

Welcoming a bigger buyer delegation

MIHAS 2025, including INSP, aims to target RM4.5 billion in global halal trade sales and is expected to welcome 45,000 visitors. — **p12-13**

Gateway to global growth

Halal Indo 2025 aims to promote Indonesia as a global hub for halal products and expand access to international markets. — **p14**

@Halal

AN IDEAL RESOURCE FOR SHARIAH COMPLIANT BUSINESS AND LIFESTYLE

Halal Rising

The Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) has become the unseen architect of Malaysia's rise as a global leader in Muslim-friendly travel.

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@Halal says ...

Strong halal bridges to Russia

MALAYSIA is strengthening its international halal diplomacy, this time with Russia.

During a recent four-day working visit to Moscow, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof announced plans to deepen bilateral cooperation in high-potential sectors. These include the halal industry, agriculture, and food security.

Despite Russia's large economy, trade between the two countries has remained modest. However, Fadillah believes that halal-related sectors could become key drivers of growth in the near future.

Russia has the market size, while Malaysia brings expertise in halal certification, standards, and ecosystem development. Fadillah, who also serves as the Minister of Energy Transition and Water Transformation, highlighted opportunities for joint research and development.

He pointed to areas such as fertiliser and pesticide technologies, agro-engineering, and food technology, which align with halal production and ethical agricultural practices.

Malaysia also expressed appreciation for Russia's educational scholarships to Malaysian students.

Fadillah proposed that these scholarships be expanded to include emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, big data, and information science.

These fields are crucial to advancing halal industry transformation and digital traceability.

Tourism and connectivity were also discussed during the visit. Malaysia welcomed a proposal for direct flights between the two countries. This initiative is expected to boost halal tourism and facilitate closer economic engagement.

Financial transaction issues were also raised. Russia voiced concerns about current limitations that have hindered trade growth. In response, Fadillah assured that the Malaysian government, through relevant agencies including Bank Negara Malaysia, will work to facilitate smoother financial processes between both sides.

Fadillah concluded that the visit had laid a solid foundation for stronger cooperation. He expressed confidence that Malaysia-Russia relations will continue to grow positively and bring tangible benefits to both nations.

The halal economy remains a key pillar of Malaysia's global engagement strategy, offering opportunities built on trust, inclusivity, and shared prosperity.



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TheTeam

Kay Mathy | **Publisher**
kaymathy@revonmedia.com
Law Beng Chee | **Chief Executive Officer**
bclaw@revonmedia.com

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

- ▶ Dato' Dr Mohmed Razip Hassan
- ▶ Dato' Fauzi Omar
- ▶ Prof Dr Yumi Zuharis Has-Yun Hashim
- ▶ Adi Satria

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

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johnson@revonmedia.com
Khirtini K Kumaran | **Editor**
khirtini@revonmedia.com
Sheila Rozario | **Contributing Editor**
sheila@revonmedia.com
Fatihah Manaf | **Writer**
fatihah@revonmedia.com
Adeline Anthony Alphonso | **Writer**
adeline@revonmedia.com
Zafirah Zafruddin | **Writer**
zafirah@revonmedia.com
Farisha Rahman | **Writer**
farisha@revonmedia.com
Isvarya Panielselvam | **Graphic Designer**
isvarya@revonmedia.com
Raven | **Creative Consultant**

SALES & MARKETING DEPARTMENT

Sahana | **Media Director**
sahana@revonmedia.com
Hash Plus Media | **Media Associate**
marketing@hashplusmedia.com

Published by:
Revon Media Sdn Bhd
A-5-1, Parklane Commercial Hub,
Jalan SS 7/26, SS 7,
47301 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor D.E., Malaysia.
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No. 16, Jalan IDA 1A,
Industri Desa Aman, Kepong,
52200 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Tel: +603 6279 9474
+6 03 6263 1856
Fax: +603 6280 6802

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Halal's next horizon

- The halal economy is experiencing rapid growth across multiple sectors - including food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and medical devices.
- The pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and medical device industries are positioned to be the next major drivers of halal economic growth.
- To capitalise on this moment, stakeholders must collaborate to promote research, develop halal solutions, and establish clear standards.

JUST as a critical harvest relies on a clear sky, with a narrow window between prime conditions and spoilage, the global halal economy now stands in precisely such an opportune moment.

After decades of being treated as a niche, faith-linked segment, halal has matured into a primary value offering food, finance, travel, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and even medical technology.

Demand is no longer confined to Muslim-majority markets; transparency, ethical sourcing, animal welfare, and clean-label expectations are pulling non-Muslim consumers into halal value chains as well. The sun is out. It is time to make hay.

'CLEAR SKY' MOMENT

Compelling demographic and economic data strongly support this period of unparalleled opportunity. New demographic research from the Pew Research Centre shows that the global Muslim population increased from approximately 1.7 billion in 2010 to about 2.0 billion in 2020, representing an impressive rise of 21 per cent that boosted Islam's share of the world population from around 24 per cent to roughly 26 per cent.

This growth is primarily driven by a younger median age and higher fertility rates, suggesting that Muslims will continue to represent one of the fastest-growing major consumer blocs worldwide (Hackett et al., 2025).

Building on this demographic shift, market analysts monitoring halal consumer spending report annual expenditures reaching into the trillions. According to DinarStandard (2024), a consolidated industry overview, halal consumption has experienced rapid scaling over the past decade, transforming from a niche segment into a multi-trillion-dollar mainstream market.

Complementing these food sector figures, DinarStandard (2024) highlights steady year-on-year growth in Muslim consumer spending across all sectors of the Islamic economy. It also underscores how regulatory har-



BY **NURHUSNA
SAMSUDIN**



BY **NURRULIZZATI
MAHMUD**

International Institute of
Halal Training and Research
(INHART)
International Islamic
University Malaysia

monisation, digital trade, and ethical branding are driving investment into halal-related sectors such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and medical devices, further broadening the halal economy's footprint.

Furthermore, recent independent market research disseminated via GlobeNewswire estimates the global halal food market at approximately US\$2.71 trillion for 2024. It projects a robust expansion to approximately US\$5.91 trillion by 2033, reflecting an impressive compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 8.9 per cent (GlobeNewswire, 2025).

Taken together, these figures signal sustained, almost double-digit growth in an already huge consumer base, showing just how important the halal market has become in the global economy.

DEMAND TO DIRECTION

With demand surging, regulatory frameworks maturing, and investor attention increasingly aligned with ethical and sustainable products, now is the time for halal industry players to act strategically. If stakeholders "make hay while the sun shines", three high-impact, science-driven sectors - pharmaceuticals, personal care, and medical devices - are particularly well-positioned to drive the next wave of halal economy growth beyond food.

First and foremost, a healthcare imperative with market momentum, the Halal Pharmaceutical. As Muslim-majority nations rise in healthcare spending, the demand for halal-certified pharmaceutical products such as vaccines, biologics, over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, and therapeutic injectables has become increasingly urgent.

This stems from growing public awareness and regulatory calls to eliminate non-halal components such as porcine-derived gelatine, alcohol-based solvents, and enzymes of uncertain origin in medicines. Recent analyses by Business Research Insights (2025) suggest that the global halal pharmaceutical market is expected to grow at a strong double-digit compound annual growth rate (CAGR) through the 2030s.

This growth aligns with the broader healthcare market expansion in Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries, driven by rising population, chronic disease burdens, and increasing health literacy.

Next is halal cosmetics, where ethics meet everyday rituals. In the world of beauty and self-care, halal products are establishing a strong identity by combining ethical assurance, ingredient transparency, and spiritual mindfulness.

According to Fortune Business Insights (2024), the global halal cosmetics and personal care market is valued at US\$47.76 billion and is projected to more than double, reaching US\$115 billion by 2032, growing at a CAGR of approximately 11.7 per cent.

The Asia-Pacific region leads the charge, thanks to large Muslim populations and rising middle-class consumption. This growth is also supported by changing consumer values, where Muslim and non-Muslim consumers alike are increasingly drawn to alcohol-free, cruelty-free, and ethical beauty brands, creating crossover potential with vegan, organic, and sustainable segments.

Major brands like Wardah (Indonesia) and Safi (Malaysia) have successfully combined faith-based branding with modern marketing and product innovation, capturing sizeable market shares across Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

Finally, halal medical devices are the sleeping giant of ethical innovation. While often overlooked, the halal medical device sector is emerging as a high-potential frontier. Medical technology that ranges from single-use surgical tools to implants and patient-touch materials frequently involves animal-derived ingredients, adhesives, and sterilisation processes that may conflict with halal requirements.

Malaysia has taken the global lead by launching MS 2636:2019, the world's first halal medical device standard. This framework provides clear guidelines for manufacturers, signalling regulatory readiness to facilitate halal certification in this critical healthcare segment.

Experts and policymakers highlight that companies that adopt halal standards early may gain a decisive advantage. Meanwhile, the conventional medical device market is booming; this projection opens up significant space for halal-compliant innovations, particularly in disposables, orthopaedic implants, wound care materials, and hospital supplies.

Together, these three science-intensive verticals (pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and medical devices) offer not just economic potential but also ethical leadership in the halal economy. By investing now, while demand, rules, and health trends are in sync, companies can secure their place in building a more ethical and inclusive global market.

JURIDICAL PRESSING

Islamic jurisprudence has historically demonstrated flexibility in addressing complex biotechnological challenges, permitting the use of doubtful or impure substances in medical treatments under the doctrines of *istihalah* (transformation) and *darurah* (necessity).

These exemptions have enabled access to life-saving vaccines, drugs, and devices even when fully halal alternatives were unavailable. However, persistent reliance on these juristic concessions risks placing the Muslim world in a cycle of dependency, perpetually positioning it as a consumer rather than an innovator in the global biomedical sector.

Islamic legal principles, such as *istihalah* and *darurah*, have historically allowed Muslim societies to accept grey-area biotechnologies, including porcine-derived vaccines and alcohol-based solvents in medicine, under urgent circumstances.

However, to avoid being trapped in a state of "permanent emergency", it is recommended that such fatwa approvals be issued with sunset clauses (e.g., five years), compelling local research and development (R&D) to find halal alternatives within a defined timeframe.

In parallel, the higher objective of Sharia namely *hifz al-nafs* (preservation of life) under *maqasid al-shari'ah*, justifies the use of doubtful products only when there are no halal substitutes available. Yet this allowance should expire once halal solutions are developed and validated.

To prevent complacency, the principle of *sadd al-dhara'i* (blocking the means to harm) can be applied by tying continued concessions to measurable R&D milestones, such as the development of slaughter-origin cell banks or plant-based substrates for vaccine production.

MAKING HAY

To grow a truly competitive and ethical halal industry, all stakeholders must act together. Investors can accelerate this momentum by supporting early-stage ventures that are building halal-friendly solutions in high-growth areas such as contract manufacturing, cosmeceuticals, and single-use medical supplies.

Backing these start-ups not only gives investors a chance at first-mover advantage, but also aligns with growing ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) trends. For example, funding halal-certified biologics or slaughter-origin cells substrate can meet rising healthcare demands in Muslim-majority countries while also appealing to both Islamic and ethical finance.

Policymakers also have a critical role in shaping this ecosystem. Rather than offering general incentives, governments can tie tax breaks or grants to meaningful Halal innovation, such as

requiring companies to spend a portion of their revenue (e.g., five per cent) on certified R&D activities.

This ensures financial support drives long-term capacity building, not just basic certification. Such a policy approach not only benefits the economy but also supports Shariah objectives (*maqad al-shariah*) by promoting public welfare, ethical production, and shared prosperity.

Academia, meanwhile, holds the key to long-term sustainability of halal innovation. Priority actions include fast-tracking the development of slaughter-origin primary cell banks, which is essential for halal vaccine production, and publishing open-access protocols for cell line handling, bio-

the next 10 years can shift the halal ecosystem from a reactive certification approach to proactive innovation.

As the Quran reminds us, "Indeed, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves." (Quran, Al-Radd, 13:11)

This verse underscores the moral urgency of moving beyond juristic dependence to technological leadership. The momentum is here, the time to "make the hay" is now.

SEIZE THE HARVEST

Those who "gather the halal harvest" today, while regulatory clarity, ethical purpose, and technological capability are aligned, will not only secure first-mover advantages and capture market

SOLUTIONS

Over-reliance on permissible exceptions has led to a dependency cycle, keeping Muslim countries as consumers rather than creators in global innovation.

1

Sunset clauses for fatwas

Time-limit fatwa approvals (e.g., 5 years) for grey-area substances

2

Incentivize local R&D

Use time limits to drive Halal alternatives

3

Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah

Life-saving exceptions expire when Halal options exist

4

Sadd al-Dharā'i (preventing harm) to prevent complacency

In the halal pharmaceutical context, continued concessions should be tied to concrete R&D goals, such as developing Halal cell banks or plant-based media.



End "permanent emergency" thinking and promote self-sufficiency through guided innovation.

"Indeed Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves."

reactor systems, and non-enzymatic processing alternatives.

Open sharing of validated halal R&D tools can broaden access to adoption among smaller manufacturers in OIC nations who may lack resources to develop or purchase proprietary systems.

Moreover, collaborations between Islamic universities, research institutes, and halal certification bodies can foster interdisciplinary programs in halal biotechnology, combining Islamic jurisprudence with cutting-edge biomedical research.

Each stakeholder has a unique, time-sensitive role to play in the evolution of the halal economy. Whether through reformulation, investment, regulation, or research, coordinated action over

share, but also play a central role in advancing global health outcomes grounded in Islamic values.

Delay, however, carries a cost. The opportunity to lead in shaping the future of halal pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and medical devices may still exist tomorrow. Still, the competitive edge, the moral authority, and the global influence will likely have shifted to more agile players. In short, the field will remain, but the sunlight may no longer be ours to work under.

This is not just a market opportunity; it is a moment of moral and strategic responsibility. The ummah has the intellectual tradition, ethical foundation, and economic momentum to lead. But leadership requires action before the window closes. - h