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**Halal Tourism Services from the standardization point of view**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations which has membership of 57 countries spread over four continents. The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world ensuring to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world. The Standard and Metrology Institute for Islamic countries also seeks for achieving uniformity in metrology, laboratory testing and standardization activities among member states and ensuring education and training and providing technical assistance to the OIC members in the domain of standardization and metrology. OIC/SMIIC Standards are prepared by the Institute's Technical Committees that are composed of its member states. The experts assigned by the member states participate in the standardization technical work and establish the common OIC/SMIIC Standards aimed to be used by member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the relevant stakeholders in the world. Technical Committee 5 is entitled as "Tourism and Related Issues". At first, the committee prepared the draft standard on Halal tourism services. Following submission of the document for the review and approval of the member states, the draft has been approved and published as the standard with reference no "OIC/SMIIC 9: 2019 – Halal Tourism Services General Requirements" by 22 December 2019.

**Keywords:** *OIC, SMIIC, Standardization, Halal Tourism Services*

**Introduction**

The Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), operating under the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), is mandated to harmonize standardization, metrology, and conformity assessment activities among its member states. In addition to establishing uniform standards, SMIIC also provides technical assistance and capacity-

building programs to its members. The establishment of common OIC/SMIIC standards for the Halal industry is achieved by the SMIIC Technical Committees through the convergence of technical requirements and Islamic rules. Halal tourism services are also seen as a subject within the working area of SMIIC Technical Committees. In this study, the technical studies on Halal tourism in SMIIC are mentioned from the perspective of standardization.

## **Organization of Islamic Cooperation**

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second-largest international organization after the United Nations, with 57 member states located across four continents. Committed to promoting harmony and international peace among diverse societies, the OIC aims to protect and safeguard the interests of the Islamic world. The organization includes various sub-bodies, such as the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA) and the Islamic Trade Development Center (ICDT), as well as standing committees like the Standing Committee on Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC). Furthermore, it encompasses specialized organizations, including the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), and affiliated organizations such as SMIIIC and the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF), each focusing on specific areas of work. The OIC has formally designated the SMIIIC as the authorised body for standardisation, with a particular focus on the development of standards pertaining to the Halal industry.

## **Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries**

SMIIIC, as an institute that develops necessary mechanisms for OIC countries, has the objective of establishing new standards in OIC member states and eliminating technical barriers to trade, with a view to increasing trade among them. The Institute's objectives also include the establishment of conformity assessment schemes, with a view to facilitating the exchange of materials, manufactured goods and products among member states.

The main tasks of SMIIIC can be summarized as follows:

- To create common OIC/SMIIIC standards and ensure that OIC member states benefit from them, thereby assisting in removing technical barriers to trade between countries
- To ensure uniformity/homogeneity among member states in standardization, metrology, laboratories, testing, and accreditation activities.
- Providing technical support to OIC member

countries that do not have standardization institutions in the short term and assisting them in establishing their own institutions and reaching a competitive level in the long term.

- Raising awareness in the fields of standardization and related areas by organizing training, conferences, congresses,...etc.

SMIIIC is headquartered in Istanbul and is an intergovernmental organization with diplomatic, independent, and technical functions, managed by its member countries through relevant national institutions working in the field of standardization, metrology or accreditation. The member states are represented in the General Assembly, the Board of Directors, Councils and Committees and contribute to SMIIIC technical work through their designated national institutions.

## **Standardization**

A standard is a document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body that provides for common and repeated use: rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.

Standardization is the process of establishing standards through collaborative efforts with stakeholders, including producers, users, consumers, governmental and non-governmental organisations, institutions, and other relevant parties. This process plays a crucial role in many areas, such as improving product quality in industrial settings, building consumer confidence, optimizing production processes, facilitating international trade, and promoting health, safety, environmental protection, and information technology.

## **SMIIIC Standardization activities and Halal Industry**

As the Halal industry continues to grow, the need for standardization in related areas has become increasingly important. To address this need, the SMIIIC Technical Committees were established. The primary role of these Technical

Committees is to prepare, develop, and systematically review OIC/SMIIC Standards based on activities within their specific fields. The Committees are responsible for revising these standards as necessary. The committees are required to operate in accordance with SMIIC Directives (Directives 1 and 2), which delineate the procedures for the preparation of standards and the overall structure of those standards. Each Technical Committee consists of a secretary, a chairperson, national delegates who are appointed by SMIIC member states and if any, liaison organizations. Each committee functions as an autonomous organisation comprising members from relevant organisations across member states. It is recommended that SMIIC member countries establish national committee structures with a view to the effective monitoring of the activities of the SMIIC Technical Committees. This enables them to advocate for their national perspectives within the context of standardisation initiatives, thereby ensuring the effective implementation of these standards. All stakeholders have the capacity to contribute to standards, either directly or indirectly. All committees are required to conduct their work through the SMIIC Information System, an online platform comprising various sections, including the Project Portal, Email, Electronic Voting Portal and Committee Pages.

SMIIC is responsible for the oversight of standardisation activities across a range of sectors through the medium of its specialised Technical Committees. The areas of focus of these committees include, but are not limited to, the following: Halal food, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, tourism and related services, Halal supply chain, Halal management systems, and so forth. The SMIIC has published standards on a range of topics relevant to the Halal industry, including Halal food, certification, accreditation, cosmetics, food additives, pharmaceuticals, leather products and tourism services. The aforementioned standards have been developed for the purpose of ensuring consistency, compliance, and quality within the Halal market.

## **OIC/SMIIC 9:2019 – Halal Tourism Services – General Requirements**

The rise in income and improvements in transportation have led to a diversification of tourism, resulting in a significant increase in the number of travellers. Muslim tourists visiting countries with different cultures and belief systems have a need for Halal products and services. Standardising Halal tourism services is essential to address this demand.

The document “Roadmap for the Development of Islamic Tourism in OIC Countries,” approved at the 10th OIC Tourism Ministers’ Meeting, is unequivocal in its assertion that establishing OIC/SMIIC Standards is vital for ensuring uniformity in Halal tourism services and products.

Technical Committee 5 – Tourism and Related Services is responsible for standardising Halal tourism. In line with relevant OIC decisions, the Technical Committee 5 has created a Draft Standard for Halal tourism services. The following documents were used as the basis of the initial draft:

MS 2610:2015 – Muslim friendly hospitality services-requirements.

OIC/COMCEC/33-17/D (18) – COMCEC MFT Guideline for regulating accommodation establishments, COMCEC Coordination Office, February 2017

Guide for halal certification for tourist and catering services issued December 2010, Agency for halal quality certification, Bosnia and Herzegovina

This Draft Standard was submitted to member states for review and approval and was published on December 22, 2019, under the title “OIC/SMIIC 9:2019 – Halal Tourism Services – General Requirements.” The committee is currently working on projects related to Halal Medical Tourism and Halal Tourism – Classification for Wellness Spa.

Halal tourism services encompass a broad range of sectors, including but not limited to Halal food, cosmetics and personal care products, accommodations, tour packages, guides,

restaurants, recreational facilities, business operations, and personnel qualifications. The OIC/SMIIC 9:2019 standard is a document that serves as a point of reference for service providers, consumers, and certification bodies. Its purpose is to ensure that services are delivered in a manner that is Halal-compliant, in accordance with Islamic rules, and that meets consumer expectations.

Muslim travellers prioritise access to Halal food. Furthermore, it is evident that personal care products offered at accommodations must also meet Halal requirements. Accordingly, the document makes reference to OIC/SMIIC 1:2019 – General Requirements for Halal Food and OIC/SMIIC 4:2018 – Halal Cosmetics – General Requirements.

To facilitate consistent application, the standard also defines key terms relevant to Halal tourism, such as “Accommodation Facilities,” “Halal Restaurant,” “Halal Tourism Services,” and “Prayer Rug.”...etc.

One of the fundamental conditions delineated in the standard is that all organisations providing Halal tourism services are obligated to comply with the applicable national laws and regulations. Moreover, the standard is organised in accordance with the following primary categories:

- **Facilities for accommodation and associated services** – The aforementioned facilities encompass a wide range of amenities, including but not limited to: accommodation, dining options, personal care products, restroom facilities, recreational areas, culinary facilities, swimming pools, sports and recreational areas, and designated spaces for prayer.
- **Tour Services** – The development of tour packages encompassing accommodation, meals, and activities in accordance with Islamic Rules.
- **Tourist Guide Services** – The employment of licensed guides who act in accordance with Islamic Rules
- **The management responsibilities in Halal Tourism Services** – The demonstration of leadership and commitment by the top

management with respect to Halal tourism services

- **Personnel Requirements in Halal Tourism Services** – Requirements to ensure skilled personnel that are aware of Halal Tourism Services.

The distinguishing feature of this standard is that the accommodation facilities to which it is applied are categorised according to the Halal tourism services they provide. The categorisation is outlined as follows:

- Category A: Accommodation Premises with Halal Tourism Advanced Scale Services
- Category B: Accommodation Premises with Halal Tourism Medium Scale Services
- Category C: Accommodation Premises with Halal Tourism Basic Scale Services

According to the aforementioned categorisation, accommodation facilities that fulfil all the requirements of the standard and provide all the services specified for Halal tourism are evaluated according to Category A. By contrast, Category B is applied to facilities that do not meet all the requirements of Category A but provide the services specified for medium-scale facilities, and Category C is applied to facilities that provide only basic services. Information pertaining to the categories is provided in the annexes of the standard. The categorisation of services in this manner is explicable by the fact that Muslim tourists can access Halal tourism services, even at the most basic level. For example, when traveling to a country outside the OIC region, one might only find accommodation facilities that meet the minimum requirements designated as Category C, which offer basic services tailored to the needs of Muslim tourists. In contrast, in countries within the OIC region, it is more likely to find accommodation facilities classified under Category A or B, which provide more comprehensive Halal-compliant services. In light of the prevailing circumstances within the tourism sector, it is evident that the comprehensive transformation of the sector at the Category A level is not a viable proposition. Muslim tourists are thus presented with a range of accommodation options, enabling them to access Halal tourism services.

## **Conclusion**

The evolution of the concept of ‘Halal’ has been shaped by the advent of industrial development and globalisation, which have led to its transformation into a significant industry. In the context of contemporary Halal product and service provisions, the necessity of common standards that are recognised by the relevant parties is evident. Consequently, the OIC/SMIIC Standards, which SMIIIC has established under the OIC for the specific purpose of the Halal industry, have been developed with the contributions of relevant stakeholders and in accordance with international standardization practices. These standards are intended for utilisation by all OIC member countries and other relevant parties on a global scale. The ‘OIC/SMIIC 9:2019 - Halal Tourism Services - General Requirements’ standard, which emerged in the field of Halal tourism services, has been a very important standard that stands out in the development of Halal tourism and the categorisation of Halal tourism services offered in accommodation facilities brought by the standard, in order for Muslim tourists to have more access to these services.

## **References**

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### **Abstract**

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Organizacija islamske saradnje (OIC) je druga najveća međuvladina organizacija na svijetu, odmah nakon Ujedinjenih nacija, sa članstvom od 57 zemalja raspoređenih na četiri kontinenta. Ova organizacija predstavlja kolektivni glas muslimanskog svijeta i djeluje s ciljem zaštite i očuvanja interesa muslimanskog svijeta, u duhu promoviranja međunarodnog mira i harmonije među različitim narodima svijeta. Institut za standarde i mjeriteljstvo islamskih zemalja (SMIIC) nastoji postići ujednačenost u oblasti mjeriteljstva, laboratorijskih ispitivanja i aktivnosti standardizacije među državama članicama, te osigurati edukaciju i obuku, kao i pružanje tehničke pomoći članicama OIC-a u oblasti standardizacije i mjeriteljstva. OIC/SMIIC standarde pripremaju tehnički komiteti Instituta, koje čine predstavnici država članica. Stručnjaci koje imenuju države članice učestvuju u tehničkom radu na standardizaciji i uspostavljaju zajedničke OIC/SMIIC standarde namijenjene primjeni u državama članicama Organizacije islamske saradnje, kao i drugih zainteresiranih strana širom svijeta. Tehnički komitet 5 nosi naziv „Turizam i srodna pitanja“. Kao jedan od svojih prvih zadataka, Komitet je pripremio nacrt standarda za halal turističke usluge. Nakon što je dokument dostavljen državama članicama na razmatranje i odobrenje, nacrt je usvojen i objavljen kao standard pod oznakom „OIC/SMIIC 9:2019 – Halal turističke usluge – Opći zahtjevi“, dana 22. decembra 2019. godine.

**Ključne riječi:** OIC, SMIIC, standardizacija, halal turističke usluge

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