

PRESS RELEASE

(for immediate release)

ITC AND MATTA ON TRACK TO EXPAND MUSLIM-FRIENDLY TRAVEL

KUALA LUMPUR, 4 JULY 2026: Malaysia steadily advances its steps in Muslim-friendly travel, this time through a newly sealed **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) and the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA)** at the World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur today.

Minister of Tourism Arts and Culture (MOTAC), YB Dato Sri Tiong King Sing stood witness as ITC Director-General, Encik Mohammad Faisal Abu Suaib Khan and MATTA President Mr. Nigel Wong signed the historic agreement.

Held on the first of the two-day **MATTA Muslim-Friendly Travel Fair (MFTF) 2026** where ITC is participating as a strategic partner, the MOU focuses on expanding and strengthening Malaysia's Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality (MFTH) ecosystem through training, industry engagement and promotion. Partnering with MATTA, the nation's largest travel and tour association with more than 2,900 members, ITC aims to equip tourism industry practitioners with the right resources to make Muslim-friendly facilities and services accessible to everyone stepping foot on Malaysian shores.

Encik Mohammad Faisal noted that the initiative highlights hospitality values that appeal to everyone. "A primary focus of this partnership involves integrating MATTA members into the **Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR)** programme. Through this joint effort, we plan to train 1,000 industry professionals over the next couple of years, with the first session happening on 27 and 28 July for an estimated 50 MATTA members."

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Mohammad Faisal said: "The global Muslim market represents a formidable demographic of 2.2 billion people worldwide. On the local front, they are estimated to contribute 15 million to our total arrival count by 2030. Given these vast prospects and the sector's universal values, ITC urges industry players to grab the opportunity to collaborate with us."

"Ultimately, our goal is to develop a single point of reference for the global Muslim population with a comprehensive database of Muslim-friendly hotels, travel agencies, tourist guides, spa and wellness offerings, and other products and services. It will be a useful and valuable resource to ease Muslim travellers in making their travel decisions," explained the ITC Director-General.

Adding to the excitement, MATTA's Vice President for Air Transportation, Dr. Fazil Khan Abdul Kadir states "MATTA and ITC have always shared the same direction. This MoU makes it official. Growing the Muslim-friendly travel market takes more than goodwill. It takes structure, accountability, and partnerships that are built to last. We are proud to have found that in ITC, and we look forward to what this means for our members and for the industry as a whole."

This partnership reinforces Malaysia's leading standing in the global Muslim travel scene. Just last month, the nation retained its position as the Top Muslim-Friendly Destination (OIC) in the Global Muslim Travel Index 2026 for 11 consecutive years, Malaysia also bagged two more major accolades—Muslim Women-Friendly Destination of the Year and Accessible Muslim-Friendly Destination of the Year at the Halal in Travel Awards 2026 in Singapore. Building on this momentum, ITC has expanded the MFAR programme to Russia and Taiwan, with the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia and Sri Lanka also expressing strong interest.

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MEET ITC AND MFAR-CERTIFIED PARTNERS AT THE MATTA MUSLIM-FRIENDLY TRAVEL FAIR 2026

Visitors and industry players are invited to the ITC Muslim-Friendly Malaysia Pavilion to meet the ITC team alongside 10 of their MFAR-certified hotel and travel agency partners throughout the fair at **Booth 5E01–5E06, World Trade Centre Kuala Lumpur on 4 and 5 July 2026.**

<u>Travel Agencies:</u>		<u>Hotels and Resorts:</u>	
1. TH Travel & Services Sdn Bhd 2. GIT Tours & Travels Sdn Bhd 3. Qasswa Travel & Tours (M) Bhd 4. Jay Ibrahim Travel & Tours 5. Bumitra Malaysia		1. Renai Hotel Kota Bharu 2. Nur Lembah Pangsun Eco Resort 3. Salaam Suites Hotel 4. Ibis Kuala Lumpur City Centre 5. Movenpick Hotel & Convention Centre KLIA	
ITC POCKET TALKS			
Worry Less, Travel More: Muslim-Friendly Tourist Guide (MFTG)	Worry Less, Travel More: Mosque Tourism	Worry Less, Travel More: Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR)	
4 July 2026 (Saturday) 1.00pm - 1.20 pm	4 July 2026 (Saturday) 1.30pm -1.50pm	5 July 2026 (Sunday) 12.30pm - 12.50pm	
Certified tourist guides share industry insights on	Explore how mosques evolve	Discover MFAR, the official MOTAC-endorsed seal by ITC,	

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delivering authentic, culturally sensitive experiences to meet the growing global Muslim travel demand.	into hubs for sustainable tourism and community engagement, highlighting unique architecture and eco-friendly management practices.	assuring premium, faith-compatible experiences across accommodations, travel agents, spas and attractions.
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Additional information:

Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR)

MFAR is a programme that recognises Muslim-Friendly tourism products based on globally accepted standards developed by Malaysia. It supports businesses that provide added value to Muslim tourists through products and services that meet their faith-based needs. Currently, MFAR covers accommodation, travel operating businesses and spa and wellness recognising 100 businesses. Tourist accommodation premises that meet the general MFAR requirements are ranked as MFAR Platinum, Gold, Silver or Lite according to their level of compliance with the guidelines.

About Islamic Tourism Centre

Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) is an entity under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Malaysia, tasked to develop the Islamic Tourism segment for Malaysia. It advocates for Muslim-friendly tourism and hospitality (MFTH) by offering research and market intelligence, training, industry development consultation, services standards and recognition, and information exchange.

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