



# @Halal

AN IDEAL RESOURCE FOR SHARIAH COMPLIANT BUSINESS AND LIFESTYLE



## Trade Redefined

With a certification system recognised worldwide, MATRADE'S global reach, and digital innovations such as the Madani Digital Trade platform, Malaysia is not only participating in the halal economy - it is setting the pace.

- P10-12

### Women Leading Change

Officially launched in June 2025, the Women in Halal Industry (WHI) initiative ensures women are central to policymaking, governance, entrepreneurship, academia, and tourism. **P06-09**





# CONTENTS

@Halal says ...

## No compromise on halal



**M**ALAYSIA has made it clear that its halal certification standards will not be compromised despite ongoing trade negotiations with the United States (US). Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) Datuk Seri Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz emphasised that any facilitation agreed with Washington only concerns streamlining processes and not lowering standards.

Tengku Zafrul assured that all imported products must still comply fully with Malaysia's halal already requirements in line with the Shariah principle, and he stressed that protecting Muslim consumers remains the government's top priority.

Recent speculation suggested that Malaysia might automatically recognise US halal certificates, a claim the minister dismissed as baseless.

He explained that Malaysia will only accept meat and poultry imports certified by bodies already recognised by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM).

Monitoring and verification will continue under JAKIM's strict framework, ensuring that quality, religious, and legal requirements remain intact.

As part of the trade talks, both countries also agreed to adopt a regionalisation approach to disease control, allowing imports of poultry from US regions certified as disease-free rather than requiring the whole country to be free from such risks.

This move is expected to improve efficiency without compromising consumer safety.

Beyond food imports, Malaysia and the United States also discussed cooperation in industrial sectors, including automotive components, pharmaceuticals, and medical devices, all under Malaysia's domestic regulatory framework.

Notably, the government affirmed that there will be no relaxation of Bumiputera equity requirements or blanket exemptions for foreign ownership in strategic sectors.

Meanwhile, the Halal Development Corporation (HDC) continues to strengthen Malaysia's halal ecosystem. HDC aims to increase the number of halal exporters to 2,443 this year, up from 1,600 in 2024.

With the global halal market surpassing US\$3 trillion, Malaysia is positioning itself as a leader in providing trusted halal products worldwide.

Tengku Zafrul highlighted that Malaysia's stance is firm. Efficiency in trade processes may improve, but halal integrity remains non-negotiable.



### P04

**Tokenised finance solutions**  
Driving Shariah-compliant tokenised finance in the gulf.

### P05

**Halal wellness rising**  
ASWC 2025 showcases innovation, sustainability, and Islamic lifestyle tourism.



### P06-09

**A new era for women**  
WHI amplifies women's voices and ensures they play a central role in shaping the halal industry's future.

### P10-12

**Accelerating halal exports**  
MATRADE accelerates halal exports with trusted standards and smart trade tools.



### P13

**Halal for Ummah**  
SMIIC strengthens global halal standards through harmonisation and innovation.





P14

**Igniting a global movement**  
Malaysia strengthens global halal leadership at Global Halal Summit (GHAS) 2025.

P15

**Halal standards redefined**  
Department of Standards Malaysia advances Malaysia’s leadership in global halal standardisation and certification.



P16-17

**ITC empowering Islamic tourism**  
ITC showcases MFAR and expands international halal tourism forward.

P18-19

**Halal vaccines: From vision to action**  
Halal assurance embedded in vaccine R&D for global competitiveness.

P20

**Where halal meets the world**  
Empowering SMEs and driving cross-border collaboration in the halal economy.

P22

**Islamic tourism at the crossroads**  
Islamic tourism embraces digital and sustainable future.

P24-25

**Behind the halal logo**  
Ensuring trust through rigorous halal compliance.

P26

**Inclusive tourism in Hong Kong**  
‘Jelajah Hong Kong’ showcases halal choices and cultural experiences.

10

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# Behind the halal logo

- Halal audits are rigorous checks of documents, processes, and facilities to ensure every product truly meets halalan toyyiban standards.
- Missing certificates or a lack of awareness beyond the halal executive are the most common causes of non-compliance.
- Auditors safeguard consumer faith that the halal logo is not just a mark, but a promise of integrity, safety, and responsibility.

**W**ALK into any supermarket, and you will see the halal logo proudly displayed on packaged foods, beverages, cosmetics, and even pharmaceuticals. For millions of Muslim consumers, this logo is more than a mark; it is a promise. It represents that what they consume or use is permissible, clean, and safe, in line with the principles of halalan toyyiban.

But what happens before a product earns the right to display that logo? Behind the scenes, a system of checks, inspections, and evaluations ensures the halal logo is more than just a sticker. At the heart of this system lies the halal audit, a structured process that protects consumers and builds trust in the halal industry.

## WHAT IS HALAL AUDIT?

A halal audit is a systematic inspection that verifies whether a company complies with halal standards and shariah requirements. It ensures every step of production, from raw material sourcing to the finished product, aligns with Islamic law and food safety expectations.

In Malaysia, audits are a mandatory requirement under the Manual Procedure for Malaysia Halal Certification (MPPHM 2020) and the Malaysian Halal Management System (MHMS 2020). These frameworks make certification structured and continuously monitored, giving both local and international consumers confidence in the Malaysian halal logo.

There are two main types of halal audits. The company itself conducts internal audits to monitor compliance and prepare for certification. In contrast, external audits are performed by certification bodies, such as the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), to confirm that requirements are fully met before granting or renewing certification. In short, internal audits are self-checks, while external audits act as the final gatekeepers.



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## INSIDE A HALAL AUDIT

A halal audit reviews documents, ingredients, processes, and facilities to ensure compliance with shariah and halalan toyyiban principles. The process typically begins with a review of the documentation.

At this stage, auditors examine records that prove compliance, including halal certificates for all ingredients, supplier approval documents, and standard operating procedures for handling and segregating halal materials.

Good documentation is more than bureaucracy; it is the backbone of traceability, ensuring that if any problem arises, the source of every ingredient can be quickly identified.

Once the paperwork is verified, auditors proceed to the on-site inspection. They walk through production floors, storage areas, and packaging lines to ensure actual practices match what is written in the documents.

They look for measures that prevent any cross-contact between halal and non-halal substances, whether hygiene protocols are strictly followed, and whether equipment is cleaned and used correctly.

For example, in a confectionery plant, an auditor may follow the journey of a chocolate coating from the supplier certificate to its storage, into production, and finally into packaging, making sure that integrity is preserved at every stage.

## COMMON FINDINGS AND REAL CHALLENGES

Halal audits often uncover similar issues across different companies. One of the most common findings is the presence of incomplete or outdated documentation. Every raw material, additive, and flavouring, no matter how minor, must be supported by a valid halal certificate from the

supplier.

This includes the emulsifiers that keep chocolate smooth, the gelatin capsules in supplements, and the “natural flavourings” in drinks. Yet these small details are sometimes overlooked. Even a single missing or expired certificate can delay approval or place an existing halal status at risk.

Auditors often describe documentation as the “spine” of halal integrity; if a problem arises, the entire supply chain must be traceable at once. In some audits, halal files have been found to contain outdated information, mismatched processing addresses, or Internal Halal Committee (IHC) charts listing members who have long since left the company.

Such oversights confuse monitoring visits and often lead to non-conformance reports.

Another recurring challenge is staff awareness and training. Workers involved in handling halal products must understand and apply halal procedures daily, segregating ingredients, maintaining hygiene, and ensuring proper labelling and storage.

Yet in many companies, these responsibilities fall almost entirely on the halal executive, while other employees and sometimes even management remain unaware of their

role. When that single individual resigns or is absent, halal compliance can falter (Nadzri et al., 2025).

These issues underline an essential truth: halal assurance is not a one-time effort to pass an audit. It is a discipline that must be woven into daily operations.

Companies that excel in audits are those that invest in continuous training, maintain rigorous supplier management, carry out regular internal checks, and follow the guidelines to the letter.

Most importantly, they cultivate a culture where everyone from the boardroom to the delivery van understands that halal integrity is both a professional duty and a matter of faith.

## WHY HALAL AUDITS MATTER

Halal audits are the backbone of consumer trust. They ensure that products carrying the halal logo are genuinely compliant with halalan toyyiban requirements. For consumers, this means that every certified product has been thoroughly scrutinised, documented, and verified to protect both spiritual and physical well-being.

Beyond technical compliance, halal audits uphold integrity and amanah. Auditors and companies are respon-



**Halal auditors and compliance officers are the unsung heroes of the halal industry. Their names do not appear on advertisements, yet their work underpins the credibility of the logo.**

## WHAT HAPPENS IN A HALAL AUDIT?

Before displaying the halal logo, a product must pass a halal audit to ensure compliance with halal standards and shari'ah requirements.



### FORMS OF HALAL AUDIT

#### INTERNAL

Internal audits are carried out by the Halal Executive or competent Muslim personnel to monitor compliance and prepare for certification.

#### EXTERNAL

External audits by halal certification bodies ensure companies meet all requirements before receiving or renewing their halal certificate and logo.

### INSIDE A HALAL AUDIT

#### DOCUMENTATION

"Paper Audit" checking halal certificates, supplier records, and SOPs for completeness and validity.

#### PHYSICAL

On-site inspection to verify real practices, equipment checks, storage inspection, production line observation, and hygiene monitoring.

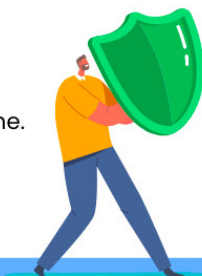
### COMMON FINDINGS

- Incomplete or expired certificates
- Outdated supplier information
- Weak traceability
- Poor record-keeping
- Staff awareness gaps
- Over-reliance on one person
- Inconsistent labelling
- Improper storage practices
- Lack of internal audits



### AUDITOR: THE SILENT GUARDIANS

- Protect halal integrity behind the scenes.
- Bridge production and certification.
- Verify documents, audits, check SOPs, and hygiene.
- Detail-oriented with a strong sense of spiritual responsibility
- Keep consumer trust and faith in halal intact.



sible for ensuring that no shortcuts or compromises threaten the confidence that Muslims place in the halal logo. This aligns with the Qur'anic guidance on integrity and justice:

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing." (Quran, An-Nisa' 4:58)

### THE SILENT GUARDIANS OF HALAL

Halal auditors and compliance officers are the unsung heroes of the halal industry. Their names do not appear on advertisements, yet their work underpins the credibility of the logo.

External auditors meticulously check documents, production processes, and facilities. Their work is often demanding, involving long hours in factories, observing processes and reviewing thick files of certificates, but their vigilance ensures consumer confidence in halal-certified products.

Internal compliance officers play an equally critical role. They are the first line of defence, monitoring daily operations, correcting lapses, and preparing for external inspections.

They run training sessions, organise mock audits, and act as the bridge between production teams and certification bodies. Without them, many companies would struggle to maintain compliance consistently.

Both internal and external auditors share the understanding that the halal logo is not merely a business tool but a symbol of faith and responsibility. Each audit they conduct represents hours of preparation, inspection, and coordination to ensure that what reaches Muslim consumers is safe, permissible, and trustworthy.

### CONCLUSION

The halal logo is more than a mark. It is a promise of compliance and integrity. Through internal and external audits mandated by MPPHM 2020 and MHMS 2020, companies ensure that halal products are authentic, hygienic, and trustworthy.

Halal auditors and compliance officers carry an amanah (trust) to protect the integrity of the halal system. Every document checked, every facility inspected, and every certificate verified is an act of safeguarding the ummah's trust in what they consume.

For consumers, awareness is the first step to confidence. By choosing certified products, understanding halal processes, and supporting brands that uphold halalan toyyiban, every purchase becomes an act of responsibility.

Halal audits connect faith, knowledge, and integrity, ensuring that what reaches our tables is safe for the body and pure for the soul. - h