



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

**Proceedings of the 9th Meeting of the
COMCEC Tourism Working Group**

**“Muslim Friendly Tourism:
Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the
OIC Member Countries”**



**COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE
February 2017**



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**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 9TH MEETING OF THE
COMCEC TOURISM WORKING GROUP
ON
“MUSLIM FRIENDLY TOURISM:
Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the
OIC Member Countries”**

(February 16th, 2017, Ankara, Turkey)

COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

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Introduction

The 9th Meeting of the COMCEC Tourism Working Group was held on February 16th, 2017 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of "Muslim Friendly Tourism: Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the OIC Member Countries." The Meeting was attended by the representatives of 15 Member States, which have notified their focal points for the Tourism Working Group namely Algeria, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Gambia, Gabon, Indonesia, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mozambique, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Turkey. Representatives of COMCEC Coordination Office, ICDT, SESRIC, SMIIC, Center for Halal Quality Certification, Dinar Standard, IH&RA, Instituto Halal, Halalbooking, Sofyan Hotels and Tripfez have also attended the Meeting.¹

At the outset, the representative of the COMCEC Coordination Office informed the participants about the tourism outlook of the Member Countries. The participants also considered MFT Accommodations Establishments through focusing on the Analytical Study titled "Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT): Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the OIC Member Countries" commissioned by the COMCEC Coordination Office specifically prepared for the Meeting with a view to enriching the discussions.

The participants had the chance to discuss the policy options for enhancing the cooperation in this important field during policy debate session. The draft COMCEC MFT Guideline based on the findings of the Analytical Study submitted to the Tourism Working Group Meeting and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions sent to the Member States by the COMCEC Coordination Office were the main inputs for the discussions during moderation session.

COMCEC Coordination Office also presented the COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism, introduced by the COMCEC Strategy, and informed the participants of its details.

The Representatives of the Member States have shared their experiences, achievements and challenges regarding Muslim-friendly tourism in their respective countries.

Lastly, the international institutions' perspectives and private sector efforts in MFT Regulations were reflected to the discussions.

¹ The list of participants is attached as Annex 4.



1. Opening Session

In line with the tradition of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Meeting started with the recitation from the Holy Quran. At the outset, Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Director in the COMCEC Coordination Office introduced the COMCEC and its activities briefly.

Mr. Zulkifly MD SAID, Director General of Islamic Tourism Centre of Malaysia was elected as the Chairman of the Meeting. Mr. SAID introduced himself and thanked all the participants for electing him as the Chairman of the Meeting.

2. The COMCEC Tourism Outlook

Dr. Gurel CETIN, consultant from the COMCEC Coordination Office, has presented key developments of tourism industry in the world and in the OIC Member Countries. In his presentation, Dr. CETIN provided an overview of the importance of tourism as a socio-economic phenomena and the current state of the industry in the World and in the OIC Member Countries.

He reflected the importance of tourism particularly for developing economies and surmised that tourism has experienced continued growth over the past seven years and become one of the most rapidly developing industries in the world. He shared various figures demonstrating that a strong tourism sector could contribute in many ways to development and the economy. He stated that with a larger multiplier than many other industries, tourism can trigger economic activities in other sectors and decrease unemployment and poverty in the OIC Member Countries.

Various key tourism trends were also mentioned by Dr. Cetin such as demographic (ageing population, growing middle class and millennials) and behavioral changes (quest for authenticity and novelty, emerging destinations), advancements in technology (internet, distribution channels, sharing economy), crises and risk management (types and impacts of crises) and sustainability implications for tourism (best practices). He reminded that various of these topics are already planned to be challenged by COMCEC reports in the future.

He then shared various figures about the current state of tourism industry in the World through displaying world tourism arrivals and receipts between 2000 and 2015. Dr. Cetin stated that global tourism arrivals have grown from 678 million in 2000 to 1,186 million in 2015. He also discussed that 2016 growth rate is projected to be 3,9% regarding tourism arrivals and expressed that the tourism receipts also increased from 495 million USD in 2000 to 1,260 million USD in 2015. He also explained the 3,8% decrease in receipts from 2014 to 2015 by exceptionally weak USD in 2015, and that the real change on receipts was actually a 4,4% growth considering exchange rate fluctuations and inflation. Dr. Cetin also provided tourism market shares of different regions as to both arrivals and receipts and suggested Africa, Middle East and Asia Pacific regions are growing at a larger pace than most established destinations in Europe and Americas.

He also compared contribution of tourism in the OIC Member Countries with those of the World averages and identified a room for further growth as to tourism's share in the OIC region. The OIC Member Countries were stated to have made 131 billion USD from 173 million arrivals in 2015. Another important issue Dr. Cetin pointed out is the low per tourist spending in the OIC. He stated that the current OIC earning is 750 USD per arrival whereas the World average is more than 1000 USD. Hence he suggested that the OIC Member Countries can focus on improving per tourist spending besides the volume in arrivals in order to increase the total value created from tourism. Top 10 destinations among the OIC Member Countries concerning arrivals and receipts were also displayed during his presentation.

Dr. Cetin then mentioned the current state of tourism in individual Member Countries such as Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Tunisia, Sierra Leone, Morocco, Qatar, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Finally, Dr. Cetin shared various strengths concerning tourism in the OIC

Member Countries (natural, cultural and human resources, authentic experiences, competitive prices, and dynamic economies) as well as various challenges the Member Countries face concerning destination planning (infra-structure, safety and security, investments) and marketing (product development and diversification, promotion and image building, service quality).

After the presentation impacts of various crises and crises sensitivity of different markets, increasing tourist spending in OIC, regulating peer to peer accommodation, health tourism were also discussed.

Questions and Comments:

Question: Is it possible to state that citizens of Muslim countries are more resilient to a security threat as a tourist, so the number of tourist arrivals within OIC are not much affected by a security threat?

Answer: In order to have a right understanding, the issue should be investigated in depth. COMCEC Tourism Working Group will focus on risks, crises, effects of negative shocks and measures to be taken in the next meeting. Also sensitivities of countries and tourists to negative shocks will be one of the main subjects that will be analyzed.

3. Conventional Tourism Quality Standards and MFT Regulations for Accommodation Establishments

Mr. Rafi-uddin SHIKOH, CEO of DinarStandard, delivered a presentation based on the analytical study titled “Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT): Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the OIC Member Countries”. Mr. SHIKOH started his presentation by reviewing the study methodology. Both primary and secondary market research was conducted to collect information for the study. The secondary research utilized market studies, government data, academic articles and research papers, press publications and other secondary sources. The primary research consisted of a consumer survey, consisting of 514 respondents from 44 countries; an accommodation sector survey, which received 163 responses from 30 countries; 8 online interviews of government officials, and 3 country case studies.

Mr. SHIKOH also discussed conventional tourism quality regulations. He provided examples that highlighted the diversity of approaches to conventional quality ratings. For example, the United Kingdom’s AA national hotel star rating system is management by a third party, the Automobile Association; while Egypt’s New Norms (NN) regulation is supervised by the Ministry of Tourism. Another standard, the Hotelstars was established by the regional tourism association, HOTREC (The Confederation of National Associations of Hotels, Restaurants, Cafés and Similar Establishments in the European Union and European Economic Area). Other quality rating systems are online rating and review systems, such as Trip Advisor. Whereas, specialized rating systems, such as ISO 14001 which is an environmental rating system was established by a private operator.

Mr. SHIKOH then presented a framework that compared conventional hospitality standards in terms of what criteria is measured and the strictness of the criteria. For example, the Green Key Global standard measures environmental friendliness and is lax in terms of implementation. Whereas the United States’ AAA star-rating system measures quality standards and is moderate in terms of level of strictness.

Question and Answers

Comment: In Muslim minority countries, it is difficult to adopt specific laws or acts on Muslim Friendly Tourism. In this respect it is necessary to have a label for MFT. The label should be used for MFT products and accommodation establishments as certification by private sector.

Question: There are many online booking websites worldwide. Many Muslim travelers use those websites to arrange their accommodation in different countries. Is there any progress on regulating online websites according to MFT?

Answer: We have MFT online booking websites such as Tripfez.com and Halalbooking.com. Since these websites are operating at the global level, it is hard to establish government level MFT regulation for them.

4. MFT Regulations for Accommodation Establishments: Selected Case Studies, Main Challenges, Recommendations and Prospects

In this session, Mr. Rafi-uddin SHIKOH, CEO of DinarStandard, continued presenting the findings of the analytical study “Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT): Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the OIC Member Countries”, focusing on MFT regulations, and providing case studies on selected countries.

At the outset Mr. SHIKOH highlighted the top markets for OIC international tourism receipts in 2015 which are as follows: Turkey (\$26.6 billion), Malaysia (\$17.6 billion), the United Arab Emirates (\$16 billion), Indonesia (\$10.8 billion), Saudi Arabia (10.1 billion). Mr. SHIKOH then shared Muslim visitor arrivals in OIC countries from 2014 and estimated arrivals up to 2020. He then shared the top markets for Muslim outbound tourism expenditure in 2015, the top three of which are Saudi Arabia (\$19.2 billion), the United Arab Emirates (\$15.1 billion), and Qatar (\$11.7 billion). Mr. SHIKOH then discussed accommodation types, and shared the number of hotels in OIC countries.

Mr. SHIKOH then shared the results of the consumer survey conducted for the study. In terms of services rated as important to be regulated, Halal food came at the top, with 98.8% respondents rating it as either important, very important or extremely important to be regulated. This is followed by offering Ramadan services (94.9%), providing qibla direction in rooms (94.1%), having a separate gym for women (92.8%), providing family-friendly entertainment (92.3%), and separate spa facilities for women. Other services and facilities that were rated as important include no-alcohol in hotel room, staff wears modest clothes, no adult channels in rooms, and other services.

In terms of awareness of MFT regulations, 25% of Muslim travelers said they were aware of regulations, while 75% said they were not aware. As for the accommodation sector survey, 38% of respondents said they were aware, whereas 62% said they were not aware.

Concerning the challenges in developing and implementing MFT standards, respondents rated them as follows: procedures to obtain certification (39.7%), risk of alienating non-Muslim guests (38.8%), cost of obtaining certification (36.4%), cost of training employees (35.5%), cost of altering facilities (33.1%), lower revenues from banning alcohol (24%).

Following the survey findings, Mr. Shikoh, presented three country case studies on Malaysia, Turkey, and Croatia. The standard development process for Malaysia’s Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Services Standard - MFHS (MS 2610:2015) was that a technical committee was formed in 2012, meetings were held with industry associations, a draft standard was made available for public comment, then the standard was officially launched in 2015.

The general requirements of the MS 2610:2015 were for management to improve MFHS on a continuous basis, appoint a trained Muslim officer to ensure implementation, hire competent personnel and offer training, and provide a list of all Muslim-friendly products and services offered. The standard’s specific requirements were that Rooms should have a qibla direction sign, prayer mat, Quran, prayer garment, a bidet/hand shower, no alcohol in mini-bar, and Halal personal care products. Additional requirements are that the kitchen is Halal certified by JAKIM,

sohour and iftar are available during Ramadan, public prayer rooms are available, and that there are Muslim-friendly recreational and wellness facilities.

The certification process for the MFHS (MS 2610:2015) is that hotels can purchase the standard for a nominal fee, after which they can voluntarily follow the standard guidelines. There is no certification process.

For the Turkish case study, Mr. SHIKOH discussed two standards. The certification process for the TSI Halal Management System (TS 13683) is through TSI's Halal certification department. Hotels complete an online application on TSI's website, TSI inspectors do a field visit and prepare a report, the report is presented to TSI's Halal Certification Committee, and then the hotel is granted a Halal Management System certificate. As for the certification process for the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's standard, which is still under development, it will be through the General Directorate of Investment and Establishments. Hotels will need to submit an application to the Ministry, then they would be visited by a controller, after which the Ministry will issue the certification. Controllers would visit to check the business regularly.

Mr. SHIKOH then presented the Croatia as another case study. The Rulebook of Certifying and Categorization of Hospitality Services was issued by the Center for Halal Quality Certification. The standard offers three levels. The requirements of Halal Package A are that hotels 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, store and prepare food according to Halal requirements, that 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 catering facility, indicate prayer direction in the rooms, provide a prayer rug, provide a prayer schedule, remove alcoholic beverages from mini bar. The requirements of Halal Package B is that it meets all the requirements of Halal Package A, and in addition not serve alcohol in the facility and well as not serve any haram food in the facility. Halal Package C requires that the hotel meets all the requirements of Halal Package B, and in addition provide a separate pool and beach for women.

The main challenges and lessons learned from the case studies in terms of standard development are stated below:

- The standard should include important criteria but not be too strict
- Industry participation is necessary
- Researches can be conducted to ensure usability
- Support from religious authorities is essential
- Consulting accommodation establishments is indispensable
- Having multiple levels encourages facilities to adopt the standard
- Obtaining government support is important.

The challenges and lessons learned in terms of standard adoption is that industry demands that adoption is voluntary, which leads to low adoption. Adoption can be increased through campaigns, road shows, industry seminars, providing incentives. In order to provide incentives, tax breaks can be used. Also on-going training for hotels is essential as abiding by MFT regulations can be challenging.

Questions & Remarks

Question: In some countries there are many hotels which have some concerns about losing customers after implementing MFT regulation. How can be proceeded in this context?

Answer: Within this context, the first thing to do can be disseminating knowledge. Tourism industry can be informed about the benefits of implementing MFT regulation.

Question: Are hotels or facilities investigated before introducing MFT standard or the standard is introduced without their involvement?

Answer: During the preparation process of the standard, stakeholders are involved to introduce the standard which suits most to the needs of the customers and business owners.

Question: Is it possible to face legal intervention after positioning products or services as halal without certification?

Answer: In many parts of the world there are many laws protecting customers from being deceived by products that is not halal.

5. Success Stories of the Member States

5.1. Gambia

Mrs. Fatou Beyai Raji, from Tourism Board of Gambia made a presentation on training Hospitality industry trainers in the Gambia, Senegal and Nigeria.

She started her presentation by giving a brief background of the project. The Gambia's Ministry of Tourism and Culture's strategy for 2015 to 2020 recommends the development of Muslim friendly tourism products. This will make The Gambia the first country in the sub region to introduce Muslim friendly tourism on a mixed basis.

Mrs. Beyai Raji also mentioned that the rationale for this training is derived from the increasing number of visitors from the sub region (Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Niger and other Muslim countries in Africa and other parts of the world) stay in hotels and need Muslim friendly accommodations and services. She also mentioned a recent survey conducted by Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute whose results presented a growing need for hotel workers and operators to undergo a training on Muslim friendly hotel operation. Furthermore, this could be the ideal location for the international Muslim traveler within the sub region offering peace and tranquility, and the emerging and rapidly growing market of Muslim travel will place high requirement for qualified talent.

With funding from COMCEC, Trainers will come from Malaysia, and trainees will be from Gambia, Senegal and Nigeria, who will be trained on the development of a curriculum for the hospitality institutes. Mrs. Beyai Raji however highlighted some of the constraints in the form of budget. Funding from COMCEC is pre-financed and makes it quite difficult for funds to be raised by developing countries. She went on to say that funding is usually in the form of training but after training the implementation of the training is quite impossible without the required funds. Sometimes there is a need for small infrastructures or equipment to go with the training but there is no Muslim friendly banking or financing for the development of the MFT products after the training.

The expectations from this training are for the program in Muslim Friendly Tourism to be developed, validated and used for training of 20 of the hospitality industry trainers in the OIC member states of West Africa. The training will create a Muslim Friendly Tourism service excellence achieved by service staff at hotels. The training manuals will also serve as reference material for trainees to use even after the training.

In her concluding remarks she stated that this training will enhance cooperation and collaboration between the OIC Member Countries in sharing ideas and best practices in Muslim Friendly tourism.

5.2. Indonesia

Mr. Riyanto SOFYAN, Chairman of Team for Accelerated of Halal Tourism Ministry of Tourism of The Republic of Indonesia made a presentation and shared information about Quickwin Program to Promote MFT.

Mr. Sofyan informed participants that the program is a practical approach for immediate implementation and benefit and it includes optimizing reports/ resources within OIC and other tourism institution.

He stated the vision of the program as to be the most preferred tourism theme for all and mission as greater goods and welfare to all mankind.

He also pointed out that focus strategy in developing halal tourism industry and its related sectors consist of two main strategy:

1. To increase the size by bringing Halal Tourism to go Mainstream as an Inclusive Family Friendly Tourism (size of the cake).
2. To increase the proportion of spending in shares as a Family Friendly travel series within its regions (share of the cake).

Four pillars of halal tourism development can be stated as:

I. Policy/ Regulation Development

- Top Government Officials Commitment
- Growth Stimulant Policy & Regulations
- Budget Allocation

II. Marketing and Promotion

Integrated Promotion of Indonesia's Halal Tourism Campaign in main markets:

- Marketing Strategy: DOT
- Promotion Strategy: BAS
- Media Strategy : POSE

III. Destination and Industry Development

- Attraction
- Amenities
- Accessibility

IV. Capacity Building

- Human Resource Development/ Certification
- Community and Stakeholders Awareness/Support
- Industry Development/

Mr. Sofyan stated that Global Muslim tourist expenditure almost equal to Chinese tourist expenditure (excluding Hajj & Umrah). In 2015 Growth rates in Tourism industry were in Indonesia 10,3%, China 2.2%, Muslim Tourist 6,3 % World 4,4 %.

In his closing remarks he stated that government can support the private sector in developing the following activities:

- Joint Package: Halal Travel Series
- Cross-selling among OIC Countries
- Expanding accessibilities through air, water, and ground transportation
- Joint programmes and promotional materials on tourism investment opportunities
- Facilitating Capacity Building and Training Programmes

5.3. Malaysia

On behalf of Malaysia, Dr. Azrul Anaz Mohd Any, Director (Research and Training), Islamic Training Centre (ITC), Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia presented on “Malaysian Accommodation Readiness Towards Shariah Compliance”. The research was funded by the Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister’s Department under the 10th Malaysia Plan.

In the presentation, Dr. Azrul Anaz shared Malaysia’s experience on the study conducted by ITC to gauge the level of readiness of hotel owners and management companies towards the concept of Sharia-compliant accommodation (SCA). The study combines primary and secondary tools and sources to fulfill its objectives. It involves in-depth interview with accommodation providers, owners and regulators. At the same time survey was also conducted with accommodation providers and domestic and international tourists comprising of Muslims and non-Muslims.

From the study, Dr. Azrul highlighted the attributes that accommodation providers find easy to implement if they were to adopt the SCA concept as follows:

- i. Musalla
- ii. Qibla sign
- iii. Halal kitchen
- iv. Prayer mat
- v. Quran (translation)

At the same time, there are certain attributes which accommodation providers find quite difficult to be adopted such as follows:

- i. Separation of facilities and services
- ii. Renovation to fit the sharia requirements
- iii. No alcohol policy
- iv. Guest with proper attire
- v. Appointing dedicated sharia officer

While the Government had developed the Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services Requirement (MFHS2610:2015) as an official MFT regulations and standards document, accommodation providers still have the liberty either to adopt such a concept or not..

At the end of the study, it has been highlighted that accommodation providers might be facing these key challenges if they decided to adopt the SCA concept:

- i. Buy-in idea towards SCA by providers and owners
- ii. Brand positioning does not suit with the SCA concept
- iii. To adopt SCA might entail higher costs
- iv. Perception towards the word Sharia
- v. Possibility of losing other target market

As a conclusion, the study had suggested for SCA rating mechanism to be introduced if there is a demand for SCA certification based on the existing available tools i.e. accommodation rating imposed by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia and the MFHS 2610:2015. Three (3)

categories of accommodation providers can be classified into silver, gold and platinum with silver having fulfilled the minimum requirements of SCA accommodation, gold as fulfilling half of the SCA requirements and the platinum having fulfilled all the SCA requirements

5.4. Turkey

On behalf of Turkey, Mrs. Tuba ULU YILMAZ, Chief Controller from the General Directorate of Investment and Establishments, Ministry of Culture and Tourism made a presentation and shared Turkey's experience in "Muslim Friendly Tourism(MFT): Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the OIC Member Countries".

Mrs. Ulu Yilmaz made a presentation on conventional quality standards and regulations in tourism industry of Turkey which are carried out by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Firstly, Mrs. Ulu Yilmaz gave general information on Board of Tourism Controllers, which is a specialist auditors group established within the organization of General Directorate of Investments and Establishments. Furthermore, she demonstrated the statistical data on licensed accommodation establishments. She mentioned the relevant Law and Regulations and different tourism establishment types which are determined by the Ministry.

Furthermore, Mrs. Ulu Yilmaz highlighted that the certification of tourism enterprises in Turkey were officially given by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. She added that although the current directive did not refer to halal tourism or halal touristic facilities, as a private sector initiative there were hotels in Turkey that promote themselves as "halal hotels".

She concluded her presentation by emphasizing that the Turkish Standard Institution (TSE) started issuing halal food certificates and also published Halal Service Criteria for Hotels.

6. Policy Options for Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the OIC Member Countries

The session was moderated by Mr. Riyanto SOFYAN, Chairman of the Sofyan Hotels. At the outset, Mr. SOFYAN stated that draft MFT Guideline, prepared by the COMCEC Coordination Office in light of the findings of the analytical study prepared specifically for the Meeting and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions which have already been sent by the CCO, would serve as the basis for the discussions in the moderation session.

At the beginning of the session, Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, made a brief presentation on the responses of the Member Countries to the policy questions on regulating MFT accommodation establishments sent to the Tourism Working Group focal points by the CCO. Afterwards Mr. Rafiuddin SHIKOH made a presentation to introduce the draft COMCEC MFT Guideline for Regulating Accommodation Establishments.

After the presentations, Mr. SOFYAN gave the floor to all delegations asking their opinions and comments on the draft COMCEC MFT Guideline as well as the experience of their respective countries in this regard. Regarding the document, the participants emphasized the stakeholder involvement, certification, supervision and requirement for capacity building issues. It is also stated that COMCEC MFT Guideline is an initial step for advanced and more comprehensive guidelines and it is prepared for the utilization of Member Countries. The participants agreed on the COMCEC MFT Guideline. Based on intensive deliberations, CCO reflected the observations made during the session to the attached document². The draft COMCEC MFT Guideline will be submitted to the 33rd Session of the COMCEC as the main outcome of the 9th Meeting of the Tourism Working Group.

² The draft COMCEC MFT Guideline is attached as Annex 3.

7. International Institutions' / Private Sector's Perspective

7.1. IHRA

"How to Accommodate Hotels According to MFT"

Dr. Ghassan AIDI, President of International Hotel & Restaurant Association made a presentation on accommodating hotels according to MFT.

At the beginning of his presentation, he gave information about hospitality industry. He stated that the world today is a great and wonderful mixture of people and various cultures. Hospitality industry should accommodate all clients regardless of their requirements, and one of them is the Islamic tourism and the Halal issue which are most important issues in the Islamic tourism.

Mr. AIDI emphasized that hospitality industry is the most important industry worldwide, employing more than 60 million people and contributing about \$ 1 trillion to the Global economy. It will continue to expand as every day 10 New hotels are opened somewhere in the world which make about 3000 hotels per year.

He stated that several hotels are afraid for such Islamic accommodation thinking that it will cost them a lot and they forget that will increase their sales. Many hotels ask IH&RA if they have specific issues about that and followings are recommended to them:

- Discreet stickers in the rooms to indicate the Qibla direction. It can be just with the picture of Qibla and an arrow
- Concierges may provide anytime a mat to pray in the rooms
- A specific halal menu should be provided for lunch and dinner or in the same menu having a little logo "H" that will be interpreted as Halal
- Provide a meeting room on Friday if guests need to pray together
- A Holy Quran may be provided on request
- During Ramadan providing food on Souhour and Iftar with a specific room and a menu
- A bidet in the bathroom is necessary
- During Ramadan having a small schedule for Pray in the city
- Open the fitness center in specific time "only" for female
- Having the female housekeeper for cleaning the room of female
- Pork free is granted not to be served
- Providing specific channels such as Arabic or other local languages depending on the location
- Prepare a brochure about addresses of specific Muslims attraction such as a Local Holy Mosque etc.

He underlined that he would like to see the Islamic Hospitality services and product to be branded, standardized and Halal Label to be recognized.

Mr. AIDI mentioned that worldwide 120 various criteria has been developed not one from the hospitality industry. 36 organizations met together in a steering committee with the UN Foundation and developed "Global Criteria For Sustainable Development". IHRA was the only Hospitality Group that was present and did participate actively protecting consumers and the

Hotels as well as their developer. These criteria has been presented & Adopted by United Nations in October 2008.

He pointed out the importance of using criteria. It's a criterion that took into consideration the needs of the consumers and Hoteliers as well as developers. Criteria will serve as a basic guidelines for hotels to become sustainable. It will be a guide for tour operator to choose their hotels. Consumers will choose their hotel freely and will be the basic guidelines for Schools and Universities for education.

Mr. AIDI expressed that new tourists are coming from China, Australia, USA who are looking for new destinations, new experiences. In this respect peace, destination image as well as safety and security are becoming very important.

He concluded his words with his wish on working together for the future of the Islamic hospitality industry.

7.2. Center for Halal Quality Certification

“Regulation of Halal Friendly Hospitality Services in non-OIC countries: Case of Croatia”

Mr. ALDIN DUGONJIC, CEO of Center for Halal Quality Certification made presentation on regulation of halal friendly hospitality services in non-OIC countries.

He highlighted that many countries in the world have established legal provisions and requirements for the tourism industry to be met in order to be part of the tourism industry. For instance, hotel industry is categorized by stars which directly communicate to the user what kind of service they can expect.

Halal Travel or better to say Halal Friendly Travel could be defined as the activities of the organization and coordination of journey/trip, accommodation, conditions for performing religious services , preparation and serving of food and other activities during guests' stay, such as extracurricular activities, excursions, visits, recreation and so on.

He also pointed that more and more countries in the world offer a variety of halal services in order to take part in this untapped market niche and the opportunity that this fastest growing market offers. For these reasons various initiatives on standardization and promotion of halal travel have been undertaken, either at the level of the Government or private. Moreover, certain hotels self-declaratively proclaim themselves as halal service providers often not knowing at all what halal is.

In conclusion remarks he stated that in Croatia they have established the Rulebook of Certifying and Categorization of Hotels and Restaurants Facilities according to requirements of Halal quality which recently have been expanded to Hospitality Services, Travel Agencies and Health facilities. The Rulebook have been developed on the basis of Halal standard HRN BAS 1049 with participation of the Ministry of Tourism, Tourism Boards, hotels and tour-operators and other tourism stakeholders. By making these Regulations Center for Halal Quality Certification has created a base for development of Halal Travel Market in Croatia and ensured that every visitor/user with halal lifestyle leave happy and satisfied. This Rulebook can be implemented in any country around the world because the hospitality provider can choose category which he

want to be halal certified. If he want that every guest can use his service, he will take A category. If he wants to have just service for Muslims he will take C category.

7.3. Sofyan Hospitality International

“Private Sector Perspective on Regulating MFT Accommodation Establishments”

Mrs. Hasya Amana, Business Development Director from Sofyan Hospitality International made a presentation and shared Sofyan Hospitality International’s experiences, achievements and challenges faced regarding regulating MFT accommodation establishments.

At the beginning of her presentation she gave brief information about Sofyan Hotels. She stated that they have more than 46 years of experience in the Hospitality Industry with over 25 years of experience in Halal Hospitality.

She also added that Sofyan Halal Hospitality Standard which is prepared by Sofyan Hospitality International includes comprehensive management tools, systems to develop Halal compliance management in tourism and hospitality product and services providers. The standard is applicable across the whole Ecosystem of Tourism and Lifestyle Industry.

Sofyan Halal Hospitality Standard (SHHS) has three categories which are SHHS for Non-Muslim Majority Countries, SHHS for Muslim Majority Countries and SHHS for Sharia Compliance Countries and it has following three level of standard for them:

- Halal Compliant Standard - Hilal 3 : Comply to halal and sharia principles in all aspect of its Business institution and operation
- Halal Compliant Standard – Hilal 2 : Comply to halal and sharia principles in all aspect of its operation
- Halal Friendly Standard – Hilal 1: Comply to halal and sharia principles to provide muslim basic essential needs with limited facilities and services provided

She also stated that SHHS is a sharia compliance business entity certified by National Council of Ulama Indonesia (DSN MUI) and it has corporate sharia advisory board from National Council of Ulama Indonesia (DSN MUI).

She gave information on Halal compliance implementation which can be shown as:

- Sofyan Halal Hospitality Stadar
- Industry Adjustments To Fulfill The Halal Compliance Requirements
- SHHS Implementation
- Halal & Sharia Compliance Certification - Certified By Council Of Ulama / Standard Department (Government)
- Officially Legitimate

Mrs. Amana presented the Halal hotel components of hotels as:

- Physical – Lobby, Front Office, Toilet, Guest Room, Bathroom, Interior design

- Service - Front Office, Housekeeping, Food and Beverage, Consultation, Entertainment
- Management – Organization, Business Management, Human Resources, Partnership

She concluded her presentation by giving information about SHHS Implementation Operational System. In order to provide continual improvement of halal quality assurance management system the key areas that needs to be considered are management responsibility, resources management, measurement, analysis, improvement and product realization.

7.4. Tripfez.com

“Salam Standard - Concept, Lessons Learned, Challenges and Benefits to the Global Hospitality Industry”

Mr. Faez FADHHILLAH, CEO of Tripfez made a presentation on Salam Standard. At the beginning of the presentation, he gave brief information on the standard. Salam Standard is one of the important hotel reference tools dedicated to Muslim travelers. The goal of the standard is to remove the barriers for people to travel freely and conveniently for all cultures, religions and beliefs. One of the initial questions which arose was how to adapt and localize travel products for the Muslim market.

He stated that the solution was Salam Standard which currently has indexed more than 55 000 hotels worldwide across 50 countries. Salam Standard provides Muslim travelers with a one-of-a-kind reference tool, enabling them to choose Muslim-friendly accommodations that adhere to their Islamic principles.

Moreover he highlighted that while Muslims travel, their faith based needs are not met in many places. According to a survey conducted by Salam Standard, 81% of Muslims are searching for Muslim friendly amenities, but there is no global and consistent solution. 70% of Muslim travelers think that more services and facilities for Muslim are important.

Salam Standard was developed based on a survey from 5000 Muslims from 47 different countries on what are the most common problems and wishes of Muslims while they travel. 93% stated that halal breakfast and halal food are important while travelling, with 87% responding that a list of halal restaurants provided by the hotel is important. The concept of Salam Standard was derived from the survey, following the following criteria:

- Muslim Praying Carpet is available or can be requested
- Qibla direction is available or can be obtained
- List of Halal Restaurants in the vicinity is available or can be requested
- There is no alcohol in the mini-bar of the hotel room
- The hotel offers halal certified food (certified through a recognized certification body)

He continued his presentation with the information that the tool is currently available on Tripfez as well as accessible via an API. A tool for hotels to serve Muslim travelers was also launched whereby hotels can access a dashboard panel that gives them access to the latest praying direction, praying time, as well as nearby mosques within the vicinity. Though this panel hotels are able to offer additional services to their Muslim guests.

Mr. Fadhllillah pointed out that the API also empowers other travel sites to help them target Muslim travelers as well as understand Muslim travelers' needs and requirements. Through the API as well, Salam Standard works with various national tourism organizations (NTOs) to educate hotels on how to become Muslim friendly as well as understand the travel trends and patterns of Muslim travelers through the usage of data.

Since the launch more than 55 000 hotels have been indexed with major international hotel chains on board including AccorHotels, Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts, Rotana Hotels & Resorts, Anantara Hotels & Resorts, and Rixos Hotels. Several hotels have started to display the standard on the website as well as print brochures with the standard logo.

Through this initiative Salam Standard have won several international awards with global media coverage and it is hoped that the awareness on the needs of Muslim travelers can be raised and more travel sites as well as NTOs can be empowered to cater for the demand. To help achieve this, we have also launched the first ever Salam Standard Global Economic Impact of Muslim Tourism 2015/2016 Report which looked into the contribution of Muslim tourism in countries across the world.

He concluded his word with challenges in developing MFT products. Some of the challenges of developing MFT products are the lack of understanding of real and diverse Muslim traveler's needs and requirements. It's also important to enable and empower hotels to become a member yet not to compromise quality. Development should take into consideration regional differences to be inclusive and yet complete.

7.5. Instituto Halal

"Success Story of Halal-Certified Hotels: The Case of Alanda"

Ms. Barbara RUIZ BEJARANO, Director of International Relations from Instituto Halal made a presentation on Halal certified hotels.

At the outset, she provided data about Muslims in Spain. Although Spain had been a Muslim-majority country in the past (Al Andalus, 711-1492), it is currently a Catholic majority country. Muslims account for approximately 4% - 5 % of the population. Within this group, the largest portion is from the Maghreb, notably Morocco and Algeria, followed by Middle Eastern countries (Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt). The percentage of Spanish reverts/converts to Islam remains low (tens of thousands).

She stated that Islamophobia and intolerance are extended phenomena across Europe and are the main deterrents for the development of the halal industries, with several campaigns to "boycott halal" and to reject refugees accounting for the many expressions of the anti-Muslim sentiments in the continent. Even so, the Islamic Heritage in Spain, and its main touristic assets: sun, beach, affordable prices still manage to attract some 2 M Muslim tourists a year.

She continued her presentation with halal certified Alanda Hotel Marbella. It is located in iconic Marbella, 60 meters from King Fadh Mosque, this 4-star hotel was sold in 2013 by NH Group to a Saudi investment group. The new management is fully committed to the Halal Concept. The halal certification procedure applied was the Halal Procedure for Catering & Hospitality Services by the Halal Institute of Spain (member of Spanish Standards Association Technical Committee 308 Halal). Requirements include: catering services, hospitality services and facilities, other

facilities (prayer room, meeting rooms, amenities), and other services (including cultural routes in Andalusian and Islamic Spanish destinations). The hotel obtained halal certification in 2014, becoming the first halal-certified hotel in Spain. The hotel did some refurbishing to offer an Andalusian taste and new facilities, including hammam, khaima, halal restaurant, pool, gym, etc. as well as suites and rooms designed to accommodate families and extended families. Menus offered are non-alcoholic and halal-certified. Staff was trained in the Halal Concept by the Halal Academy. Also, Arabic speakers were hired to suit the preferences of a high percentage of guests. In terms of marketing, the hotel has resorted to specialized agencies and organizations such as Crescent rating or halalbooking.com.

She highlighted the figures which demonstrate the successful experience of Alanda: In 2014, the number of guests was below 500; in 2016 it was over 1,400. The profile of guests according to their origin includes: regular guests from Spain, some of whom are Muslims; French guests, mostly originally from the Maghreb; Saudi Arabian guests, and guests from GCC & European countries.

The case of Alanda Hotel Marbella has also had an impact on the hotel's environment: many local business have shown their interest in the case of Alanda; some local cafes and restaurants have begun to create their own halal menus; some neighboring catering businesses are also outsourcing halal-certified products. The hotel managed to convey the idea of the halal lifestyle as positive and healthy, which is now attracting many Non-Muslims.

In her closing remarks she stated that Halal certification has been key to the success of the hotel under their new ownership. The hotel has been refurbished to suit Muslim customers' needs and preferences. Staff have been trained in the halal concept, Muslim staff have been hired. Engagement with other actors in the value chain, such as booking agencies, has contributed to a more solid halal image. The impact in the environment has been positive, as other businesses are interested in the halal-certified model.

7.6. Halalbooking.com

"A Global View on the Halal-Friendly Tourism Sector"

Mr. Ufuk SEÇGİN, Chief Marketing Officer from Halalbooking.com make a presentation on halal travel and hospitality market.

At the beginning of his presentation he stated that there are 1.6 billion Muslim in the world. Total Muslim traveler expenditure exceeded 140 billion dollars which is more than 10% of the global tourism expenditure. 78% of the expenditure is from 57 OIC Muslim-majority countries and 22% from Western Muslim-minority countries. Moreover Muslim traveler expenditure is expected to reach 233 billion dollars by 2020. Muslim Tourism expected annual 5% growth rate.

He also stated that travel categories for Muslim tourists are City Break (Hotel + tours, sightseeing, shopping, business trip, etc), Resorts (Beach, Health, Desert, Ski and other resorts) and Private Villas (Private swimming pools).

He informed the participants that Muslim tourists prefer Halal food & drink, gender-related nuances (dedicated women/family facilities), family environment (sport, animation, evening entertainment), religious practices/rituals (prayer, Ramadhan, bathroom, etc), interests (heritage, sightseeing, shopping, theme parks). The market also have potential for non-OIC

countries such as villa preference in non-OIC countries and city hotels with “halal services” for Muslim travelers.

He mentioned the concept of Halal-friendly beaches. The concept started in Turkey and there are approximately 160 Resorts in Turkey. The concept started with focus on Turkish customers, but rapidly attracted global customers. Antalya/Alanya globally leading destination for halal-friendly beach resorts and have more than 15 resorts and #1 destination for halal-friendly beach holidays.

He concluded his words with the contribution of HalalBooking.com to the Halal Tourism. HalalBooking.com helps to develop Halal Tourism in various destinations by:

- Sharing market insights with suppliers & tourism offices
- Advising hoteliers on design and layout of halal services
- Supporting DMCs on design of tour itineraries
- Facilitating Familiarization trips to its current best-selling destinations
- Marketing a Supplier’s brand to its global customer base.

8. Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding

Mr. Burak KARAGÖL, Director at the COMCEC Coordination Office made a presentation on the COMCEC Project Funding introduced by the COMCEC Strategy. At the outset, Mr. KARAGÖL informed the participants about where the COMCEC Project Funding stands in the COMCEC Strategy. Mr. KARAGÖL underlined the basic qualifications of the COMCEC Project Funding as “simple and clearly defined procedures and financial framework”, and mentioned that CCO provided continuous support to the Member Countries during the all stages of the COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism. With respect to the financial framework, Mr. KARAGÖL emphasized that the funds are grant in nature and would be provided by the CCO.

After briefly explaining the COMCEC Project Funding, Mr. KARAGÖL highlighted the potential project owners. It was emphasized that relevant ministries and other public institutions of the Member Countries and the OIC Institutions operating in the field of economic and commercial cooperation could submit projects. He also underlined that Member Countries have to be registered to respective working group in order to submit their project proposals.

During the presentation, three key actors and their responsibilities under the COMCEC Project Funding were identified; Project Owner (Project Submission and Implementation); the CCO (Program Management) and the Development Bank of Turkey (Project Monitoring and Financing). Moreover, steps and roles of these key actors throughout the project application process were defined.

He continued his presentation by explaining the “Project Selection Criteria” namely, compliance with Strategy’s Principles, and targeting strategic objectives of the Strategy, focusing on output areas and pursuing multilateral cooperation among the OIC Member Countries. Mr. KARAGÖL also emphasized that project proposals submitted by the Member Countries should be compliant with the sectoral themes for the fourth call stated in the Program Implementation Guidelines. Mr. KARAGÖL pointed out the importance of the multilateralism for project appraisal and stated that project proposals should focus on common problems of at least two Member Countries and also should offer joint solutions for these problems.

Mr. KARAGÖL also gave information on 2014, 2015 and 2016 Projects. He stated that Member Countries and OIC institutions had shown great interest and 209 project proposals were submitted by Member Countries and OIC institutions in three-year period (2013-2015). He also stated that totally five tourism projects were implemented under the COMCEC Project Funding in 2014, 2015 and 2016. They were titled “Improving Statistical Capacities of Tourism Sector in COMCEC Mediterranean and Gulf Region”, “Cities of Common Cultural Heritage”, “Strengthening Community Resilience through eco-tourism”, “Enhancing the Capacity of Craft Producers in the OIC Member Countries” and “Short Course on Strategies in Enhancing Tourism Workforce in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) within the OIC Member Countries” proposed by SESRIC, Azerbaijani, the Gambia, the Gambia and Malaysia respectively. Mr. KARAGÖL also stated that 57 project proposals received under the fourth project call and 15 of them will be funded in 2017. He also mentioned that 5 tourism projects will be funded in 2017.

Mr. KARAGÖL shared brief information with participants regarding common characteristics of successful project proposals and stated that “sufficient and informative project summary”, “sound project activities and relevant details about them”, “qualified human resources in line with Program Implementation Guidelines requirements”, “detailed and well-designed work



plan”, “realistic cost estimations in the budget and sufficient explanations for them”, “Project Owner’s cooperation and communication with CCO” and “active participation to the relevant Working Group” are key success factors.

9. Closing Remarks

The Meeting ended with closing remarks of Mr. Zulkifly MD SAID, Islamic Tourism Centre (Director General) of Malaysia and Chairperson of the Meeting and Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Director in the COMCEC Coordination Office.

In his remarks, Mr. SAID thanked all the Member Countries for giving him the opportunity to chair this session. He also thanked all the participants, presenters for their invaluable contributions, comments and ideas presented during the discussions.

Mr. Selçuk KOÇ also thanked all the participants for their invaluable contributions. He underlined that the observations and comments of the participants on the analytical study prepared specifically for the Tourism Working Group Meetings would be mostly welcome in order to improve its quality. He also stated feedbacks about the main output of the meeting, the draft COMCEC MFT Guideline which will be presented to the 33st Session of the COMCEC, would be very valuable. If participants have any comments about Guideline, they should not hesitate to contact CCO.

Mr. KOÇ also informed the participants that the next (10th) Meeting of the Tourism Working Group will be held on September 21st, 2017 in Ankara with the theme of “Risk and Crisis Management and Recovery from Crisis in Tourism Sector in the OIC Member Countries.”

Annex 1: Agenda of the Meeting



9th MEETING OF THE COMCEC TOURISM WORKING GROUP (February 16th, 2017 Ankara)

“Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT): Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the OIC Member Countries”

AGENDA

Opening Remarks

1. The COMCEC Tourism Outlook
2. MFT Regulations/Standards for Accommodation Establishments in the OIC Member Countries: Current Situation, Main Challenges, Recommendations
3. Policy Options for Developing Regulations for Accommodation Establishments in the OIC Member Countries
4. Member State Presentations
5. International Institutions’/ Private Sector’s Perspective
6. Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding

Closing Remarks

Annex 2: Program of the Meeting



9th MEETING OF THE COMCEC TOURISM WORKING GROUP (February 16th, 2017, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Ankara)

“Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT): Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the OIC Member Countries”

PROGRAMME

08.30-09.00 **Registration**

09.00-09.05 **Recitation from the Holy Quran**

09.05-09.15 **Opening Remarks**

The COMCEC Tourism Outlook

09.15-09.35 - *Presentation: Mr. Gürel ÇETİN
Associate Professor
COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO)*

09.35-09.45 - *Discussion*

Conventional/ MFT Regulations for Accommodation Establishments

09.45-10.15 - *Presentation: Mr. Rafi-uddin SHIKOH
CEO
Dinar Standard*

10.15-10.45 - *Discussion*

10.45-11.00 *Coffee Break*

MFT Regulations for Accommodation Establishments: Selected Case Studies, Main Challenges, Recommendations and Prospects

11.00-11.40 - *Presentation: Mr. Rafi-uddin SHIKOH*
CEO
Dinar Standard

11.40-12.20 - *Discussion*

12.20-14.00 *Lunch*

Policy Options for Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the Member Countries

There will be a moderation session under this agenda item. The participants are expected to deliberate on the Draft MFT Guide which has been prepared by the CCO, in light of the findings of the analytical study prepared specifically for the Meeting. The Draft Guide was shared with the Tourism Working Group focal points by the CCO before the Meeting. At the beginning of the session, the CCO will make a short presentation on the responses of the Member Countries to the policy questions which have already been sent to the focal points. Afterwards, the consulting company, DinarStandard will present the Draft Guide.

14.00-14.10 - *Presentation: “Responses of the Member Countries to the Policy Questions on Regulating Accommodation Establishments”*
Mr. Selçuk KOÇ
Director
COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO)

14.10-14.20 - *Presentation: “Draft COMCEC MFT Guideline For Regulating Accommodation Establishments”*
Mr. Rafi-uddin SHIKOH
CEO
Dinar Standard

14.20-15.30 - *Discussion*

Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding

15.30-15.45 - *Presentation: Mr. Burak KARAGÖL*
Director
COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO)

15.45-15.55 - *Discussion*

15.55-16.10 *Coffee Break*

Success Stories of the Member States

- 16.10-17.10 - *Presentation(s)*
- *Discussion*

Private Sector Experience

- 17.10-17.20 - *Presentation: "How to Accommodate Hotels According to MFT"*
Dr. Ghassan AIDI
President
IHRA
- 17.20-17.30 - *Presentation: "Regulation of Halal Friendly Hospitality Services in non-OIC countries: Case of Croatia"*
Mr. Aldin DUGONJIC
CEO
Center for Halal Quality Certification
- 17.30-17.40 - *Presentation: "Private Sector Perspective on Regulating MFT Accommodation Establishments"*
Ms. Hasya Amana RIYANTO
Vice Financial Director
Sofyan Hotels
- 17.40-17.50 - *Presentation: "Salam Standard - Concept, Lessons Learned, Challenges and Benefits to the Global Hospitality Industry"*
Mohammad Faez Mohamad FADHLILAH
CEO
Tripfez.com
- 17.50-18.00 - *Presentation: "Success Story of Halal-Certified Hotels : The Case of Alanda"*
Dr. Barbara RUIZ-BEJARANO
Director of International Relations
Instituto Halal
- 18.00-18.10 - *Presentation: "A Global View on the Halal-Friendly Tourism Sector"*
Mr. Ufuk SEÇGİN
Chief Marketing Officer
Halalbooking.com
- 18.10-18.20 - *Discussion*
- 18.20-18.30 *Closing Remarks*

Annex 3: Draft COMCEC MFT Guideline for Regulating Accommodation Establishments

With the rising numbers of Muslim travelers, who have unique faith-based needs, tourism businesses around the world have started to pay attention to the needs of this growing and lucrative market segment. Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT) is defined as “the activities of Muslim travelers who do not wish to compromise their faith-based needs while travelling for a purpose, which is permissible.”³

Given the growing importance of the MFT market, COMCEC commissioned the following three studies on MFT:

1. *Muslim Friendly Tourism: Understanding the Demand and Supply Sides in the OIC Member Countries*
2. *Muslim Friendly Tourism: Developing and Marketing MFT Products and Services in the OIC Member Countries*
3. *Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT): Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the OIC Member Countries*

The findings of the third MFT study - *Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT) Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the OIC Member Countries* were presented to the 9th Meeting of the Tourism Working Group held on February 16th, 2017 in Ankara.

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 some 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 the 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 MFT Regulation guidelines for OIC and Non-OIC countries. It presents key considerations in evaluating and setting up of MFT guidelines, and general MFT services & facilities guidelines for different levels of MFT readiness across the OIC

³ “Muslim-Friendly Tourism: Understanding the Demand and Supply Sides in the OIC Member Countries.” COMCEC, Feb. 2016. Web.

Member Countries. Finally, market positioning options for MFT travel are also summarized in this document.

Evaluating & Setting-Up for MFT Guidelines

The aforementioned study strongly recommends the regulation of MFT elements within the accommodation sector (albeit at varying level depending on individual country environment and maturity), given the strong feedback provided by surveys and a clear articulation of the types of services required.

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.

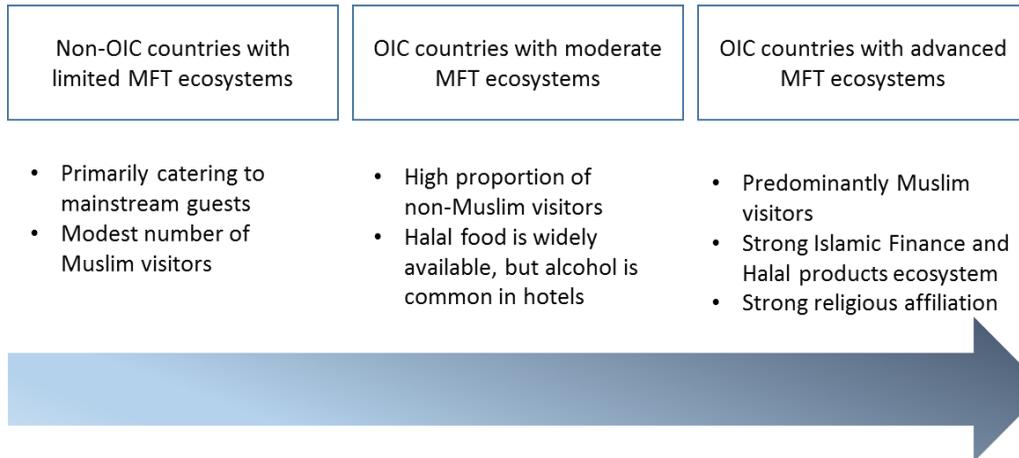
MFT regulation provides guests with an assurance of authenticity, especially in case of Halal food, provides consistent expectations, and supports a family-friendly ecosystem, which is beneficial to both Muslim guests as well as to mainstream guests traveling with their families.

The analysis and main findings of the research report titled *“Muslim Friendly Tourism: Understanding the Demand and Supply Sides in the OIC Member Countries”* and *“Muslim Friendly Tourism: Developing and Marketing MFT Products and Services in the OIC Member Countries”* which have already prepared for the COMCEC TWG, can also be utilized by Member Countries in their efforts towards regulating MFT accommodation establishments.

MFT Services & Facilities – General Guidelines

The relevance of MFT services and facilities will differ by nature of country. 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



Based on the review of various existing MFT guidelines, below are a summary listing of MFT services and facilities guidelines per segment category of country described above.

1. 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.

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.

2. 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 following⁴:

⁴ 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.

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. Providing family-friendly entertainment
6. Requiring staff to dress modestly

3. MFT Services and Facilities for 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
4. Holy Qurans should be placed in each room
5. Congregational prayers should 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.

Family-Friendly and Ethical Positioning

The level of practicality in introducing MFT features varies by country. One of the key consideration is positioning and promoting Muslim-friendly services without alienating non-Muslim customers. Some 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.

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

Annex 4: List of Participants

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS 9th MEETING OF THE TOURISM WORKING GROUP (16 February 2017, ANKARA)

A. INVITED STATES

THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

- Mr. DJAMEL ALILI
Focal Point, Ministry of Spatial Planning, Tourism and Handicraft
- Mr. YACINE HADJI
Minister Plenipotentiary. Embassy of Algeria in Ankara

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

- Mr. SHELLY SALEHIN
Counsellor, Embassy of Bangladesh in Ankara

BURKINA FASO

- Mr. BOUKARI TAO
Director, Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- Ms. LAMOUSSA ROSALIE BALIMA
Technical Counsellor, Ministry of Culture and Tourism

THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

- Ms. MONA MOUSTAFA ELKORASHI
Second Secretary, Embassy of Egypt in Ankara

THE GABONESE REPUBLIC

- Mr. THIBAUT IFOUNGA
Chief of Protocol, Embassy of Gabon in Ankara

THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

- Ms. YA AWA NYASSI
Planner, Ministry of Tourism and Culture
- Ms. FATOU BEYAI RAJI
Director, Gambia Tourism Board

REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

- Mr. RIYANTO SOFYAN
Team Leader for Accelerated Development, Ministry of Tourism
- Mr. JUBILAR PASKORO
Staff, Ministry of Tourism

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

- Mr. ESMAEIL BARAT
Director of Regulations and Tourism Standards, Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization
- Mr. ARMIN HADIGHI
Director, Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization

THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

- Mr. MEDER ABAKIROV
Counsellor, Embassy of Kyrgyzstan in Ankara

MALAYSIA

- Mr. ZULKIFLY MD SAID
Director General, Islamic Tourism Centre
- Mr. AZRUL ANAZ MOHD ANY
Director, Islamic Tourism Centre

THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

- Mr. JOSE FARIA
Chief of Planning, Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- Mr. MOHAMED HARUN
Adviser, Ministry of Culture and Tourism

THE STATE OF PALESTINE

- Mr. AZMI ABU GHAZALEH
Counsellor, Embassy of Palestine in Ankara

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

- Mr. ABDULAZIZ AL SAEIDI
Head of Sanctions, Saudi Commission for Tourism

REPUBLIC OF SUDAN

- Mr. MUSA ABDELKARIM ADAM BABIKER
Deputy Director, Ministry of Tourism

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

- Mr. MURAT KARAKUŞ
Chief Inspector, Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- Ms. BAŞAK ÖNSAL DEMİR
Coordinator, Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- Ms. TUBA ULU YILMAZ
Controller, Ministry of Culture and Tourism
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- Mr. FARUK ÇUBUKÇU
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Manager, Turkish Standards Institution
- Ms. NEFİSE BETÜL HIDIROĞLU
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- Mr. ABDELAZIZ ALAMI
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C. INVITED INSTITUTIONS

CENTER FOR HALAL QUALITY CERTIFICATION

- Mr. ALDIN DUGONJIC
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- Mr. NEDIM OMEROVIC
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SOFYAN HOTELS

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- Mr. GÜREL ÇETİN
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- Mr. GÖKTEN DAMAR
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- MEHMET C. AKTAŞ
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