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1. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The objective of this Guideline is to define the procedures of Halal Accreditation Agency (HAK) to perform the accreditation assessments of Halal Conformity Assessment Bodies (HCAB) and the obligations of HCABs in the context of these assessments.

This Guideline includes the procedures and principles for the halal accreditation assessment process which begins from assessment scheduling and ends by presenting the assessment reports to Report Evaluation Committee of HAK.

2. TERMS, DESCRIPTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Activity Affecting Certification Competency: Processes which affect HCAB's competency including but not limited to policy formulation, process and/or procedure development, review of certification contract, planning of halal conformity assessments activities [such as calculating audit time, forming an audit team], reviewing, approving and decision making on the results of halal conformity assessment activity.

Assessment: Determination of whether the activities, systems and personnel of a HCAB comply with national and internationally accepted technical criteria, standards and related legislation by means of document review, office visit, witnessing the halal conformity assessment activity etc.

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

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


Location: Addresses in which halal conformity assessment activities, as well as other related activities, are carried out (branch, addresses where key activities are conducted, mobile facility, travelling facility, virtual site, remote personnel's location, representative office, liaison office etc.)

Office Visit: An assessment activity aiming to determine whether the management system and technical competence of the the HCAB meet the requirements of both the international standards and the complementary criteria (e.g., national legislation, HAK Guidelines) as well as to test the sustainability of the management system, for the requested scope of halal accreditation

Surveillance: A series of assessment activities to regularly monitor the accredited HCAB for continuous conformity with the accreditation requirements

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

Third Party: Produce, service provider or person certified by the HCAB

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Witness Assessment: HAK’s observation of halal conformity assessment activities carried out by the HCAB within the scope of accreditation in the premises of third party.

IMPLEMENTATION

Halal accreditation assessment is composed of the phases below:

- Control of Documents & Records
- On-site Assessments
 - Office Visit
 - Witness Assessment
- Preparation of the Assessment Report

After completing the control of documents and records and reporting the findings of pre-assessment (if conducted), the Team Leader prepares an assessment calendar in collaboration with the Project Coordinator, Department of Halal Accreditation (HADB) and HCAB, in case no impediment for the assessment is present.

The calendar includes the dates for office visit and witness assessments in the scope of initial halal accreditation assessment.

3.1. Office Visit

3.1.1. Planning the Office Visit


Office visit shall be conducted by HAK Assessment Team, established before the ‘document control’ process and approved by HCAB, pursuant to requirements defined in the latest version of “General Guideline for Halal Conformity Assessment Bodies (AKR-Rh-003)”.

Thereafter, “Assessment Team Proposal Form (AKR-Pr01-Fo-002)” which includes assessment cost based on the assessment calendar is sent to HCAB by the Project Coordinator.

In principle, it is essential to send the Proposal Form to HCAB within a reasonable time prior to the assessment date.

HCAB submits the Proposal Form to HAK within maximum five (5) working days upon approving. HCAB has the right to ask for a revised assessment schedule within maximum five (5) working days.

Following the approval & submission of Proposal Form to HAK, a detailed working plan and schedule are prepared under the supervision of the Team Leader and in collaboration with HCAB. The plan and schedule include the task distribution approved by the Team Leader. Necessary documents (e.g., information on the HCAB and the third party, assessment report templates, previous audit reports and other documents requested by the HAK Assessment Team) are conveyed to members of the Team.

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3.1.2. Preparation for the Office Visit

In preparation process of the visit, Team Leader and other Team members make arrangements for the following:

- Mandatory requirements toward HCABs and the implementation documents of HAK describing these requirements
- International standards and legislations concerning the HCAB to be assessed
- Content and processes of the management system of the HCAB to be assessed (e.g., policy and objectives, historical data on policy and goals, corrective actions, improvement)
- Third parties' products and services, business processes, management systems, organizational structure, and norms specific to the geographical region they are located in

3.1.3. Conducting the Office Visit

After the approval of the assessment schedule by the HCAB and finishing the necessary preparations, office visit is conducted in accordance with the assessment schedule and working plan.

By the office visit, it is aimed to determine whether the technical competency of the HCAB within the requested scope of halal accreditation meets the following requirements:


- International standards as a basis for halal accreditation
- Requirements of the additional complementary criteria (e.g., HAK implementation documents, national legislation)

In office visits, the sustainability of the HCAB's current management system within the requested scope of the accreditation shall be reviewed as well.

Office visit begins with an opening meeting through which the aim, scope and schedule of the assessment; cases terminating the assessment, information about closing meeting, halal accreditation criteria of HAK, principles for use of HAK Halal Accreditation Mark, handling of complaints and appeals, sampling methods for assessment, evaluation of non-conformities, issues on privacy and information security are clearly delivered to the HCAB. Opening meeting is conducted under the chairmanship of the Team Leader with the participation of HCAB's authorized personnel, as well as with the other personnel having a key role in the assessment.

The centre office of the HCAB and the branches (as well as the representative offices) in which activities affecting the certification competency take place and are deemed necessary to observe shall be included in the scope of initial halal accreditation assessment.

Where necessary; additional branches, representative offices, agencies, and premises can also be included in the scope of assessment schedule to obtain objective evidence for the conformity of

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the HCAB against OIC/SMIIC Halal Standards and HAK’s normative documents as well as its competency within the requested scope of halal accreditation.

During office visit, findings are recorded in the “Non-conformity and Corrective Action Notification Form (AKR-Pr01-Fo-003)” by members of HAK Assessment Team without any comments in dispute.

If there is any divergence about the assessment-related subjects occurs, or no consensus between the members has been reached, the opinion of the Team Leader forms the basis. However, Team Leader may ask for opinion of HAK’s Project Coordinator or HADB related to an issue in dispute during the visit.

Assessment team evaluate the non-conformities and observations before the finalization of office visit.

Office visit is finalized with a closing meeting together with the attendance of whole assessment team and HCAB’s authorized personnel. HAK Assessment Team re-emphasizes the fact that the assessment took place by certain sampling methods. The non-conformities and observations determined during the assessment, as well as any recommendations of the Team for general matters (if any), are explained at this closing meeting¹. A signed approval of HCAB authorised personnel is requested regarding the approval of the non-conformities.

3.2. Witness Assessment

A pre-determined number of certification audit carried out on-site by HCAB is monitored by HAK Assessment Team. As such, HAK shall gather information that will be the basis of evaluation regarding HCAB’s implementations, monitoring and follow-up performance over the third party and auditor competence.

3.2.1. Planning and Conducting the Witness Assessment


The detailed rules regarding witness assessment are elaborated in the “Implementation Guide for Witness Assessment for Halal Conformity Assessment Bodies”.

During the accreditation assessment period, in order to conduct detailed examinations, HAK Assessment Team members can visit a third party to which the assessed HCAB had already carried out a certification audit, where deemed necessary.

3.3. Main Procedures After the Assessment

Once the assessment processes are complete, HAK Team shall share a copy of the “Non-conformity and Corrective Action Notification Form (AKR-Pr01-Fo-003)” to HCAB for the

¹ If the non-conformity can be resolved before the end of the accreditation assessment, then the information related to the non-conformity may be shared with the authorised personnel at the moment of detection and the HCAB may be allowed to resolve it before the assessment is complete, **with the approval of the Team Leader**.

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purpose of providing the root-cause analysis and conveying the time limits for the corrective actions.

HCAB may complain about the non-conformities and observations determined during the assessment. The final decision about this issue shall be given by HAK office. Once the non-conformities and observations are approved by HAK, HCAB shall begin to implement necessary corrective actions. No further complaint is possible once the non-conformities and observations are finalized.

HCAB shall convey the corrective actions that will be implemented as well as their time limits to the Assessment Team for approval in ten (10) days after the final version of Non-conformity and Corrective Action Notification Form is received.

Based on the approval given, HCAB begins to make the corrective actions foreseen. In the case of disapproval of root-cause analysis and corrective action plans by HAK, HCAB shall prepare a new schedule and immediately convey it to HAK for re-evaluation.

HAK Assessment Team shall evaluate the records of corrective actions, whose maximum implementation time-limit is three (3) months. Three (3) more months can be defined in case the corrective actions are deemed unsatisfactory. This duration [3+3 months] is the total ultimate period for the HCAB to successfully resolve all non-conformities. Time spent for a follow-up assessment, specifically conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of corrective action, shall be included to this period.

3.4. Termination/Suspension of Assessment Process

Below are the situations requiring the termination/suspension of the accreditation assessment:

3.4.1. Before Assessment

Critical changes can happen in the conditions of the assessed HCAB such as natural disasters, pandemics, change of main activity address or legal status, quitting of key personnel, operational obstacles in the third party etc. In such cases, HAK's Project Coordinator and Team Leader can change the assessment dates in coordination with the HCAB.


If necessary, HAK may change its own Assessment Team and revamp the assessment schedule and proposal accordingly.

Where HCAB withdraws the accreditation request (or assessment) after signing of the Assessment Proposal Form (AKR-Pr01-Fo-002), HCAB shall be under obligation to pay all the travel, accommodation and other expenses incurred or committed by HAK or HAK Assessment Team, and half of the total charge quoted for the assessment.

3.4.2. During Assessment

Below are the situations requiring the termination of assessment after the start of assessment:

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- a) The negative effect of assessment conditions to HAK's Assessment Team's health and/or failure to ensure the security of the Team
- b) In relation to the non-conformity identified, any exposure of significant risks regarding the environmental and security-related subjects
- c) In spite of the declaration of HCAB's readiness to the assessment, a counter identification that the HCAB is not ready for assessment at all in terms of infrastructure, personnel or documentation (e.g. unavailability of key personnel during the assessment who are responsible for certification processes)
- d) Lack of adequate implementation records in the areas where halal accreditation is requested, blocking of access to records by HCAB, failure to meet the conditions for HAK Assessment Team to collect objective evidence or direct interference with the Team's right to collect evidence
- e) Absence of proper organizational preparations (such as logistics) to proceed the assessment
- f) Detection of unsubstantial records examined during the assessment to a large extent, or deliberate formation (partially or completely) of false records or deliberate presentation of misleading information and documents/records.
- g) Any offer made by the HCAB that implies financial and commercial interest towards the Team members
- h) HCAB's withdrawal of halal accreditation request


In addition to the provisions listed above, the assessment can be terminated with the approval of HADB where the Team Leader notifies HAK about objective evidence hindering the proper realization of the assessment.

The reason of the termination of the assessment is recorded in an official report, together with the reasons of termination, by HAK Assessment Team and HCAB's authorized personnel.

The provisions (a) – (g) listed above mean that HCAB did not fully prepare for the assessment and that the assessment is interrupted due to deficiencies, defects or omissions that would adversely affect the effectiveness of the assessment. HAK Assessment Team, together with the Project Coordinator, may decide to conduct the assessment at a later date convenient. Otherwise, the assessment shall be deemed as complete and halal accreditation request shall be refused. In such cases, HCAB cannot re-apply for six (6) months. After this period, HCAB can re-apply by paying the mandatory application fees. The accreditation process, then, shall be either operated from the beginning or from any stage deemed convenient, considering the procedures properly finished in the previous application.

In both cases, in accordance with the provisions of the Halal Accreditation Contract (AKR-PvT-001), HCAB shall be under obligation to pay all the travel, accommodation and other expenses

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incurred or committed by HAK or HAK Assessment Team, and half of the total charge as approved by the HCAB in the proposal form.

On the other hand, if the assessment is terminated for a reason not stemming from the HCAB, the assessment shall be completed at another appropriate date without any additional charge to the HCAB.

Where the terminated assessment is not negatively completed:

- For an initial halal accreditation assessment, a new audit shall be planned within one (1) year from the date of application. In the duration/scope of the new planned audit, reductions can be made taking into account the successful parts of the terminated assessment. If a new assessment cannot be carried out due to the reasons stemming from the HCAB within one (1) year from the date of application, then the accreditation file shall be closed.
- For a surveillance, a new surveillance assessment is planned within a maximum of twelve (12) months from the last assessment. In the duration/scope of the new planned audit, reductions can be made taking into account the successful parts of the terminated assessment. HAK's suspension/withdrawal processes shall be applied should a surveillance assessment cannot be performed within the necessary timeframe.
- For a renewal assessment, a new renewal assessment is planned to take place within the period of sixty (60) months halal accreditation cycle period. In the duration/scope of the new planned audit, reductions can be made taking into account the successful parts of the terminated assessment. If the renewal assessment cannot be carried out within sixty (60) months due to reasons stemming from the HCAB, then the renewal process shall be performed as an 'initial' halal accreditation application.

4. Preparation of Assessment Report


An assessment report shall be submitted to HAK by the Assessment Team covering all matters recorded during the office visit and witness assessments, including the findings and non-conformities and observations stated to the HCAB at the closing meeting.

It is not expected to demand a root-cause analysis, etc. for observations yet in the next surveillance assessment, these observations shall be subject to evaluation to check if there have been any improvements/preventive actions conducted.

The main responsibility for compiling, consolidating and such pertaining to halal accreditation assessment reports is for the Team Leader. For these actions, the Project Coordinator shall help the Team Leader.

As a minimum, the reports submitted by the Assessment Team to the HAK are as follows:

- Accreditation Assessment Report (AKR-Pr01-Ra-002)


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- Witness Assessment Reports (AKR-Pr01-Ra-003), (AKR-Pr01-Ra-008)
- Corrective Action Follow-up Report (AKR-Pr01-Ra-004)

Document History

Page #	Revision #	Revision
02	01	“Surveillance assessment date” included in the assessment schedule is removed
02	01	“Assessment Proposal Form” is altered as “Assessment Team Proposal Form”
02-03	01	Assessment schedule work plan has been elaborated.
03	01	“Office visit schedule” is altered as “assessment schedule”
03	01	The topics that will be discussed in the opening meeting are elaborated.
05	01	An additional information regulating that “the assessment findings shall be based on a sample of available information”.
Whole	01	“Observations” that will be written to the Non-conformity and Corrective Action Form are defined.
Whole	01	“Client” is altered as “client organization”.
Whole	02	The definition of “third party” is added, and the terms “client organization” is altered as “third party”.
Whole	02	Terminological editions are made.
06	02	Under the title of “Main Procedures After the Assessment”, rules are defined regarding the notification of nonconformities after the on-site assessment, planning of corrective actions, etc.
08	02	The section on the assessment report preparation procedure is removed.
Whole	03	Definitions of “key activity” for different halal conformity assessment areas are removed.
01	03	Definition of “key activity” is altered as “Activity Affecting Certification Competency”
02	03	In Article 3, it is emphasized that the documents and records submitted to the HAK before the on-site assessment would be examined by HAK Assessment Team in terms of technical suitability.
02	03	In Article 3.1.1, assessment planning and preparation processes are elaborated.
02-03	03	In Article 3.1.2, the criteria to be considered in the preparation of the office visit are revised.
03	03	In Article 3.1.3, Implementation details of office visit are revised.
04	03	In Article 3.3, details of some special processes to be carried out after the assessment, such as the evaluation of corrective action records, are revised.
05	03	In Article 3.4.1, obligations of the HCABs are revised in cases where a halal accreditation assessment is suspended/terminated before the on-site assessment begins.

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05-06	03	In Article 3.4.2, the circumstances that terminate a halal accreditation assessment are revised. Details on how HAK shall react in these cases, as well as the obligations of HCABs are elaborated.
07	03	In Article 4, the procedures and processes valid for the reporting phase are elaborated