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1. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The objective of this guidance document is to present the halal accreditation application procedures for the Halal Conformity Assessment Bodies (HCAB) and the conditions by which Halal Accreditation Agency (HAK) evaluates these applications.

This Guideline aims to inform HCABs about the principles of HAK in managing the processes such as field assessment, renewal of halal accreditation, suspension, scope change, withdrawal and clarify their obligations.

2. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

- ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems
- OIC/SMIIC:2019 Standards

3. TERMS, DESCRIPTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Appeal: HCAB's request for re-evaluation of the decision on halal accreditation

Assessment: Determination of whether the activities, systems and personnel of a HCAB comply with national and internationally accepted technical criteria, standards and related legislation

Assessor: Person assigned by HAK to perform, alone or as part of an assessment team, an assessment of a HCAB

Board of Directors (BoD): Decision-making body of the HAK, consisting of a total of five members, which are the Chairman and four members as defined in the relevant legislation

Complaint: The application that expresses dissatisfaction to be answered of real persons or legal entities regarding the procedures, policies, temporary or permanent personnel related to the accreditation activities of HAK, the activities performed by an accredited institution within the scope of the accreditation or any activities of HAK

Complaint and Appeal Committee: Committee in which the chairman is the Secretary General naturally and which takes decisions unanimously, evaluates and concludes complaints and appeals


Corrective Action: An activity related to the measures taken to resolve the causes to prevent the re-occurrence of existing nonconformity, defect or other unwanted situations

Extending Scope: Addition of new activities to the current accreditation scope

External Source: The third parties whose service is consulted by HAK for the purpose of carrying out the halal accreditation process

Decision on Halal Accreditation: Holding HAK BoD meeting regarding the applications made for halal accreditation and providing halal accreditation certificate to be given to HCAB or rejecting the halal accreditation application as a result of the decision taken in this meeting

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Department of Halal Accreditation (HADB): Department that performs the processing and finalization of the halal accreditation applications of organizations performing halal conformity assessment activities, and monitoring and assessing accredited organizations

Document: Information prepared and/or used to regulate the principles and accreditation activities carried out by HAK and stored in all kinds of physical, electronic, magnetic, etc. mediums and is reproducible

Documented Information: It is the sustainable recording, preservation and acceptance as a basis for performance monitoring criteria of halal accreditation certificates issued, decision meeting minutes, and the rules regarding basic operation and procedures of halal accreditation processes by HAK

Expertise Committee: Committee formed by HAK Board of Directors (BoD) and composed of people who use their expertise in the provision of the halal accreditation service, use their knowledge and experience for the benefit of the administration, have no relationship based on self-interest with the contractors of the service in which they use their expertise, and who do not make any profit from the administration except his/her expertise service.

General Secretariat (GS): The body responsible for ensuring and monitoring the implementation of the basic policies defined by the HAK BoD for halal accreditation and other administrative activities defined in the relevant legislation

Halal Accreditation: Regular assessment and monitoring, approval of the competence and evaluation according to the national and internationally accepted technical criteria of the organizations operating in the field of halal conformity assessment

Halal Accreditation Contract: Contract in which the conditions that HCAB declares to comply during the accreditation process and after accredited

Halal Conformity Assessment Body (HCAB): Body that performs halal conformity assessment activities according to the national and internationally accepted technical criteria


HCAB's Authorised Person: Personnel that has been authorized by HCAB to convey any information/document to be sent to HAK and provides the communication between HAK and HCAB

Islamic Affairs Expert: A Muslim with profound and comprehensive knowledge and competence of Islamic rules in the subject of halal and non-halal whose competency has been approved by the relevant authority and appointed by HAK

Key Activity: Processes include policy formulation, process and/or procedure development and, as appropriate, contract review, planning halal conformity assessments, review, approval and decision on the results of halal conformity assessments which affect HCAB's competence.

Location: Addresses where halal conformity assessment activities and related activities are carried out (branch, addresses where important activities are carried out, mobile facility, travelling facility, virtual field, remote personnel's location, representative office, liaison office)

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Project Coordinator: The technical staff working in HAK and assigned by HADB, who is responsible for any technical and administrative contact, coordination and secretariat procedures with the body accredited or applied for halal accreditation at every stage of the halal accreditation activities

Project File: Application file of HCAB that apply to be accredited by HAK

Quality Management System: It expresses the quality management strategy that contributes to the strengthening of the performance of HAK's halal accreditation activity presentation in the axis of national legislation and international rules, supports sustainable development initiatives in different fields, and provides all these on the basis of the basic principles and requirements of the ISO 9001: 2015 Quality Management System standard

Reducing Scope: Cancellation of part of the current accreditation scope

Relevant Parties: The group including public institutions and organizations related with accreditation and halal certification, HCABs, companies that will receive halal conformity assessment services from accredited bodies and final consumers, and end consumers

Report Evaluation Committee: Committee consisting of a total of 3 people who are the Secretary General as the chairman and 2 members that are not involved in the assessment processes

Scope of Halal Accreditation: Specific conformity assessment activities for which halal accreditation has been granted

Surveillance: A series of assessment activities including monitoring of the accredited HCAB to see if it continues to meet the accreditation requirements

Suspending Halal Accreditation: Putting temporary restrictions in place for all or part of the scope of halal accreditation

Team Leader: Assessor who is given overall responsibility for assigned halal accreditation assessment activities and assessment team

Technical Assessor: Assessor assigned by HAK who conducts the assessment of the halal technical competence of the HCAB for specific area(s) of the desired scope of accreditation

Technical Expert: A person assigned by HAK which has technical competence regarding a specific area or technology
Withdrawing Accreditation: Cancellation of the halal accreditation for the full scope


Witness Assessment: Observation of conformity assessment activities carried out by HCAB within its scope of accreditation in the field of HCAB's client organization by HAK

4. IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Information and Documentation Control

Halal accreditation application and document control processes is composed of below mentioned two (2) main stages:

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- Receiving Application
- Document Control and Review

4.2 Receiving Halal Accreditation Application

“Application Form” and “Authorised Person Declaration (Notice) Form” are essential for accreditation application to HAK. These two forms need to be filled and signed by a person that authorised for representing and binding the HCAB. Then, these forms are submitted to HAK.

HCAB shall determine and clearly define the halal accreditation scope for application at this phase in order not to face any problem. HCAB shall determine its application scope considering its current certified clients and certification scheme.

As a result, temporary project file is constituted.

HCABs applying for halal accreditation shall establish a management system related with the accreditation standard concerned, operate this system at least for six (6) months and have at least one (1) client which it gives the conformity assessment service by the time application made. In other words, a HCAB needs to possess a complete file of halal certification (including application review, audit time calculation, stage 1&2 audits, decision on certification etc.) to HAK before planning the field assessments.

Following the submission of application form and constitution of the temporary project file, HADB assigns a Project Coordinator that will be responsible from the halal accreditation application and follow the administrative transactions.

Project Coordinator officially forms the project file after the assignment.


Afterwards, the Project Coordinator controls the submitted information whether it meets the required criteria. If it is determined that the information given in the application is not at will, the situation is notified to the HCAB and at most five (5) working days are given for correction of the related information. Extra five (5) working days are given to the HCAB that cannot finish corrections because of force majeure.

By the same time, the Project Coordinator performs resource evaluation of the application. While resource evaluation is performed, below criteria were taken into consideration by Project Coordinator:

- Whether HAK provides accreditation service in the area that HCAB requests halal accreditation for
- Whether HAK has sufficient number of technical experts and assessors
- Whether there is a need for an Expertise Committee to evaluate the technical adequacy of the applicant
- Whether the status and operational structure of the applicant comply with the principles and policies that HAK adopt.

Project Coordinator prepares “Information Review Report” and “Resource Adequacy (Competence) Evaluation Report” according to these evaluations and presents them to HADB.

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If the result of the review process is positive, the “Document Control and Review” stage begins and HCAB is informed about the development.

4.3. Document Control and Review

HCAB’s authorised person conveys the requested document (as noted in the Document Submission Information Form: AKR-Fo-003) to HAK.

The application is considered invalid if the duly signed versions of the Halal Accreditation Agreement is not a part of submitted documents.

HCAB has fifteen (15) working days to submit the required documents to HAK after the notice regarding the beginning of “Document Control and Review” stage. HCAB is responsible for keeping the document updated and informing HAK about any change in each document.

4.4 Conformity Assessment

Conformity assessment is composed of the below basic procedures:

4.4.1 Establishment of the Assessment Team

Once the result of evaluation/verification of information is positive, following the approval for “Document Control and Review” stage, arrangements for forming an assessment team are made by HDAB.

In this manner, it is envisaged that the team is composed of assessor, technical assessor, technical expert (and HAK observers) provided that at least one (1) Team Leader and one (1) Islamic affairs expert are included. According to the HCAB’s activities and requested scope to be accredited, the team may consist of more than one assessor and/or technical expert.

HCAB can convey its complaint regarding the assessment team in maximum ten (10) working days to HAK, based on objective evidences. Following the HCAB’s approval of assessment team, the next stage starts.

4.4.2 Control for the Content and Adequacy of the Documents


The documents and records that were submitted to HAK are examined and reviewed by the established assessment team before an on-site assessment.

After the examination of the adequacy and accuracy of the documents and records, “Document Control and Conformity Report” is submitted by the assessment team to the approval of HADB.

While checking the adequacy of documents and accuracy of content, the assessment team may need to resort to confirmative information from an external source. In this case, related HAK procedures are followed by the assessment team. The evaluations received from external sources are added to the “Document Control and Conformity Report”.

“Document Control and Conformity Report” is sent to HDAB for approval. Considering the evaluations and findings, HADB makes a decision about the application as consenting/rejecting the application completely or partially. Decision is notified to the HCAB.

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In case the assessment team detects non-conformities during the adequacy control that deemed to hinder the accreditation assessment, the applicant HCAB is informed them. The HCAB needs to eliminate these non-conformities in fifteen (15) working days at most.

The accreditation assessment can start if and only if the non-conformities are eliminated. HCAB's application will be finalised negatively if the non-conformities hindering the assessment are not eliminated in given time.

4.4.3 Pre-assessment (Voluntary)

After "Document Control and Conformity Report" is prepared, the Project Coordinator communicates with HCAB and ask if a pre-assessment is requested or not. If HCAB's request is positive, the pre-assessment time is determined according to the proper schedule developed by the Team Leader and the Project Coordinator.

Pre-assessment is a narrow-scoped assessment in which the halal certification system of HCAB is analysed and some basic information about halal accreditation process is given. No solution is offered to the non-conformities identified in the pre-assessment. The pre-assessment duration cannot exceed two (2) man/days.

Pre-assessment is performed by one (1) Team Leader and one (1) Assessor and with the presence of HAK observer and Technical Expert if needed.

During the pre-assessment, the HCAB's code of practices for its management system is examined. If appropriate, HCAB's relevant departments or other managerial elements can be examined as well. At the end of the pre-assessment, a closing meeting takes place and the non-conformities identified are shared with the HCAB.

From the date that pre-assessment report is submitted, HCAB shall convey its decision to HAK in writing regarding whether it will continue its halal accreditation process or not by not more than fifteen (15) working days.


4.4.4. Accreditation Assessment

In case of not having a pre-assessment request, "Assessment Request Form" is conveyed to the HCAB after the approval of "Document Control and Conformity Report" by HDAB.

HCAB shall either consent the request or offer a new date in five (5) working days after the assessment offer is conveyed. Once the date was set, HCAB shall make the necessary arrangements for assessment activities on time and keep in touch with the assessment team and Project Coordinator in order to organise the assessment at the soonest possible date.

If the assessment cannot be performed because of applicant HCAB which is not ready in one (1) years' time following the application, the application file is closed. The time spent for the pre-assessment (if performed) is included in this time. After the file is closed because of this reason, HCAB can re-apply in three (3) months provided that the application fees are paid again. For the HCABs that apply after three (3) months, the process shall begin from the very beginning.

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4.4.5 Corrective Action Follow-up

After the non-conformities identified during the accreditation assessment, the HCAB is informed by the team. Then, the HCAB shall submit its corrective action schedule to the assessment team in ten (10) working days at most.

Team Leader examines the schedule submitted by HCAB and approves it. Based on the approval, HCAB starts to implement corrective actions proposed in the aforementioned schedule. If the Team Leader does not approve the schedule, HCAB prepares a new one and submits it to HAK for re-evaluation of the Team Leader.

4.4.5.1 Follow-up Assessment (If needed)

Corrective actions -which are expected to be finalised in three (3) months at most- are monitored basically in two ways: namely evidence inspection and follow-up assessment.

In evidence inspection, the HCAB conveys the evidences (information, documents etc.) to the assessment team as a result of the corrective actions performed for the aforementioned non-conformities. The team performed the initial accreditation assessment examines these evidences. If the assessment team consider it necessary, following the completion of all corrective actions, the HCAB may be assessed on-site in order to control that the non-conformities are fully eliminated.

Follow-up assessment is planned in line with the general HAK principles on accreditation assessment, yet its scope is solely limited with the subjects related with the non-conformities in question.

If it is convinced that the non-conformities are still present at the end of the follow-up assessment, in accordance with the opinion of assessment team, the assessment shall be finalised negatively (either as a whole or only for the scope related with non-conformities).

As a result of the follow-up assessment, the assessment team prepares “Corrective Actions and Follow-up Assessment Report” that includes the findings and evaluations and presents it to the Report Evaluation Committee together with the main Accreditation Assessment Report.

4.4.6 Evaluation of Assessment Report


A Report Evaluation Committee is established for examining the main Accreditation Assessment Report which was prepared by the Team Leader.

Report Evaluation Committee receives the report via Project Coordinator and scrutinizes. The report approved by the Committee is deemed as the “Final Evaluation Report”. A copy of this final report is conveyed to the HCAB by the Project Coordinator.

4.4.7 Presenting the Report to the Board of Directors for Decision

Report Evaluation Committee decides unanimously in all its activities. Final Evaluation Report that is formed by Committee and HCAB file which consists of all necessary information and documents are presented to the Board of Directors (BoD) for decision.

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4.5 Halal Accreditation Decision

4.5.1 Preparation Phase for Decision

The members of the BoD examine the file presented. The decision is made at the meeting of BoD following the end of the examination.

4.5.2 Halal Accreditation Decision

The members of the BoD who examined the HCAB file gather to decide about the halal accreditation application. The BoD is the only body authorized for making accreditation decision.

If the BoD accepts the halal accreditation, synchronously with the positive decision, related HCAB is added to the accredited HCABs list at the web site of HAK, clearly noting the scopes and the validity period of the halal accreditation.

Similarly, the BoD can make a negative decision. Any negative decision regarding the accreditation application is notified to the HCAB.

HCAB can make its possible appeal to the accreditation decision pursuant to predetermined terms.

4.5.3 Decision Notification

If the BoD makes positive decision, HAK halal accreditation certificate is sent to the HCAB's address declared in the application form. In this certificate, the halal accreditation scope and all the addresses of the locations where key activities are performed are visibly noted.

On HAK halal accreditation certificate, the starting date of halal accreditation is written. The validity period of the certificate is sixty (60) months beginning from the decision date (as long as the surveillance activities are successful).

HAK halal accreditation certificate is prepared both in Turkish and English and then published in the HAK website. When there is a change in HAK halal accreditation certificate, the necessary updates are made, the relevant parties are informed, updated certificate is re-published on the HAK website.

If the BoD makes negative decision, the negative decision notification is sent to the address of HCAB declared in the application form.


4.6 Post-Decision Processes

4.6.1 Surveillance Activities

Surveillance activities basically involves office visits and witness assessments dispersed throughout the halal accreditation cycle that lasts for sixty (60) months. The office visits involve the following subjects;

- Documentation control and review under the management system scope of the HCAB,
- Review of notifications related with HCAB's activities,
- Management review meetings and internal audits of HCAB,
- The HCAB's capability to handle the complaints,

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- Analyses regarding the situations that can create conflict of interest and the policies of the HCAB developed for this subject,
- Corrective action records regarding the non-conformities found at the previous accreditation assessments or at the HCAB's own internal audit
- The HCAB's management of impartiality,
- Competence of the HCAB's personnel,
- The HCAB's legal entity and/or organizational structure (including any possible changes took place)
- Performance records of HCAB.

In witness assessment, in addition to the subjects mentioned above, conformity assessment activities of the HCAB shall be witnessed by HAK.

For every year within the sixty (60) month halal accreditation period cycle, at least one (1) office visit or witness assessment is performed by HAK. HAK can perform these office visits and witness assessment without notice as stipulated in its implementation documents. First surveillance shall be performed within the first twelve (12) months' time following the halal accreditation decision.

The centre and branches in which the key activities are performed are in the scope of surveillance. If HAK deems it necessary, the branches in which the HCAB carries on the activities in the scope of halal accreditation and client firms that are engaged in halal certification activities of the HCAB may be in the scope of surveillance activities.

If there are any complaints about activities of the accredited HCAB, certified client firms, members of audit team etc. HAK may perform extraordinary assessment processes (such as additional surveillance or complaint-verification assessments). These extraordinary assessments may be in the form of office visit or witness assessment.

HAK may combine the scope extension assessments with surveillance where it deemed appropriate.

4.6.1.a Surveillance with Notice

If the surveillance (which is conducted once a year) is performed with notice, it begins with "Planning of Office Assessment". In assessment with notice, the durations defined for the corrective actions and reporting are as same as in the first conformity assessment.

4.6.1.b Surveillance without Notice


For the surveillance without notice, the visit is conducted without any notice to HCAB about the assessment team and date.

Assessments without notice begin with "Planning of Office Assessment" but, any approval form is not sent to HCAB.

4.6.2 Suspension

The suspension of halal accreditation can be discussed in two ways; either suspension directly by HAK or suspension upon a request of the HCAB.

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The rules related with this process and all other statements are determined in the implementation documents prepared by HAK.

4.6.3 Scope Change

In halal accreditation scope, two basic change can be discussed: namely reduction or extension.

Reducing the scope can be realized either directly by HAK or upon a request of the HCAB. Extending the scope is based on the application of HCAB to add new scope(s) to the present halal accreditation scope.

4.6.4 Withdrawal

The withdrawal of halal accreditation can be discussed in two ways; either withdrawal directly by HAK or withdrawal upon a request of the HCAB.

The rules related with this process and all other statements are determined in the implementation documents prepared by HAK.

4.6.5 Renewal

If the HCAB requests a renewal of HAK halal accreditation certificate, it shall convey the “Renewal Request Form” at least six (6) months before the end of the sixty (60) month validity period. The HCAB is expected to fill in this form accurately.

Upon an appropriate application, a file is prepared regarding the renewal of HAK halal accreditation certificate by a Project Coordinator.

If HCAB does not submit the request of halal accreditation renewal six (6) months before the end of sixty (60) months’ time, the Project Coordinator gets a confirmation from the HCAB that it has no renewal application. The Project Coordinator then closes the HCAB’s file at the end of the halal accreditation period.


Renewal assessment is expected to be conducted at the fifty seventh (57th) month of the cycle. The HCAB loses its halal accreditation status in case a late renewal application takes place or conducting a renewal assessment before the end of the cycle becomes impossible because of any HCAB-originated reason.

Renewal assessment is planned, performed and reported like first halal accreditation assessment in principle. The corrective action durations valid for first halal accreditation assessment are valid for the renewal assessments as well.

As the findings obtained/experiences gained through the surveillance assessments are taken into consideration, the content of renewal assessment and the number of branches/locations that is supposed to be visited in this content can be reduced to its one fourth (1/4) at most.

When the halal accreditation is ceased, the name and accreditation information of the HCAB are removed from the HAK website and all relevant parties are informed. In this situation, the HCAB make its application like a new halal accreditation application if it wants to be re-accredited.

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4.7 Complaints and Appeals

4.7.1 Making Complaints

The processes of the accredited HCABs or the services given by the accredited HCABs (ones related with the scope accredited) can be subject to complaints.

Complaints can be made by accredited HCABs, organizations that use accredited services or third parties.

In principle, it is essential that the complaints about the HCABs are directed to the related HCABs initially. Yet if there is no result, complaints can be made to HAK.

Nevertheless, complaints regarding the HCAB's activities in which HAK's halal accreditation rules are violated can be received by HAK directly.

In complaints, the following two points are essential:

- The HCAB processes that is subject to complaint must be based upon evidences
- Complaint subject and concerned evidences must be related with the accredited scope

No action is taken against the HCAB if the complaint is made against non-validated information.

4.7.2 Making Appeals

Appeal can only be made to the ACCREDITATION DECISION made by HAK.

In other words, no other issue except the halal accreditation decision made by HAK BoD can be subject to an appeal.

The appeal that will be made to the HAK's halal accreditation decision shall be made in thirty (30) working days' time starting from the decision notification date.