

FOREWORD

Southeast Asia is the powerhouse of skills and innovation in Islamic finance as the GCC is the pool of liquidity. Recently, there have been many issues of concern in the sector, with some recalled certifications and Shariah incompatibility concerns. The sector is young and growing rapidly, thereby demanding close monitoring to enable the establishment of a robust and sustainable alternative to conventional finance.

This is a timely book as it addresses the issues facing the momentum that Islamic finance has taken in the world. The sub-prime crisis and the credit crunch have focused considerable attention on the sector: its viability and sustainability. The challenges are many and not insurmountable. The market place is constantly evolving and expanding beyond the Muslim clientele and regions. The expected growth of the Islamic finance sector worldwide is estimated at about 15% by the year 2020, but if it exceeds that it should come as no surprise.

Standardisation and harmonisation are issues raised consistently at many fora and being addressed and dealt with by many of the active members and institutions involved in the Islamic finance sector. It takes time but the start has been made and many intelligent minds have committed to establishing this means of finance.

Dr. Angelo Venardos has provided a valuable service in the publication of this book with contributions from some of the legends in the Islamic finance industry who have considerable knowledge of their subject and are active practitioners. The leading lawyers, bankers, regulators, and accountants in the sector are among the contributors and some of them are personal friends. They are talking the talk and walking the walk on a daily basis and are at the cutting edge of development in the industry. There is not much available in the form of literature on the current issues in the sector and this is a fine addition that will prove useful to academics, practitioners, students, and others who would be interested in this sector — where it has been, where it is, and where it is going. All extremely relevant.

Majid Dawood
CEO, Yasaar Limited
Dubai, UAE