

ITC EXPANDS MALAYSIA'S MUSLIM-FRIENDLY TOURISM STANDARDS THROUGH RUSSIAN PARTNERSHIP

KAZAN, RUSSIA, 17 MAY 2026: Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) is spearheading its influence through a landmark development that sees the global expansion of Malaysia's Muslim-friendly tourism standards.

The lead agency under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC) tasked to develop the Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality (MFTH) ecosystem, has solidified this global push by forging a strategic partnership with RusQuality (Roskachestvo), Russia's premier Halal assurance body.

At the 17th International Islamic Forum Russia-Islamic World: KazanForum in Tatarstan, Russia, the two agencies fulfilled the mission of making Muslim-friendly travel feasible globally. Through a Memorandum of Mutual Recognition (MOMR) signed on 14 May 2026, the two organisations will harmonise Malaysia and Russia's guidelines and standards for Muslim-Friendly tourism and hospitality services. This is a momentous event in global tourism as both parties are granted the reciprocal right to the official logos and branding of these guidelines, ensuring a unified visual identity for Muslims in both destinations.

ITC Director-General Encik Mohammad Faisal Abu Suaib Khan said: "We are honoured to represent Malaysia in this historic collaboration, which further extends the global reach of the Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR) programme. When Malaysia initially developed MFAR, our goal was to create a sense of home and peace of mind for Muslim travellers, no matter where they landed."

“Russia has demonstrated sophisticated work in the Halal sector through RusQuality, and we are proud to work alongside such a capable partner for Malaysia. By aligning our standards, we wish to simplify businesses for both countries to work together and succeed. The USD 235 billion-worth Muslim international tourist market is huge, and having both parties on board will mobilise greater liquidity through the tourism economy in both destinations,” he added.

This statement is supported by Mr. Maxim Aleksandrovich Protasov, Head of ANO Russian Quality System / RusQuality: “This partnership with ITC reflects our deep confidence in Malaysia’s MFAR framework as a global benchmark for Muslim-friendly travel. Harmonising our standards strengthens Russia’s position as a premier Muslim-friendly destination and equips our industry players to capture the immense potential of the Muslim-friendly travel sector and the greater Halal economy. Our hope is that this partnership will facilitate a new era of seamless travel, giving Muslim tourists the same level of confidence and assurance in Russia that they experience in Malaysia.”

Faisal also highlighted the global potential of the Muslim-friendly tourism standard: “I would also like to emphasise that as travellers become more conscious of their choices, Muslim-friendly standards—rooted in universal values such as cleanliness, safety, and family-oriented services—will see growing demand, not only among Muslim travellers but also among those who value these principles.”

He added: “ITC is ready to work with other destinations to help them strategise to leverage on this global tourism potential through our standards, training, and research.”

Tourism Malaysia Moscow office Director, Encik Zulkifli Mohamed stood as a witness of the historic signing between Encik Faisal and Mr. Maxim of RusQuality.

ITC’s participation in the Russia-Islamic World: KazanForum also saw the Director-General leading conversations on the 2 billion-strong Muslim tourist

market. His presentation showcased Malaysia's success in capturing this segment by focusing on standards development, industry capacity building and strategic product development. He also reiterated the impact of the harmonised Muslim-friendly tourism standards signed with RusQuality, foreseeing robust movement in Muslim travel between the two countries.

ITC engaged with decision-makers and industry players in Kazan and beyond from 12 to 17 May 2026 to explore similar partnerships with global peers, adding to the momentum of its collaboration with RusQuality.

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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.

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.

For further details, kindly email comms@itc.gov.my or the following individuals:

Anis Ramli, Corporate Communications Division, ITC at 012 321 913

Nadhirah Aripin, Corporate Communications Division, ITC at 019 356 053

Nurin Sufia Muazamir, Corporate Communications Division, ITC at 019 8013 400