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# Philippines and Maldives keen to emulate Malaysia's Tabung Haji model

**MECCA** • The Philippines and Maldives are interested to emulate Malaysia's Lembaga Tabung Haji (TH) model in their respective countries, says TaHa Alam Sdn Bhd CEO Nik Joharris Nik Ahmad.

"Our Philippines counterpart is keen to know more about TH haj management, particularly in the handling of excess luggage and flight chartering services for pilgrims.

"Whereas our counterpart in the Republic of the Maldives is keen to learn more of the overall TH's model and we will probably start with the training segments.

"Our counterpart in Singapore is keen to use our excess luggage service," said Nik Joharris, adding that TaHa Alam is eyeing to lock the deals involving the three countries for

this year's haj session.

The company shared TH's experience at a forum titled, "Mobilising Savings and Effective Haj Management — Malaysia's Experience" in conjunction with the 39th IDB Annual Meeting last week in Jeddah.

The forum showcased the challenges and success of Tabung Haji's model and its potential replication to other countries, as well as its benefits and spillover effects to the economy.

"In some countries, unfortunately, Muslims have to either forgo their personal belonging and/or borrow huge sums of money to finance their pilgrimage.

"This can be partially attributed to the lack or non-existence of Shariah-compliant savings instruments for them to save systematically for their once-in-

a-lifetime Haj pilgrimage," Nik Joharris told the forum.

He said TaHa Alam offers advisory and consultancy services to interested countries towards mobilising haj savings scheme and managing Haj management companies.

"With the global leadership positions of our shareholders (TH) and by leveraging on the latest technology together with continuous operational improvement, we can assist many countries in mobilising haj savings schemes and managing haj management companies," he said.

TaHa Alam is a joint-venture (JV) company owned by ICD, the private sector arm of the IDB Group and Theta Edge Bhd, a subsidiary of TH.

TH is the premiere Islamic financial institution in Malay-

sia backed by more than RM41 billion in funds and with 50 years experience in deposits, haj services and operations, and investments.

ICD holds a 50% stake in TaHa Alam while TH, through Theta Edge, holds the remaining 50%, said Nik Joharris.

He said TH's consistent track record has gained world recognition and has served as a role model of innovative haj management and Islamic financial services for most Islamic countries in the world.

The JV agreement between TaHa Alam and ICD was inked during the "In Malaysia-IDB Group Investment Forum" held in Kuala Lumpur in 2012 for cooperation and promotion of products and services related to haj and *umrah* globally.

— *Bernama*