

HALAL TOURISM IN KENYA DEVELOPING FAST



Kenya has been developing a new certification program for tourist establishments to comply with Islamic standards. The aim is to attract more Muslim travelers and develop local halal tourism.

The tourism sector is one of the pillars of the country's economy and an important source of foreign exchange. The Tourism Regulatory Authority (TRA) recently announced a new program to certify hospitals and leisure establishments according to Islamic standards.

Halal tourism in Kenya has a great potential and the sector is expanding rapidly, not only in the East African country. In 2015, Kenya, home to 44 million people, accommodated 40 875 tourists from the United Arab Emirates, an increase of more than half in one year. In 2014, the number of Emirati visitors reached 24 828.

The Director General of TRA, Lagat Kipkorir, said that specific standards are being developed in partnership with the Kenyan Bureau of Standardization.

"We have already developed a detailed plan including key milestones, stakeholder engagement, preparation of quality assurance and training programs prior to the actual launch of the halal tourism certification," he said.

The Kenyan authorities are attentive to the specific needs and requirements of Muslim tourists, especially in terms of catering, accommodation, and leisure or professional services such as safaris or congress events.

According to the TRA, consultations are underway **to complete the funding for this national certification program, the process of which is expected to last at least six months.**

According to Kipkorir, the certification of halal tourism in Kenya will become effective in early 2018. Kenya will be hosting an international conference on halal tourism in the coming few months.

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