



Foundation

RESTORING TRUST IN HADJ ADMINISTRATION

**Reforming Hadj Administration in Mauritius:
Governance Integrity, Digital Accountability, and
Institutional Renewal**

23 October 2025

Disclaimer:

This report has been prepared by ILMA Foundation as a policy and governance framework based on the official *Committee of Inquiry on Hadj 2025 Visas*. It is intended solely for institutional reform and capacity-building purposes. The report does not assign liability or responsibility to any individual or authority, and all personal names from the original inquiry have been omitted in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2017.

Submitted to: Ministry of Arts and Culture
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P R E A M B L E

For thousands of Mauritian Muslims, performing Hajj represents the fulfillment of a lifelong spiritual commitment. The Islamic Cultural Centre Trust Fund bears a sacred responsibility: to facilitate this pilgrimage with integrity, fairness, and transparency.

The Committee of Inquiry Report of 09 September 2025 revealed how profoundly that responsibility was breached. Twenty-two confirmed fraudulent visa allocations, systematic record manipulation, and institutional breakdowns exposed an administration that had strayed from its founding purpose.

This report charts a path to restoration. Rather than dwelling on past failures, it focuses on constructive renewal—rebuilding an institution worthy of the pilgrims it serves, anchored in Islamic values of Amanah (trust) and Adl (justice), strengthened by modern governance standards.

The proposed reforms are neither theoretical nor aspirational—they are practical, evidence-based, and implementable. Drawing from international best practices in Malaysia, Singapore, and South Africa, they address one essential question: how do we guarantee every eligible Mauritian pilgrim fair, transparent, and dignified treatment?

This report presents a comprehensive reform framework encompassing governance restructuring, digital transformation, and operator accountability. A summary of proposed legislative amendments is provided in Appendix 1, with the complete draft ICCTF Act 2026 in Appendix 2 translating these policy recommendations into concrete legislative provisions for the Ministry's consideration.

ILMA Foundation respectfully offers this policy framework and our technical expertise to assist the Ministry, Parliament, and all stakeholders committed to this vital work of institutional renewal.

DISCLAIMER

This report, *Restoring Trust in Hadj Administration*, has been prepared by ILMA Foundation in good faith as a policy and governance framework to support the ongoing reform and modernization of the Islamic Cultural Centre Trust Fund (ICCTF) under the supervision of the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage.

The content of this document is based on information publicly available in the Committee of Inquiry Report on the Allocation of Hadj 2025 Visas (September 2025) and related official sources. The analysis and recommendations presented herein are intended to assist policymakers in strengthening institutional governance, transparency, and digital accountability.

This report represents ILMA Foundation's independent policy submission and does not constitute an official publication or endorsement by the Government of Mauritius. It does not assign or imply liability, misconduct, or culpability to any individual, officer, or entity. All references to administrative or procedural deficiencies are made strictly in the context of institutional reform and capacity-building.

Names of individuals cited in the original inquiry have been deliberately omitted to preserve privacy and compliance with the Data Protection Act 2017 and relevant ethical standards.

The proposals, models, and legislative suggestions contained in this document are advisory in nature and do not represent binding legal or policy commitments. Implementation and enforcement remain within the exclusive discretion of the Government of Mauritius and the competent authorities.

ILMA Foundation, its contributors, and affiliates shall not be held liable for any reliance placed on this document or its contents for purposes other than public policy consultation and academic reference.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 *Committee of Inquiry on the Allocation of Hadj Visas* has revealed a profound systemic breakdown in the Islamic Cultural Centre Trust Fund's administration of one of Mauritius's most sacred public responsibilities. The Inquiry exposed not isolated misconduct but comprehensive institutional failure: twenty-two confirmed fraudulent visa allocations, systematic manipulation of registration records, an outdated database vulnerable to tampering, absence of audit trails, and complete breakdown of governance oversight.

This report, prepared by ILMA Foundation, provides a twofold response:

1. **Policy recommendations** for the Ministry to restore integrity, fairness, and institutional trust; and
2. **An implementation framework** showing how these reforms can be realized through modern governance principles and phased digital transformation.

The objective is not punitive but reconstructive: to rebuild the Hadj administration on a foundation of transparency, rule-based processes, and ethical service to the Muslim community.

The Solution Framework

We propose a comprehensive transformation over 18-24 months, anchored in Islamic values of Amanah (trust) and Adl (justice), strengthened by modern governance standards, and informed by international best practices from Malaysia, Singapore, and South Africa:

Foundation (0-6 months): Establish Reform Task Force, conduct comprehensive data integrity audit, suspend new registrations, and publish transparent interim criteria.

Transition (6-12 months): Adopt formal Hadj Selection Policy with rules-based criteria, initiate procurement for secure Digital Hadj Management System, and draft governance documents embedding rights and accountability.

Consolidation (12-24 months): Deploy certified digital platform with immutable audit trails, reconstitute Board with independent technical experts, establish operator licensing framework, launch complaints mechanism, and publish first Annual Hadj Governance Report to Parliament.

Key Legislative Reforms

The report includes a comprehensive draft Islamic Cultural Centre Trust Fund (Amendment) Bill 2026 that professionalizes governance, mandates digital transformation with ISO 27001 security standards, ensures transparency through automated selection and public reporting, regulates operators through licensing and performance monitoring, provides meaningful deterrence, empowers ministerial oversight, and protects pilgrim rights.

Expected Impact

These reforms will restore public trust, eliminate fraud opportunities, ensure fair treatment, improve service quality, and establish Mauritius as a regional leader in ethical pilgrimage management.

ILMA Foundation offers our combined legal and information technology expertise to support implementation if the Ministry considers external technical assistance beneficial.

1.0 CONTEXT AND PROBLEM DIAGNOSIS

The Hadj visa scandal of 2025 marks a watershed moment. It demonstrates how outdated systems, opaque decision-making, and weak institutional cultures can compromise public trust.

The Inquiry report identified falsified registration records, tampering with data entries, missing forms, double allocations of registration numbers, and the absence of a functioning oversight framework.

The problem is both technical and institutional:

- Technically, the ICCTF operates a legacy Microsoft Access system with no access control, allowing unrestricted editing and deletion of records.
- Institutionally, it functions without clear segregation of duties, leaving the same officers responsible for data entry, approval, and record maintenance.
- Governance-wise, the Ministry's oversight remains reactive rather than proactive, depending on crisis-driven interventions rather than structured supervision.

At its core, this is a governance failure — one that calls for deep structural change, not procedural patchwork.

2.0 SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN THE HADJ 2025 INQUIRY REPORT

The findings of the *Committee of Inquiry on the Allocation of Hadj 2025 Visas* reveal that the problems within the Islamic Cultural Centre Trust Fund (ICCTF) are not confined to isolated acts of negligence or misconduct, but rather stem from a systemic collapse of governance, data integrity, and ethical control. The Inquiry exposed structural weaknesses across every stage of the Hadj administration process — from registration and verification to record-keeping and oversight.

The following table summarises the principal issues identified in the report, grouped by thematic area. It provides a clear diagnostic overview of how institutional failures, outdated systems, and poor accountability mechanisms combined to produce widespread irregularities in the management of Hadj 2025.

Table: Summary of Key Issues from the Hadj 2025 Inquiry Report

Category	Key Issues Identified	Impact / Consequence
1. Governance & Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear ministerial and board oversight • No separation of duties among ICCTF officers • Conflicting decisions (visas cancelled, reinstated, re-cancelled) • Absence of internal control mechanisms • Intervention by politically connected individuals creating perception of external pressure • Unclear Board/Hadj Committee nomination guidelines and qualifications • No minutes or records of meetings available for review • No declarations of conflict of interest between Board/Committee members and operators • Lack of independent third-party audit mechanism for decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional confusion and breakdown of accountability • Arbitrary decision-making • Increased risk of manipulation and cover-ups • Perception of favoritism and nepotism • Absence of transparent governance processes
2. Data Integrity & Fraudulent Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of fictitious or reused registration numbers • Forged signatures on Hadj confirmation forms • Tampering of Tannazul payment records and backdated documents • Multiple cases of repeat pilgrims and queue-jumping • Missing or destroyed registration files • Unauthorized transfer of Tannazul payments to third parties • Allocation of previous/fictitious numbers based on Mahram status rather than actual queue position without proper documentation of concessions granted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraudulent visa issuance • Denial of rightful places to legitimate applicants • Financial irregularities and loss of traceability • Erosion of public trust • Systemic undermining of queue integrity

3. Process & Administrative Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No written policy or standard operating manual • Lack of eligibility verification (first-time status, Mahram rules, age) • Unclear rationale and validity of eligibility criteria • Inconsistent application of established criteria • Unclear role and accountability of Hadj operators • Ad hoc decision-making based on personal discretion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent application of rules • Unfair allocation and perception of favoritism • Absence of transparent criteria for selection • Officers operating without clear guidance
4. Technology & Data Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdated Microsoft Access 2007 database • No password protection or user-level access control • No audit logs or version tracking • Lack of integration between payment and registration systems • No data backup or disaster recovery protocol • Manual processing requiring human intervention for all communications • No automated email or SMS notification system • No records of user logins or data modifications • Inability to verify queue position in real-time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High vulnerability to tampering and data loss • Inability to trace edits or identify responsible users • Inaccurate financial reconciliation • Breach of confidentiality and data protection standards • System completely dependent on manual intervention
5. Ethical & Accountability Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No whistleblower or internal reporting mechanism • Evidence of political or external influence in specific allocation decisions • Inadequate disciplinary framework • Lack of Code of Conduct and ethical awareness training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture of impunity and mistrust among staff • Perceived favoritism and external interference • No deterrent against future misconduct • Officers unclear about ethical boundaries

6. Transparency & Public Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No publication of criteria, waiting lists, or allocation outcomes • Poor communication with pilgrims and operators • Absence of grievance redress or appeal mechanism • No means for applicants to verify queue position in real-time • No public reporting on selections or processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public suspicion and reputational damage to the ICCTF and Ministry • Decline in confidence among pilgrims and wider community • Pilgrims unable to verify their status independently
7. Financial Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak verification of Tannazul payments • Manual cash-handling processes • Lack of reconciliation between financial and registration data • Unauthorized transfer of funds to third parties • Unclear refund procedures and lack of guidelines on processing steps • No standardized protocols for payment transfers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to financial mismanagement • Risk of loss, misuse, or theft of funds • Financial data unreliable for audit purposes • Pilgrims unsure of refund entitlements
8. Record-Keeping & Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing, untraceable, or incomplete forms • Failure to archive or retrieve past records • Inconsistent storage of physical and digital data • Backlog of previous manual records still incomplete and not digitized • No systematic filing or retrieval system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of institutional memory • Compromised evidence base for audit and accountability • Unable to verify historical registrations • Creates opportunities for fabrication
9. Institutional Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complacency and tolerance of irregularities • Resistance to change or external audit • Absence of performance or ethical evaluation • No continuous improvement mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak governance culture with recurring operational failures • Lack of ownership or responsibility among officers • System stagnation and deterioration

Summary Insight:

The inquiry exposes not isolated misconduct but a systemic institutional failure—combining outdated technology, weak governance, inadequate financial controls, and absence of ethical culture. The reforms required must therefore address structure, process, technology, and mindset together. Piecemeal improvements will be insufficient; comprehensive transformation is necessary to restore integrity and public trust.

3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR REFORM

Reform must be guided by principles that blend administrative best practice with the ethical imperatives of the Hadj itself:

1. **Amanah (Trust):** Every pilgrim's application is a trust that must be handled with integrity.
2. **Adl (Justice):** Allocation must be fair, rules-based, and free of personal influence.
3. **Transparency:** Decisions and criteria should be visible and verifiable.
4. **Accountability:** Every action must have a traceable decision-maker.
5. **Efficiency:** Administrative processes must serve, not frustrate, the pilgrim.

These values underpin the proposals that follow.

4.0 INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES IN HADJ ADMINISTRATION

While Mauritius faces unique challenges, several countries have successfully modernized their Hadj administration systems. Three models offer particularly relevant lessons.

4.1 Malaysia: The Tabung Haji Model

Malaysia's Lembaga Tabung Haji (Pilgrims Fund Board), established in 1963, manages Hadj for over 30,000 pilgrims annually through an integrated digital system.

Key Features:

- Digital registration with mobile applications enabling real-time status tracking
- Automated selection based on transparent criteria with minimal human intervention
- Integrated savings scheme where pilgrims accumulate funds through Shariah-compliant investments
- Annual public reporting on operations and financial performance

Relevance to Mauritius: Demonstrates how transparent queue management and digital systems can eliminate discretion while building public trust in large-scale operations.

4.2 Singapore: The MUIS Hadj System

The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) administers Hadj for approximately 900 pilgrims annually through a fully digitized, paperless system.

Key Features:

- Online registration portal (MyHajSG) integrated with national identity authentication
- Automated eligibility verification against government databases
- Transparent waiting list published online with personalized status dashboards
- Post-Hadj feedback system rating operators and services
- Annual public reporting with full financial transparency

Achievements: 95%+ pilgrim satisfaction ratings, significantly reduced fraud risk, and processing time reduced from weeks to days.

Relevance to Mauritius: Singapore's comparable scale (900 pilgrims) and emphasis on efficiency and transparency provide a directly adaptable model for small-nation Hadj administration.

4.3 South Africa: The SAHUC Coordination Model

The South African Hajj and Umrah Council has historically coordinated Hadj for approximately 2,500 pilgrims annually, managing a diverse Muslim population.

Key Features:

- Standardized operator licensing with performance-based accreditation
- Transparent selection criteria prioritizing first-timers and elderly applicants
- Mandatory operator bonds and insurance requirements
- Independent complaints tribunal with binding decisions
- Multi-stakeholder governance including government, Islamic scholars, and community representatives

2025 Transition Note: South Africa is currently transitioning to Saudi Arabia's centralized Nusuk platform, reflecting evolving international Hadj administration frameworks.

Relevance to Mauritius: South Africa's experience managing diversity, strong operator accountability framework, and multi-stakeholder governance address challenges similar to those faced by Mauritius.

4.4 Key Lessons for Mauritius

From these international models, several principles emerge:

1. **Technology eliminates discretion** – Digital systems with audit trails make fraud difficult and create permanent oversight records
2. **Transparency builds trust** – Public disclosure of selection criteria, waiting lists, and selections prevents suspicion
3. **Financial integration reduces fraud** – Electronic payment systems eliminate cash handling vulnerabilities
4. **Operator accountability drives quality** – Performance ratings and licensing conditions ensure service excellence
5. **Multi-stakeholder governance enhances legitimacy** – Including community representatives and independent experts builds confidence
6. **Continuous improvement through feedback** – Systematic pilgrim satisfaction measurement drives service quality

Mauritius need not reinvent Hadj administration—proven models exist and can be adapted to local context, scale, and resources.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MINISTRY

5.1 Establish a Hadj Governance Reform Task Force

The Ministry should immediately constitute a *Hadj Governance Reform Task Force* mandated to clean, reform, and re-establish the integrity of the Hadj administration within 12 months.

Its functions would include:

- Supervising a comprehensive data integrity audit of all records from 2010–2025;
- Designing a new governance structure with clear reporting lines;
- Drafting a Hadj Administration Charter defining the rights and obligations of all stakeholders; and
- Recommending permanent institutional reforms to the ICCTF.

This Task Force should include non-conflicted individuals who understand the values and essence of Hadj, representatives from the Ministry, ICCTF, National Audit Office, National Computer Board, DPO and one independent ethics and IT governance expert.

5.2 Conduct a Clean Data and Integrity Audit

Before any further Hadj registration is opened, the entire existing database should be verified. All legitimate registrations must be reaffirmed; all forged or duplicated records must be nullified.

Each registrant, including those affected by misuse, should receive written confirmation of their verified registration status.

The outcome must be a *Clean Start Database*, certified by the NAO, on which future Hadj processes will rest.

5.3 Adopt a Transparent Rules-Based Selection Framework

The Ministry should publish a formal Hadj Selection Policy that sets out clear and objective criteria — first-time applicants (those who have never performed Hadj and constitute the primary queue) repeat applicants (those who have performed Hadj previously and seek to return), Mahram relationships, and health and age-based priorities — along with the precise method of selection and clear criteria of when and why exemptions can be made.

To ensure transparency and public accountability, the ICCTF shall publish on its website:

- A provisional list of selected Hadj candidates for each season
- The complete waiting list showing queue position and registration year

Both lists shall display only: full name, year of registration, selection category (first-time/repeat/Mahram/priority), and unique reference number. No sensitive personal data including NIC numbers, addresses, contact details, medical or financial information shall be disclosed. Publication shall comply with the Data Protection Act. A formal objection mechanism shall be established for raising and resolving legitimate challenges.

This policy must be published annually and audited independently. Transparency in allocation is the foundation of credibility; without it, any digital system will only automate existing flaws.

5.4 Implement a Digital Hadj Visa Management System (DHVMS)

The Hadj administration must transition from paper and Access files to a secure, online management platform designed for accountability.

- Each registration, amendments, approval, and cancellation must carry a digital signature, user identity, a timestamp and an approver with proper criteria and reasons.
- The system must generate an immutable audit log accessible to the Ministry and the Auditor-General.
- This platform will not be a technical luxury but an institutional necessity — the digital expression of integrity.

Note: Detailed technical specifications, migration strategy, and system requirements will be developed at a later stage in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

5.5 Institutional Oversight and Reporting

The ICCTF should be required to submit regular (twice per year) compliance reports to the Ministry, detailing registrations, cancellations, refunds, and complaints.

A comprehensive Hadj Governance Report should be tabled before Parliament within two months following the completion of each Hadj season, ensuring democratic accountability and public transparency. The Ministry should also establish a Religious and Ethical Oversight Committee to review fairness and compliance with Islamic principles.

5.6 Refunds, Complaints, and Citizen Interface

Refunds of unused *Tannazul* payments must become automatic within a fixed statutory timeframe.

A modern and integrated grievance redress system — online, phone, and in-person — should be established to handle appeals and complaints transparently.

Each case must be logged, tracked, and resolved within a published service standard.

5.7 Ethical and Institutional Capacity-Building

The Hadj crisis revealed not only procedural gaps but ethical fragility. Mandatory training in data ethics, confidentiality, and public service values should be instituted for all ICCTF staff.

A Code of Conduct and Whistle-blower Policy should be adopted to encourage internal accountability.

Rotation of duties must prevent any single officer from controlling an entire process chain.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK: HOW TO ACHIEVE REFORM

The reform process can be rolled out in **three progressive stages**, each building on the previous one.

Stage 1: Foundation (0–6 Months)

The Ministry issues a Cabinet-backed directive establishing the Hadj Governance Reform Task Force comprising representatives from the Ministry, ICCTF, National Audit Office, National Computer Board, and independent technical experts.

New registrations are temporarily suspended pending the data audit. The NAO and NCB or technical experts begin forensic verification of existing digital and paper records. Public

communication is made transparent—the government announces a reform process to reassure pilgrims and community stakeholders.

Stage 2: Transition (6–12 Months)

The Ministry adopts a Revised Hadj Policy and Procedure Manual detailing duties, decision flow, and accountability checkpoints. Procurement for the new digital management platform initiated.

Drafting of the Hadj Administration Charter begins, embedding rights, duties, and ethical obligations.

Stage 3: Consolidation (12–24 Months)

The new digital platform is piloted with a limited user base and refined through feedback. Staff are trained; operators are accredited; and real-time monitoring dashboards are established.

At year-end, the first Hadj Governance Annual Report is published publicly, marking the completion of institutional renewal.

Technical Support: Independent technical expertise in legal drafting, system design, and governance frameworks would strengthen implementation. ILMA Foundation's combined legal and IT capabilities are available to support any of these stages if the Ministry considers external assistance beneficial.

7.0 ILMA FOUNDATION'S ROLE AND CAPACITY

ILMA Foundation brings a rare combination of legal expertise, information technology specialization, and community trust. This dual competency in law and technology is essential for Hadj reform, which requires both robust legal frameworks and secure digital systems.

Why ILMA is Uniquely Positioned

Independent and Credible: We have no affiliation with any Hadj operator, ICCTF personnel, or commercial interests. Our Islamic values framework and community standing ensure reforms respect religious principles while modernizing administration.

Proven Expertise: Our team combines legislative drafting skills, administrative law knowledge, database design capabilities, cybersecurity expertise, and governance framework development experience.

How ILMA Can Assist

We can support across five key areas:

1. **Legislative Reform:** Draft amendments to the ICCTF Act with enhanced governance, accountability, and technology standards.
2. **Digital System Design:** Develop technical specifications for the new Hadj Management System, including security protocols and integration requirements.
3. **Governance Documents:** Create Board charters, codes of conduct, whistleblower policies, and operational manuals.
4. **Capacity Building:** Design and deliver training programs for ICCTF staff on ethics, governance, and fraud prevention.
5. **Implementation Support:** Serve on the Hadj Governance Reform Task Force and provide ongoing monitoring and guidance.

Our role is advisory and collaborative. We recognize the Ministry's ultimate authority and offer technical assistance to support—not direct—the reform process. Our team is available to commence immediately and commits to the full 24-months implementation period.

8.0 EXPECTED IMPACT

The proposed reforms would transform the Hadj administration from a vulnerable, opaque system into a transparent and auditable institution.

They would establish clear accountability lines, safeguard data integrity, reduce human interference, and ensure that every Mauritian pilgrim is treated equitably.

Over time, this model could become a regional benchmark for ethical pilgrimage management in the Indian Ocean region, demonstrating that public faith, once shaken, can be restored through principled leadership and transparent administration.

9.0 CONCLUSION

The Hadj 2025 Inquiry should not end with condemnation; it should begin with reconstruction.

Through the proposed governance and digital reforms, the Ministry can turn this episode into a national example of ethical recovery — a demonstration that public faith, once shaken, can be restored through principled leadership and transparent administration.

A just and accountable Hadj system is not only a bureaucratic necessity. It is a moral obligation — one that honours the pilgrims, upholds the trust of the community, and reflects the values of the Republic itself.

ABOUT ILMA FOUNDATION

ILMA Foundation is a foundation registered under the laws of Mauritius (the “Foundation”).

The Foundation is a charitable foundation.

The Purpose and Object of the Foundation is to:

- i. alleviate poverty,
- ii. advance in education,
- iii. assist in the development of religion,
- iv. preserve of the environment,
- v. protect the fundamental human rights in Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean and in Africa.

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Appendices

For access to Appendix 1 (*Proposed Legislative Amendments to the ICCTF Act 1948*) and Appendix 2 (*Draft ICCTF (Amendment) Bill*), please download the complete version of this report from the ILMA Foundation website:

 www.ilmafoundation.com

 Direct URL:

https://ilmafoundation.com/Restoring_Trust_in_Hadj_Administration_Full_Report.pdf