

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: Instituto Halal – Estandar Global de Certificación Halal

Address of Home Office: Claudio Marcelo, 17, 1ª. 14002 Córdoba, Spain.

Location of Additional Offices:

Mexico

Lisboa

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

Dr. Barbara Ruiz Bejarano

Director of International Relations

Barbara.bejarano@institutohalal.com

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

Mr. Muhammad Escudero

Director of Certification and International Relations

international@institutohalal.com

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

Worldwide

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

Mr. Muhammad Escudero

Director of Certification and International Relations

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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, feed must be of halal sources only.

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. Never.

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.

As we follow international standards, fish will be certified halal for specific destinations according to the specifications of the standards applicable for those destinations only. When several destinations are served, we operate under the most restrictive one.

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?

International applicable standards are followed, all following questions 5 to 10 can be answered in this way.

5. What requirements do you have on the knife used for slaughter and on the training of your slaughtermen?
6. i) How often and how do you say the Takbir (prayer) during slaughter? ii) Who says the prayer? iii) What prayer is said?
7. i) Do you permit the slaughterhouse to slaughter pigs are other times? ii) What is your stance on the use of horse?
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?
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?
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?
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?

No, as a certifier there is an incompatibility to have economic interests in certified companies. Producers must comply or they will not get certified by us.

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

They are not acceptable.

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?

Most companies export, and meeting the requirements of the destination country is compulsory. Where no regulation exists, we apply OIC-SMIIC standards. We are accredited for GCC countries, OIC-SMIIC countries and recognized for Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore.

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?

In some cases, the applicable standard is OIC-SMIIC plus our own procedure, plus customer requirements. Mostly, it is airline caterings offering halal menus.

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

Private company under the umbrella of an Islamic Association.

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?

There are no governmental standards or agencies in Spain.

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 advocate for a simplification and harmonization of halal standards, under OIC-SMIIC leadership. The multiplicity of standards confuses both consumers and producers, creates duplicity of structures and rises the costs.

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: Barbara Ruiz Bejarano Signature: _____

Date: _____ 4th October 2021 _____