



**DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE**

---

**WORKSHOP ON “EXPLORING TOURISM POTENTIAL OF AL QUDS AL SHERIF CITY”**

24- 25 November 2015

Istanbul, Republic of Turkey

**Contents**

1- Context .....	2
2- Objectives of the Workshop.....	2
3- Format & Structure of the Workshop .....	3
4- Participants in the Workshop.....	3
5- Expected Outcome of the Workshop.....	4
6- Organizers and Partners of the Workshop .....	4

## **1- Context**

Al Quds Al Sherif City is one of the oldest cities in the world. Blessed with rich historical, cultural and religious heritage, this City has high but untapped potential for the development of sustainable tourism. Undoubtedly, by having a comprehensive tourism development program Al Quds Al Sherif City and its inhabitants can benefit from many positive economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts such as foreign exchange earnings, generation of employment, stimulation of infrastructure investment, preservation and restoration of cultural heritage, cultivation of cultural pride and sense of identity, and enhancement of the local environment.

Since 1967, Al Quds Al Sherif City is under the unjust occupation and control of Israel. With a long-standing strategy of Judization of the Al Quds Al Sherif City, Israel has been working restlessly in making the living and economic conditions of the Palestinian people in Al Quds Al Sherif City unbearable. In doing so, Israel aims at undermining the viability and resistance of Al Quds Al Sherif and forcing its population to migrate out of the City thus, replacing them with Israeli settlers.

To counter Israeli strategy of Judization of the Al Quds Al Sherif City, there is a vital need to revive and support the preservation of Islamic heritage and economic development of the City. However, due to constraints and obstacles imposed by the occupying Israeli authorities, the Islamic heritage is highly in danger and economic situation remained very fragile. In fact, there is very little room for the other sectors like manufacturing and agriculture to contribute to the economic development of the City. It is for this reason that tourism stands out as one of the main sectors to shoulder the mission of economic development of Al Quds Al Sherif City.

The above mentioned fact was not absent from the mind of OIC leader when it adopted the “Strategic Plan for the Development of the City of Al-Quds” in the 12<sup>th</sup> Session of the Islamic Conference Summit held in Cairo on 6-7 February 2013. This Plan gives special importance to the tourism sector in the Al Quds Al Sherif City by devoting 22% of the total projects fund to tourism. Also, the same fact was in mind when Al Quds Al Sherif City was selected as the OIC City of Tourism 2015 by the Coordination Committee on the Implementation of the “Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism among OIC Member States” according to the Resolution of the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of Ministers of Tourism (ICTM) held on 4-6 December 2013 in Banjul, Gambia.

In line with the “Strategic Plan for the Development of the City of Al-Quds” and the selection of the Al Quds Al Sherif City as the OIC City of Tourism 2015, SESRIC has decided to organise a two day workshop on “Exploring Tourism Potential of Al Quds Al Sherif City” in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey on 24 and 25 November 2015.

## **2- Objectives of the Workshop**

The objective of the workshop is to provide the participants an opportunity to deliberate and to exchange views, knowledge and expertise with a view to determining ways and modalities for tapping into the tourism potential in Al Quds Al Sherif City and formulating concrete recommendations for action at the OIC level. In particular, the workshop aims at:

- Exploring and introducing the potential of Tourism in Al Quds Al Sherif City and designing strategies to exploit them;
- Examining and discussing the challenges and obstacles as well as the prospects for enhancing the development of tourism in Al Quds Al Sherif City;
- Exchanging and sharing knowledge, experiences and best practices in the tourism sector that can be applied to Al Quds Al Sherif City;

- Exploring feasible and implementable ways and means for collaboration among government entities, OIC institutions and the private sector to support the development of tourism sector in Al Quds Al Sherif City.

### 3- Format & Structure of the Workshop

The workshop will be organized in two days. In addition to the opening session in the first day and the wrap-up and closing session in the second day, the workshop will include the following, four working sessions:

#### **A. Tourism in Al Quds Al Sherif City: Current State, Challenges and Prospects**

This session will set the stage for the following working sessions of the workshop. The discussions and deliberations in this session will cover current state of tourism in Al Quds Al Sherif City, the prospects & opportunities, and the challenges that hinder Al Quds Al Sherif City from realizing its full potential in the tourism sector.

#### **B. Tourism and Heritage Preservation in Al Quds Al Sherif City**

This session will revolve around the protection of the Islamic sites in the Al Quds Al Sherif City and the safeguarding of its Muslim cultural identity in the face of Israel's attempts to destroy the city's Islamic sites and to highlight the impacts of tourism development on heritage preservation in this City.

#### **C. Tourism Policy, Planning and Capacity building in Al-Quds Al Sherif City**

This session will concentrate on the policymaking, planning and capacity building for the development of tourism in Al Quds Al Sherif City with emphasis on the key players in sustainable tourism planning and management, community based tourism development and the need for education and training.

#### **D. Marketing, Promotion and Competitive Positioning of Al Quds Al Sherif City in the Domain of Tourism**

This session will tackle the issue of differentiating Al Quds Al Sherif City as a tourist destination and positioning it in the OIC and international tourism market to gain a competitive advantage.

In line with their respective themes, each session will start with a 20-minute presentation given by a keynote speaker. With the active participation of keynote speaker, moderator, discussants and the participants, an 80 minutes brainstorming and general debate and discussion will follow the presentation. The last 20 minutes of each session will be used to wrap up the discussion and formulate policy recommendations to be included in the report of the workshop.

### 4- Participants of the Workshop

Participants of the workshop include:

- A. Representatives from the Ministries of Tourism in OIC Countries
- B. Associations of Tourism and Travel Agencies in OIC Countries
- C. Representatives of private sector
- D. Relevant OIC institutions: OIC General Secretariat, SESRIC, COMCEC, IDB, IRCICA, ISESCO and ICDT
- E. Relevant international institutions and organizations
- F. Relevant international academicians and scholars

#### **5- Expected Outcome of the Workshop**

The workshop is expected to generate concrete and implementable recommendations and project proposals for tapping into the tourism potential of Al Quds Al Sherif City that can be presented to the relevant authorities at the OIC level in future.

#### **6- Organizers and Partners of the Workshop**

The workshop will be organized by SESRIC in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of State of Palestine.