

Dear Halal Food Certifier,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI). GHI is a global scientific non-profit association whose objectives are to achieve consensus on issues related to the science of food regulations and legislation, and to ensure the global availability of safe, wholesome food products for all consumers. As part of its effort to improve the global food supply, the organization has a working group on “Food Safety in Relation to Religious Dietary Laws.”

The Board of Directors has concluded that the best approach to help consumers purchase foods that meet religious dietary needs would be to contribute to improving Consumer Right to Know (transparency of standards and information) and Truth in Labelling. In other words, rather than try to get religious certifiers to adopt a single set of standards, which might violate religious freedom, simply have each certifying agency provide consumers with the details of the standard they are using. In this way, consumers can determine if the certifying agency’s standard meets their own needs. At the same time, certifying agencies and companies can be held accountable to “do what they say and say what they do.” Our goal is to develop a web presence on the GHI site (www.globalharmonization.net) where consumers can learn more about the standards (through this questionnaire and/or using an internet link (www.globalharmonization.net/halal-certifier) of different religious dietary law certifying agencies including yours.

Because the Muslim world encompasses between 20 and 25% of the world’s population, halal dietary laws and halal certification seemed like the place to start. Below is a questionnaire for which we would appreciate answers that you would be willing to share with the public. These have received an extensive review, and these questions will hopefully provide a level playing field for all the agencies that choose to participate. Participation is obviously voluntary, and we hope you will respond to all — or, if necessary, most — of the questions. We thank you in advance for your participation.

If you have any questions about this questionnaire or the process, please address them to: jmr9@cornell.edu. Also please use the same email if you feel a need to update your answers. Our goal is to maintain this web site and to continuously update the information as it is received from certifying agencies from all over the world. We hope you will include a copy of your organizations trademarked logo if you have one.

With respect to language, we are hoping that all submissions will be in English, but we will also accept information in other languages (ideally English and your countries language(s)). We are willing to work with you on polishing the English. GHI has ambassadors in most countries of the world that speak many different languages so they should be able to help with polishing the language in many other languages. It is also the intent of the GHI to publicize the availability of this information through its communications network including a newsletter and participation in global conferences.

Questionnaire

Name of Organization:

Halal Quality Control Group

Address of Home Office:

Laan van Meerdervoort 53d | 2517 AE | The Hague | The Netherlands

Location of Additional Offices:

Please see attachment 'W0452' for all addresses of branches

Person and Title of Person Filling Out This Form (please include email):

Wasim al Shaman, Managing and Project Manager | wasim@halaloffice.com

Person for Consumers to Contact with Questions (please include email):

Multiple departments apply | info@halaloffice.com

Countries or Areas where the Agency is Prepared to Give Certification:

Europe, Africa, Middle East (some restrictions apply)

Person for Companies to Contact If Interested in Certification (please include email):

Ahmad al Chaman | a.alchaman@halaloffice.com

Website:

www.halaloffice.com (Global)

Please answer as many of the following questions as you/your organization is comfortable answering:

1. i) In selecting animals for religious slaughter, do you put any requirements on the agricultural practices, i.e., what the animal was fed? ii) If so, what are those requirements?

Yes, Animal Feed is a scope for which we are accredited to assess upon and certify.

Aspects to take into consideration are the dietary length, enzymes used as utilizers, feed additives, genetically modified sources and animals, ethical regulations applied in the country of domestication, and biotechnologies used for producing the feed.

2. Will you permit the use of processing aids and ingredients that are derived from non-halal slaughtered animals, e.g., bovine enzymes? Are there any circumstances when something derived from porcine would be acceptable?
No, animal derived materials should be deriving from permissible animals which are slaughtered ritually by a Muslim. There are others whom may accept synthetic transformation, but Halal Quality Control remains that processing aids and additives shall be derived from permissible and Halal slaughtered animals only.
3. When it comes to fish and seafood, what is in and what is out? Specifically: fish with removable scales; fish with non-removable scales, e.g., swordfish, sturgeon, and shark; fish with no scales, e.g., catfish; crustaceans, e.g., crab, lobster and shrimp; and molluscs, e.g., squid/cuttlefish, clams, and scallops.
This topic is in good research; it depends whether or not the fish are caught in their natural environment without being hurt or poisoned prior to being frozen or sold. Animals which could both live in (sweet) waters and on land are not permissible. Some scholars do not accept to consume invertebrates living in the sea; we follow whatever the Halal standard do permit and what the regulations are of the countries.
4. i) Do you permit any pre-slaughter intervention prior to a Muslim doing the cutting of the neck, e.g., mild electrical and/or non-penetrating stunner? ii) How do you define the acceptable interventions? iii) Do you treat mammals differently from poultry?
For poultry and larger animals, calming down the animal could be permissible as long as the animal is deemed alive prior to slaughter (which can be tested). Non-stunning is acceptable as long as the slaughtering is carried out accordingly by a professional slaughtering personnel as non-stunning is more difficult to be carried out precisely.
The parameters and acceptable interventions are mentioned in several guidelines, government regulations, and Halal standard which explain the permissible methods for auditors to be carried out.
Animal welfare is differs from animal to animal; all animals should be treated with great care as described in several Halal guidelines and Halal standards.
5. What requirements do you have on the knife used for slaughter and on the training of your slaughtermen?
The requirements for the knives are described in SMIC, GSO, UAE.S, JAKIM, and MUI HAS standards.
Training shall be carried out each year for each slaughtering person. The training is provided by both the Technical and the Shariah department. In addition to this training, the slaughtering personal shall be approved by the local authorities or municipality.

6. i) How often and how do you say the Takbir (prayer) during slaughter? ii) Who says the prayer? iii) What prayer is said?

For each slaughtered animal. The prayer is said by the slaughtering personnel or the ones standing in front of the animal during the time of slaughtering. There shall be a literal mentioning of 'In the Name of Allah' without mentioning any other name beside or without the Name of Allah.

7. i) Do you permit the slaughterhouse to slaughter pigs are other times? ii) What is your stance on the use of horse?

No pigs within the same facility. We have no experiences with horse slaughtering facilities, however the vast majority of Muslims can accept to consume horse meats as long as it is Halal slaughtered.

8. i) Do you permit the use of ethanol in the preparation of food or ingredients? ii) What is your standard for the presence of ethanol in an ingredient and in the finished product?

Aerobic alcohol (pure form) can be acceptable as this is a natural. Anaerobic (airless) processes are doubtful as this method is mainly for fermentation purposes for the alcoholic beverage industry.

Any ethanol produced by anaerobic fermentation and ranging between 1 to 15% is considered to be Haram (non-Halal, Forbidden)

Ethanol produced by natural fermentation and less than 1% is considered as preserving agent and its Halal status is allowed.

For intermediate (not-fit-for-consumption) components, higher limits are allowed as long as the source of the ethanol is permissible and the end-limits can adhere to the permissible limits.

9. i) Do you have a list of compounds/ingredients that you consider makrooh (suspect)? ii) Under what circumstances do you permit a company to use such materials?

Many processing aids and additives (E-Numbers) can be considered makrooh; we do have an own database where we can see the Halal status of each component; the terms are that the source of each components should be deriving from a Halal/permissible source without bringing any hazard or intoxication.

10. i) What are your generally standards for cleaning equipment in a food processing plant that is not halal? ii) Do you do anything extra if you know that porcine/pork materials were run previously?

Halal standards such as GSO/UAE.S 2055, SMIIC, General standards such as ISO 22000, FSSC 22000/

We do not accept equipment which use porcine products.

11. Do you work with your (client) companies to determine the countries they wish to export to and adjust your standards to meet the requirements of the importing country?

Yes

12. What is your stance on the feed (e.g., animal by-products, antibiotics, and hormones) used for industrialized fish, poultry and livestock?

There should be an obligation to have the animal feed Halal certified. This should be enforced by governments in order to force the companies to add Halal certification into their quality program.

13. Do you certify only for export or only for domestic consumption or both? Do you use different standards for export, i.e., do you try to meet the standards of the importing country? Some countries require halal certifying agencies to be “approved” for their country. Are you approved by any country’s halal program?

Both. Standards which are applicable or recognized by a country can apply. If there is no Halal authority/standard within the country of import, the most applicable standard shall apply. Halal Quality Control has each individual branch approved by United Arab Emirates (ESMA/EIAC) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (SFDA/SASO). In the future, more Islamic countries might adapt this type of approval method.

14. i) Are you also certifying restaurants and caterings? ii) If so, are there any different or special standards for such facilities that you want to share with the readers?

Catering with a central kitchen operated by a company yes. Restaurants are too tricky and not realistic to be Halal certified unless controlled upon each day.

15. Which one best fits your organization’s belonging from these: Governmental/Semi-governmental/Non-profit organization/Private company?

Private Company (we are not subsidized or receive donations/zakat for support)

16. If there are governmental standards for halal in your country and you are not a government agency, do your standards differ from those of the government? If so, how do they differ from those of the government?

Not applicable

17. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your halal certification agency? (Please try to focus on providing consumer useful information about your standards and how they are implemented.)

We are available in 10 countries throughout Europe to be close to the industry and the local Muslim consumers. Each office is accredited and maintains a strong system to be in compliance with the latest requirements and trends. Please do keep in touch with us to be part of our seminars, webinars, or consumer awareness programs for all the latest information. Food safety and Halal aspects go hand in hand.

We thank you for your participation and look forward to staying in touch with you.
All the best. Salaam.

I hereby acknowledge that I understand that the answers to this questionnaire will be made public on the Global Harmonization Initiative site.

Name: Wasim al Shaman

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wasim al Shaman', enclosed within a circular scribble.

Date: 25 June 2021