

# The Malaysian Reserve

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**CIFF in talks to set new chapter in Indonesia:** Chartered Institute of Islamic Finance Professionals (CIFF) is looking to expand beyond Malaysia in the next two to three years, with talks already underway in Indonesia. **pg 24**



## CIFF to set new chapter in Indonesia

*The body is also looking at expanding to Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia*

by ISHUN P AHMAD

**CHARTERED** Institute of Islamic Finance Professionals (CIFF) is looking to expand and establish new chapters beyond Malaysia in the next two to three years, with talks already underway in Indonesia.

Established in 2015, CIFF was set up to support capacity building agenda of the Islamic industry by setting professional standards to drive the next phase of Islamic finance in human capital development.

CIFF president Datuk Badliyah Abdul Ghani said the body is also looking to establish chapters in Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

"We are currently exploring with Asosiasi Bank Syariah Seluruh Indonesia (Asbisindo) in Indonesia. The parties have exchanged documents and are at discussion stage. CIFF will also hold discussions with other bodies to sign on chapter qualification and recognition with Islamic finance institutions," he told *The Malaysian Reserve* in an interview.

Asbisindo was established in 1992 in Bandung, Indonesia, and its members include Islamic banks in Indonesia. One of its missions is to maintain and develop Islamic banks in the republic.



**We were advised to come out with another document, an overarching document on the principles of Shariah that govern both the codes, says Badliyah**

Its Malaysian counterpart is the Association of Islamic Banking Institutions Malaysia.

"There are other industry associations that represent the takaful, micro finance players, and many others. Over time, we will talk to each of them to sign on the chapter," he said.

Headquartered in Kuala Lumpur, CIFF was formerly known as the Association of Chartered Islamic Financial Professionals Malaysia

(ACIFP), which was established in 2008. The ACIFP was specifically mentioned in the Bank Negara Malaysia Financial Sector Blueprint 2011-2020, under Recommendation 5.3.2 as the professional body responsible for global quality standards for Islamic finance professionals.

CIFF now has 600 members, with the bulk of them coming from Malaysia, which has a vibrant Islamic finance sector. Some 30% of the

members are non-Malaysians, and the association is keen on growing that portion.

"We have also received some inquiries to establish chapters in countries like Kazakhstan, Senegal and the UK. Initially, CIFF will start with having representatives in these countries. This is a long-term exercise in building a professional body," he said.

One of the key initiatives undertaken by CIFF at this juncture is developing a booklet on Shariah principles for its members and Islamic practitioners, which is expected to be completed by the year-end. This comes after the release of its earlier two documents: CIFF Code of Ethics and CIFF Standards of Professional Conduct, which aim to represent the ideals of the CIFF and its members in forging the benchmarks for professionalism and industry best practices.

"We were advised to come out with another document, an overarching document on the principles of Shariah that govern both the codes. We are in the middle of developing this document that must be read together with these two documents. It sort of provides the soul and spirit," he said.

"We asked the question: What is exactly about Shariah that deals with the concept of integrity, professionalism, transparency, and its shortcomings?"

The two codes set the obligations for CIFF members to be navigated by five principles — accountability, confidentiality, competency, integrity and objectivity — in their multifaceted interactions and business dealings.

Under its standards of professional conduct, it talks about compliance with all laws in accordance with Shariah.

"As Shariah is the foundation of Islamic finance, members shall undertake to make informed decisions, actions and omissions based on permissibility and prohibition of Shariah, including to facilitate and comply with all applicable laws, regulations, standards and rulings governing their Shariah-compliant activities," the document states.

In an explanatory note, it states that the standards "emphasise on the importance for CIFF members to adhere and uphold their respective organisation's governance and carry through necessary processes to seek decisions, views and opinions related to Shariah matters".

In setting professional standards, the CIFF aims to support its members towards the continuous pursuit and development of cutting-edge knowledge in Islamic finance, upholding the highest levels of integrity in discharging their professional duties and providing distinguished quality service in the execution of their professional duties.