spas...

Source: DinarStandard

6.1.3. Adopt/Develop Standard

The OIC countries that do not currently have MFT regulation in place are advised to adopt an existing MFT standard that is suitable for the OIC countries with their level of development. It is recommended to follow SMIC's standard, and adjust the detailed criteria to match industry readiness and guest needs especially that the SMIC standard will allow for local customization. Other standards that may be adopted include the Malaysia MS 2610:2015 standard, or the Sofyan standard.

As an example of the main categories that are covered by MFT standards, below are the categories covered Malaysia's MS 2610:2015 standard:

- Rooms
- Food and beverage
- Public musalla/prayer room
- Public washroom
- Recreational and wellness facilities
- Management responsibility
- Personnel competence
- MFHS management system
- Training

If none of the currently available standards is suitable for a country’s unique requirements, it is recommended to follow certain steps to establish an MFT standard. These steps, which are outlined in the figure below, are based on findings from the case studies, interviews, and research on existing standards.

Figure 22: Steps for Setting up a Standard



Source: DinarStandard

As indicated in the chart above, it is recommended to follow the following steps to develop an MFT standard:

- ***Appoint authority responsible for national or regional standard***
MFT standards are typically developed by the national standard setting body, such as Standards Malaysia and the Turkish Standards Institution (TSE); or by the tourism ministry, as in the case of the MFT standard being developed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey; or by Islamic authorities in the non-OIC countries, as is the case in Croatia. Whereas many mainstream accommodation standards are developed by industry associations. Under all conditions, a responsible body, which is well connected with both the government and the stakeholders, has to be granted the authority to produce the standard.
- ***Establish a committee with all stakeholders represented***
A core committee responsible for developing the standard needs to be established. It should consist of stakeholders from the tourism ministry, the standard setting

agency, accommodation industry associations, and Sharia' experts. The private sector, through industry associations, should be heavily involved in developing the standard as they have the technical expertise. This will also ensure their agreement with the standard to increase adoption rates. In case of the development of a regional standard, the committee should include representation from all countries in the region where the standard will be applied.

- ***Review existing standards***

Existing MFT standards should be reviewed to learn from best practices and to replicate relevant features. It is also important to keep open communication channels with individuals responsible for developing other MFT standards to stay informed of the latest developments in the area of MFT standards.

- ***Conduct in-depth interviews and surveys with the accommodation sector, consumers, certifiers and other stakeholders***

Primary research should be conducted to identify the needs, preferences and challenges of all stakeholders. It is recommended to conduct in-depth interviews and surveys with consumers, the accommodation sector, certifiers, and other stakeholders.

- ***Develop a draft standard, and share with a wider group of stakeholders for commentary***

The committee should develop a draft standard based on consumer and industry feedback while taking into consideration best practices from existing MFT standards and input of all stakeholders. This draft standard should be shared with a wider group of stakeholders including travel agencies, travel associations, regulators, etc.

- ***Train auditors/inspectors***

The auditors or inspectors who will be performing the inspections need to be thoroughly trained. They need to be familiar with operational details of the accommodation sector, as inspecting hotel facilities and services requires distinct skills from Halal food audits. It is important to prepare a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document for certifiers, to be used in combination with the standard as a guideline to inspectors.

- ***Issue Standard***

Once the final draft of the standard is reviewed and approved by all stakeholders, it can be formally released. All stakeholders should be informed of the release date.

- ***Promote standard***

To promote a standard to all stakeholders as well as to consumers, several strategies can be used including holding press conferences to announce the release of the standard, conducting informational seminars for the industry, and liaising with stakeholders to promote within their circles.

6.1.4. Campaign for stakeholder buy-in

For a new MFT regulation to succeed it is important to ensure buy-in from all stakeholders including accommodation facilities, industry associations, tourism boards, as well as travelers.

Most existing standards have been adopted by a limited number of hotels. Promotion campaigns as well as specific industry events, as well as incentives, such as tax breaks, are required to ensure wider adoption. There is also limited awareness among consumers of the existence of MFT regulation as evident from the survey. The campaign should also aim to increase the demand for MFT certification by Muslim travelers.

To ensure industry buy-in, position obtaining the standard as a quality assurance mechanism, comparable to ISO, to justify cost and effort involved.

PR campaign

Hold press conferences upon the adoption/release of the standard. Issue press releases announcing the standard and later issue press releases that announce hotels that have joined. The publicity for these hotels will encourage others to join. Include sessions on MFT regulation in travel conferences.

Industry seminars

Conduct regular seminars to educate the accommodation sector on the standard and to encourage adoption. Work closely with accommodation sector's industry associations as the acceptance of industry players is essential for the success of a new standard.

Email campaigns

Liaise with all stakeholders, such as industry associations to announce the release of the standard to their members through email campaigns.

Influencer campaigns

Launch influencer campaigns to raise consumer awareness. Influencers should have a global reach and have a large audience in the main top source countries.

Social Media campaigns

Campaigns on social media platforms that are popular top source countries, as well as locally should be launched. The campaigns should be a combination of organic and paid content.

Events

Hold Muslim lifestyle festivals that encompass Halal cuisine, modest fashion and highlight MFT facilities.

Awards

Launch awards for top MFT certified hotels that provide exceptional services and facilities for Muslim guests.

6.1.5. Implement and Monitor

It is critical that MFT regulation is implemented effectively and is closely monitored to ensure success. This involves the following:

- Training certifiers to conduct MFT hotel inspections
- Conducting mystery shopping on a regular basis
- Making sure any deviations from the specified criteria are corrected by the accommodation facilities (and making sure fines are enforced in case of deviation)

6.1.6. Measure benefits

It is important to articulate clear benefits of MFT regulation nationally, in terms of Muslim tourist receipts, as well as on the individual hotel level. An increase in sales due to certification will build confidence and encourage other hotels to become certified.

Many hotels fear that adopting MFT standards will result in alienating mainstream guests and a loss of business. Success stories of hotels that increased their business after adopting an MFT standard should be highlighted. Interviews with several hotel managers, such as the General Manager of Alanda hotel in Spain which became Halal certified after being bought by a Saudi group, revealed the contrary. Hotels reported that mainstream travelers continue using their hotels, especially if they seek a family-friendly environment, or a safe environment free of alcohol, in the case of female business travelers or sports teams.

6.1.7. Gather industry and consumer feedback

After the standard has been implemented, collect feedback from the accommodation sector, regulators as well as from consumers. Continue monitoring and periodically gathering feedback.

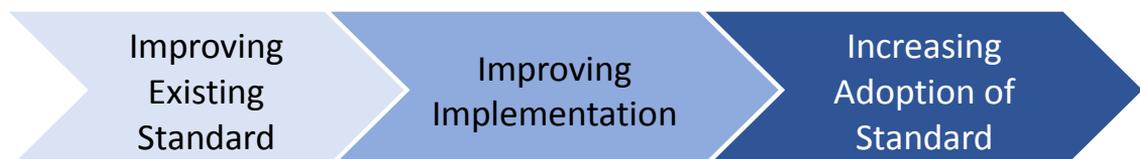
6.1.8. Re-assess Standard

Based on the level of benefits that have been realized and the feedback that has been gathered from all stakeholders, reassess the standard and revise if necessary.

6.2. Recommendations for the OIC Countries with Existing Regulation

Some of the steps mentioned in section 6.1 are still relevant for the OIC countries that have MFT regulation. While some steps probably already exist, such as a nation-wide MFT strategy, it makes sense to revisit it the strategy to ensure it supports MFT regulation and vice versa.

Figure 23: Recommendations for the OIC Countries with Existing Regulations



Source: DinarStandard

6.2.1 Improving Standard

Review MFT Strategy

It is assumed that countries that have developed an MFT standard already have a robust MFT strategy. In looking to improve the standard, this strategy should be revisited as well. The OIC countries should review their MFT tourism growth targets, reassess their domestic destinations for the MFT market, re-identify and prioritize source MFT markets, plan for improved MFT products and services, and revisit their MFT marketing strategy.

Enhance MFT Accommodation Sector Products & Services

Similar to what is mentioned in section 6.1, the tourism ministry should work with accommodation facilities to improve their MFT requirements. In the case of non-certified hotels that are not MFT certified, the tourism ministry can ensure they offer the basic level of services and facilities. For MFT certified hotels, the ministry can encourage them to offer more advanced MFT facilities, which are part of the criteria of an advanced level of the standard, in case it is a multi-level standard.

Assess impact of MFT regulation

Analyze tourism figures and conduct focus groups and surveys with all stakeholders including accommodation facilities, guests, travel agents, industry associations, certifying bodies, etc., to assess the impact of MFT regulation as well as areas of improvement. Ask the following:

- Has MFT regulation resulted in an increase in Muslim tourist receipts?
- Did MFT hotels experience an increase in sales after certification?
- Is there an increase in guest satisfaction?
- What challenges do hotels face in implementing MFT regulation?
- What is preventing hotels that are not MFT certified from adopting the certification? Cost? Difficulty in implementing? Concern of alienating mainstream visitors? Other reasons?
- What are guest perceptions of the MFT services and facilities? What is missing? What needs to be modified?
- Are inspectors qualified to assess accommodations?

Gather industry and consumer feedback

Conduct in-depth interviews and surveys with the accommodation sector, consumers and the regulation sector to identify areas that need improvement within the standard.

Improve standard

Analyze all feedback from previous steps and determine actions that need to be taken to improve standard. Consider the following if not already in place:

- Include some MFT standards within conventional hospitality standards, as in the case in Malaysia whose conventional star rating system includes some basic MFT requirements.
- Remove MFT hindering requirements from conventional standards, for example, requiring serving alcohol for a five-star rating, as is the case in some of the OIC hotels in Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

Update if necessary

Reassess the standard against feedback from stakeholders. If an update is required, follow a similar process as that adopted when developing the standard (form a committee of stakeholders, gather input from a wider group of stakeholders on what needs to be changed, etc.).

6.2.2 Improving Implementation of Standard

As mentioned in section 6.1, it is vital that MFT regulation is properly implemented and is closely monitored on an on-going basis. Ensure the following:

- The certification role is held separate from the standard-setting role. In several the OIC countries, the standard setting body also provides certification which causes a conflict of interest
- Inspectors and auditors are properly trained in MFT travel services and facilities
- Professionalism of certifying bodies is assured by ensuring they are accredited. When certification bodies are accredited this ensures that all required documentation and processes are in place. In many instances, certification bodies are missing critical documentation such as a scheme document (or standard operations procedure) for the standard.
- Certifiers should not assume the role of trainers as this results in a conflict of interest. Each should be a separate role.

6.2.3 Improving Adoption of Standard

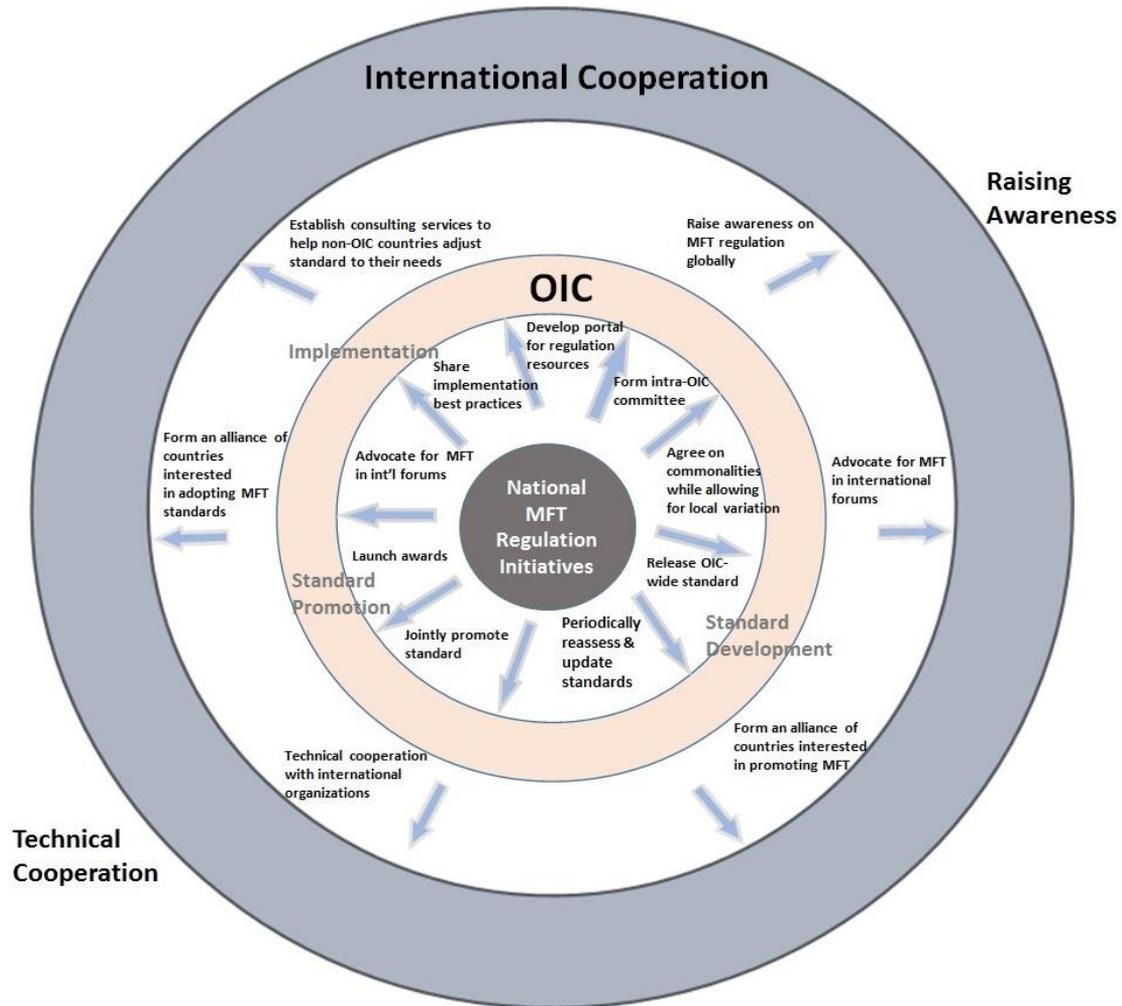
Follow steps similar to those mentioned in section 6.1 under campaign for stakeholder buy-in. Conduct a promotion campaign to encourage adoption of the standard by the accommodation sector. Issue press releases, hold conferences, schedule industry seminars to educate the sector, launch awards for MFT certified hotels that provide exceptional service and MFT facilities and create a buzz around them.

In addition to the promotion campaign, government incentives such as tax breaks can encourage more accommodation facilities to adopt the standard.

6.3. Recommendations for International Cooperation

In this section, both intra-the OIC and international cooperation strategies in the area of MFT regulations will be outlined. The following diagram summarizes the recommendations for intra-the OIC and international cooperation presented in this section.

Figure 24: Recommendations for International Cooperation



Source: DinarStandard

6.3.1 The OIC Cooperation

In section 6.1 and 6.2, separate policy recommendations were provided for the OIC countries without MFT regulations and for the OIC countries with the OIC regulations. In this section, intra-the OIC cooperation policies are presented.

Standard Development

As previously mentioned in section 6.1, the OIC countries that do not currently have MFT regulation in place are advised to adopt SMIIC’s MFT standard once it has been developed rather than develop a new standard. Countries may adjust the detailed criteria to match their specific situation, especially that the SMIIC standard will allow for local customization.

Standard Promotion

- Jointly promote standard

Promote the standard throughout the OICs well as globally among all stakeholders including tourism ministries, the accommodation sector, the regulation sector and consumers.

- Launch awards

Develop industry awards for accommodation providers that excel in providing MFT services and facilities and that are certified. Create a buzz around these awards to motivate the industry and encourage further certification.

- Form a core committee to advocate for MFT in international forums

A committee should be formed to advocate for MFT at key international conferences and meetings. This is further discussed in the next section on international cooperation.

Implementation

- Share best practices and technical know-how in implementing standards

The standard committee should facilitate sharing of best practices as well as technical details with the accommodation industry as well as with regulators to allow for smooth implementation.

- Develop portal for regulation resources

A portal should be developed that includes all documentation, processes and best practices related to the standard and its implementation. A forum should be included as part of the portal to allow for knowledge sharing and discussions among stakeholders.

6.3.2 International Cooperation

International cooperation should focus on raising awareness on MFT regulation globally and advocating for MFT regulation at international forums, in addition to technical cooperation with international organizations.

Raising Awareness

- Raise awareness on MFT regulation globally

The OIC countries should raise awareness on MFT as well as MFT regulation in the non-OIC countries through international organizations such as the UNWTO, EU, and ASEAN.

- Advocate for MFT in international forums



An intra-the OIC committee should be formed with a core responsibility to advocate for MFT - including MFT regulation - in international forums, including meetings, conferences and tourism working groups.

- Form an alliance of countries interested in promoting MFT

An alliance of the OIC and the non-OIC countries that will benefit from promoting their MFT services and facilities should be formed. They can jointly promote their MFT products and services under a unified MFT/Halal symbol.

Technical Cooperation

- Technical cooperation with international organizations

International organizations such as the UNWTO, OECD, ASEAN, ISO, HOTREC are experienced in establishing tourism standards and enabling certifiers. They should be consulted on best practices in developing a regional or international standard, encouraging its adoption and monitoring compliance. Once the MFT standard is released, the OIC countries can cooperate on knowledge sharing on MFT regulation related issues.

- Form an alliance of countries interested in adopting MFT standards

Both the OIC and the non-OIC countries interested in adopting an international MFT standard should form an alliance to share best practices, brainstorm solutions for challenges, and provide input for future revisions of the standard.

- Establish consulting services to assist the non-OIC countries in adopting a standard

the OIC countries can form an organization that provides consulting services for the non-OIC countries to assist them with implementing an MFT standard or in developing their own standard if an existing one does match their needs.

7. Appendix

7.1. Hotelstars Quality Standard

Area	No.	Criterion	Points	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	
I. General Hotel Info									
Cleanliness / Hygiene	1	Cleanliness and perfect hygiene are prerequisites are basic conditions in all categories.	-	M	M	M	M	M	
Preservation condition	2	All mechanisms and equipment are functional and in faultless condition.	-	M	M	M	M	M	
General impression	3	The general impression of the hotel is sufficient for _____ requirements.	-	simple ¹⁵⁰	medium ¹⁵¹	elevated ¹⁵²	high ¹⁵³	highest ¹⁵⁴	
Staff	4	All services must be provided by competent and identifiable staff.	-	M	M	M	M	M	
Car Park	5	Parking directly at the hotel	3						
	6	Parking possibilities for busses	1						
	7	Garage	5						
	8	Charging station for electrical vehicles (e.g. cars, bicycles)	3						
Others	9	Min. 50% of the rooms with balcony or terrace	2						
	10	Elevator ¹⁵⁵	15				M	M	
Facilities for disabled persons ¹⁵⁶	11	Barrier-free Wheelchair or assistance 	5						
	12	Barrier-free Electronic wheelchair 	8						
	13	Barrier-free  Blind or visually impaired	5						
	14	Barrier-free Deaf or hearing impaired 	5						
	15	Completely barrier-free 	5						

¹⁵⁰ In particular, furnishing and equipment are appropriate and maintained.

¹⁵¹ In particular, furnishing and equipment are maintained and harmonized.

¹⁵² In particular, furnishing and equipment are consistent in form and colour. The general impression is that of elevated comfort.

¹⁵³ In particular, furnishing and equipment are high-quality and offer first-class comfort. The overall appearance is consistent in form, colour and materials.

¹⁵⁴ In particular, furnishing and equipment are luxurious and offer highest comfort. The overall appearance is consistent in form, colour, and materials.

¹⁵⁵ For hotels with more than three floors (incl. ground floor).

¹⁵⁶ According to national regulations.

Area	No.	Criterion	Points	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	
II. Reception and Services									
	16	Visually, separated area or desk securing privacy (appropriate table or secretary is acceptable)	1	M	M	M			
	17	Separate, independent reception station or desk securing privacy	6				M	M	
	18	Lounge suite at the reception	1			M			
	19	Lobby with seats and beverage service	5				M		
	20	Reception hall with several seats and beverage service	10					M	
	21	Reception service, available for phone calls (from inside and outside the hotel) 24 hours	1	M	M				
	22	Reception open 14 hours, available for phone calls (from inside and outside the hotel) 24 hours	3			M			
	23	Reception open 16 hours, available for phone calls (from inside and outside the hotel) 24 hours and staffed 24 hours ¹⁵⁷	4				M		
	24	Reception opened and staffed 24 hours, available for phone calls (from inside and outside the hotel) 24 hours	6					M	
	25	Express check-out	3						
	26	Bilingual staff	2			M	M		
	27	Multilingual staff	4					M	
	28	Photocopy/scan service	2				M	M	
	29	Valet parking service	10					M	
	30	Doorman (separate personnel)	15						
	31	Concierge (separate personnel)	15					M	
	32	Page boys (separate personnel)	15					M	
	33	Luggage service on demand	2			M	M		
	34	Luggage service	5					M	
	35	Secure left-luggage service for arriving or departing guests	5				M	M	
	Cleaning of rooms / change of laundry	36	Daily room cleaning	1	M	M	M	M	M
		37	Daily change of towels on demand	1	M	M	M	M	M
		38	Change of bed linen at least once a week	1	M	M	M		
		39	Change of bed linen at least twice a week	2				M	M
		40	Daily change of bed linen on demand	4				M	M
Laundry and ironing service	41	Chemical cleaning/dry cleaning (delivery before 9 a.m., return within 24 hours)	1						
	42	Chemical cleaning/dry cleaning (delivery before 9 a.m., return within 9 hours)	3						

¹⁵⁷ "staffed 24 hours" means 24h availability.

Area	No.	Criterion	Points	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
	43	Ironing service (return within 1 hour)	2					M
	44	Laundry and ironing service (return as agreed)	1			M		
	45	Laundry and ironing service (delivery before 9 a.m., return on the same day – weekend excluded)	3				M	
	46	Laundry and ironing service (delivery before 9 a.m., return within 9 hours)	4					M
Payment	47	Payment via card	2		M	M	M	M
Miscellaneous	48	Support for in-house IT	2					M
	49	Umbrella at the reception/in the room	1					
	50	Up-to-date magazines	1					M
	51	Daily newspapers (print or digital)	2				M	M
	52	Sewing service	2				M	M
	53	Shoe polishing service	2			M ¹⁵⁸	M ¹⁵⁹	M
	54	Shuttle or limousine service	2					M
	55	Offer of sanitary products (e.g. toothbrush, toothpaste, shaving kit)	2		M	M	M	M
	56	Personalized greeting for each guest with flowers or a present in the room (not only a welcome message on the TV-screen)	6					M
	57	Accompanying the guest to the room at the arrival	2					
	58	Turndown service in the evening as an additional room check ¹⁶⁰	10					M
III. Rooms								
General Room Info	59	Size of rooms (incl. bathroom) $\geq 14\text{m}^2$ ¹⁶¹	10					
	60	Size of rooms (incl. bathroom) $\geq 18\text{m}^2$ ¹⁶¹	15					
	61	Size of rooms (incl. bathroom) $\geq 22\text{m}^2$ ¹⁶¹	20					
	62	Size of rooms (incl. bathroom) $\geq 30\text{m}^2$ ¹⁶¹	25					

¹⁵⁸ A shoe polishing machine (see no. 163) can be offered instead of a shoe polishing service in the hotel. A shoe polishing kit in the room is also considered equivalent (see no. 162).

¹⁵⁹ A shoe polishing machine (see no. 163) can be offered instead of a shoe polishing service in the hotel.

¹⁶⁰ Also called “Second service”. Change of towels, removal of bedspread, emptying of waste paper basket, etc.

¹⁶¹ If the hotel has a limited number of rooms (max.15 %) that are below this size, the guest must be informed about this fact before the accommodation contract is made.

Area	No.	Criterion	Points	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
	63	Number of suites ¹⁶²	2 per suite, max. 6					M (min. 2)
	64	Min. 50% of the rooms is non-smoking	3					
Room equipment	65	Bed system with a modern and well-kept mattress of at least 13 cm	1	M	M			
	66	Bed system consisting of an elastic system in combination with a modern and well-kept mattress with an overall height of at least 18 cm ¹⁶³	5			M	M	M
	67	Bed system consisting of an elastic system in combination with a modern and well-kept mattress with an overall height of at least 22 cm ¹⁶³	10					
	68	Ergonomically adjustable bed system	5					
	69	Single beds with a min. size of 0.80m x 1.90m and double beds with a min. size of 1.60m x 1.90m ¹⁶⁴	1	M	M			
	70	Single beds with a min. size of 0.90m x 1.90m and double beds with a min. size of 1.80m x 1.90m ¹⁶⁴	5			M		
	71	Single beds with a min. size of 0.90m x 2.00m and double beds with a min. size of 1.80m x 2.00m ¹⁶⁴	15				M	M
	72	Single beds with a min. size of 1.00m x 2.00m and double beds with a min. size of 2.00m x 2.00m ¹⁶⁴	25					
	73	10% of the beds with a min. length of 2.10m	5					
	74	Additional crib	3					
	75	Hygienic covers for mattresses ¹⁶⁵ (“encasings”)	10					
	76	New acquisition of mattresses max. 3 years ago (The certificate has to be added to the application.)	10					
	77	Annual laundry or thorough cleaning of mattresses ¹⁶⁶ (The certificate has to be added to the application.)	10					

¹⁶² No “Junior suites“. Suites consist of at least two separate rooms; one of which is furnished as a bedroom and one as living room. The rooms do not need to be connected by a door; an opening is sufficient. Basically, a holiday flat in a dépendance is not considered a suite. In order to ensure that guests can make full use of the hotel services, suites must be situated in the hotel building.

¹⁶³ The base of the system can be a box spring, a sprung slatted or any other equivalent system.

¹⁶⁴ If there are two single beds or one queen size bed (1.50m x 2.00m) instead of one double bed, the guest must be informed about the fact that it does not comply with the usual standard before the accommodation contract is made. If the hotel has a limited number of beds (max.15%) that are below the appropriate size for the respective category, the guest must be informed about this, before the accommodation contract is made.

¹⁶⁵ A simple molleton mattress pad is not accepted. But a (chemo-thermally) washable, breathable, bedcover free from mites and their excrements, made of cotton or synthetic materials that is opened at the bottom side will fulfil this criterion.

¹⁶⁶ This criterion is fulfilled, if there is no residual moistness, the mites are killed and their growth is eliminated.

Area	No.	Criterion	Points	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
	78	Allergy friendly sleeping alternative available on demand (The certificate has to be added to the application.)	2					
	79	Modern and well-kept blanket	1	M	M	M	M	M
	80	Additional blanket on demand	2			M	M	M
	81	Modern and well-kept pillow	1	M	M	M	M	M
	82	Hygienic covers for pillows (“encasings”)	5					
	83	Annual laundry of pillows or new acquisition max.1 year ago (cleaning) (A proof has to be added to the application.)	8					
	84	Additional usable, non-decorative pillow on demand	1			M	M	M
	85	Two usable, non-decorative pillows per person	4					M
	86	Choice of pillows ¹⁶⁷	4				M	M
	87	Possibility to darken the room (e.g. curtain)	1	M	M	M	M	
	88	Possibility to completely darken the room (e.g. shutter or blackout curtain)	5					M
	89	Sheer curtain/screen/blinds or equivalent	3					
	90	Washable bedside carpet	3					
	91	Wake-up service or device	1	M	M	M	M	M
	92	Adequate wardrobe or clothes niche	1	M	M	M	M	M
	93	Linen shelves	1		M	M	M	M
	94	Adequate number of hangers ¹⁶⁸	1	M	M	M		
	95	Adequate number of hangers of different types	3				M	M
	96	Wardrobe or clothing hooks	1	M	M	M	M	M
	97	Possibility to hang up a suit bag (outside the wardrobe)	1			M	M	M
	98	1 chair	1	M	M			
	99	1 seating accommodation, at least one chair per bed	2			M	M	M
	100	1 comfortable seating accommodation (upholstered chair/couch) with side table/tray	4				M	M
	101	1 additional comfortable upholstered chair or loveseat in double rooms or suites	4					M
	102	Table/desk or desk top	1	M	M			
	103	Table, desk or desk top with a free min. working space of	5			M	M	M

¹⁶⁷ The guest can choose among different types of pillows.

¹⁶⁸ Simple wired hangers do not fulfil this criterion.

Area	No.	Criterion	Points	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
		0.5 m ² and an adequate appropriate lighting						
	104	Bedside table/tray	2			M	M	M
	105	Accessible power socket in the room	1	M	M	M	M	M
	106	Additional accessible power socket next to the table/desk or desk top	2			M	M	M
	107	Accessible power socket next to the bed	1			M	M	M
	108	Central light switch for the room light	3					
	109	Bedside light switch for the room light	2					
	110	Bedside light switch for the complete room light	4					
	111	Night light	1					
	112	Adequate room lighting	1	M	M	M	M	M
	113	Reading light next to the bed	2		M	M	M	M
	114	Dressing mirror	2			M	M	M
	115	Adequate place or rack to put the luggage/suitcase	1			M	M	M
	116	Wastepaper basket	2			M	M	M
Safekeeping	117	Safekeeping facilities (e. g. at the reception)	1	M	M			
	118	Central safe (e. g. at the reception)	3			M ¹⁶⁹	M ¹⁶⁹	M
	119	Safe in the room	8					M
	120	Safe with integrated power socket in the room	10					
Noise control / air conditioning	121	Adequate noise protection (windows)	8					
	122	Sound-absorbing doors or double doors	8					
	123	Rooms with centrally adjustable air conditioning	8					
	124	Rooms with individually adjustable air conditioning	15					
	125	Air conditioning in public guest areas (restaurant, lobby, entrance hall, breakfast room)	4					
	126	Harmonious room atmosphere in public areas (light, smell, music, colour, etc.)	4					
Entertainment electronics	127	Radio ¹⁷⁰ broadcast device	1			M	M	M
	128	Audio or multimedia player	2					
	129	Fixed electronic media in the bathroom	5					
	130	TV with remote control	2	M	M			

¹⁶⁹ Or a safe in the room (see no. 119).

¹⁷⁰ The radio reception can also be organized via TV or the hotel's central telecommunication system.

Area	No.	Criterion	Points	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
	131	TV in a size appropriate for the room with a remote control and a channel list	4			M		
	132	Modern TV in a size appropriate for the room with a remote control, a channel list and a programme	6				M	M
	133	Additional modern TV in suites in a size appropriate for the room	2					
	134	National and international channels available	2					
	135	Pay-TV, movie channels or videogames with the possibility of “Adult lock”	5					
	136	International power adapter plug on demand	2					
	137	Charging station (for multiple electronic devices) and/or different adapters on demand	2					
Telecommunications	138	Publicly available telephone for guests	1	M	M	M	M	M
	139	(Mobile) telephone on demand in the room along with at least bilingual instruction manual ¹⁷¹	3			M		
	140	Telephone in the room along with a multilingual instruction manual	8				M	M
	141	Internet access in the public areas (e. g. broadband, WIFI)	2		M ¹⁷²	M	M	M
	142	Internet access in the room (e. g. broadband, WIFI)	8			M	M	M
	143	Internet device with printing option in public area	5				M	M
	144	Internet device in the room on demand	1					M
	145	Internet device in the room	3					
Miscellaneous	146	Hotel information ¹⁷³ (The hotel information has to be added to the application.)	1	M	M			
	147	Bilingual service manual A-Z (The service manual A-Z has to be added to the application.)	2			M		
	148	Multilingual service manual A-Z (The service manual A-Z has to be added to the application.)	3				M	M
	149	Regional information material available in public area	1	M	M	M	M	M
	150	Daily newspaper in the room (printed or digital)	2					
	151	Guest magazine in the room	1					M
	152	Writing utensils and note pad	1			M	M	M
	153	Correspondence folder	3					M

¹⁷¹ The guest must be informed about this offer during the check-in; a display, etc. is accepted.

¹⁷² Or internet access in the room (see no. 142).

¹⁷³ The hotel information includes at least the breakfast time, the check-out time, and the opening hours of hotel facilities.

Area	No.	Criterion	Points	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
	154	Trouser press	3					
	155	Laundry bag	1			M	M	M
	156	Iron and ironing board on demand or ironing room	2					
	157	Iron and ironing board in the room	4					
	158	Sewing kit on demand	1		M ¹⁷⁴	M ¹⁷⁴	M	
	159	Sewing kit in the room	2					M
	160	Shoehorn in the room	1					M
	161	Shoe polishing kit on demand	1		M ¹⁷⁵	M ¹⁷⁵		
	162	Shoe polishing kit in the room	2				M ¹⁷⁶	M
	163	Shoe polishing machine in the hotel	3			M ¹⁷⁷	M ¹⁷⁸	M
	164	Door viewer	2					
	165	Additional locking mechanism at the room's door	3					
General Bathroom Info	166	Bathroom/Sanitary facilities $\geq 5m^2$ ¹⁷⁹	5					
	167	Bathroom/Sanitary facilities $\geq 7,5m^2$ ¹⁷⁹	10					
	168	100% of the rooms with shower/WC or bath tub/WC	1	M ¹⁸⁰	M ¹⁸⁰	M	M	M
	169	100% of the rooms with shower/WC or bath tub/WC and <u>thereof</u> 50% of the rooms with bath tub and separate shower cubicle	10					
	170	30% of the rooms with toilet separately	5					
	171	Shower with curtain ¹⁸¹	1	M	M	M	M	M
	172	Shower with screen ¹⁸¹	5					
	173	Washbasin	1	M	M	M	M	M
	174	Twin wash basin in double rooms and suites	5					
	175	Washable bath mat	1		M	M	M	M
	176	Adequate lighting at the washbasin	1	M	M	M	M	M
	177	Permanent or removable anti-slip appliance in shower and bathtub	3					
178	Safety handles	1						

¹⁷⁴ A sewing service (see no. 52) can be offered as well, instead of a sewing kit on demand.

¹⁷⁵ A shoe polishing service (see no. 53) or shoe polishing kit in the room (see no. 162) can also be offered instead of the shoe polishing kit on demand. A shoe polishing machine in the hotel (see no. 163) does also fulfil this criterion.

¹⁷⁶ A shoe polishing service (see no. 53) can be offered instead of the shoe polishing kit in the room.

¹⁷⁷ A shoe polishing service (see no. 53) can be offered instead of the shoe polishing machine in the hotel. A shoe polishing kit (see no. 162) in the room does also fulfil this criterion.

¹⁷⁸ A shoe polishing service (see no. 53) can be offered, instead of the shoe polishing machine in the hotel.

¹⁷⁹ If the hotel has a limited number of rooms (max. 15%) that are below this size, the guest must be informed about this fact before the accommodation contract is made.

¹⁸⁰ If up to 15% of the hotel's rooms are not equipped with private showers/WC but offer shared showers/WC instead, the guest has to be informed of the fact that the room does not comply with the usual standard before the accommodation contract is made.

¹⁸¹ If there is a separation between the sanitary facilities and the toilet in the bathroom, the existence of a shower curtain or shower screen is not necessary.

Area	No.	Criterion	Points	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
	179	Mirror	1	M	M	M	M	M
	180	Accessible power socket near the mirror	1	M	M	M	M	M
	181	Vanity mirror	1					
	182	Flexible vanity mirror	2				M	M
	183	Lighted vanity mirror	1					
	184	Towel rails or towel hooks	1	M	M	M	M	M
	185	Heating option in the bathroom ¹⁸²	5				M	M
	186	Heated towel rail	3					
	187	Shelf	1	M	M	M		
	188	Large shelf	3				M	M
	189	Toothbrush tumbler	1	M	M	M	M	M
	190	Soap or body wash at the wash basin	1	M	M	M	M	M
	191	Body wash or shower gel at the shower/bath tub	1		M	M	M	M
	192	Shampoo ¹⁸³	1		M	M	M	M
	193	Personal care products in bottles	2					M
	194	Additional cosmetic products (e.g. bath essence, shower cap, nail file, Q-tips, cotton wool pads, body lotion)	1 per item, max. 4				M	M
	195	Facial tissues	2			M	M	M
	196	Toilet paper in reserve	1	M	M	M	M	M
	197	1 hand towel per person	1		M	M	M	M
	198	1 bath towel per person	2	M	M	M	M	M
	199	Bathrobe on demand	2				M	
	200	Bathrobe	4					M
	201	Slippers on demand	1				M	
	202	Slippers	3					M
	203	Hairdryer on demand	1					
	204	Hairdryer	2			M	M	M
	205	Stool in the bathroom on demand	3					M
	206	Bathroom scales	1					
	207	Waste bin	1	M	M	M	M	M
IV. Gastronomy								
Beverages	208	Beverage offer in the hotel	1	M	M	M	M	M
	209	Beverage offer in the room	2			M	M	M

¹⁸² Minimum criterion is already considered as fulfilled, if the criterion “Heated towel rail” (see no. 186) is fulfilled.

¹⁸³ This criterion is considered as fulfilled, if the bath essence or shower gel is suitable as shampoo as well, and this is indicated (on bottle or dispenser).

Area	No.	Criterion	Points	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
	210	16 hours beverages via room service	2				M ¹⁸⁴	
	211	24 hours beverages via room service	4					M
	212	Maxibar on each floor ¹⁸⁵	2					
	213	Fridge in the room	2					
	214	Minibar (with drinks and snacks)	6				M ¹⁸⁶	M
	215	Coffee machine or water boiler for tea/coffee together with accessories in the room	4					
Bar	216	Bar ¹⁸⁷ (open at least 6 days per week)	4				M	
	217	Bar ¹⁸⁶ (open at least 7 days per week)	6					M
Breakfast	218	Breakfast room	3	M	M	M	M	M
	219	Extended breakfast ¹⁸⁸	1	M				
	220	Breakfast buffet or equivalent breakfast menu card ¹⁸⁹	2		M	M		
	221	Breakfast buffet <u>with service</u> or equivalent breakfast menu card	8				M	M
	222	Breakfast menu card via room service	5					M
Food	223	Food offer in the hotel	1	M	M	M	M	M
	224	14 hours food offer via room service	5				M	
	225	24 hours food offer via room service	10					M
	226	Restaurant ¹⁹⁰ open 5 days per week	5 each, max. 10	M ¹⁹¹ (min.1)	M ¹⁹¹ (min.1)	M ¹⁹² (min.1)		
	227	Restaurant ¹⁹⁰ open 6 days per week	8 each, max. 16				M ¹⁹³ (min.1)	

¹⁸⁴ Or minibar (see no. 214) or Maxibar (see no. 212).

¹⁸⁵ The products can be charged to the room.

¹⁸⁶ Or 16 hours beverages via room service (see no. 210) or Maxibar (see no. 212) on each floor.

¹⁸⁷ A "bar" is more than a simple beverage service. It must be separate from the restaurant.

¹⁸⁸ An extended breakfast includes at least one hot beverage (e. g. coffee or tea), a fruit juice, selection of fruits or fruit salad, a choice of bread and rolls with butter, jam, cold cuts and cheese.

¹⁸⁹ Self-service offer with at least the same choice of products as in the extended breakfast with an egg or an egg-plate and cereals.

¹⁹⁰ Each of them with a different concept, choice of food and location.

¹⁹¹ Three-course menu or "à la carte" or buffet.

¹⁹² Three-course menu with choice or "à la carte" or buffet.

¹⁹³ Three-course menu with choice or "à la carte" or buffet for Dinner.

Area	No.	Criterion	Points	☆	☆☆	☆☆☆	☆☆☆	☆☆☆
	228	Restaurant ¹⁹⁰ open 7 days per week	10 each, max. 20					M ¹⁹⁴ (min.1)
	229	Dietary-kitchen	2					
	230	Regional kitchen ¹⁹⁵	4					
V. Event Facilities (MICE)								
Banquet options	231	Banquet options for at least 50 people ¹⁹⁶	2					
	232	Banquet options for at least 100 people ¹⁹⁶	4					
	233	Banquet options for at least 250 people ¹⁹⁶	8					
Conference rooms	234	Conference room(s) of at least 36 m ² to 100 m ² , ceiling height of at least 2.50 m ¹⁹⁷	10					
	235	Conference room(s) larger than 100 m ² , ceiling height of at least 2.75 m ¹⁹⁷	15					
	236	Conference room(s) larger than 250 m ² , ceiling height of at least 3.50 m ¹⁹⁷	20					
	237	Group work rooms/break rooms ¹⁹⁸	2 per room,					
	238	Business centre (separate office and available staff)	3					
	239	Conference service ¹⁹⁸ (separate department, separate staff)	5					
	240	Conference office/typing pool ¹⁹⁸	1					
Equipment/ technology of conference rooms	241	Sufficient power sockets adapted to the number of seats ^{198, 199}	2					
	242	Daylight in the conference room and possibility to darken the room ^{198, 199}	3					
	243	Individually adjustable air conditioning of the conference rooms ¹⁹⁸	3					
VI. Leisure								

¹⁹⁴ Three-course menu with choice or “à la carte” or buffet for Lunch and Dinner.

¹⁹⁵ The food offer features a significant part of regional/national specialities. The majority of used products is from the region.

¹⁹⁶ The restaurant area is not included.

¹⁹⁷ A conference room must have appropriate lighting, (with artificial light 200lux), a telephone, WIFI of appropriate capacity, a projector, a projection screen (appropriate ceiling height and room size), two pin boards a flip chart, workshop material, a coat rack or locker, at least eight power sockets, an extension cable and power distribution.

¹⁹⁸ Acceptance only if at least one of the criteria no. 234 – 236 is fulfilled.

¹⁹⁹ Minimum criterion for every conference room.

Area	No.	Criterion	Points	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
Sport	244	Adequate own recreation facilities onsite (indoor or outdoor) ²⁰⁰ (e. g. tennis court, beach, golf course)	3 per facility, max. 9					
	245	Rental of sports equipment (e. g. skis, boats, bicycles)	2					
	246	Gym ²⁰¹ with at least 4 different exercise machines (e.g. ergometer, dumb bell, machine for weight training, treadmill, rowing machine, stairmaster)	4					
Spa/Wellness ⁵³	247	Massages ²⁰² (e. g. full body massage, lymph drainage, Shiatsu, foot reflexology)	2 per cabin, max. 6					
	248	Separate relaxation room ²⁰³	3					
	249	Whirlpool or equivalent	3					
	250	Sauna (with a minimum size of 6 seats)	5 per sauna type ²⁰⁴ , max. 10					
	251	Beauty farm ²⁰² with at least 4 different kinds of treatment (e. g. facial, manicure, pedicure, peeling and stress relaxation massage are offered)	5					
	252	Spa ²⁰² with at least 4 different kinds of treatment (e. g. bath, Kneipp, hydrotherapy, moor, hammam and steambath are offered)	5					
	253	Private spa cabin	2					
	254	Swimming pool (outdoor) ²⁰⁵ or swimming pond ²⁰⁶	10					
	255	Swimming pool (indoor) ²⁰⁷	15					
Children	256	In-house child care (for children younger than 3 years) for at least 3 hours on weekdays by skilled staff	10					
	257	In-house child care (for children older than 3 years) for at least 3 hours on weekdays by skilled staff	10					
	258	Children's area (playroom/playground)	4					

²⁰⁰ Facilities are part of the hotel area and possible costs of use can be charged to the room.

²⁰¹ The gym has a minimum size of 20m².

²⁰² The cabins have a minimum size of 10m².

²⁰³ The relaxation room has a minimum size of 20m².

²⁰⁴ Sauna types: "hot/dry" (e. g. Finnish sauna), "warm/slightly humid" (e. g. Tepidarium), or "warm/heavily humid" (e. g. steam room).

²⁰⁵ The outdoor swimming pool is heated and has a minimum size of 60m².

²⁰⁶ A swimming pond is a man-made, standing water body for swimming or bathing free of chemical water preparation.

²⁰⁷ The indoor swimming pool is heated and has a minimum size of 40m².

Area	No.	Criterion	Points	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
Others	259	Lounge for hotel guests (in addition to breakfast room or restaurant)	2					
	260	Reading and writing room (separate location)	1					
	261	Library (separate location)	2					
	262	Host/animation programme	3					
VII. Quality and Online Activities								
Quality Systems	263	Systematic complaint management system ²⁰⁸	3			M	M	M
	264	Systematic analysis of guest reviews ²⁰⁹	5				M	M
	265	Quality controls by mystery guesting ²¹⁰ (Proof thereof has to be added to the application.)	10				(M) ²¹¹	M
	266	Quality management system according EHQ ²¹² or equivalent	10					
Online Activities	267	Website ²¹³ with updated information and realistic pictures together with the location of the hotel	5	M	M	M ²¹⁴	M ²¹⁴	M ²¹⁴
	268	Website with direct booking option and guest reviews ²¹⁵	10					
	269	Active invitation of departing/checked-out guests to write a review on a portal or on the website	5				M	M
Others	270	Eco-label ²¹⁶	10					
VIII. Minimum Points²¹⁷								
	Hotels			90	170	260	400	600

²⁰⁸ A systematic complaint management system includes structured complaint acceptance, evaluation, and response.

²⁰⁹ Active and systematic gathering and evaluation of guest opinions about the quality of the hotels services, analysis of weaknesses, and the realization of improvement.

²¹⁰ For the Mystery guesting to be accepted the following aspects need to be fulfilled at least once during a classification period: by professional externals upon initiative and on the account of the hotel, analysed and documented. Hidden (internal) controls e. g. of the hotel chain or cooperation are accepted as equal.

²¹¹ Mystery guesting is a minimum criterion in the 4-star-superior-sector.

²¹² European Hospitality Quality (EHQ) is the European Hospitality Quality scheme launched by HOTREC, the umbrella association of national trade associations representing hotels, restaurants, cafés, and similar establishments in Europe (cf. www.hotrec.eu). It serves as a reference model for national and regional quality schemes on European level. E. g. the initiative "ServiceQualität Deutschland" (cf. www.servicequalitaet-deutschland.de) is accredited in its entirety.

²¹³ Pictures have to show at least an exterior view, the public area and a room.

²¹⁴ The website must be at least bilingual.

²¹⁵ A simple e mail is not accepted.

²¹⁶ For instance (without implying exclusivity): Austrian Umweltzeichen, DEHOGA Umweltcheck, DINö, EarthCheck, EMAS, EU Ecolabel, Green Globe, Green Key, ISO 14001 or Viabono.

²¹⁷ For a "hotel garni" - i. e. a hotel with breakfast only - the number of points to be reached is lowered by 20 points in each category. A "hotel garni" cannot obtain 5 stars.

Area	No.	Criterion	Points	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
	Supplement “Superior” ²¹⁸			170	260	400	600	700

²¹⁸ The accreditation “Superior” indicates excellent hotels having acquired considerable points beyond the threshold points of their category, but which do not comply with the minimum criteria of the next higher category. Such hotels usually offer a high degree of service. “Superior” is accessible to all hotels and “hotels garnis”.

7.2. Croatia's Standard



REGULATIONS ON CERTIFICATION AND CATEGORIZATION

ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES

AS REQUIRED

HALAL QUALITY

INTRODUCTION

Halal tourism is a new form of tourism which is already present in the world and usually are not so much different from what we know as tourism.

Halal tourism is in the beginning of development, according to statistics of World Tourist organization, halal tourism is in 2010. in total tourist industry had a share of nine percent, and its value was about 90 billion U.S. dollars.

Tourism, as an activity, in the entire Croatian economy has a very important role, and is often referred to as the backbone of the development and therefore the Centre for Halal Quality Certification preparation of this Regulation, creates a theory of developing halal tourism in Croatia, and is increasing the number of guests who know and understand what is halal quality .

1. Purpose and scope

1.1 Purpose

Regulations on categorization accommodation facilities according to Halal Quality (hereinafter: Regulations) is intended for certification and categorization of accommodation facilities according to halal quality. Regulations uses: Centre for Halal Quality Certification (hereinafter referred to the Center), audit team and interested accommodation facilities.

1.2 Scope

This regulation applies in relation to the provision of food and beverage and accommodation in accommodation facilities.

1.3 Responsibilities

For the implementation of and compliance with this Regulation is responsible Centar and interested accommodation facilities.

2. Reference documents

Next documents were used as reference documents for the preparation of this Regulation:

- Halal standard, HRN BAS 1049:2010,
- Accommodation activity Act (NN 138/06, NN 43/09, NN 88/10).

3. Terms and definitions

3.1 Halal *Arab.* includes all what is for Muslim allowed in respect of religious regulations (nutrition, behavior, etc.). Halal is a complete human life style.

3.2 Haram *Arab.* denotes a strict ban for the believer based on the sources of Islam. Is contrary to the concept of halal.

3.3 Mesbuh *Arab.* suspicious.

Etc. food ingredients that can not be determined with certainty whether they are halal or haram, and as such are not allowed to be consumed until it is determined that they are halal (permitted). Generally, all the ingredients derived from GMOs are mesbuh because they still can not determine with certainty what the impact on human health have GMO products.

3.4 Qur'an God's book posted to the Prophet Muhammad a.s. and written in the collection (Mushaf), transferred entirely with believable (tevatür) transmission.

3.5 Abdest *Persia.* washing certain parts of the body with water before entering the prayer or the teachings of the Qur'an.

3.6 Namaz *Persia.* prayer, adoration.

3.7 Kibla *Arab.* direction of prayer towards the Kaaba in Mecca; southeast of our space.

3.8 Vaktija *Arab.* exact schedule of daily prayer.

3.9 Serdžada *Tur.* rug or carpet where Muslim does prayer.

3.10 Masjid *Arab.* room designed for religious rites.

3.11. Ramadan *Arab.* name for the 9th month of Islamic calendar, the month of fasting and restraint, the month in which began publication of the Quran.

3.12. Sehur *Arab.* morning meal before fasting.

3.13. Iftar *Tur.* time when the fast is broken (in the akşam), dinner.

3.14. Bayram, Eid *Tur.* Mubarak, selected day, the biggest holiday for Muslims, Muslims have two Bayram, Eid: Ramadan and Qurban or Hajji Bayram.

4. Categorization accommodation facilities according to Halal Quality

Certification process and categorizing accommodation facilities is made under this Regulation respecting step procedures for Halal Quality Certification.

Accommodation facilities are characterized by:

- HALAL PACKAGE A
- HALAL PACKAGE B
- HALAL PACKAGE C

For category HALAL PACKAGE A accommodation facilities must meet the following requirements:

- a) have a solution for accommodation facilities services, the solution on the categorization of the competent ministry,
- b) maintained requests by HACCP system and ISO 22000:2005,
- c) provision of halal food from approved manufacturers (who have halal certificate and authorized by the Centre)
- d) storing and preparing food according to halal requirements HRN BAS 1049:2010,
- e) educated staff according to Halal Quality by Center,
- f) highlight a special place with a clearly visible label halal-serving and self-serving halal food
- g) clearly labeled halal menu in the usual menus,
- h) clearly highlight halal certificate at the reception of catering facility (on guests request elaborate categorization of the accommodation facility as required by the Regulations)
- i) in the rooms marked southeast (direction during the execution of prayer)
- j) to provide a rug for prayer,
- k) provide vaktiju (exact schedule of daily prayer)
- l) mini bar emptied from alcoholic beverages.

Note: Items marked with I, J, K, L refer to accommodation facilities which provide accommodation service.

7.3. DRAFT COMCEC MFT GUIDELINE FOR REGULATING ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS

In recent years, the tourism industry has started to grasp and address the distinct needs of Muslim travelers. Muslim-friendly travel is seen as a promising niche market by many accommodation providers. There is no current consensus on which MFT elements to incorporate, however, accommodation establishments make their decision based on the ease of implementation, the cost, and the impact on non-Muslim guests. Previous research studies show that needs of Muslim and non-Muslim travelers do overlap in several areas, such as a hotel’s location and price, which are critical for travelers, regardless of faith. Furthermore, Muslim and non-Muslim travelers alike value many of the characteristics captured by conventional quality standards, including cleanliness, spaciousness and convenience. However, research has indicated that Muslim travelers have specific faith-related needs; some of which may even clash with the needs of non-Muslim travelers, including, for instance the absence of alcohol from hotel premises. Given the varying levels of MFT services and facilities offered in the tourism industry, there is a need for regulation, especially in the accommodation sector.

Based on the COMCEC *Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT) Regulating Accommodation Establishments in OIC Member Countries* study which includes insights from case studies, surveys, expert interviews as well as an analysis of existing standards, this document presents basic guidelines for OIC countries with varying levels of MFT ecosystem development, as well as non-OIC countries, for services and facilities to be offered in accommodation establishments.

The chart below illustrates country segmentation based on whether or not it is an OIC Member Country, and based on the level of MFT ecosystems available.

Country Segmentation - MFT Ecosystem

Non-OIC countries with limited MFT ecosystems	OIC countries with moderate MFT ecosystems	OIC countries with advanced MFT ecosystems
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- Primarily catering to mainstream guests
- Modest number of Muslim visitors

- High proportion of non-Muslim visitors
- Halal food is widely available, but alcohol is common in hotels

- Predominantly Muslim visitors
- Strong Islamic Finance and Halal products ecosystem
- Strong religious affiliation



The guidelines in this document cover a distinct set of services and facilities for OIC countries with modest MFT ecosystems. This is followed by MFT services for OIC countries with advanced MFT ecosystems. Lastly, guidelines for non-OIC countries, which understandably have limited MFT ecosystems, are provided.

1. MFT Services and Facilities for OIC Countries with Modest MFT Ecosystem

There are three practical MFT services that are important to Muslim guests, are easy to implement and have low impact on mainstream guests, which accommodation facilities in OIC countries with modest MFT ecosystems should incorporate. These three services, as illustrated in the following chart, include the following²¹⁹:

1. Offering exclusively Halal certified food (with a consideration to have the hotel kitchens Halal certified)
2. Providing prayer mats in rooms
3. Accommodating for Ramadan meal timings and menu items.

MFT services and facilities that may be offered by accommodation providers can be segmented based on whether they are low cost or costly to implement as well as on their effect on non-Muslim guests (whether implementing the new service will have a low or high impact on Muslim guests). MFT services that are low cost and have a low impact on mainstream guests are easy to implement, while services that are low cost but have a high impact on mainstream guests are sensitive to implement, etc. (Please refer to Figure 15: MFT Services for Modest Ecosystems in the study).

Additional services, which were rated important and are of medium to high cost to implement are as follows:

1. Installing a bidet or hand shower in bathrooms, both in guest rooms as well as in bathrooms in public areas
2. Providing family-friendly entertainment
3. Being alcohol free and having no casinos or nightclubs on site.
4. Removing adult channels and placing internet content filters
5. Requiring staff to dress modestly

2. MFT Services and Facilities for OIC Countries with Advanced MFT Ecosystems

For OIC countries with advanced MFT ecosystems, the following higher level of MFT services and facilities are recommended in addition to the basic services:

General:

1. Hotel kitchens should be Halal certified
2. No alcohol should be available or allowed inside the hotel
3. Wudu-friendly facilities should be available in public bathrooms and room bathrooms

²¹⁹ An additional service that was rated as important by survey respondents and is not costly to provide is having a “musalla” or prayer area within the hotel.

4. Holy Quran should be placed in each room
5. Congregational prayers should be possible to be held at the musalla/masjid including Friday prayers, and the call to prayer should be broadcast on the speaker system.
6. In Ramadan, in addition to providing iftar and suhoor meals, shuttle transportation should be provided to local mosques
7. Halal certified products should be extended to wellness products such as shampoos and lotions.

Leisure Activities:

8. Gender-separated wellness facilities including gyms, pools, spas, and beaches should be provided, either by having separate facilities, or by allocating certain hours for women.

Managing the business

9. All financing should adhere to Shariah-compliant principles
10. The accommodation's employees should be treated fairly and receive a living wage that is high enough to maintain a normal standard of living
11. Businesses should have eco-friendly processes in place and have an environmental certification.

3. MFT Services and Facilities for non-OIC Countries with Limited MFT Ecosystems

In non-OIC countries, establishments can attract Muslim consumers in a practical way by offering low cost basic services that are easy to implement and have a low impact on mainstream guests. (Please refer to Figure 17: MFT Services for Limited Ecosystems, in the study)

The recommended services and facilities can be summarized as follows:

1. Provide some Halal food options
2. Remove alcohol from the mini-bar for Muslim guests
3. Provide *qibla* (prayer) direction in rooms.
4. Provide list of local Halal restaurants and directions to local mosque
5. Provide a prayer rug and prayer schedule upon request
6. Train staff on awareness of MFT principles

While very important to Muslim guests, most of these services and features have little effect on mainstream guests and are low cost.

4. Family-Friendly and Ethical Positioning

The level of practicality in introducing MFT features varies by country. Several of the features relating to MFT may be of higher cost and more difficult to implement; however, several MFT features also accentuate the accommodation facility's family-friendly and ethical positioning. For example, the absence of a nightclub or a bar, not only accommodates the needs of Muslim guests, but also strengthens a hotel's family-friendly positioning, since many mainstream families with children would consider such an environment a safer place for their family.

The table below lists MFT services and facilities that strengthen an accommodation facility's family-friendly and ethical positioning across the different MFT levels. Having no alcohol, casinos, or nightclubs, in addition to banning adult channels, obscene artwork and placing internet filters, all accentuate an accommodation facility's family-friendly positioning, in addition to being ethical.

Family-Friendly and Ethical MFT Services and Facilities

Minimum requirements	
Halal Food	Halal food options
Alcohol Policy	Alcohol-free minibar for Muslim guests
Good to have	
Alcohol Policy	No alcohol: no bar or alcohol served at hotel restaurants
Entertainment	No nightclubs on site
	No casinos on site
	No adult channels available
	Internet content filters in place (for obscenity)
	Family-friendly programming and entertainment on site
Staff	Staff to wear modest clothes
Premium	
Alcohol Policy	No alcohol on site (e.g., at restaurant or on demand)
Entertainment	No obscene, music or artwork that may contradict Islamic values, displayed
Environmental	Environmental certification and eco-friendly processes in place