	Halal Center Quality Certification			
	Title: Halal Certification Scheme			
	Doc ref: HCQC/03/13	Issue: 01	Rev: 00	Date: 15th October 2021
	Prepared by: Quality Manager		Approved by: Certification Manager	

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this scheme is to provide general guidelines on how to conduct halal certification activities in the light of applicable standards and other requirements as specified by regulatory authorities or stake holders. It is to facilitate trade, market access, fair competition and consumer acceptance of products at national, regional and international level.

2.0 Scope


This document covers the policies & procedures, assessment & evaluation guidelines for the Halal certification of food, cosmetic & personal care products. It is applicable to a third-party Halal certification system for determining the conformity of a product with specified requirements through initial assessment, testing of samples of the product and assessment of the involved Halal Food Management System by assessment and testing of product samples taken from the client's facility or the open market, or both. This guide addresses conditions for use of a mark of conformity and conditions for granting a certificate of conformity. This document shall be read in conjunction with UAE.S / GSO 2055-2 & EIAC Guidelines for Halal Accreditation. Where there is conflict between standard and the certification scheme, the relevant standard will take precedence.

The scope covers certification of the food, cosmetic & personal care products against UAE/GSO Halal standards.

3.0 Responsibilities

- **Quality Manager & Certification Manager:**


- Maintain applicable standards
- Provide oversight and enforcement of the rules governing the use of intellectual property.
- Train Halal Center quality certification (here and after – HCQC) personnel.
- Ensure HCQC personnel practice quality consistency through audits, continuing education, technical updates, and training.
- Ensure uniform application of the standard.
- Manage the Quality System to ensure alignment of the certification process as per the UAE/GSO Halal standards, EIAC Guidelines, ISO guides and the relevant standards.
- Interpret standard as necessary for clarification in the course of certification assessments and maintain a library of interpretation and guidance relating to the implementation of the standards.
- Represent HCQC principles and practice to stakeholders and the public.
- Establish and maintain financial independence of the HCQC.
- Maintain database registry of certified clients.
- Achieve and maintain accreditation to conduct conformity audits based on the applicable standards.
- Conduct conformity audits to the standards in accordance with established policies and procedures.
- Render certification decisions.
- Maintain surveillance of certifications, including adherence to governing intellectual property rules and changes to the scope of certifications.
- Develop and maintain organizational structure and systems in accordance with guidelines and standards as per regulatory requirements.
- Establish and maintain Independent Third-Party status in accordance with guidelines

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and the relevant standards requirements.

- **Basic Client Responsibility:**

- The client will be responsible to make all necessary arrangements for the conduct of the assessment, including provision for examining documentation and access to all areas, records (including internal audit reports) and personnel for the purposes of evaluation (e.g. testing, inspection, assessment, surveillance, reassessment and resolution of complaints);
- Provide to HCQC such samples of products, processes, specifications, other documents and access to facilities and those of its subcontractors and suppliers as may be required from time to time for initial assessments and such periodic re-examination of market products to confirm that they continue to conform to the Standards. Sourcing or marked products may be from warehouses, manufacturing facility, factories etc., but in any case, shall be provided to HCQC at the Client's expense.
- Grant HCQC and its' accreditation body free access without notice at any time during normal business hours to all of CLIENT's places of production, processes, assembly, shipment or storage of the Products to enable HCQC to examine the Products, processes or any component parts thereof by witnessing of tests, inspection or other means for continued compliance with the Standards, to monitor CLIENT's control systems applicable to the Products and to inspect any test data, calculations, records or reports required pursuant to HCQC follow-up procedures for determining continued compliance with the Standards;
- Designate a responsible person or persons to control security with respect to the HCQC Mark, to maintain records of each of the Products to which the Labels or Marks have been affixed and to provide HCQC with access to these persons and records during normal business hours; In accordance with Policy for Use of Halal Certification Mark or Logo.
- Affix or apply the HCQC Mark only at the place or places of production when HCQC has given initial authorization to CLIENT, only to those Products which comply with all requirements of the Standards.
- Provide copies of certification documents to third parties in their entirety or, alternatively, as specified by HCQC, if applicable;
- Notify in case of any proposed change in design, method, materials or place of production of the Products; and prevent release of any modified product prior to HCQC approval.
- Pay HCQC for the services and charges hereunder at the rates agreed.
- In addition, the client agrees that its equipment, plant, facilities, and procedures, and shall conform to the recommendations of the relevant initial facility inspection, or as otherwise may be specified in writing from time to time by HCQC.
- Failure of client to permit such access and provide such support shall be a breach of client's obligations, shall in the sole discretion of HCQC terminate Client's rights hereunder and be due cause for removal by the client of any HCQC Mark from the Products and the return of all labels containing such Marks to HCQC.
- Client acknowledges that the sole discretion of HCQC in issuing and continuing certification is the essence of the licensing agreement.
- Client also acknowledges that Client has the sole responsibility for the continued compliance of its Products with the Standards. HCQC does not design, develop, manufacture, repair, maintain, produce or otherwise participate or consult in any way

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with Client's Products or quality controls with regard thereto.

4.0 Procedure

4.1 Conformity Assessment Functions and Activities

HCQC maintains (through publications, electronic media or other means), and makes public, without request, in all the geographical areas in which it operates, information about

- audit processes;
- processes for granting, refusing, maintaining, renewing, suspending, restoring or withdrawing certification or expanding or reducing the scope of certification;
- types of Management Systems and certification schemes in which it operates;
- the use of Halal Certification and certification mark or logo;
- processes for handling requests for information, complaints and appeals; policy on impartiality.

The scheme includes the following functions and activities:

Audit Processes:


a. Scope of Halal Certification

HCQC conducts Halal certification activities as covered by the applicable relevant standards. Specifically, slaughterhouses, food manufacturing & processing industries etc. are assessed according to the requirements of the relevant standards. HCQC manages the Halal certification schemes with reference to normative documents other than officially issued standards. Such reference documents are also available for access by the public.

Any application received by HCQC for Halal certification is carefully evaluated to determine the scope of work and corresponding resources that will be needed to conduct the whole process of certification. The products/ services included in a particular application are classified according to the categories/ sectors stated in the applicable Halal certification scheme. Clients may apply for Halal certification of products/services that fall to one or more categories. The scope of the assessment shall include all processes, sectors, products or services on the part of client that have influence on conformity of the product/ service under application to Halal requirements. For a multisite organization, each site shall be audited and certified separately.

b. Audit Program

HCQC adopts the principles and guidelines of auditing as per standard requirements. Accepted applications for Halal certification are scheduled for audit, as applicable depending on the requirements of the Halal standard. An audit team is formed by HCQC, according to the expertise required by the scope of Halal certification applied for by a particular client. The schedule of the audit is agreed upon by the audit team and the client taking into consideration the operations of the organization for assessment. Audit day(s) are strategically picked in consultation with the client where in the audit team will have an opportunity to assess representative number of product lines, categories or sectors covered by the scope of Halal certification. The appropriate length of time to complete and effectively conduct any audit conducted by HCQC is determined according to determination of audit time with consideration given to the requirements of the Halal standard and regulatory authorities, criticality of the product, size of the client organization, number of sites,

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scope and complexity of its management system, and number of product lines and processes.

Audit plan shall be prepared by the assigned leader of the audit team prior to conduct of the audit. It shall include the audit objectives, scope, criteria against which the client shall be evaluated, language to be used, date, sites, audit team and roles, client details, and expected time and duration of each on-site audit activity. Audit plan shall be distributed to the client and all members of the audit team. Any change in the audit plan shall be made known to the client prior to audit date or during the opening meeting if the change is minor.

c. Audit Stages

Audit program of HCQC for all Halal certification applications include a two-stage initial audit and annual surveillance audit for the three years duration of certification, at the end of which the client shall apply for a Halal recertification for its products/ services and shall undergo the full certification process. Non-renewal of the certification shall cancel all the rights of the client to use the Halal certificate and Halal Logo/Mark on their products or services, and any matters related to their promotion and advertisement.

Special audits as in the case of scope extension and short-notice audits (i.e. investigation of complaints, response to changes, follow-up on corrective actions) shall also be made known by HCQC to the client prior to the date of audit. Reports shall be issued to clients (if required) for all audits conducted by HCQC, as a result of analysis to be done by the audit team based on evidences gathered during the Stage 1 and Stage 2 audits, in addition to documents provided in the application. Any raised nonconformities shall be confirmed by the client and effectiveness of implemented corrective action shall be verified by the auditors. Final files were forwarded to the Halal Decision Team for final recommendation for certification.

d. Application

HCQC shall require an authorized representative of the applicant organization to provide the necessary information to enable it to establish the following. It will be done through an application form available on request as well as on our web site.

- the desired scope of the certification;
- relevant details of the applicant organization as required by the specific certification scheme, including its name and the address(es) of its site(s), its processes and operations, human and technical resources, functions, relationships and any relevant legal obligations;
- identification of outsourced processes used by the organization that will affect conformity to requirements;
- the standards or other requirements for which the applicant organization is seeking certification;


e. Application Review

Once the application is received, the submitted documents are reviewed for completeness and correctness by the Halal certification personnel in charge. The client is informed of any missing, incomplete or improper document for correction and resubmission. The Accounts

Officer, in consultation with the certification personnel incharge and if necessary, the Manager of the certification Department, draws the quotation based on the information contained in the application.

The Halal certification personnel in charge, together with the eventually necessary technical expert (e.g., for activities not included in the pricelist) review the application information to verify that:

- Product and client information are sufficient for the certification process;
- All known differences in understanding between HCQC and the client (including the agreement on standards or other normative documents) are resolved;

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- The scope of the certification required is defined;
- The means to conduct all evaluation activities are available when needed;
- The competence and capability to perform the activities required by the application are available when needed.

HCQC personnel in charge assess all eventual criticalities related to the competences needed to meet clients' requests in terms of product category, applicable normative documents or Halal certification scheme. They then conduct all the relevant investigations and inform clients thereof. Products may be considered of the same type when knowledge of the requirements, characteristics and technology related to one product are sufficient to understand the requirements, characteristics and technology related to another product.

In this case, HCQC can guarantee availability of the competence and capability for all certification activities it has to undertake and keep updated records justifying the decision to undertake the Halal certification. HCQC shall decline to undertake specific certification if it lacks any competence or capability for the certification activities it is required to undertake.

HCQC rely on certifications previously issued to the client, or to other clients, in order to omit any activity, reference is made to the certification(s) included in its internal records. HCQC provides the client a justification for activity omissions upon client's request.

The client, upon understanding the whole process of Halal certification including all his rights and obligations, shall sign the **Certification Agreement**.

f. Determination of Audit Time

HCQC has documented procedure for determining audit time, for each client HCQC determines the time need to plan and accomplish complete and effective audit of the client.

The audit time determined by HCQC is recorded with proper justification according to requirements of UAE.S / GSO 2055-2.

Calculation of Minimum Initial Certification Audit Time

B.2.1 Minimum audit time for single site, **T_a**:

$$T_a = B + H + (PV + FTE) * CC$$

Where

B is the basis on-site audit time

H is the audit days for each additional HACCP studies and applied only for products/services in food-chain.

PV is the audit days for product variety

FTE is the audit days per number of employees


CC is the factor as multiplier for process or production complexity class

B.2.2 Minimum audit time for each additional site, **T_{asv}**:

$$T_{asv} = T_a * 50/100$$

TABLE B-1

MINIMUM INITIAL CERTIFICATION AUDIT TIME

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Category (See Annex A)	B Basic on-site audit time (in audit days)	H* for each additional HACCP studies	FTE Number of employees (in audit days)	CC Complexity Class (factor, multiplier)	PV** Product Variety (in audit days)	Tasv For each additional site visited (in audit days)
A	1,0	0.25	1 to 19 = 0.5 20 to 49 = 1.0 50 to 79 = 1.5 80 to 199 = 2.0 200 to 499 = 2.5 500 to 899 = 3.0 900 to 1299 = 3.5 1300 to 1699 = 4.0 1700 to 2999 = 4.5 3000 to 5000 = 5.0 > 5000 = 5.5	Low CC=1	1 to 3 = 0.25 4 to 6 = 0.50 7 to 10 = 0.75 11 to 20 = 1 > 20 = 2	50 % of minimum on-site audit time
B	1,0	0.25				
C	1.75	0.50				
D	1.25	0.50				
E	1.75	0.50				
F	1.75	0.50				
G	1.25	0.50				
H	1.25	0.50				
I	1.25	0.25				
J	1.25	0.25				
K	1.25	0.25				
L	1.75	0.50				
M	1.25	0.25				
N	1.75	0.50				

* **H** is applied only for products/services in food-chain.


** **PV** is used for only products not services.

Table B1 is based on four primary complexity classes of the nature of the processes or production of an organization that fundamentally affect the Halal certification audit time, these are:

- **Very High** – very large number of detailed sub-processes with significant nature (typically manufacturing or processing type organizations with highly significant non-Halal risks. It covers those products or service sectors that potentially have very high risks in terms of Halal aspects, with a high variety of processes or sub-processes or with a very large number of raw materials or inputs);
- **High** – large number of processes with significant nature (typically manufacturing or processing type organizations with significant non-Halal risks. It covers those products and service sectors that potentially have high risks in Halal aspects, with many processes.);
- **Medium** – average number of processes with significant nature (typically manufacturing or service organizations. It covers products and services with moderate potential non-Halal risks.);
- **Low** - small number of processes with significant nature (typically organizations with few significant natures. It covers products and services with low potential non-Halal risks.);

Table B1 covers the above four complexity classes. Table B2 provides the link between the four complexity classes above and the industry sectors that would typically fall into that class.

The Halal CB should recognize that not all organizations in a specific sector will always fall in the

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same complexity class. The certification body should allow flexibility in its contract review procedure to ensure that the specific activities of the organization are considered in determining the complexity class. For example: even though many businesses in the chemical production sector should be classified as “high complexity”, an organization which would have only a mixing free from chemical reaction, and/or high number or risky raw materials and/or advanced processing could be classified as “medium” or even “low complexity”.

All attributes of the organization’s system, processes, and products/services should be considered, and a fair adjustment made for those factors that could justify more or less audit time for an effective audit. Additive factors may be offset by subtractive factors. In all cases where adjustments are made to the time provided in the audit time table (B1) and B2, sufficient evidence and records shall be maintained to justify the variation.

TABLE B-2

Examples of linkage between business sectors and complexity classes

Complexity Class	Business Sector
Very High	Not else-where classified (n.e.c.) chemicals and pharmaceuticals, processed meat products, genetically modified products, food additives, bio cultures, cosmetics, processing aids and microorganisms.
High	Slaughtering meat and poultry; cheese products; biscuits; snacks; oil; beverages; hotels; restaurants; dietary supplements; cleaning agents; packaging material, textile
Medium	Milk products; fish products; egg products; bee keeping; spices; horticultural products; preserved fruits; preserved vegetables; canned products; pasta; sugar; animal feed; fish feed; water supply; development of product, process and equipment; veterinary services; process equipment; vending machines, leather products
Low	fish; egg production; milk production; fishing; hunting; trapping; fruits; vegetables; grain; fresh fruits and fresh juices; drinking water; flour; salt; retail outlets; shops; whole-salers, transport and storage;

g. Planning audits

Determining Audit Objectives, Scope and Criteria

The audit objectives shall be determined by HCQC. The audit scope and criteria, including any changes, shall be established by HCQC after discussion with the client.

The audit objectives shall describe what is to be accomplished by the audit and shall include the following:

- a) determination of the conformity of the client’s Management System, or parts of it, with audit criteria;
- b) determination of the ability of the Management System to ensure the client meets applicable statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements;
- c) determination of the effectiveness of the Management System to ensure the client can reasonably expect to achieve its specified objectives;
- d) as applicable, identification of areas for potential improvement of the Management System.

The audit scope shall describe the extent and boundaries of the audit, such as sites, organizational units, activities and processes to be audited. Where the initial or re-certification process consists of more than one audit (e.g. covering different sites), the scope of an individual audit may not cover

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the full certification scope, but the totality of audits shall be consistent with the scope in the certification document.

The audit criteria shall be used as a reference against which conformity is determined, and shall include:

- the requirements of a defined normative document on Management Systems;
- the defined processes and documentation of the Management System developed by the client.

Audit Team Selection and Assignments

The audit team shall be appointed and composed of auditor/lead auditor, Shariah Expert & Technical Expert, who between them have the totality of the competences identified for the certification of the client. The audit team shall consist of at least two (2) personnel. One of them shall be technical auditor and the other one shall be a Halal Islamic affairs expert. When determining the audit team to be allocated the following issues need to be considered:

- Standard to be audited
- Product codes/ category
- Auditor status i.e. Lead Auditor / Auditor
- Scope of the audit
- Duration of the audit
- Contractual requirements
- Auditor utilization rates
- Geographical location of the audit site
- Language capabilities of the auditor versus language used by the client


Audit plan

HCQC shall ensure that an audit plan is established prior to each audit identified in the audit program to provide the basis for agreement regarding the conduct and scheduling of the audit activities. The audit plan shall be appropriate to the objectives and the scope of the audit. The audit plan shall at least include or refer to the following:

- the audit objectives;
- the audit criteria;
- the audit scope, including identification of the organizational and functional units or processes to be audited;
- Product codes/ category as per scope of the certification
- the dates and sites where the on-site audit activities will be conducted, including visits to temporary sites and remote auditing activities, where appropriate;
- the expected duration of on-site audit activities;
- the roles and responsibilities of the audit team members and accompanying persons, such as observers or interpreters.

The tasks given to the audit team shall be defined, and require the audit team to:

- examine and verify the structure, policies, processes, procedures, records and related documents of the client relevant to the management system standard;
- determine that these meet all the requirements relevant to the intended scope of certification;
- determine that the processes and procedures are established, implemented and maintained effectively, to provide a basis for confidence in the client's management system;
- communicate to the client, for its action, any inconsistencies between the client's policy, objectives and targets.

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The audit plan shall be communicated, and the dates of the audit shall be agreed upon, in advance, with the client.

HCQC shall provide the name of and, when requested, make available background information on each member of the audit team, with sufficient time for the client to object to the appointment of any particular audit team member and for HCQC to reconstitute the team in response to any valid objection.

h. Conducting Audits

HCQC shall have a process for conducting on-site audits. This process shall include an opening meeting at the start of the audit and a closing meeting at the conclusion of the audit. Where any part of the audit is made by electronic means or where the site to be audited is virtual, HCQC shall ensure that such activities are conducted by personnel with appropriate competence. The evidence obtained during such an audit shall be sufficient to enable the auditor to take an informed decision on the conformity of the requirement in question.

Conducting the Opening Meeting:

A formal opening meeting, shall be held with the client's management and, where appropriate, those responsible for the functions or processes to be audited. The purpose of the opening meeting, usually conducted by the audit team leader, is to provide a short explanation of how the audit activities will be under taken confirmation that, during the audit, the client will be kept informed of audit progress and any concerns;

Communication during the Audit


- During the audit, the audit team shall periodically assess audit progress and exchange information. The audit team leader shall reassign work as needed between the audit team members and periodically communicate the progress of the audit and any concerns to the client.
- Where the available audit evidence indicates that the audit objectives are unattainable or suggests the presence of an immediate and significant risk (e.g. safety), the audit team leader shall report this to the client and, if possible, to HCQC to determine appropriate action. Such action may include reconfirmation or modification of the audit plan, changes to the audit objectives or audit scope, or termination of the audit. The audit team leader shall report the outcome of the action taken to HCQC.
- The audit team leader shall review with the client any need for changes to the audit scope which becomes apparent as on-site auditing activities progress and report this to HCQC.

Obtaining and Verifying Information

- During the audit, information relevant to the audit objectives, scope and criteria (including information relating to interfaces between functions, activities and processes) shall be obtained by appropriate sampling and verified to become audit evidence.
- Methods to obtain information shall include, but are not limited to interviews, observation of processes and activities and review of documentation and records.

Identifying and Recording Audit Findings

- Audit findings summarizing conformity and detailing nonconformity shall be identified, classified and recorded to enable an informed certification decision to be made or the certification to be maintained.

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- Opportunities for improvement may be identified and recorded, unless prohibited by the requirements of a management system certification scheme. Audit findings, however, which are nonconformities, shall not be recorded as opportunities for improvement.
- A finding of nonconformity shall be recorded against a specific requirement, and shall contain a clear statement of the nonconformity, identifying in detail the objective evidence on which the nonconformity is based. Nonconformities shall be discussed with the client to ensure that the evidence is accurate and that the nonconformities are understood. The auditor however shall refrain from suggesting the cause of nonconformities or their solution.
- The audit team leader shall attempt to resolve any diverging opinions between the audit team and the client concerning audit evidence or findings, and unresolved points shall be recorded.

Conducting the Closing Meeting

A formal closing meeting, where attendance shall be recorded, shall be held with the client's management and, where appropriate, those responsible for the functions or processes audited. The purpose of the closing meeting, usually conducted by the audit team leader, is to present the audit conclusions, including the recommendation regarding certification. Any non-conformity shall be presented in such a manner that they are understood, and the timeframe for responding shall be agreed. The client shall be given opportunity for questions. Any diverging opinions regarding the audit findings or conclusions between the audit team and the client shall be discussed and resolved where possible. Any diverging opinions that are not resolved shall be recorded and referred to HCQC.

Audit report

- HCQC shall provide a written report for each audit to the client. The audit team may identify opportunities for improvement but shall not recommend specific solutions. Ownership of the audit report shall be maintained by HCQC.
- The audit team leader shall ensure that the audit report is prepared and shall be responsible for its content. The audit report shall provide an accurate, concise and clear record of the audit to enable an informed certification decision to be made. The report shall also contain:
 - a statement on the conformity and the effectiveness of the MS together with a summary of the evidence relating to:
 - a conclusion on the appropriateness of the certification scope;
 - Confirmation that the audit objectives have been fulfilled.

Cause Analysis of Non-Conformities

HCQC shall require the client to analyze the cause and describe the specific correction and corrective actions taken, or planned to be taken, to eliminate detected nonconformities, within a defined time.

Effectiveness of Corrections and Corrective Actions

HCQC shall review the corrections, identified causes and corrective actions submitted by the client to determine if these are acceptable. HCQC shall verify the effectiveness of any correction and corrective actions taken. The evidence obtained to support the resolution of nonconformities shall be recorded. The client shall be informed of the result of the review and verification. The client shall be informed if an additional full audit, an additional limited audit, or documented evidence (to be confirmed during future audits) will be needed to verify effective correction and corrective actions.

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i. Initial Certification - Initial Certification Audit

The initial certification audit of the management system shall be conducted in two stages: Stage-1 and Stage-2 Audits.

Stage-1 Audit:

The objectives of stage-1 audit is to:

- review the client's management system documented information;
- evaluate the client's site-specific conditions and to undertake discussions with the client's personnel to determine the preparedness for stage-2 audit;
- review the client's status and understanding regarding requirements of the standard, in particular with respect to the identification of key performance or significant aspects, processes, objectives and operation of the management system;
- obtain necessary information regarding the scope of the management system including:
 - the client's site(s);
 - processes and equipment used;
 - levels of controls established (particularly in case of multisite clients);
 - applicable statutory and regulatory requirements;
- review the allocation of resources for stage-2 audit and agree the details of stage-2 audit with the client;
- provide a focus for planning stage-2 audit by gaining a sufficient understanding of the client's management system and site operations in the context of the management system standard or other normative document;
- Evaluate if the internal audits and management reviews are being planned and performed, and that the level of implementation of the management system substantiates that the client is ready for stage-2 audit.

Documented conclusions with regard to fulfillment of the stage-1 audit objectives and the readiness for stage-2 audit shall be communicated to the client, including identification of any areas of concern that could be classified as a non-conformity during stage-2 audit.


Stage-2 Audit:

The purpose of stage-2 audit is to evaluate the implementation, including effectiveness, of the client's management system. The stage-2 audit shall take place at the site(s) of the client. It shall include the auditing of at least the following:

- information and evidence about conformity to all requirements of the applicable management system standard or other normative documents;
- performance monitoring, measuring, reporting and reviewing against key performance objectives and targets (consistent with the expectations in the applicable management system standard or other normative document);
- the client's management system ability and its performance regarding meeting of applicable statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements;
- operational control of the client's processes;
- internal auditing and management review;
- management responsibility for the client's policies.

The Stage 2 audit shall be conducted within 90 days from the last date of the Stage 1 audit. HCQC will provide an audit program prior to the commencement of the audit.

The HCQC audit team will meet with the Client's management to discuss the details of the audit

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process and consider possible issues relating to the performance of the audit. The HCQC audit team will discuss any nonconformities, observations and opportunities for improvement if and when they are identified during the audit.

The HCQC audit team will prepare and present to the Client's management a report of the audit, which will include the audit findings and the scope of certification and will seek agreement, where necessary, on the nature of any corrective actions to be taken.

In cases where independent tests are required by the Halal certification scheme or other regulations, the audit team shall randomly take samples in sufficient quantity from the production/ service premises and sent for testing to a laboratory accredited to ISO 17025. If the Halal certification of products under evaluation will be based on the results of the testing, sampling shall follow GIP-014 Sampling Plan and Technique. Testing shall be based on internationally acceptable guidelines such as those issued by ISO (ISO 21569, ISO 21570, ISO 21572, ISO 16578, etc.), CAC (as reflected in the CODEX-STAN 234) or other reputable international bodies.

Changes to Stages 1 & 2:

If as result of Stage 1 HCQC determines that the Stage 2 arrangements (i.e. changes in the scope, man-days, auditors, sites) shall be adjusted, the Agreement may be amended. If after Stage 1 HCQC determines that HCQC is not ready, Stage 1 can be repeated until it produces satisfactory result to proceed with Stage 2. When Stage 1 & 2 is planned back to back HCQC has the right to postpone Stage 2 at the expenses of the Client if the results of Stage 1 are not satisfactory to proceed with Stage 2.

Non-conformity:

HCQC auditors will identify nonconformities on which the client needs to be taking appropriate corrective actions. When Major Non-Conformity occurs, the client needs to take corrective actions based on root cause analysis within 28 days and submitted to the HCQC. After the verification of these corrective actions, HCQC will perform a "follow up audit", which is charged at HCQC's current rates.

When Minor Non-Conformity occurs, the client needs to take corrective actions based on root cause analysis and submit the evidences within 90 days to the HCQC. Audit team will verify these corrective actions and evidences

Initial Halal Certification Audit Conclusions

The audit team shall analyze all information and audit evidence gathered during stage-1 and stage-2 audit to review the audit findings and agree on the audit conclusions. At least three Halal certification personnel who were not involved in the evaluation process (especially for the client's file under review for certification) shall form the Halal Decision Team. The Team shall review the evaluation results and all technical and administrative aspects of the products / services sought for registration. Documents forwarded to the Team include but not limited to the audit reports, nonconformity reports and corrective action done by the client, recommendation for certification by the auditors and all documents provided during application. Halal Shariah Board give final recommendation for certification on the based on all information related to the evaluation forms, its review, and any other relevant information using **Request for Certification Form**. Recommendation for certification shall be taken unanimously, not by majority of votes, and shall be based on full review of the results of evaluation. HCQC is responsible and retains authority for all its decisions relating to certification.

In case of a decision not to grant certification due to non-conformity on the part of the customer, HCQC shall notify the customer of the reasons for the decision. If the customer expresses interest

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in continuing the certification process, HCQC shall coordinate once more with the customer in order for them to initiate the necessary actions to satisfy the requirements of the applicable certification scheme. Upon the client's submission of the corrective actions and supporting evidences, the processes of evaluation and review are repeated. Should the decision not to grant certification is due to missing information from the evaluation results or other administrative aspects, and then the evaluation report is sent back to the Halal certification personnel who performed the evaluation for correction.

If, on the contrary, the review is successful, the decision to grant certification is taken and therefore the documents for certification are prepared. HCQC does not authorize third parties to issue, maintain, extend, reduce, suspend or withdraw certification. Eventually outsourced stages of the certification process, under formal agreements and procedures defining their limits, remain under the responsibility of HCQC.

Information for granting initial Halal Certification


- The information provided by the audit team to HCQC for the Halal certification decision includes, as minimum,
 - a. The audit reports
 - b. Comments on the non-conformities and, where applicable, the corrections and the corrective actions taken by the client.
 - c. Confirmation of the information provided to the Halal certification body used in the application review.
 - d. A recommendation whether or not to grant a Halal certificate, together with any conditions or observations.
- HCQC makes the certification decision on the basis of an evaluation of the audit findings and conclusions and any other relevant information (e.g. public information, comments on the audit report from the client).

j. Surveillance

HCQC has developed its surveillance activities so that representative areas and functions covered by the scope are monitored on a regular basis and takes into account changes to its certified client. Surveillance activities include on-site audits assessing the fulfillment of specified requirements with respect to the standard to which the certification is granted. Other surveillance activities may include:

- a. Inquiries from HCQC to the certified client on aspects of certification
- b. Reviewing any client's statements with respect to its operations (e.g. promotional material, website)
- c. Requests to the client to provide documents and records (on paper or electronic media)
- d. Other means of monitoring the certified client's performance.

Product testing also constitutes the surveillance activities. During the annual surveillance audit or any other time determined appropriate by HCQC based on applicable Halal certification scheme, a representative sample of the certified product is taken randomly, appropriately sealed by the auditor, and sent to an ISO 17025 accredited laboratory for analysis. Sampling may also be taken from the market through purchase of the Halal certified products. The auditor also reports any eventually withheld changes in the structural organization of the company audited, which may lead to further actions by HCQC.

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Surveillance Audit

Surveillance audits are on-site audits and are planned together with the other surveillance activities so that HCQC can maintain confidence that the system continues to fulfill requirements between recertification audits. The surveillance audit program includes, at least:

- a. Internal audits and management review
- b. A review of actions taken on non-conformities identified during the previous audit
- c. Treatment of complaints
- d. Effectiveness of products/services/management system with regard to achieving the certified client's objectives
- e. Progress of planned activities aimed at continual improvement
- f. Continuing operational control
- g. Review of any changes
- h. Use of marks and/or any other reference to certification.

Surveillance audits are conducted at least once a year. The date of first surveillance audit following initial certification is not more than 12 months from the last day of the stage-2 audit.

Maintaining Certification


HCQC maintains certification based on demonstration that the client continues to satisfy the requirements of the relevant standard. It may maintain a client's certification based on a positive conclusion by the audit team leader without further independent review, provided:

- a. For any non-conformity or other situation that may lead to suspension or withdrawal of certification, HCQC has a system that requires the audit team leader to report to the HCQC the need to initiate a review by appropriately competent personnel, different from those who carried out the audit, to determine whether certification can be maintained
- b. Competent personnel of HCQC monitor its surveillance activities, including monitoring the reporting by its auditors, to confirm that the halal certification activities are operating effectively.

k. Recertification

Recertification Audit Planning

- A recertification audit is planned and conducted to evaluate the continual fulfillment of all the requirements of the relevant standard. The purpose of the recertification audit is to confirm the continued conformity and effectiveness of the system, and its continued relevance and applicability for the scope of certification.
- The recertification audit considers the performance of the system over the period of Halal certification and includes the review of previous surveillance audit reports.
 - Recertification audit activities may need to have a stage-1 audit in situations where there have been significant changes to product/service/management system, the client, or the context in which the system is operating (e.g. changes to legislation).
 - In case of multiple sites, certification on the relevant standard being provided by HCQC, the planning for the audit shall ensure adequate on-site audit coverage to provide confidence in the certification.

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Recertification Audit

The recertification audit includes an on-site audit that addresses the following:

- The effectiveness of system in entirety in the light of internal and external changes and in continued relevance and applicability to the scope of certification.
- Demonstrated commitment to maintain the effectiveness and improvement of the system in order to enhance overall performance.
- Whether the operation of certified system contributes to the achievement of the organization's policy and objectives.

When, during a recertification audit, instances of nonconformity or lack of evidence of conformity are identified, HCQC defines time limits for correction and corrective actions to be implemented prior to the expiration of certification.

Information for Granting Recertification

- HCQC makes decisions on renewing certification based on the results of the recertification audit, as well as the results of the review over the period of certification and complaints received from the users of certification.
- Halal certified clients should submit a recertification or renewal application two months prior to expiry date of current Halal certificate.
- Halal certified clients who fail to renew their certificates shall not be allowed to use the Halal mark/logo.

1. Special Audits

Extension to scope

HCQC, in response to an application for extension to the scope of a certification already granted, undertakes a review of the application and determines any audit activities necessary to decide whether or not the extension may be granted. This may be conducted in conjunction with the surveillance audit.

Short-notice Audits

It may be necessary for HCQC to conduct audits of certified clients at short notice to investigate complaints, or in response to changes, or as follow up on suspended clients, In such cases:

- HCQC shall describe and make known in advance to the certified clients, the conditions under which these short notice visits are to be conducted.
- HCQC shall exercise additional care in the assignment of the audit team because of the lack of opportunity for the client to object to audit team members.

Certification Changes:

The Client is requested to inform HCQC promptly of any significant changes to its product(s) or services that may impact the certified management system(s) or any other circumstances, which may affect the validity of its certification. Change of site, additional sites, change of process, change of ownership, change of scope, change of number of employees, etc. are considered as changes which may affect the validity of the certification. HCQC will then take the appropriate action, such as conducting a special visit and/or changing the certification. Special visits can be conducted as well to investigate complaints received about the Client.

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m. Suspending/Cancelling, Withdrawing or Reducing the Scope of Certification

HCQC has a policy and documented procedure for suspension, withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification, and shall specify the subsequent actions by HCQC. HCQC shall suspend certification in cases when, for example:

- a. The client's certified system has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for effectiveness of the system.
- b. The certified client does not allow surveillance or recertification audits to be conducted at the required frequencies.
- c. The client has voluntarily requested a suspension.

Under suspension, the client's certification is temporarily invalid. HCQC shall have an enforceable arrangement with its clients to ensure that in case of suspension the client refrains from further promotion of its certification. HCQC shall make the suspended status of the certification publicly accessible and take any other measures if deems appropriate.

HCQC shall reduce the client's scope of certification to exclude the parts not meeting the requirements, when the client has persistently or seriously failed to meet the certification requirements for those parts of the scope of certification. Any such reduction shall be in line with the requirements of the standard used for certification.

n. Complaints and Appeals

The complaints management process of HCQC is based on the following principles:


- a. objective, impartial and non-discriminatory investigation of complaint/ appeal
- b. timeliness in the management of the process
- c. verification of actions taken

HCQC maintains a system for receiving complaints, appeals, claims and disputes. The client needs to provide the following information.

- a. Client Details
- b. Application reference, if applicable
- c. Nature of complaint

Any member of Complaint & Appeal Committee receiving a complaint/appeal related to a potential problem must promptly obtain information about problem and notify the Quality Manager upon learning of any extortion incident. Chief Executive Officer is responsible to call out a meeting of Complaint & Appeal Committee to discuss necessary actions to be taken. Quality Manager is responsible to coordinate with committee members about the actions taken and not to be taken about complaint/appeal. Quality Manager is responsible to identify the points where the potential problems occurred or from where the information's is to be collected.

Necessary information's are collected and sent immediately to the Quality Manager. He may take the aid of other committee members to accomplish this task, where the committee for investigation comprised of at least 03 persons and at least one of whom is a Halal Islamic affairs expert, who were not involved in the certification process or activities related to the complaint/appeal nor has been employed by the complainant/appellant or render consultancy service for them within two years, shall be formed. The personnel or committee will gather all the necessary information and evidences to verify the merit of the complaint/ appeal. The root cause of a valid complaint/ appeal shall be determined based on outcome of the investigation, and appropriate action plan to prevent recurrence shall be recommended by the Quality Manager, subject to approval by the CERTIFICATION MANAGER.

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The effectiveness of the implemented corrective actions shall be verified by the Quality Manager within the time frame specified. **Complaint and Appeal Form** is used to record all activities concerning handling of complaints and appeals. These complaints/ appeals are also part of the management review meeting.

The outcome of complaint/ appeal investigation and final decision, including any action required from the client shall be communicated to the complainant/appellant by the Quality Manager. Client's feedback on HCQC process of handling complaints and appeals are welcomed and duly recorded in the same **Complaint and Appeal Form**.

o. Records of applicants and clients

HCQC maintains records on the audit and other certification activities for all clients, including all organizations that submitted applications, and all organizations audited, certified, or with certification suspended or withdrawn.

Records of certified clients include the following:


- a. Application information and initial, surveillance and recertification audit reports
- b. Certification agreement
- c. Justification of the methodology used for sampling. (Note: Methodology of sampling includes the sampling employed to assess the Halal management system and/or to select sites in the context of multi sites assessment).
- d. Justification for auditor time determination
- e. Verification of corrective and preventive actions
- f. Records of complaints and appeals and any subsequent corrective and preventive actions
- g. Committee deliberations and decisions if applicable
- h. Documentation of the certification decisions
- i. Certification documents, including the scope of certification with respect to product, process or service, as applicable
- j. Related records necessary to establish the credibility of the certification, such as evidence of the competence of auditors and technical experts.

HCQC keeps records on applicants and clients secure to ensure that the information is kept confidential. Records are transported, transmitted or transferred under lock and key to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. This phase is supervised by a staff member of HCQC. HCQC has documented policy and documented procedure on the retention of records. Records are retained for the duration of the current cycle plus one full certification cycle.

p. Maintenance and Improvement of Scheme:

➤ **Review of scheme operation:** This scheme will be reviewed on at least annually basis during a management review meeting. The purpose of review is to confirm the validity of scheme and to identify aspects requiring improvement. The following points will be covered in the review process:

- Provisions to ensure that the scheme requirements are being applied in consistent manner.
- Feedback from stake holders will be considered.
- Complaints and appeals will be reviewed.
- In case any change in the scheme is decided, it will be communicated to EIAC and other stake holders.
- Review record will be maintained in the form of minutes of meeting and circulated to all concerned.

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- Changes in Specified Requirements: HCQC will monitor the development of the standards and other normative documents which define the specified requirements used in this scheme. Where changes in these documents occur, Quality Management Representative/Quality Manager will be responsible for incorporating these changes in the scheme and for managing implementation of the changes by clients and other stake holders.
- Other Changes to the Scheme: HCQC will follow the Document Change Procedure for managing the implementation of other changes to the rules, procedures and management of the scheme.

q. Use of Halal /product certification mark:

HCQC provides a unique identifier to be displayed in conjunction with the HCQC mark. The identifier shall be the HCQC's official acronym and shall be formatted and positioned to the right of the certification mark. The identifier shall be legible and shall be no taller than the height of the HCQC mark itself. HCQC will provide to the product certification body a copy of the mark and authorize applicant organizations to use in conjunction with labeled products. The HCQC shall provide to the applicant organization of a certified product, the appropriate certification mark artwork and shall monitor that the applicant organization applies and uses the certification mark in accordance with the Policy for Use of Halal Certification Mark or Logo.

r. Confidentiality and Impartiality:

HCQC is responsible for ensuring that confidentiality of information is maintained by its employees and those of its subcontractors concerning all information obtained as a result of their contacts with the licensee. It also ensures impartiality. The HCQC has established confidentiality and impartiality procedures in accordance with the relevant standards.

s. Fraudulent claim of certification:

HCQC shall take appropriate action when an applicant organization of a product it has certified, engages in unauthorized, incorrect, or misleading use of the certification mark, whether it is discovered by the product HCQC or is brought to its attention of competent authority. The HCQC shall bring to the official notice, any instances of unauthorized use of a certification mark by an applicant organization of a product that has not been certified. The competent authority will engage in appropriate action with the infringing organization.

t. Miscellaneous:

Liability & Financing:

Revenue of HCQC: HCQC is financed by HCQC own reserves and also financed itself with revenue from:

- Halal Certification
- Systems Certification
- Inspection Services
- Training Services

The financial year runs from 1st July to 30th June. The Financial Statements are drawn up by the Administration and Finance Control Department, who then submits them to CERTIFICATION MANAGER for approval. An external auditing company performs an independent verification of the Financial Statements of HCQC.

Fees: HCQC intends to support the certification activities with fees received from its clients. These



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funds will be adequate for covering all required activities to meet the procedures defined in the HCQC Quality Manual. The breakdown of service charges will be decided mutually depending upon the client size and the scope of certification.

u. Retention of Records.

- HCQC will retain record to demonstrate that all certification process requirements as explained in the standards and certification scheme are fulfilled.
- If re-certifications are done on a determined cycle, then records are retained at least for the current and previous cycle. Otherwise retention time of records will be decided under legal circumstances.
- The records will be treated as confidential.

As a rule, the last copy of obsolete documents will be retained.

5.0 Records

Application Form	HCQC/03/06
Certification Agreement	HCQC/03/08
Audit Plan	HCQC/03/34
Halal Audit Report	HCQC/03/39
Non-Conforming Report	HCQC/03/27
Halal Decision Team	HCQC/03/04
Halal Shariah Board	HCQC/03/05
Directory of Certified Clients	HCQC/03/42

Reviewed By: Quality Manager

Signature: _____

Approved By: Certification Manager

Signature: _____