



Agenda n°8

NOTE ON

THE ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM
SUBMITTED BY

THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT
OF TRADE

TO
THE 40th SESSION OF THE FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE OF
THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC AND
COMMERCIAL CO-OPERATION OF THE OIC
(COMCEC)



Ankara, Republic of Türkiye
22nd -23rd May 2024

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
I. OIC TOURISM FAIR	1
1. History of the Islamic Tourism Fair:	1
2. Organization of the 3 rd Islamic Tourism Fair:.....	3
II. TRAININGS.....	4
1. Training Webinar on Managing and Marketing Protected Areas (21-22 February 2022)	4
2. Training Webinar on Sustainable Tourism Perspectives in OIC Member States, (1-2 June 2022)	5
3. Webinar on Prospects of Health Tourism in OIC Countries, 8-9 November 2022..	5
4. Webinar on the Digitalisation of Tourism Services in the OIC Countries (24-25 May 2023)	6
5. Webinar on Gastronomic Tourism in OIC Countries (4-5 October 2023).....	6
6. Webinar on strengthening ecotourism and conservation practices in OIC countries (November 29-30, 2023)	6
7. Following up on the implementation of the Regional Project for the Sustainable Development of Tourism in a Network of Cross-Border Parks and Protected Areas in West Africa:.....	7
8. Activities in Khiva, OIC Tourism City 2024:.....	7
III. STUDIES.....	7

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a significant generator of foreign exchange, growth, and employment in OIC Countries. In 2019 they welcomed 259 million international tourists and generated 216 billion dollars of tourism receipts according to the latest SESRIC report on international tourism in OIC countries. As a result of the outbreak of the pandemic, the tourism sector has been heavily affected and tourism receipts have dropped to 78 billion dollars which corresponds to 70 million international tourist arrivals in 2020 due to restrictions and lockdowns imposed by the crisis.

Intra-OIC tourism trade reached 566 billion dollars generating a drop of 89 million tourists in 2020, i.e. a regression of 70%.

In order to reduce the negative effects of the pandemic on their economies, OIC Countries implemented various strategies and policies aiming at reinforcing the resiliency of the tourism sector. In this context, the 11th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers was organized last June in Baku (Republic of Azerbaijan) to discuss the opportunities and challenges related to the sector and examine the ways and means to contribute to the recovery of the tourism sector in OIC countries.

In this regard, ICDT is planning to organize the 3rd Edition of the Islamic Tourism Fair in the second half of 2023, keeping in mind that the 1st Edition of this fair was organized in Istanbul, the Republic of Türkiye in 2005, and the 2nd in the State of Kuwait in 2019.

The present Concept Note aims at providing the member countries with all the necessary information relating to the organization of this fair.

I. OIC TOURISM FAIR

1. History of the Islamic Tourism Fair:

The organization of the OIC Tourism Fair by the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) is part of the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the OIC Summit Conferences, the Councils of Tourism Ministers, and the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.



All these resolutions highlight the importance of the tourism sector in the economic strategies of the OIC Countries. In this vein, it is of great interest for the Member States to participate in this Fair and contribute to the promotion of this vital sector for their economies.

❖ **Objectives of the Fair:**

The Fair aims at strengthening cooperation among OIC countries in the tourism sector, promoting historical monuments and tourist sites of Member States, and encouraging investment in this sector. Besides, it constitutes an opportunity to exhibit the touristic offers as well as the reception infrastructures, thereby promoting the touristic destinations of each OIC country. Moreover, the fair contributes to depicting the authentic image of Islam, as a religion of peace and tolerance.

❖ **Products to be exhibited:**

The products to be exhibited are commercial services related to tourism, hotels, transport in all its forms, travel agencies, equipment for hotels, and all kinds of activities relating to tourism.

❖ **Conditions and Terms of Participation:**

The Tourism Fair will be open to the participation of all OIC Member States represented by their institutions operating in the field of tourism promotion as well as the various private and public stakeholders in the tourism sector (travel agencies, transport companies, hotels, vacation resorts, real estate companies, tourism service providers and craftsmen).

Furthermore, this event is open to the participation of the countries with an observer status within the OIC, the tourist operators belonging to the Muslim minorities in the non-member countries of the OIC, as well as the international tourism companies, through their subsidiaries established in the Member States.

The organizers will provide the participants with a set of incentives in the form of customs and non-customs facilitations for the admission of persons and goods, transport, freight, transit and customs clearance. Additionally, they will provide exhibition spaces that meet international standards and the necessary conditions to ensure the success of the fair.

As far as ICDT is concerned, the Centre will assist the hosting country in the marketing and promotion of the fair among the OIC countries. It will also organize sideline events and mobilize international experts for the organization of the aforesaid activities.

The first edition of the Islamic Tourism Fair was held from 24th to 26th November 2005, in Istanbul - Republic of Türkiye. It was a great success thanks to the participation rate of the Member States and the number of participating companies reached 350 companies, operating in the tourism area.

Besides, the Ministry of Trade and Industry of the State of Kuwait and ICDT in collaboration with "Kuwait International Fair Company" organized an Exceptional Edition of the Tourism, Handicrafts, and Interior Decoration Fair from 18th to 23rd December 2019.



The objective of this event which attracted the participation of more than 120 companies, is to strengthen cooperation among the OIC Member States in the tourism, handicrafts and decoration sectors, to promote historical monuments and tourist sites of Member States, and to encourage investments in this sector. Furthermore, the fair provided a platform for the handicraft sector players in OIC countries to seek business opportunities and establish partnerships among themselves.

2. Organization of the 3rd Islamic Tourism Fair:

The 3rd Tourism Fair of the OIC Member States was hosted by ICDT in partnership with NeXTfairs Ltd, with the strategic sponsorship of Qatar Tourism. The event was held from November 20th to 22nd, 2023, at the Doha Exhibition & Convention Center (DECC). This fair coincided with the Qatar Travel Mart (QTM 2023) and was held under the esteemed patronage of the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar. The theme of the fair was “OIC TOURISM FAIR: An exclusive platform promoting Muslim-friendly tourism where tradition and modernity converge.”

This fair aimed at strengthening cooperation among OIC Member States in the tourism sector, promoting historical monuments and tourist sites and encouraging investments in this sector. Moreover, this event has provided a platform for stakeholders to exchange views and share national experiences of public and private investors in the tourism sector, as well as an opportunity for economic operators to establish business opportunities and partnerships. This edition also focused on the promotion of the family tourism industry which represents 30% of the travel market in the world and served as a platform to promote non-traditional destinations in the OIC countries with high potential for ecotourism and cultural tourism.

On the side-lines of this fair, were organized the following events .

- Panel on “Gastronomy Tourism in OIC Member States ”;
- Panel on “ Health Tourism in OIC Member States ”;
- Panel on “ Muslim – Friendly Tourism ”;
- QTM Conference ;
- Global Village ;
- Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony ;
- Hosted Buyer Program ;
- Media Familiarization Trip ;
- B2B business meetings between economic operators.

The opening ceremony recorded the participation of 60 countries. It was chaired by H.E. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Hamad Bin Qassim Al-Abdullah Al-Thani, Minister of Commerce and Industry of the State of Qatar accompanied by H.E. Mr. Saad Al Kharji, Chairman of Qatar Tourism and Mrs. Latifa El Bouabdellaoui, ICDT's Director General and their Excellencies the Ambassadors of the OIC Member States accredited in the State of Qatar.

II. TRAININGS

1. Training Webinar on Managing and Marketing Protected Areas (21-22 February 2022)

Within the framework of the implementation of the Regional Project on Sustainable Tourism Development in a Network of Cross border Parks and Protected Areas in West Africa, ICDT and SESRIC organized a Training Webinar on Managing and Marketing Protected Areas, on 21st and 22nd February 2022 via Zoom platform. The aim of this training was to reinforce the capacities of the Project' Member Countries in terms of managing and marketing protected areas in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Participants from the following Member Countries benefited from the Training: Burkina Faso, Benin, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal.



The opening ceremony of the event was marked by the presence of HE Mr. Alpha Soumah - Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Handcraft of the Republic of Guinea and Regional Coordinator of the Project mentioned above along with Mrs. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui - Director-General of ICDT and Dr. Nebil Dabur - Director General of SESRIC.

During his speech, HE Soumah expressed his deepest thanks to their Excellencies Mrs. Elbouabdellaoui and Dr. Dabur for their valuable efforts towards the realization of the project and welcomed the organization of the Webinar which responded in a timely manner to the challenges faced by the managers and tourism authorities as regards the management and marketing of protected areas in the context of Covid-19 pandemic.

On their turn, their Excellencies Mrs. Elbouabdellaoui and Dr. Dabur expressed their readiness to continue to support the project in line with the mandate given by the OIC General Secretariat. In this regard, they stressed the importance of the project for the socio-economic development of West African countries and shared their intent to organize other trainings that would reinforce the capacities of managers, local staff, and tourism authorities of the sub-region. They also emphasized the need to utilize digital tools and social media to shed more light on the protected areas which have been badly affected by the pandemic.

On this occasion, Experts from Malaysia, Bangladesh, and SESRIC presented the best practices in managing and marketing protected areas and the participants took the opportunity to share their national experiences in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic while stressing the urgent need to benefit from financial and technical supports in order to both upgrade the touristic sites and attract more visitors.

2. Training Webinar on Sustainable Tourism Perspectives in OIC Member States, (1-2 June 2022)

Within the framework of their respective programs TOURDEV and Tourism-CaB, ICDT and SESRIC organized on the 1st and 2nd of June a Training Webinar on the Perspectives of Sustainable Tourism. The objective of this training is to sensitize tourism authorities and operators on the potential of sustainable tourism and to strengthen their capacities in this field.



On this occasion, participants were familiarized with the key concepts of sustainable tourism and marketing tools to position themselves in this high-potential market. Moreover, they have shared their national experiences and expressed their needs to benefit from the financial and technical assistance of the OIC institutions for the development of this sector in their respective countries. The following countries took part in the training: Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea, Guyana, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yemen.

3. Webinar on Prospects of Health Tourism in OIC Countries, 8-9 November 2022

Under their respective TOURDEV and Tourism-CaB programs, ICDT and SESRIC organized a Training Webinar on “Prospects of Health Tourism in OIC Countries”, on 8-9 November 2022.

The objective of this training is to highlight the prospects for the development of Health Tourism in the OIC Countries, to encourage the sharing of experiences, and to contribute to the strengthening of the resilience of the actors evolving in this sector while highlighting new post-pandemic opportunities.

This Webinar has, on the one hand, allowed the strengthening of the capacities of tourism institutions in the OIC countries in terms of development, marketing, and the elaboration of a strategy for the promotion of the sector and, on the other hand, to sensitize all the actors on the prospects and potential of health tourism to revive the economy.

4. Webinar on the Digitalisation of Tourism Services in the OIC Countries (24-25 May 2023)

Within the framework of their joint programs TOURDEV and Tourism-CaB, ICDT and SESRIC organized a Webinar on " Digitalization of Tourism Services in OIC Countries ". It aimed at enhancing the capacity of Member States to develop effective policies and measures to attract more visitors to their destinations. By providing participants with valuable information on the latest trends and best practices in this field, this training enabled countries to become familiar with the knowledge and skills needed to benefit from digital technologies and optimize their tourism offerings.

5. Webinar on Gastronomic Tourism in OIC Countries (4-5 October 2023)

Within the framework of their joint programs TOURDEV and Tourism-CaB, ICDT and SESRIC organized a training webinar on "Gastronomic Tourism in OIC Countries" on 4-5 October 2023, to build the capacity of Member States in this field.



The training enabled participants to discover and apply the tools of Gastronomic Tourism in order to accelerate the development of the sector. It also highlighted the essential role of Gastronomic Tourism in promoting sustainable tourism and in the economic empowerment of local communities, particularly women.

On this occasion, the Experts exchanged views with participating countries to assess their situation. They recommended organising more activities to develop this sector and also to use digital marketing to increase their visibility on a regional and global scale.

6. Webinar on strengthening ecotourism and conservation practices in OIC countries (November 29-30, 2023)

This training session organized with SESRIC enabled participants to build their capacity to develop a competitive ecotourism sector, through the presentation of essential tools, the obstacles hindering the development of the sector in OIC countries, the latest trends and best practices in this field. On this occasion, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Türkiye and the Turkish Tourism Promotion Agency presented their country's rich experience in ecotourism and best practices in the sector. The representative of the World Tourism Organization presented the key concepts of Ecotourism, as well as UNWTO initiatives in this field around the world.

7. Following up on the implementation of the Regional Project for the Sustainable Development of Tourism in a Network of Cross-Border Parks and Protected Areas in West Africa:

as part of this project, ICDT will be organizing a Virtual Workshop with SESRIC between May and June 2024 to build the capacity of park and protected area managers involved in the project. This year, the Centre intends to organize the 2nd Donors' Conference with all the parties involved, to facilitate the financing of the project.

8. Activities in Khiva, OIC Tourism City 2024:

With regard to activities to promote tourism as a growth sector with a direct impact on the population, and as part of the activities planned in Khiva, the OIC Tourism City 2024 in Uzbekistan, the Centre plans to organize a Workshop on tourism destination strategies, a Panel dedicated to investment in the tourism sector and an Expo dedicated to the city's cultural heritage.

III. STUDIES

In 2022, ICDT produced a "Study on Developing Sustainable Tourism in OIC Countries." Following that, in 2023, the Centre published a "Study on Unleashing Tourism Potential in OIC Countries through Health and Gastronomy Tourism." These studies are designed to assist Member Countries capitalize on the opportunities presented by emerging niche markets in the tourism sector.