MSc Thesis

Halal Food Certification, Regulations, Standards, Practices, in the Netherlands.

Yousif Alharbi

Supervisors

Prof. Bernd M.J. van der Meulen.

Law and Governance Group

Wageningen University and Research Center

Isabella van Rijn

Wageningen University and Research Center

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Registration Number: 790528011130

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Yousif Alharbi

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. IIHO International Islamic Halal Organization.
2. SFDA Saudi Food and Drug Authority.
3. SASO Saudi Standards Metrology and Quality Organization.
4. GCC Standardization Organization of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf.
5. EC European Commission.
6. EU European Union.
7. EFSA European Food Safety Authority.
8. MWL Muslim World League.
9. GFL General Food Law.
10. MUI Majelis Ulama Indonesia
11. JAKIM Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia
12. GSO GCC standardization organization
13. NVWA The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority
14. FBO Food Business Operators
15. WHC World Halal Council

ABSTRACT

Halal food is food permitted for consumption by Muslims, and permitted according to Islamic Law. All foods are considered to be Halal, except for those clearly identified in the Qur'an or Hadith as non-Halal (or "haram" - meaning "forbidden" for consumption by Muslims). Halal food products may be found in all Muslim countries and also in non-Muslim countries where there are Muslim consumers. The global Halal market is rising, while worldwide a large number of standardization and certification organizations have been established. Halal food certification is a different process in order to approved the food is halal. This process starts from at the processing of raw materials, processing of food, packaging, labelling, storing, and transportation. The complete process of production must be controlled in order to ensure the food product is halal. The demands of halal food in the Netherlands is increasing, and the market for Halal food products in the Netherlands is expanding. Halal food is becoming more available in markets around the country, as the Muslim population itself increases, and with it, their demand for Halal food. Halal Certification organizations are responsible for inspecting and monitoring food manufacturers seeking to obtain Halal Certificates. There are no clear regulations for halal food in the Netherlands. The interviews with halal certifiers to evaluate the halal certification in the Netherlands shows the halal certification is fully controlled by private halal certification organizations which are run by Muslims in the Netherlands. Also, the halal standards and requirements are set by the halal certifiers based on worldwide Islamic interpretations which allow many differences in their standards. This may lead to misleading of the halal consumers, also food companies want to know more about the certification in order to export their products especially to Islamic countries. Comparisons with Certification models in Saudi Arabia show that Saudi Halal food certification comprises a well-organized system of Halal regulation, Halal standards, and formal controls by officials of Saudi Government agencies. It also confirms that Halal food standards are understood, and that Muslim consumer demands for certification exist as much in the Netherlands as in Saudi Arabia. However, priorities for organizing and implementing Halal certification are different in the two countries. Dutch Government agencies are urged to take initial steps to begin establishing, organizing and harmonizing controls over Halal food certification in order to protect Halal food status in the Netherlands from possible Halal misleading, and to help Dutch food companies by facilitating export of their Halal food products to Islamic countries.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

Halal food which must meet Islamic legal standards of manufacture, is big business, and international food companies are recognising its market potential. Demand for Halal food products from Muslims in Europe and around the world has grown, increasing the Halal food market. The Halal food market has exploded in the past decade, and is now valued at an estimated $667 billion annually, currently worth 16% of the entire global food industry (Farouk, 2013).

Halal is an Arabic word meaning "allowable, permitted, and lawful", and comes from the Holy Book (the *Qur'an*)[1], in which the term, "*Halal*", derives from "*Halalan Toyyiban*". In terms of food, it means food which is permitted according to Islamic Law. All such foods are considered to be Halal, except for foods clearly identified in the *Qur'an* or *Hadith*[2] as non-*Halal* or *haram* (meaning "forbidden" for consumption by Muslims).

According to the *Qur'an*, all food products in principle are considered Halal, except for some special products with special conditions, such as pigs and pork products, blood and blood products, alcohol, meat from cadavers, and meat from animals not slaughtered according to Islamic Law. Halal standards and requirements determine which foods are permitted or prohibited for Muslims. "Excepted products", which are not Halal, are as stated in the *Qur'an* since 1400 years ago, when they were clear for Muslims of that time. Today, excepted products are still considered non-Halal, and are explicitly prohibited in Islamic law. Food Industry development makes the production of designated food products more complicated, while food technology is nowadays more sophisticated. Therefore, in respect of Halal standards and requirements, it is very important and necessary to keep pace with developments in the food industry. Halal standards and requirements will help the food manufacturing industry to produce Halal food products and to ensure that Halal food products meet all Halal standards and requirements to protect consumers of Halal foods. Producers are increasingly aware of the need for Halal standards and certification, and bring that knowledge to the fore when promoting their exports. Despite increasing worldwide demand for Halal

[1] The Qur'an is the Islamic Holy Book. It contains the words of God (ALLAH), as dictated to the Prophet Mohammad, and is written in Arabic.

[2] Hadiths are the collection of reports of the teachings, deeds and sayings of the Islamic Prophet Mohammad. This term comes from the Arabic language.

foods, Halal food businesses in general cannot grow any faster, because no agreement on worldwide Halal food standards exists, each country currently adopting its own interpretation and having its own standards. The big challenge for Halal standards is the wide disparity between different Islamic schools of thought, leading to differences of opinion in the interpretation of what is lawful and what is unlawful[3], thus encouraging some countries to issue their own national standards, e.g. the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)[4], Malaysia, and Indonesia. At the international level, the Codex Alimentarius Commission has proposed guidelines related to the use of the term "Halal" in food labelling, such as "Guidelines for the Use of the term Halal" (CAC/GL 24-1997), which supports and facilitates food trade between Muslim countries.

Halal food can be found in all places around the world where there are Muslim consumers. The basic concept of Halal food is generally known to Muslims because it is explicitly mentioned in the *Qur'an*. Halal foods are available on both the Netherlands and Saudi Arabia markets where there is demand from Halal consumers, so it is manufactured by food companies in both countries. However, Saudi Arabia, as an Islamic country, has its own Halal regulation and standards, and also prohibits non-Halal food in its own food markets. By contrast, the Netherlands, a freedom country with around a million Muslims, Halal food is not defined by Government regulations. The necessary demand for Halal food by Muslims in the Netherlands encourages the growth and development of "third-party" organization to supervise Halal production, to verify that these foods were produced in accordance with Islamic dietary laws. This enables Halal food certifiers to control, organize, and issue Halal food certificates within the Dutch market. Heavy demand for Halal food in Dutch markets, and acceptability of Halal food certificates, encourages big supermarkets (such as Albert Heijn, C1000, Jumbo and Hoogvliet) to place Halal food products in their supermarkets (Van Waarden & Van Dalen, 2011).

In 2006, Halal meat, certified by one of the Dutch Halal certification organization, was placed in one of the big Dutch supermarket (Albert Heijn) to serve local consumers of Halal meat. However, Animal Rights Organizations objected, because that meat came from animals slaughtered without stunning. The Market was therefore obliged to replace the Halal certifier

[3] The General Guidelines for the Use of the Term "Halal" were adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 22nd Session, 1997 (CAC/GL 24-1997).

[4] The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) consists of the States of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

with another certifier from another Halal Certification Organization which sanctioned the use of electric stunning of animals prior to slaughter. This angered Dutch Muslims, because the market was accused of selling non-Halal meat as though it were Halal (Havinga, 2010). This case indicates that Halal consumers can be misled with Halal food on Dutch markets in the absence of Government regulators, and where Government regulations do not cover Halal labelling and certification.

1.2. Problem Statement

There is unclear regulations regarding Halal food in the Netherlands which may lead to Halal consumers being misled, as Certification Organizations apply their own regulations and standards. On the other hand, the export market for Halal food from the Netherlands to Islamic countries is growing, but Dutch companies lack knowledge of Halal certification standards and requirements. This sometimes prevents food companies from exporting their food products to Islamic countries.

In order to provide an overview of the current Halal food certification in the Netherlands, it is necessary to study the requirements and procedures of Halal food certification bodies. An evaluation of similarities and differences between Halal Certification organizations could help to create that overview – and eventually to help regulate the Dutch Halal market.

Moreover, such an approach could facilitate a comparison between Halal certification procedures in the Netherlands and Saudi Arabia. Comparison with Halal certification in Saudi Arabia is particularly interesting, because Halal Food is often produced by food companies in both Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands. However, the Netherlands is a freedom country, unlike Saudi Arabia, an Islamic country with great value for Muslims as the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad and Islam. Halal certification in Saudi Arabia is regulated by Islamic food law and supervised by Government agencies, while Halal food is not Halal-regulated by law in the Netherlands. Furthermore, to facilitate export of their Halal food products to Islamic countries, Dutch food companies must take steps to minimize their lack of knowledge of Islamic certification requirements

Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands were selected for this research because Saudi Arabia is the Islamic country which has developed regulatory procedures for Halal food by establishing special requirements for production of Halal food and for acceptance of Halal food certificates. While demand for Halal food in the Netherlands is increasing, several Halal food

organizations provide Halal Food Certificates without any regulatory intervention or oversight by Dutch Government agencies. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia imports many food products from the Netherlands (e.g., milk, cheese and various meats) which require Halal certification organisations in the Netherlands to apply Saudi Arabian Halal Standards.

1.3. Research Objectives

1.2.1 To obtain knowledge of the regulatory procedures for Halal food certification in Saudi Arabia, in order to compare differences between Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands regarding requirements and procedures for such certification.

1.2.2 To create an overview of similarities and differences between Halal certification organizations in the Netherlands, in order to help Halal food consumers with more information about halal certification in the Netherlands.

1.4. Research Questions

1- **Halal Food**

a) How can Halal food be defined?
b) What is a Halal Certificate?
c) What are the Halal food certification requirements in the Netherlands?
d) What are the Halal certification benefits for food companies and consumers?

2- **Halal Food Certification in Saudi Arabia**

a) How is Halal food certified in Saudi Arabia?
b) How can Halal food certification be regulated?
c) What are the Halal food regulation standards and policies in Saudi Arabia, and where can they be found?

3- **Halal Food Certification in the Netherlands**

a) What is the current situation regarding Halal food certification systems in the Netherlands?
b) What are the challenges and opportunities to organize Halal food certification in the Netherlands?

1.5. Methodology

This research is based on two approaches -

1.5.1 A **desk study** will be carried out, using a literature review, a description, legal sources and a comparison in Halal food certification between the regulations and the standards of Halal certification in Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands. A Literature review will take account of the global perspective of Halal food, including definitions of Halal food and Halal food certification. Literature sources used include papers, international organizations, Saudi standards, and the Standardization Organization of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) for the Arab States of the Gulf (GSO) standards. Some sources are written in Arabic, and will thus need translation. This scheme will provide answers to the research questions about Halal certification in Saudi Arabia because Saudi Arabia provides both a legal basis and Halal food standards for it.

1.5.2 **Interviews** with representatives from the Halal Certification bodies in the Netherlands by email, telephone, and face-to-face meetings, in order to evaluate the present situation regarding Halal certification in the Netherlands to provide an outline of the similarities, differences and common features between each Certification Body. Halal certification in the Netherlands is a private sector function with a variety of different standards and regulations, so it is preferable to interview each Halal Certification body in order to distinguish between their different certification procedures. This method is a better way to assess and answer the research questions about Halal food certification in the Netherlands where there is a general lack of knowledge of Halal requirements.

1.6. Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of five chapters. The objectives and questions of this research, methodology and outline are described in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2, general information contributes to an elucidation of Halal principles, including definitions of Halal Certificates, Halal certification, and Halal Assurance systems. Chapter 3 clarifies the history of Halal Certification in Saudi Arabia, and focuses on the different activities for the different government agencies involved in Halal Certification in Saudi Arabia. Chapter 4 explains the current situation of Halal certification in the Netherlands, and describes the similarities and differences of Halal certification practices between different Halal certification organizations in the Netherlands. Then finally, Chapter 5 presents a discussion and conclusions, with some recommendations for the Halal certification in the Netherlands.

2. HALAL PRINCIPLES

This chapter provides brief information and clarifies Islamic legal issues important in Halal food certification. Firstly, Halal can be defined in many ways. However, a definition of "permissible" has been used, as the Arabic word "*halal*" translates literally as "permissible", and Halal refers to that which Allah has made lawful. Halal extends beyond the obvious references to food, and includes all matters relating to human life, such as goods, services, entertainment, finance and commerce. Halal food, as previously mentioned, refers to food permitted under Islamic dietary law, and allowed for consumption by Muslims. Halal red meat animals and poultry are Halal when slaughtered according to Halal standards. Other food products can be classified Halal when free from non-permitted materials. Halal certification is a process used to control Halal food during its production chain, e.g. raw materials, processing, packaging, and storage, including transportation and distribution.

A Halal Certification Organization is responsible for inspecting and monitoring food manufacturers seeking to obtain Halal Certificates. A Halal Certificate is an official document, issued by a Halal Certification Organization, which clarifies to Government authorities and consumers that food producers and manufacturers are applying Halal food standards. Obtaining Halal Certificates has many advantages for food manufacturers and food premises (Zamali, 2006).

2.1. Halal Certification

Halal Certification can be defined as a process undertaken by a qualified independent Third Party organization to supervise Halal production, to indicate that these products were produced in accordance with Halal standards, guaranteeing to consumers that nothing in the food has any forbidden components in accordance with Islamic dietary laws. A Halal Certification body issues Halal certificates to producers after ensuring successful application of the standards required and approved for Halal food production. Halal certification focusses on applying Halal standards, while issues of food safety are the responsibility of Government regulatory bodies; for example, in the Netherlands, the Dutch Food and Consumer Products Safety Authority (NVWA) is not involved in testing if food is Halal or not (Havinga, 2011).

Procedures for Halal Certification can be summed up in four stages. The **first stage** is for a Company to apply for Certification by submission of a formal application, providing product and production details. The **second stage** is a review of the formal application in respect of both technical and Islamic requirements. The **third stage** is an audit of the premises concerned, to ensure that it complies with technical and Islamic requirements, and by taking laboratory samples, if necessary. The **fourth stage** is the certifying of the company by issuing a Halal Certificate valid for one to five years, with an attached Audit Schedule.

There are two types of certification. The **first type** includes certification of the product, including the ingredients (raw materials), production processes, and the end-product or the output of the slaughter process. The **second type** certifies sites, slaughterhouses, food establishments, transport companies, or storage buildings having the capacity to produce, process, or transport Halal products.

2.2 The Halal Certificate

A Halal Certificate is an official document requiring food manufacturers to have observed and implemented Islamic requirements in producing Halal foods in accordance with Islamic law. A Halal Certificate is then issued by a Halal Certification Organization after conducting an inspection to verify that the required standards have been met. When a Halal Certificate is issued by a Halal Certification Organization accredited by an International Halal Organization (such as MUI[5], JAKIM[6], and GCC[7]), it provides more trust and acceptability as a Halal Certification Organization, which could lead to requests for their services and supervision from Halal food producers (Yunos et al. (2014). The Halal Certificate is valid for one to five years from its date of issue, and is conditional on individual contracts, with audit schedules during the contract period, confirming that Halal standards and criteria have been met.

2.3. Benefits of Halal Certification

Halal Certification benefits food manufacturers and food premises wishing to increase the demand and acceptance of their products to consumers of Halal products. Moreover, the production of Halal food products makes food companies global food companies (Power & Gatsiounis 2007). It helps in the organization of the global Halal Market to provide assurances

[5] Majelis Ulama Indonesia.
[6] Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia.
[7] Standardization Organization of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf.

to Halal consumers. Furthermore, it provides a great opportunity to food manufacturers to increase their customers by exporting their products to over 1.6 billion Halal consumers worldwide (Pew Research Center, 2009). Also, Halal Certification of food products provides opportunities for Halal consumers, particularly Muslims, to increase their trust of Halal food, that the ingredients used, and the process of production, are according to Islamic law (Yunos., et al. (2014)., thus ensuring that they are always able to eat Halal food without contravening Islamic law by eating non-Halal food (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008).

2.4. Halal Assurance System (HAS)

This is a management system intended to maintain the Halal status of products which have already obtained Halal Certificates. It is compulsory for all Halal certified companies depends on their halal certifies, and must be applied within six months of the issue of a Halal certificate. It seeks to ensure that a Halal certified Company is producing Halal food during the term of validity of the Halal Certificate.

A Halal Assurance System needs the assembly of a team of internal Halal auditors, who are staff employed by each Food Company and are responsible for implementation of HAS. HAS documentation is needed, such as Halal policy and standards, Halal management organization, and scope of HAS. The HAS must be verified around internal audit prescribed in the Halal Certification Schedule, and must include corrective actions proposed in cases of errors. An audit report must be delivered to the Halal Certifying Body every six months. HAS is essential if renewal of Halal certification is being sought. This system is applied by two Halal Certification Organizations in the Netherlands, such as Halal Quality Control (HQC), and Halal Feed and Food Inspection Authority (HFFIA).

2.5. The Internal Halal Audit Team

Internal Halal Audit (IHA) Team is a group of Halal auditors who are staff officially in the food company which is seeking Halal certificate, and is mandatory by Halal Certification contract. This team is appointed by that Company's management to coordinate implementation of Halal production standards. The Internal Halal Audit (IHA) team will be trained by Halal Certification auditors, and the team has direct contact with Halal certification auditors. This is the system applied by "Halal Correct", a Halal Certification Organization in the Netherlands.

3. HALAL FOOD IN SAUDI ARABIA

3.1 Halal Certification in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country, and all available food products must be Halal. Saudi Arabia imports various foods from many countries around the world, such as the USA, European Union Member States, and Muslim countries (e.g., Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan). It applies special requirements on food imported from Muslim or non-Muslim countries alike. All imported food products must be Halal in order to be allowed entry into Saudi Arabia. Such entry can be facilitated only through mandatory Halal certification. In the absence of agreed international Halal standards, the Saudi Government needed to develop its own Halal standards and requirements, and gave the responsibility for the development of such standards to its own Saudi Arabian Standards Organization (SASO). SASO therefore set Halal standards to define what Halal food is, including explicit requirements for slaughtering animals, and for dealing with different methods of food processing to ensure its Halal status.

Halal standards and criteria are generally applied through Halal Certification bodies in those countries of origin supplying food for manufacturing or animals for slaughter. Therefore, Halal standards should be sufficiently explicit for Halal Certification bodies in food exporting countries, in order to facilitate their application in food manufacturing companies in those exporting countries.

Halal Food Certification Bodies worldwide wishing to certify export food products to Saudi Arabia, must adapt their Halal certificates for such export, and must apply Saudi Halal standards in order to be accredited by the International Islamic Halal Organization (IIHO) , a legal organization established by the Muslim World League (MWL) , wholly authorized by the Government of Saudi Arabia to be responsible for the worldwide accreditation of Halal Certification Bodies, in order that their Halal food certificates may be acceptable to Saudi Arabia.

3.2 Profile of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has a rich profile, but the information which follows is necessarily brief. The country known as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) was founded in 1932. It is located in the Middle East and is the largest country in the Arabian Peninsula, with an estimated population of around thirty million. It is an Islamic state with a constitution based on Shariah[8]. The Qur'an and Sunnah (traditions of the Prophet Muhammad) are the two sources of legislation in Islam. KSA is part of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)[9], and is a developing country with a strong economy based on oil. It ranks as the largest exporter of oil and petroleum products in the world. The major manufacturing infrastructure is based on the petro-chemical industries. Because Saudi Arabia is not an agricultural country, it imports about 85% of its food requirements from foreign countries, both Muslim and non-Muslim, while the remainder of its food requirements are locally produced. Food safety enforcement in the Saudi Arabia is mostly the responsibility of the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) with some responsibilities currently allocated to local Municipal Authorities, but expected to be transferred to SFDA responsibility (Al-Mutairi, 2015). All food in Saudi Arabia is recognised by consumers as Halal, which should cause consumers no concern. However, consumers are worried about food products imported from non-Muslim countries, such as the USA, UK and other Europe Union Member States. Therefore, Saudi Arabia applies special requirements for Halal food certification in order to protect consumers in Saudi Arabia from non-Halal food, and that such imported foods are accompanied by Halal certification.

[8] Islamic Holy Law which is from the Qur'an and the Traditions of Prophet Muhammad.

[9] Gulf Cooperation Council consists of Member States of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Figure (1) Saudi Arabia's Main Imports in 2011 (Source: FAO website) [10]

Figure (2) Saudi Arabia's Main Exports in 2011 (Source: FAO website)[11]

[10] See http://faostat3.fao.org/browse/rankings/commodities_by_country_imports/E
[11] See http://faostat3.fao.org/browse/rankings/commodities_by_country_exports/E

3.3. The Development of Halal Certification in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia introduced food controls on imported food in 1967 by sending all such food products for laboratory species testing to verify that they did not contain any pig meat or pork products. There were two laboratories which are under Ministry of Commerce responsibility, one in Jeddah (located on the west coast of the Kingdom, and the second in Dammam (on the Arabian Gulf coast).

The Saudi Arabian Standards Organization (SASO), dealing with metrology and quality standards, was established in 1972, and became responsible for setting the standards for goods and services. The first Saudi Standard (known as card of packaged food - SASO: No.1/1972), dealt with food product labelling, on which must be declared the origin of meat or meat products, and which must not contain any meat or fat from pigs. Later, with increasing demands for imported food products and frozen meat, regulations and standards were developed to ensure that imported food products were genuinely Halal.

In 1978, Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries established and signed an agreement for animal slaughtering requirements according to Islamic law. In 1979, SASO issued Standards (numbered SASO: 116/1979) for imported fresh and frozen meat, and a Standard for imported poultry meat (numbered SASO: 117/1979). Both required accredited certification to prove that animal slaughtering requirements according to Islamic law had been applied to imported frozen poultry and red meat. Halal certification from Islamic Halal Certification bodies in the country of origin became mandatory for all imported food products and poultry meat products in 1990. Standards for meat and meat products required great attention to the verification that imported food is genuinely Halal, because it had become clear that these products were causing concern to Saudi consumers that they really were Halal, and needed special slaughtering requirements according to Islamic law. Saudi Arabia and GCC States have developed a Halal Certification system by issuing and implementing a specific Standard (numbered GSO: 993/1998) clarifying the general requirements for animal slaughtering according to Islamic law.

In 2005, according to Royal Decree No. 5887, issued on 04.28.1426 (H), Saudi Arabia announced a new Regulation for adoption of Halal certificates for imported food products as follows (Figure 3):

1- Responsibility of the Muslim World League (MWL) for Halal Certification systems.
2- Muslim World League established the International Islamic Halal Organisation (IIHO) to be responsible for accrediting Halal Certification bodies around the world.
3- Such Halal Certification bodies must be owned by Muslim organizations, and not only by commercial interests.
4- The IIHO obliged Halal Certification bodies to apply the required standards in order to receive Halal Certification accreditation.

Figure (3) - shows how Halal food certification in Saudi Arabia interacts with the structure of private food law[12].

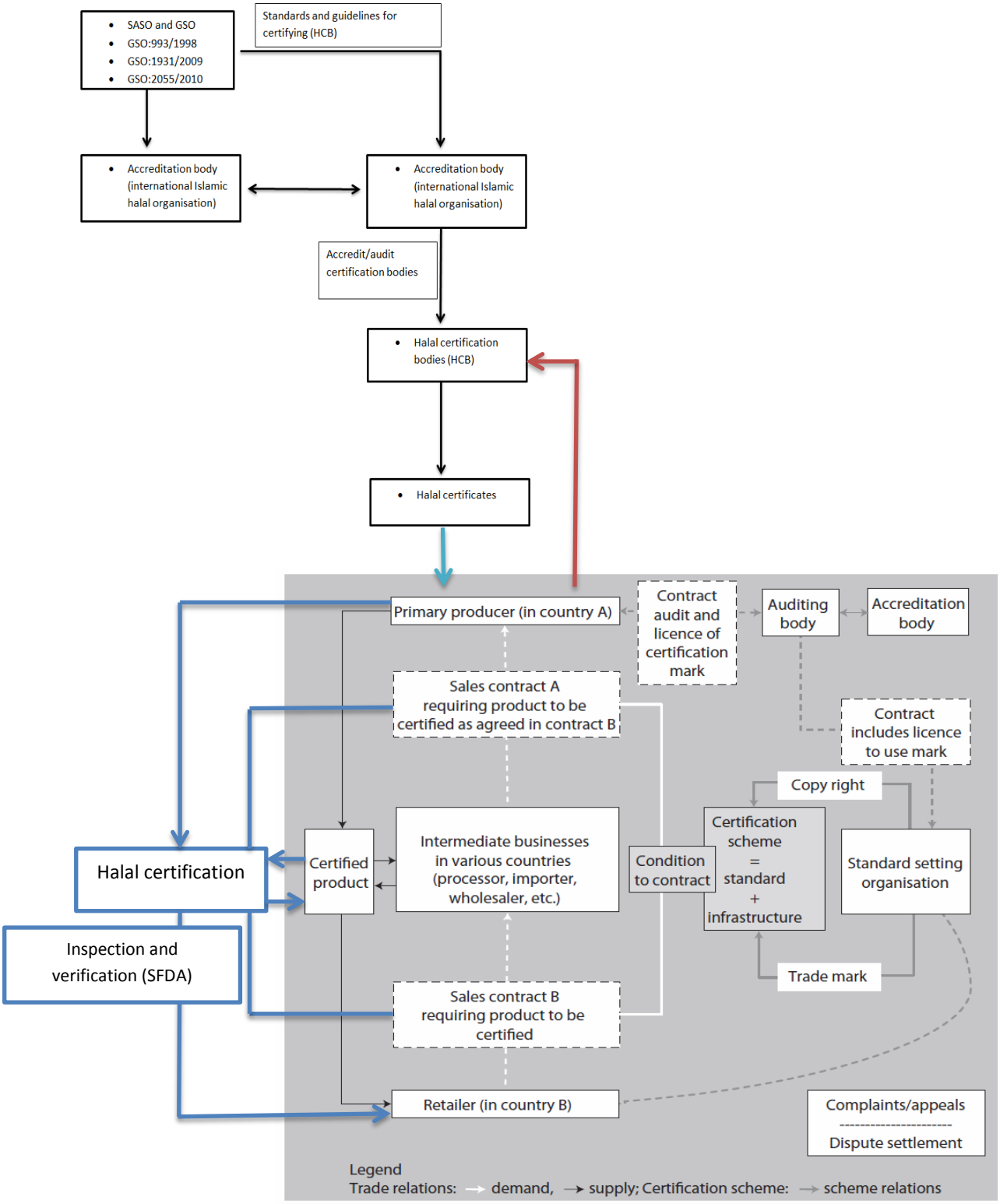


Figure 3.2. The structure of private food law.

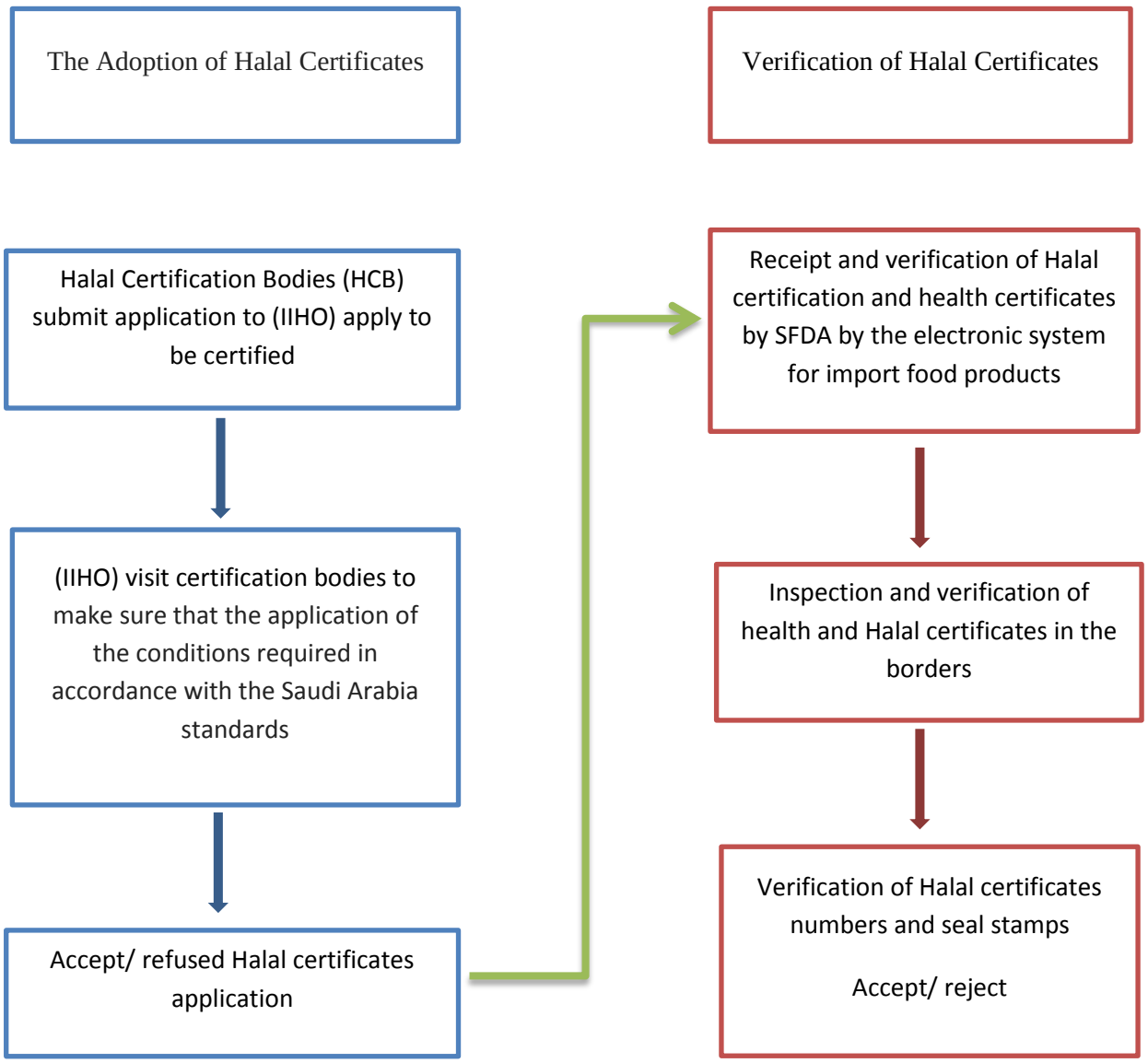
[12] Private food law, governing food chains through contract law, self-regulation, private standards, audits and certification schemes, edited by: Bernd M.J. van der Meulen (2011).

From the previous Figure 3, a conceptual view shows that the Halal certification process is part of a complex system involving not only the Halal applicant and the Halal certifier but also other agencies such the SASO, IIHO, and SFDA. This indicates that the certification system involves several stakeholders who may influence the certification process.

In 2010, the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) became responsible for the verification of Halal certificates accompanying imported food products at KSA Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) (Figure 4). Recently, Saudi Arabia requested a mandate from Halal Certification bodies to apply GSO standards, such as GSO: 993/1998 (which clarifies the general requirements for animal slaughtering according to Islamic law), GSO: 1931/2009 (which clarifies the requirements for Halal food production and indicates non-Halal foods), and GSO: 2055/2010 (which clarifies the special requirements for accreditation of Halal Certification Bodies).

Figure (4) shows the adoption and verification of Halal certificates in Saudi Arabia. It illustrates how Halal Certification bodies worldwide should apply to International Islamic Halal Organisation (IIHO) for Halal Certifier accreditation, and whose members will visit the Halal Certification Body to check if the applicant has met the conditions required in accordance with Saudi Arabian Standards. When the Halal Certification body has met all requirements of Saudi Arabia, Halal standards will be accredited by IIHO and their Halal certificates will be accepted by SFDA at Saudi Border Posts. Also, when imported food products arrive at Saudi borders, SFDA auditors will check the documentation of all shipments, including Halal certificates. Halal Certificates will be checked for Serial Numbers and Halal Stamps, and compared with the documents of Halal Accreditation Certification Bodies.

Figure (4) - Adoption and Verification of Halal Certificates in Saudi Arabia



3.4. Halal Food Standards in Saudi Arabia

In order to justify Halal food standards, information should be sought and explained because the GSO[13] has responsibility for issuing standards. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a regional political and economic union, consisting of six countries - Saudi Arabia, Bahrein, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates. The Gulf Standardization Organization (GSO) is also a regional organization employing well-educated people from Arab Gulf States. The objective of this organization is to prepare Gulf standards in different areas, such as economic, environment and public health, consumer protection, encouraging industries and agricultural production, and finally to minimize the technical trade barriers between Member States. One of GSO's main functions is to issue Gulf technical regulations and standards through specialist Technical Committees (TCs). The regulations for food production standards and Halal food regulations are developed by a Technical Committee for the food and agricultural products sectors. In order to regulate foods imported from non-Muslim countries, the GSO has issued special standards for the slaughter of animals for Halal food. These standards are applied to the whole Halal food-chain from farm to table. The GSO standards became the official standards for Member States. They consist of definitions of Halal and non-Halal food, general requirements for Halal food, special requirements for slaughtering animals according to Islamic Law, and the requirements for accreditation of Halal Food Certification Bodies.

3.5. GSO[14] Standards relating to Halal food:

These standards are issued by the GSO in order to identify, unify and organize the different operations which are related to halal food, by defining and listing the important halal definitions and the general requirements ,such as for observation in the production chain starting from raw materials by classified which is the non halal foods and the other operations like preparation, handling and storage , and for accreditation of the issuing Halal food certification bodies which allows to animal slaughtering according to Islamic law.

The following tables show the general principles of GSO Standards relating to Halal food, Halal food certification requirements, and animal slaughtering requirements according to Islamic law:

[13] GSO : Standardization Organization of the Gulf Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GSO)
[14] GSO : Standardization Organization of the Gulf Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GSO)

(1) The standard of general requirements of halal food GSO 2055-1/2009[15]:

Table (1) General Requirements of Halal Food (Part 1) - according to GCC Standards Organization GSO 2055-1/2009[16]. This standard defines requirements which must be observed in the production, preparation, handling and storage of halal food and food products.

Principle	Content	Details
Pre-Requisite standards	• apply GSO 993/1998[17], GSO 21/1984[18] and GSO 9/2007[19]	
	• food and food products must be halal	• All food & food products are halal, except non- halal food.
Non-Halal Food	• wild animals	• Not slaughtered according to Islamic law. • Dead or contaminated not permissible.
		• Pigs, donkeys, and elephants.
		• Dogs, foxes, and bears.
		• Eagles, hawks, and crows.
		• Rodents and Snakes.
		• Scorpions, worms, insects, ants, bees & woodpeckers.
		• Amphibians, crocodiles, turtles and frogs.
	• plants	• All plants & their products which are toxic or harmful to health, unless stripped of toxicity. • Substances harmful during processing.
	• drinks	• Alcohol and their products
	• GMO food	• Using genes from non- halal food.
	• additives	• Additives from non-halal food (table).
Processing, packaging, storage, handling and distribution requirements	• non halal food free	• No contamination by non- halal equipment. • Special production line for halal food. • cleaning

[15] This standard number 2055-1/2009 from GSO act on 24 May 2009, HALAL FOOD Part (1): General Requirement.(available in Arabic language)
[16] This standard number 2055-1/2009 from GSO act on 24 May 2009, HALAL FOOD Part (1): General Requirement.(available in Arabic language)
[17] This Standard No. 993/1998 from GSO enacted on 15 September 1998, for Animal Slaughtering Requirements according to Islamic Law.
[18] This Standard No. 21/1984 from GSO enacted on 15 September 1984, for Hygiene Regulations for food plants and their personnel.
[19] This Standard No. 9/2007 from GSO enacted on 5th June 2007, Labeling of prepackaged food stuffs

		• applying GSO 21/1984
Labelling	Halal logo	• applying GSO 9/2007

Table (1) shows Standard GSO 2055-1/2009 which identifies general requirements for Halal food. Its importance lies in the fact that, in respect of Halal foods, it identifies non-Halal foods which could be animals, plants, drinks, genetically-modified foods, and additives, as well as processing, packaging, storage, handling, distribution requirements and labelling. This Standard categorizes animals which are not permitted for human consumption, or to be a source of human food products. According to Standards Article 4.2, all foods/food products are Halal, except for any originating from the following list (which are classified as non-Halal food:

- Article 4.2.1 – "animals" -
- Article 4.2.1.1.1- wild animals not slaughtered according to Islamic law, dead animals, or those contaminated by prohibited animals, i.e. pork.
- Article 4.2.1.1.2 – "animals" include pigs, donkeys and elephants.
- Article 4.2.1.1.3 – "Predator animals" include dogs, foxes, leopards, bears, and cats.
- Article 4.2.1.1.4 - birds with claws or birds of prey, including eagles, hawks and crows.
- Article 4.2.1.1.5 - rodents and snakes.
- Article 4.2.1.1.6 - scorpions, worms, insects, ants, bees & woodpeckers.
- Article 4.2.1.1.7 - animals having been fed with feeds contaminated by non-Halal items.
- Article 4.2.1.2 - aquatic animals - amphibians, crocodiles, turtles and frogs.
- Article 4.2.2 – "plants" - aall plants & their products which are toxic or harmful to health (unless stripped of toxicity), and any substances harmful during processing.
- Article 4.2.2 – drinks, such as alcohol and their products.
- Article 4.2.4 - GM food - using genes from non-Halal food.
- Article 4.2.5 – additives - from any non-Halal food as in previous Articles.
- Article 4.2.5 - processing, packaging, storage, handling and distribution requirements - free from non-Halal food in article (4.2.1), preparation equipment must not be contaminated by non-Halal food, with a special production line for Halal food, cleaned by applying GSO 21/1984
- Article 5 - labelling must include the Halal label from accredited Halal certifiers and applying GSO 9/2007.

This standard therefore clarifies non-Halal food to be avoided by Halal consumers, Halal food manufacturing, and the requirements for production procedures which should comply, in order to ensure Halal food production. To apply this Standard, all Pre-requisite standards must apply first.

(2) The standard of The Requirements for Accreditation of the Issuing Halal Food Certification Bodies GSO 2055-2/2010[20]:

Table (2) The Requirements for Accreditation of the Issuing Halal Food Certification Bodies, according to GCC Standardization Organization GSO 2055-2/2010[21]

Principle	Content	Details
Pre-Requisite standards	• Apply GSO 993/1998[22], GSO 21/1984[23], GSO 2055 -1/2009[24] & GSO 9/2007[25]	
General Conditions for Certification Bodies.	• Working legally in the exporting State.	
	• Permanent headquarters in the country of adoption.	• Organization has clear: ➢ Structure; ➢ employee responsibility ➢ authorized manager ➢ official seals
	• Stable financial resources. • Independence	
	• Staff with good education and technical knowledge in halal certification.	
	• Commitment by using GCC halal certificates	
	• Registration and documentation system	• slaughterers and supervisors, and their accredited signatures • procedures

[20] This Standard No.2055-2/2010 from GSO enacted on 2nd June 2010, for HALAL FOOD - Part (2): Guidelines for HALAL Food Certification Bodies and their Accreditation Requirements.
[21] This Standard No.2055-2/2010 from GSO enacted on 2nd June 2010, for HALAL FOOD - Part (2): Guidelines for HALAL Food Certification Bodies and their Accreditation Requirements.
[22] This Standard No. 993/1998 from GSO enacted on 15 September 1998, for Animal Slaughtering Requirements According to Islamic Law.
[23] This Standard No.21/1984 from GSO enacted on 15 September 1984, for Hygiene Regulations required for food plants and their personnel.
[24] This Standard No. 2055-1/2009 from GSO enacted on 24 May 2009, HALAL FOOD Part (1): General Requirement.
[25] This Standard No. 9/2007 from GSO enacted on 5th June 2007, Labelling of Pre-packaged foodstuffs

		• Halal certificate numbers.
	• Identity cards for employees during working time.	
	• Training system for supervisor & slaughterers.	• comply with GSO 993 standards
	• certified certification system	• Requirements documents
	• System for certification procedures.	
	• send a copy of certified signatures of supervisors and slaughterers	• To the competent authorities in country of export for verification later.
	• Certification bodies report every 6 months to halal authority in GCC.	
Procedures for accrediting HALAL certificate issuing bodies.	• Halal certification body must apply for accreditation from halal authority in GCC.	• apply GSO 2055-/2009[26]
	• Written pledge to apply GSO 993/1998[27] and GSO 2055-1/2009	•
	• Initial approval	• halal authority in GCC visits certification body
	• Applicant approval	• Certification renewable every 2 years.
	• Right to make unannounced visits	• halal authority in GCC
Halal Food Certificates	• Must include Information for carcases	• Slaughtering date and time. • Health certificates number.
	• Other food products	• Production date. • Health certificates number. • number of halal certificates for food ingredient
	• Issued by accredited halal certification bodies in the country of origin	• halal logo; • name & signature of slaughter supervisor; • Serial number (as "no. /year).

[26] This Standard No. 2055-1/2009 from GSO enacted on 24 May 2009, HALAL FOOD Part (1): General Requirement.
[27] This Standard No. 993/1998 from GSO enacted on 15 September 1998, for Animal Slaughtering Requirements According to Islamic Law.

		• Original & copy for exporter, save copy and send original to the importer. • copy for HCB; • Protection of forgery.
Halal certification label	• Halal logo and GSO 9/2007[28]	• official logo

Table 2 shows: This Standard GSO 2055-2/2010 is Part 2 of the Standard about Halal food, which identifies terms and definitions, such as Islamic rules and beliefs (which ALLAH legislated for Muslims) comes directly from the *Qur'an* or Hadith by the Prophet Mohammad, and definitions of Halal food certification, and accreditation. Experts working in this field., according to this Standard Article 3 states that the Inspector and Auditor must be adult, Muslim persons who have a sufficient educational background to be assigned to verify the application of animal slaughtering conditions according to GSO 993/1998, and requires that all workers in Halal certification must be Muslims. Also, this Standard includes the General Conditions for Halal Certification Bodies, and according to this Standard Article 4, the halal certification body must be:

- Working legally in the exporting country.
- Permanent headquarters in the country of adoption.
- Stable financial resources and independence
- Staff with good education and technical knowledge in halal certification.
- Commitment by using GCC Halal certificates
- The Halal Certification Body should apply this system for registration and documentation to record all information, such as Halal slaughterhouses, slaughterers and their accredited signatures.
- Identity cards for employees during working time.
- Training system for supervisor & slaughterers depends on GSO 993/1998 standards, concerning requirements for slaughtering animals according to Islamic Law.
- Applying system for certification procedures and send a copy of certified signatures of supervisors and slaughterers to Halal Authority in GCC.
- Certification bodies report every 6 months to Halal Authority in GCC.

[28] This Standard No. 9/2007 from GSO enacted on 5th June 2007, labeling of prepackaged food stuffs.

Article 5 explains the procedures for accrediting HALAL certificate issuing bodies:

- Halal certification body must apply for accreditation to Halal authority in GCC.
- Sign a contract pledging to apply GSO 993/1998 and GSO 2055-1/2009 and Halal authority in GCC visits certification body, accreditation renewable every 2 years, and Halal Authority in GCC have the right to make unannounced visits.

Article 6 - Halal Food Certificates

- Must include information on carcases, including slaughtering date and time with health certificates number.
- Food products should include production date, health certificates number, and the number of Halal certificates for food ingredients.
- Certificates should be issued by accredited Halal Certification bodies in the country of origin of food products.
- Halal Certificate should have two copies for the exporter - the original to be sent to the importer, and the copy to be saved. The second copy is for the Halal Certification body.

Article 7 - Halal Label – Official Halal Label should be applied by the Halal Authority of GCC [29]

[29] The halal authority of GCC have not started yet, so the official halal label not applicable yet, and now each GCC member works by their local halal authority following GSO standards.

(3) The standard of The Requirements for Slaughtering Animals according to Islamic Law GSO 993/1998:

Table (3) Animal Slaughtering Requirements according to Islamic Law and GCC Standardization Organization GSO 993/1998[30]. This GSO standard is concerned with the general requirements for animal and poultry slaughtering according to Islamic law.

Principle	Content	Details
Slaughtering requirements	• Animal	• should not be on non-Halal list - carrion, dead animal, strangled, pigs, predatory birds of prey)
	• Slaughterer	• Must be Muslim or Jewish or Christian. • Supervision by Muslim who knows Islamic slaughtering rules.
	• Slaughter tool	• slaughter toll not made from bones or nails • Clean and sharp. • Not used on pigs.
	• Slaughtering	• slaughtering in the front of the neck; • Shooting or stunning not allowed. • animal must be alive; • announce the name of God; • Dressing not allowed before animal death. • Neck should not be cut until bleeding finished. • Should not be carried out in places for pigs.
	• Certification and stamps	• Halal certification.

[30] This Standard No. 993/1998 from GSO enacted on 15 September 1998, for Animal Slaughtering Requirements according to Islamic Law.

Table 3 shows that this Standard GSO 993/1998 is very important because it explains the requirements of slaughtering animals according to Islamic law. Article 2 of this Standard provides important definitions -

- *2.1 DAKAH: Slaughtering of animals through ritual killing, using any of the following methods:*
- *2.1.1 Slaughter (dabh): Involves cutting of the animal's trachea, oesophagus and jugular veins. This method is mostly used in case of sheep, cattle and birds.*
- *2.1.2 Slaying (nahr): Carried out by stabbing the animal in the lower part of the neck, then severing, with a knife, down through the upper part of the chest. This method is mostly used in case of camels.*
- *2.1.3 Stabbing (agr): Carried out by fatally wounding an unmanageable animal, be it a type of wild animal which is lawful to hunt or of livestock animal known to be fierce.*
- *2.2 Carrion: The animal which dies a natural death and is not slaughtered in due form, the term also applies to any part cut from the body of an animal before it is slaughtered.*
- *2.3 Strangled animal: The animal which dies from asphyxia.*
- *2.4 Fatally beaten animal: The animal which has died as a result of severe beating by a stick, or any other object, (exception to these are birds or game animals shot dead by arrows or bullets with the intention of hunting).*
- *2.5 Animal dead through falling from a height: The animal which has died as a result of falling from a height or into a pit or similar hole.*
- *2.6 Horn-butted animal: The animal which has died as a result of butting by horns of another animal.*
- *2.7 Animal which has been partially devoured by predatory animals: The animal (other than those hunted) which has been partially devoured by predatory animals or birds of prey.*
- *2.8 Animal which has been dedicated to any, other than God: The animal upon which at the time of slaughter, a name other than that of God was invoked, such as the name of an idol or false deity.*
- *2.9 Big animals: Such as: camels, sheep, cattle and goats or similar size.*

Article 3.1 clarifies the requirements of the animal that is allowed to be slaughtered:

- Animal should not be on the non-Halal list (as stated in Article 4.2 of GSO 2055-1/2009).
- *Carrion, strangled and fatally beaten animal, animal dead through falling from a height, horn-butted animal, animal which has been partially devoured by predatory animals and animal which has been dedicated to any, other than God.*
- Predatory animals, such as lions, tigers and bears.

Article 3.2 includes requirements for slaughterer (the person who is responsible for killing the animal), and also for the slaughter tool:

- Slaughterer must be Muslim or Kitabi (Jewish or Christian) under supervision by Muslim who knows Islamic slaughtering rules.
- Slaughter tool should not made from bones or nails, and must be clean, sharp, and not used on pigs.
- *Beating on head or similar action, such as using of bolt shot pistol or non- penetrative percussion or stunning by carbon dioxide is not permitted.*
- *Animals shall remain alive in cases where low-voltage electrical stunning is used on head only, so as to be ritually killed. This can be indicated by animal movements after slaughtering. Animals which die before slaughtering are considered to be carrion and are refused. Electrical stunning is not allowed in case of birds.*

Article 3.3 describes the requirements of the slaughter method:

- Animal must be alive.
- The name of God (*ALLAH*) should be invoked on the animal to be slaughtered
- Slaughter starts by "sticking", then the neck is cut after complete bleeding.
- Dressing not allowed before animal's death.
- Not allowed to cut any part of animal body before the animal's death.
- Should not be carried out in pig slaughter places.

Article 3.4 requires a carcase after slaughter to be stamped with special ink, which clarifies that this animal has been slaughtered according to Islamic legal requirements. Also, frozen carcasses must have a certificate to prove that slaughtering was done according to Islamic law.

In summary, Halal food certification in Saudi Arabia is well organized, because of its basis in Islamic law, the official religion of the country, and a necessity for Saudi consumers. The Kingdom imports most of its meat and food products from non-Muslim countries, thus relying on greater regulation to assure the Halal status of such food imports. Several Government agencies (e.g., SASO, IIHO and SFDA) play an important role in Halal certification. SASO has set and issued the required Halal standards for animal slaughter and Halal food certification, while IIHO is responsible for accrediting Halal Certification Organizations around the world wishing to gain approval for their Halal certificates in order to be accepted by Saudi border controls. SFDA Inspectors at Saudi international borders are in charge of Adoption and Verification of Halal Certificates.

4. HALAL FOOD in The NETHERLANDS

Through a desk study and a series of interviews with several Halal Certification organizations, this Chapter provides information about Halal food certification arrangements in the Netherlands, where no official Halal food certification exists.

Current arrangements for Halal food certification in the Netherlands will be discussed, and interviews with Halal Certification bodies documented to provide more detail about processes and requirements. The representatives of Halal food certification in the Netherlands also describe aspects of the history of Halal certification in the Netherlands, including their beliefs about the regulation of Halal food markets. They also indicate the extent of their concern at the actions of the Dutch Government in proposing special regulation of Halal food, because they believe that Halal is solely an Islamic religious element.

4.1. General Overview of Halal Food in the Netherlands

Trade in Halal food is increasing worldwide, and demands for Halal meat are both growing and developing. Halal food products may be found in many Muslim and non-Muslim countries (Lever and Miele, 2012). The market for Halal food products in the Netherlands is expanding, and Halal food is becoming more available in markets around the country, as the Muslim population itself increases, and with it, their demand for Halal food.

Halal food in the Netherlands is not regulated by Government Agencies, but the Government permits Halal food organizations to control Islamic slaughtering in order to issue Halal certificates. The issue of Halal food production in the Netherlands is complicated, because there are many different stakeholders, e.g., Halal Certification organizations, Animal Welfare organizations, Consumer Protection Associations, and Food Safety Authorities, all of whom have an interest in this topic (Havinga, 2010).

Thirty years ago, Halal food certification in the Netherlands first came into being, based on the efforts of Muslim people and certain Muslim organizations, which had worked hard to ensure the introduction of Halal regulation in slaughterhouses in order to provide Halal meat and meat products for the Muslim population. This was initially important for meat and meat products only, as other Halal food organizations were yet to develop. Then, with further development and evolution of the food industry, leading to production and consumption of different food products in the different countries, a special law for regulating production of

Halal food products was needed. Halal organizations in the Netherlands had begun by using the same Halal rules and regulatory methods already implemented in other Muslim countries.

In 1978, the Netherlands was blacklisted for a short time by several Middle Eastern countries, including Saudi Arabia, because of the "Beef Lanchos" scandal, in which a Dutch meat company despatched these Lanchos as beef, but it was unfortunately mixed with pig bone powder (van Waarden & van Dalen, 2010). Mr. Al-Chaman, the Chairman of Halal Quality Control (HQC), said this incident gravely affected meat export companies, causing the Dutch Government to seek discussions with the Royal Saudi Embassy in The Hague to find a solution to this problem. The Royal Saudi Arabia Embassy chose Mr. Al-Chaman as Halal certifier to introduce Halal requirements for Dutch meat producers, and to audit their slaughtering procedures. This action later helped Dutch companies resume exports to Saudi Arabia and GCC States. This incident thus encouraged the development of a Halal certification organization in the Netherlands (HQC interview).

Thus, by the early 1980s, some Halal Certification organizations had started to monitor and control Halal slaughtering in Dutch slaughterhouses, to ensure that production methods for meat and meat products (particularly avoiding cross-contamination by pigs and pork products), in order to provide Halal meat for Muslims. The Halal food trade worked on the basis of trust between a local market or butcher and consumers (meaning that the seller and buyer know each other very well). This type of Halal market could be described as an 'uncle and auntie' market, a kind of market which can be successful in small communities (van Waarden and R. van Dalen (2010).

The Halal method of slaughtering animals is important, with its basis in Islamic law, requiring that an animal should be alive at the point of slaughter. The flesh of dead animals is thus prohibited for consumption by Muslims. In the Netherlands, it was not permitted to slaughter an animal without stunning, although an exception was made for Jewish slaughter. This was the reason Muslim butchers were permitted to use Jewish slaughterhouses for Halal slaughter, until the Dutch Government made specific provision for Islamic slaughter in 1996 (Havinga, 2010).

There are a few Islamic poultry slaughterhouses in the Netherlands where chickens are slaughtered without stunning in accordance with Islamic slaughter law. Electro-stunning is common in poultry slaughterhouses in order to facilitate the rapid slaughter of large numbers of poultry in the shortest time possible, for production purposes. This electro-stunning uses an

electrified water bath delivering a current of 100 mA (milli-Amperes) to ensure that birds are stunned - but not dead - prior to slaughter. In January 2013, the Dutch Government implemented a new EU Welfare Regulation, in which electro-stunning of poultry would require an increased current of 150 mA which is sufficient to kill birds - a method no longer in accordance with Islamic slaughter law (i.e., non-Halal). The Muslim community and Halal Certification organizations made official objections to this decision. Thus, in a practical way, they are now not applying this Regulation.

Nowadays, Halal food is becoming an industrial "big business", needing more regulation and standards to help control Halal food production around the world. International Halal Certification bodies work hard to unify Halal standards, and require their approved Halal Certification organizations to apply those standards in order to be accepted worldwide. Thus, Halal Certification organizations in the Netherlands have developed Halal certification procedures which permit the application of quality systems, traceability, Halal assurance systems, and Halal Critical Control Points (HCCP).

4.2 The current situation of Halal Certification in the Netherlands

Halal Certification in the Netherlands currently has developed through regulation, methods of inspection, traceability and quality auditing, because of food industry development which makes food production more complex, including specific requirements and standards from importing Muslim countries. For these reasons, there are a few Halal Certification organizations accredited by international Halal authorities (such as Halal Correct, Halal Quality Control (HQC), Halal Feed and Food Inspection Authority (HFFIA), International Halal Standard, and Halal Audit Company (HAC). However, there are some Halal Certification organizations which certify some Halal food products without applying basic Halal standards, because such food products are consumed in the Netherlands without controls. This situation creates a further risk of misleading Halal food markets by facilitating Halal food certification and dealing with it as purely commercial, regardless of the religious importance and service value to large group of Muslim consumers.

4.3. Interviews with Halal Certifiers in the Netherlands

There are approximately forty Halal food certifiers in the Netherlands, including well-known, well-established Halal Certification Organizations, as well as individual certifiers, such as Mosque Imams, and private markets or butchers. Halal food certifiers were selected for this review on the basis of their reputation in the Dutch Halal market by asking the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs about food companies wishing to produce and export Halal foods, those experienced in Halal food certification procedures, or because they are accredited by international Halal organizations. Interview questions are related to Halal food certification requirements, processes for certification, Halal certificates, numbers of audit visits, and accreditation (See Table 4).

The purpose of interviews with Halal Certification organizations is to evaluate the current status of Halal food certification in the Netherlands, to know the requirements and procedures for Halal certification, and to gain insight into how Halal certification is implemented in practice.

Four Halal Certification organizations allowed interviews to be conducted to seek answers to the questions put. These were carried out with Halal Certification organizations in their main offices in The Hague, Leiden and Zoetermeer, using the following questions:

Table (4) - Interview Questions for Halal Certification Organizations

No.	Question
1	What are the requirements for establishing an organization for Halal Certification?
2	What are the primary processes of Halal Certification?
3	What kinds of companies may apply for Halal Certification?
4	What documents and information are required in Halal certification?
5	How long does it take to achieve approval of Halal Certification? How long is it valid?
6	Who is responsible for providing Halal inspection in those companies? How many inspectors would be required, and what level of education should they have?
7	What kinds of international/national Regulations and standards are to be used in Halal certification?
8	Is your organization accredited by any International Accreditation Body? If so, by which bodies?
9	Why did you choose this particular Accreditation Body?
10	How many times a year does the Accreditation body visit your organization?
11	Are the general guidelines in using the term "Halal" by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC/GL 24-1997) appropriate for Halal Certification?
12	What problems are inherent in a Halal Certification system?
13	What assistance do you need from Netherlands Government Agencies to organize the Halal market?

Outcomes of Interviews with Halal Certification organizations in the Netherlands are summarized below: (full text of interviews in appendix 7)

Table (5) Interview Questions for Halal Certification Organizations in the Netherlands & Responses received

No.	Question Subject	Responses from Halal Certification Organizations			
		Halal Correct	**HQC**	**HFFIA**	**HIC**
1	Establishing Halal Certification body	No specific requirements. Commercial company.	No specific requirements. Commercial company.	No specific requirements. Commercial company.	No specific requirements. Commercial company.
2	Primary Process	Documentation- Pre-audit. Pre-assessment. Final assessment Halal certificate. Internal Halal Audit team(IHA)	Documentation- Pre-audit. Pre-assessment. Final assessment Halal certificate. HAS.	Documentation- Pre-audit. Pre-assessment. Final assessment Halal certificate. HAS.	Documentation- Pre-assessment. Audit. Halal certificate depends on type of certificate , Halal Products, Halal Batch, and Halal Business)
3	Scope of Halal certification	Dairy companies. Meat & meat product companies. Spices & flavours companies. Powder, Coffee	Dairy companies. Meat and meat product companies. Spices and flavours companies. Water Sugar.	Dairy companies. Meat and meat product companies. Spices &flavours companies. Water Sugar.	Dairy companies. Meat and meat product companies. Spices & flavours companies. Restaurants & cafes.
4	Information requirements	Confidentiality Agreement. Ingredient suppliers, feed ingredients. Company plan & flow chart. HACCP & quality documents.	Confidentiality Agreement. Ingredient suppliers, feed ingredients. Company plan & flow chart. HACCP & quality documents.	Confidentiality Agreement. Ingredient suppliers, feed ingredients. Company plan & flow chart. HACCP & quality documents.	Confidentiality agreement. List of all ingredient suppliers. Production Flow Chart. Cleaning & disinfection documents.
5	Time to obtain Approval of Halal Certificate	2-8 weeks. Valid 1-5 years.	1-5 months. Valid 1-5 years.	2-8 weeks. 5 years.	1-3 months. One year, or depends on type of certificate.

6	Number of auditors in the Company	6 auditors + Islamic committee.	16 auditors + Islamic committee	24 auditors + Islamic committee	2 auditors + Imam consultation.
7	International/ National standards	World Halal Council (WHC)	World Halal Council (WHC)	World Halal Council (WHC). Majlis Al-Ifta Europe	Own Halal standards.
8	International Accreditation body	MUI Indonesia MUIS Singapore JAKIM Malaysia	MUI Indonesia MUIS Singapore JAKIM Malaysia GCC Dubai authority.	MUI Indonesia MUIS Singapore JAKIM Malaysia GCC Dubai authority.	None.
9	Use of Term "Halal" by Codex Alimentarius Commission	Don't protect Halal.	Define Halal very clearly. Don't protect Halal.	No interest in Codex Halal Guidelines in Halal food business	Not applicable.
10	Halal problems	Halal misleading and fraud. Use of Halal logo without permission	Halal misleading and fraud.	Halal Certification bodies do not apply minimum Halal standards.	Halal misleading and fraud.
11	Netherlands Government assistance need	Place Halal certification organizations information requirements & processing with Halal logo on the governmental website which permits consumer to know which Halal food can be chosen.	Save HQC rights and protect Halal logo	Nothing.	Regulations & control by Government.

These interviews show that there are many similarities between the Halal certification organizations in the Netherlands, because essential requirements for Halal food come from two sources. The Holy Book (the Qur'an) explicitly prohibits pigs and pork products, blood and blood products, alcohol, carrion, strangled and fatally beaten animals, animal dead through falling from a height, horn-butted animals, animals partially devoured by predatory animals, and animals which have been slaughtered and dedicated to any other than God than

ALLAH. In addition, the writings of the Prophet Mohammad explain by *Hadith*[31] the procedures and structures of slaughtering animals.

The interviews also show that Halal certification organizations start as any commercial business in the Netherlands, which means that no special requirements or documents could be provided to the Ministry of Commerce. Therefore, anyone could establish themselves as a Halal certifier, even as an individual "freelancer". The primary procedures for Halal certification in general are the same for all organizations, including documentation, pre-audit. Pre-assessment. Final assessment, and in the last step issuing Halal certificate. However, there are differences between the Halal certification organizations in the way that they choose to maintain Halal status of products which have already been granted Halal certificates during the validation period for the halal certificate, e.g., HQC and HFFIA require HAS, while Halal Correct requires IHA. Numbers of auditors within each Halal certifying group depend on the numbers of clients, and the size of their companies. All representatives of Halal certifiers agree that the Halal label is not protected by law. This leads to consumers in Dutch markets being misled (as representative of HFFIA said, during interview, that there are many Halal certifiers in the Netherlands not applying minimum Halal standards.

Furthermore, interviews showed that the Halal Certification organizations are more strict with standards in cases where foods or meat products are to be exported to Muslim countries having formal Halal Regulation (e.g. Malaysia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and GCC States), because they are obliged to observe those established Halal standards (HQC and Halal Correct interviews). However, in cases of export to non- Muslim countries or for Dutch Muslim consumers, some Halal Certification organizations are less strict, because there are no formal Halal standards to be observed. In addition, the cost of Halal certification plays an important role, because food companies want to produce Halal products at lower cost in order to maximize their profits.

There are many differences between Halal certification organizations affecting Halal certification in the Netherlands, e.g. cost of certification, Halal certification accreditation, interpretation by Islamic consultants (e.g. in the case of gelatine, or pre-slaughter stunning). The cost of certification is €2.000-50.000 per year, an important factor in food companies' choice of Halal certifier – companies clearly prefer the lowest price in order to boost profit.

[31] Hadiths are the collection of reports of the teachings, deeds and sayings of the Islamic Prophet Mohammad. This term comes from the Arabic language.

All Halal certifiers are accredited by International Halal Bodies, such as WHC, because they apply those international standards, while others are not accredited, such as HIC, which applies its own standards and is thus not accredited by Halal international bodies. Some Halal certifiers, such as HQC and HIC, classify gelatine as Halal (despite its origin from animal sources, possibly including pigs), because it enters into food processing, while other Halal certifiers (such as Halal Correct and HFFIA) do not accept gelatine as Halal. Pre-slaughter stunning is not accepted by Halal certifiers except HIC. This makes HIC a popular certifier with big Dutch supermarket chains (e.g. Albert Heijn, C1000, and Jumbo). However, some Halal certifiers, such as HQC, are sometimes less strict with Halal food products destined for the domestic market.

In summary, it can be concluded that Halal food certification in the Netherlands is neither well organized nor under Government supervision, but is left to private Halal Certification organizations run by Muslims in the Netherlands. Halal Certification organizations apply their Halal standards and requirements in order to provide certification of food companies and slaughterhouses. Some Halal Certification organizations in the Netherlands are members of some of international Halal bodies, such as Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKEM), and the World Halal Council (WHC), which apply their Halal standards in order to have their certificates accepted in many countries. Food companies exporting their Halal food products worldwide seek Halal certificates from these Halal certifiers. However, Halal foods on the Dutch market are available in many places (e.g., restaurants, cafes, and supermarkets) where many of these foods are sold as Halal food even if they are not Halal (although labelled Halal for the benefit of Muslim consumers). The absence of any controls over Halal foods by Netherlands Government agencies leads to more Halal misleading of consumers. Government agencies should be persuaded to take concerted action to harmonize Halal food certification procedures and controls in the Halal food trade in the Netherlands.

5. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, the development of Halal certification in Saudi Arabia will be discussed, and how cooperation between various Saudi Government agencies helped to organize and control Halal food certification. This discussion will also include evaluation of the current situation surrounding Halal certification in the Netherlands.

The objectives of this research seek detailed information in order to describe the development of the regulatory procedures of Halal certification in Saudi Arabia, and to enable a comparison of similarities and differences amongst Halal Certification Organizations in the Netherlands to be undertaken. This was done in order to compare Halal certification in Saudi Arabia with that applicable in the Netherlands, and to bring more information about Halal certification to the attention of Halal consumers.

5.1 Halal Certification in Saudi Arabia

This research has described the development of Halal certification in Saudi Arabia. It is clear that Halal food in Saudi Arabia is of great national importance because of its basis in Islam, the official religion underpinning the constitution of Saudi Arabia, so that Halal food is available for consumers, and non-Halal food cannot be placed on the market. Also, Saudi Arabia cannot be regarded as an agricultural country, as it is far from self-sufficient in essential raw materials required by the Saudi food manufacturing industry. Thus, the Saudi Kingdom has no alternative but to import both raw materials and finished food products in large quantities from different parts of the world.

Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam, and therefore of great significance to all Muslims worldwide. Great reliance is therefore placed on imports of many foods from countries around the world. The Kingdom has well established standards and requirements for all Halal food to ensure that all imported foods, whether raw materials, processed food products, fresh meat or processed meat products, etc., including all raw materials required for food manufacturing are compatible with the Halal standards and conditions expected of Halal food by local Saudi consumers. They believe that foods processed inside Saudi Arabia are produced to Halal standards, because the Kingdom has strict requirements and laws for ensuring such Halal status. Consumers also expect raw materials imported from worldwide sources to be accompanied by Halal certification at ports of entry into Saudi Arabia.

Major control points exist for regulating Halal foods; namely, animal slaughtering operations, and food manufacturing processes, using either local raw materials or imports. When correctly implemented, controls over these activities can fully guarantee Halal food status. They must be well regulated through implementation of clear standards and requirements, and those standards audited by government agencies to ensure compliance with Halal standards.

Firstly, slaughter of animals in slaughterhouses in Saudi Arabia must be by the Islamic method. All slaughterers in Saudi slaughterhouses are already fully aware of these Islamic principles and practices because Saudi regulation of slaughterhouses requires all slaughterers to be Muslims, and to have received special training in Islamic slaughter methods. In Saudi Arabia, officials of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs[32] and the Ministry of Agriculture have the task of ensuring that slaughtering operations fully comply with government requirements. Daily checks on animal slaughter include mandatory pre-slaughter health observations ("ante-mortem inspection") of live animals, as Islamic law (as well as international law) prohibits the processing of dead animals for human consumption, and moreover prevents the slaughter of sick animals (to prevent production of non-Halal meat or meat which may cause harm to consumers). All violations of Islamic slaughter processes in Saudi slaughterhouses are followed by the imposition of various sanctions (including suspension of slaughter activity and fines) by local government authorities.

Secondly, standards of food manufacturing and imported foods require an extensive monitoring programme, such that all manufactured food products in Saudi Arabia (both food products ready for consumption, as well as meat and other raw materials which enter the Kingdom for further processing) must comply with Saudi Halal requirements to be permitted entry into Saudi Arabia for placing on Saudi markets. Therefore, Saudi government agencies, such as the Ministry of Commerce, the Saudi Arabian Standards Organization (SASO), Ministry of Agriculture, and Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA), have important, wide-ranging and onerous tasks to perform. Saudi standards require that all food products and raw materials for food manufacturing (including imported raw materials) hold Halal Certificates from countries of origin, provided by Halal Certification Organizations accredited by the International Islamic Halal Organization (IIHO) to be eligible for entry into Saudi Arabia.

[32] Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs still has a legislative and enforcement role in animal slaughterhouses in Saudi Arabia, but such control will revert to the Saudi Food & Drug Administration (SFDA) in the future.

The International Islamic Halal Organization (IIHO) is considered to be part of the Muslim World League (MWL), which is the official body responsible for the adoption and accreditation of Halal Certification Organizations in exporting countries around the world (according to Saudi Royal Decree No. 5887 issued on 04.28.1426 (H)). It is also assigned the task of coordinating overall supervision of Halal standards within the Muslim World League.

In summary, therefore, the Halal certification process is considered of paramount importance in Saudi Arabia, where it is well organized and fully implemented, according to standards and methodology adopted by the Saudi Arabian Standards Organization (SASO), modified and approved by the GCC Standardization Organization[33] (currently considered to be the Official Authority in the Arabian Gulf States for setting standards). Accreditation of Halal Certification Organizations worldwide is provided by the International Islamic Halal Organization (IIHO), and adoption and verification of Halal Certificates within Saudi Arabia by Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA), which provides legal authority to SFDA Inspectors to accept or reject Halal food certificates within the Saudi Kingdom's borders.

5.2 Halal Certification in the Netherlands

Because of private regulation of Halal food in the Netherlands, this research evaluates the current situation of Halal certification in the Netherlands by interviewing representatives of Halal Certification organizations, in order to provide an overview of those organizations and their activities. These activities are undertaken without controls exercised by any Dutch government agency. Increasing demand for Halal-certified food products around the world is already well documented, and it is clear that Halal food is available from many outlets, such as restaurants, supermarkets and cafés in the Netherlands.

Halal Certification in the Netherlands could be classified as any commercial business with freedom of regulation provided by Halal Certification Organizations. There are about forty such organizations, but only some of them are well known and functioning professionally. These organizations adapt Halal food standards and regulations from international Halal bodies on which to base their own work, and to ensure that their Halal Certificates are accepted in many other countries.

From interviews with Halal Certification Organizations, various similarities and differences between different Halal standards and regulations emerge, dependent upon the origins of

[33] GSO: the Arab Gulf States (GCC) Standardization Organization.

those Halal standards, and because following standards set by those Halal international bodies is more important for them.

Many similarities exist between Halal Certification organizations engaged in Halal regulation, particularly in listing non-Halal foods not permitted for consumption by Muslim consumers because of a clear prohibition in the Holy Book (the *Qur'an*) – this refers to pigs and pork products, blood and blood products, alcohol, carrion, strangled and fatally beaten animals, dead animals which had fallen from a height, horn-butted animals, animals which had been partially devoured by predatory animals, and animals which had been slaughtered and dedicated to any other God than ALLAH. The Islamic Prophet Mohammad also has explained by *Hadith*[34] the procedures and structures of animal slaughter. This information is not capable of any other interpretation or variation by different Islamic schools of thought, as it is an explicit stipulation for Muslim people in the Holy Book (*Qur'an*). However, different Islamic schools of thought originated from peoples who came after the Prophet Mohammad's generation and interpreted his Hadith in different ways. Such different interpretations may impact, for example, on the use of gelatine originating from animals (including pigs in some countries). Some groups believe that gelatine is Halal because it has entered into production chains, leading to its disappearance from the final product, while others believe that the source of gelatine is non-Halal, so its use must not be permitted in Halal food.

There are also wide variations in the overall cost and fees charged for Halal certification amongst Halal certifiers in the Netherlands. Some Halal certifiers charge Food Business Operators (FBO) €50.000 per annum for visiting, factory inspections, process audit, and finally issuing Halal Certificates, while other Halal certifiers may charge other FBOs just €2000 per annum. This wide variation in the costs of Halal Certification could perhaps be considered reasonable, because some Halal Certification Organizations employ large numbers of auditors, who require essential training, travel around the world to track and trace origins of food products or raw materials, and salaries. Other Halal Certification Organizations, by contrast, may employ small numbers of auditors who perhaps travel only in the Netherlands and Belgium.

Food manufacturers and slaughterhouses interested in Halal food production may ask for Halal Certificates acceptable in certain countries in order to export their products to those

[34] Hadiths are the collection of reports of the teachings, deeds and sayings of the Islamic Prophet Mohammad. This term comes from the Arabic language.

particular countries. Thus, those food manufacturers seeking to sell Halal food to Dutch consumers have a great opportunity and many choices of Halal certifiers, because no legal requirement for such certification exists, and choosing a Halal certifier simply depends on the cost which could influence the choice for a Halal certifier. According to the case of Halal meat sales in the Netherlands (Albert Heijn Market), for example, in 2006, Halal meat was placed on the market to serve local Halal meat consumers. However, Animal Rights Organizations objected, because that meat came from animals slaughtered without stunning. The Market was therefore obliged to replace the Halal certifier with another certifier from a Halal Certification Organization which sanctioned the use of electric stunning of animals prior to slaughter. This angered Dutch Muslims, because the Market was accused of selling non-Halal meat as though it were Halal (Havinga, 2010). It is therefore not difficult for food companies to change their Halal certifiers, depending on what standards they prefer. Furthermore, Halal labelling is not obligatory under Dutch law, so consumers have no alternative but to trust that what is claimed to be Halal really is Halal food. According to Article 8 of the General Food Law (GFL)[35] which states that "*Food law shall aim at the protection of the interests of consumers, and shall provide a basis for consumers to make informed choices in relation to the foods they consume. It shall aim to prevent: (a) fraudulent or deceptive practices; (b) adulteration of food; and (c) any other practices which may mislead the consumer"*. So, it is clear in the General Food Law that consumers have the right to be protected from food fraud and anything which misleads, e.g. concerning food products, items labelled as Halal but not fulfilling all Halal requirements, clearly mislead consumers. Also, according to Codex Alimentarius provisions for the use of Halal labelling on food products, in Article 3.1 "*the term Halal can only be used for food considered lawful under Islamic law"*. This guidelines explain that all food products labelled as Halal food must meet all requirements in the Codex Guidelines to be Halal. However, some food products are labelled as Halal, even though non-Halal, are still available on the Dutch Market, but offenders are difficult to pursue legitimately within or outwith Markets, and to prosecute, as such activities are not regulated by Dutch government agencies. No organization could pursue a case such as this, because the prime consideration of food safety is not affected.

Market freedom without Government regulation can create many problems for Halal food consumers in the Netherlands, unless action can be taken by Government food agencies to

[35] REGULATION (EC) No 178/2002 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety (OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 9)

adapt and organize Halal markets. Considering Halal certification in the Netherlands, only three stakeholders currently exist; namely, food companies, Halal certifiers, and Muslim consumers. No Government agencies currently have an interest. The Halal Consumer is thus the weakest stakeholder in the Halal certification "chain", without any protection, because other stakeholders simply seek profit for themselves.

Finally, Dutch Governmental authorities should be persuaded to seek a solution for reorganizing Halal food certification. The Government has tried to resolve this issue, but unfortunately, Halal Certification organizations disagreed, because of variation amongst the different schools of thought in Sharia, and also because large Halal Certification organizations believe themselves to be the Dutch Halal authority (van Waarden and R. van Dalen, 2010). Furthermore, the Dutch government may believe that Halal food on the Dutch market may actually be non-Halal, since the Netherlands Minster of Agriculture sent a letter to the Dutch Parliament, stating that "*Dutch chicken products, sold as Halal or Kosher, may possibly contains pork protein*" (van Waarden and R. van Dalen, 2010). If this is the case, then Dutch Governmental authorities should take stronger action - more than simply adopting recommendations to unify many different Halal certificates into one accredited Halal certificate capable of adoption by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture (Havinga, 2010). These actions could combine regulatory issues from both the Government and the private sector, giving advantages to both sectors, the power through the law from the Government, and the experience and standards from the private sector. However, serious negotiations will be necessary if these problems are to be resolved in collaboration with Halal Certification organizations, leading to the introduction of a new Government Regulation to protect consumers of Halal food, ensuring that the working of Halal Certification organizations is based on Halal standards, and implementing Government control of the Halal trade.

Table (6) Summary of comparison of Halal Certification in Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands

	Saudi Arabia	**The Netherlands**
Halal food	Available	Available
Non-Halal food	Not permitted	Available and permitted
Halal food consumers	Majority of residents	c.925,000 Muslims - 6% of total Dutch population[36]
Relationship between religion and food	Strong relationship	Unrelated based the law
Halal standards and regulation	**Standard No. 993/1998**, for animal slaughter. Requirements according to Islamic Law. **Standard No. 2055-1/2009**, HALAL FOOD Part 1: General Requirements **Standard No.2055-2/2010**, for HALAL FOOD - Part 2: Guidelines for HALAL Food, Certification Bodies, and their Accreditation Requirements.	No Official standards or regulation by Government agencies, but Halal Standards set by private Halal Certification organizations. Halal standards vary dependent on Halal certifiers.
Government agencies involved	SASO, IIHO & SFDA	None
Halal certification bodies	IIHO accredited organization for private Halal Certification organization.	c.40 privately-operated Halal Certification organizations
Control & Enforcement	SFDA	NVWA responsible for safety of food & consumer products.

[36] GATESTONE INSTITUTE, INTERNATIONAL POLICY COUNCIL, http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/4129/islamization-belgium-netherlands 2013.

Points of comparison shown in the table above originating from Sections 5.1 and 5.2 above - illustrate that halal food is well known and has consumers in both countries and there are wide differences which currently exists between the halal certification in Saudi Arabia which is formal by the government agencies , well established, well enforced, and well audited procedures for Halal Certification, and by contrast, the Halal Certification in the Netherlands is controlled by the private halal organizations without protect by the Government agencies in the Netherlands.

5.3 Conclusion

Halal food can be defined as food which is permissible for consumption by Muslims. This concept of Halal food in both Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands is the same in general for their Muslim consumers, who believe that Halal food is more important for them because it is part of Islam. Halal certification is performed by professional experts working in this field to check food manufacturing factories and slaughterhouses, to ensure that they apply Halal standards and requirements. In Sections 5.1 and 5.2, differences between Halal food certification in Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands are discussed. Halal foods are needed on the Saudi market, whether produced by domestic food companies or imported from other countries, necessitating Saudi legislation for Halal regulation and standards. There are differences between Halal certification in Saudi Arabia and those in the Netherlands, because Saudi Regulations and standards governing Halal food certification and policies for controlling, monitoring and auditing these Halal procedures are the full responsibility of Saudi Government agencies. Official controls by Saudi Government agencies include the organization of Halal markets for the protection of consumers. By contrast, Halal certification in the Netherlands is left in the hands of private Halal food organizations which deal with Halal food in a purely commercial manner by Halal certifiers and Food Companies, with little care or thought for consumers.

The Netherlands is a freedom country where there is separation between Church and State. Muslims in the Netherlands have arrived there from different countries with different Islamic schools of thought, contributing to the wide diversity seen amongst the Muslim community. Therefore, the effects of such differences between Islamic schools of thought appear in many scenarios, including Halal food. These differences affect Halal food certification by making some groups believe that some food products and food manufacturing practices are, or perhaps are not, Halal, while other groups take a different view. Therefore, these differences

between Halal food certification and unclear regulation of Halal food in the Netherlands, contributed in one way or another to the lack of organization of the Halal market, and may mislead Halal consumers in the domestic market. Furthermore, this lack of regulation also contributes to some Dutch companies being refused or denied export opportunities, but the big challenge of Halal business in the Netherlands which is a big market, it is getting more care and regulation by the Dutch Government, could be encouraged to organize and better develop itself in future.

5.4. Recommendations

1- Further research is needed to assist in the rational development and application of Halal certification procedures in the Netherlands.

2- Further research into Halal fraud in the Netherlands should be conducted to identify its extent and scale.

From this comparative study, regulatory procedures for Halal food certification in the Netherlands are necessary for Halal consumer protection from misleading certification, with input from the Dutch government and cooperation from Halal Certification organizations, may re-organize and regulate Halal certification gradually in the following way:-

1- All Halal Certification Organizations in the Netherlands must be required to register with the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA)[37], an organization dealing with food products in all other aspects.

2- Each Halal Certification Organization must register and document its Halal requirements, standards, Halal certificates and Halal labelling, and for retaining its Halal certification and organisational rights.

3- All Halal Certification Organizations must be required to place all relevant documented information - such as names, addresses, locations, specific requirements, Halal standards, Halal Certificates, and Halal Labelling - on an official website easily accessible to food companies and food consumers alike, ensuring a freedom of choice of Halal certification organizations.

[37] The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA)is responsible for monitoring animal & plant health, animal welfare, safety of food & consumer products, and for enforcing nature laws. https://www.nvwa.nl/

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7. HALAL FOOD CERTIFICATION INERVIEW

7.1. Total Quality Halal Correct Certification Foundation in the Netherlands (Halal Correct)

This interview was organized after contact with "Halal Correct" by email, and introduces myself and explained my project. It took place on 4 February 2015 in the main office in Leiden, The Netherlands, with Mr. Abdulfatah Ali Salah (Chairman of Halal Correct Certification). Interview questions were answered and further explanation given by Mr. Salah about Halal Food Certification in this country. Halal Correct Certification is a non-profit organization established in 1995, with its headquarters in the Netherlands, and another branch in France.

Answers to interview questions are set out as follows:

1- **What are the requirements for starting procedures for Halal certification**?
There are no special requirements for starting a Halal Certification Company in the Netherlands. It begins as a commercial Company seeking registration in a Chamber of Commerce. Also, it must register as a non-profit organization because it helps Muslim people find Halal food products meeting Islamic dietary law.

2- **What are the primary procedures for Halal Certification**?
When a food manufacturer or slaughterhouse is planning to produce Halal food or Halal meat, it should first make contact with "Halal Correct" and apply on-line. It will receive a call from Halal Correct with more details of their requirements for Halal food production. If the applicant Food Company accepts and approves Halal Correct requirements, an initial visit will be organized by Halal Correct auditors to decide whether or not that Company can or cannot produce halal food. If the Company's production facilities do not meet the requirements, Halal Correct auditors will request amendments, in order to allow the process of certification to continue at this stage. It takes time, depending on the food company's priorities. When Halal requirements have been met by the Food Company, a team of auditors will visit the premises, and make a visible inspection. Thereafter, a Halal Certification Contract will be written and signed. This contract includes creating a team of internal Halal auditors who will be staff officially appointed by that Company's management, to coordinate implementation of Halal production standards. The Internal Halal Audit (IHA) team will be trained by Halal Correct auditors. A Schedule of visits will be proposed, depending on "risk categorization". Halal Correct certification classifies its clients based on risk categories for food products as follows:

Risk Category	Products	Frequency of Visits
High	Red Meat & poultry during Slaughter	Daily
Medium	Spices	Once a week
Law	Sugar, Powder, Coffee	3-4 times a year

3- **What kinds of Companies apply for Halal Certification**?

Various types of Food Companies seek Halal Certification, such as dairy companies, meat and processed meat products Companies, spices and flavours Companies, etc. At present, Halal Correct has more than 70 food companies and slaughterhouse clients.

4- **What documents and information are required for Halal Certification**?

Halal Correct certification asks for all information about food products manufactured and methods of production with flow charts, even secret recipes to ensure that every substance used is Halal. When producing non-Halal food products alongside Halal production lines, cleaning and disinfection documents and records are also required. Finally, food safety and food quality documents (such as ISO and HACCP) will also be required.

5- How long does it take to obtain Halal Certification approval, and how long is it valid?

Halal Certification procedures normally require between two and eight weeks, depending on the speed by which a company can achieve all necessary conditions for Halal production. The minimum contract for Halal Certification is one year, and certificates remain valid during the contract period.

6- Who is responsible for Halal inspection in the various Companies? How many inspectors are needed, and what educational level must they bring to the job?

A Halal Correct certification team consists of two groups. The first team will be a technical team, comprising six auditors with educational backgrounds in chemistry, food safety, engineering, and veterinary medicine. They have the responsibility for inspecting companies. The second team will consist of two men with expert knowledge of Islamic scientific law and Islamic jurisprudence. It will be their responsibility to research and give opinions from the Islamic law perspective. All members of the technical team must have received training and attended courses in Halal inspection.

7- **What kinds of international/national Regulations and standards are used in Halal Certification**?

Halal Correct certification is a member of the World Halal Council (**WHC**)[38], and applies its requirements for Halal standards.

8- **Is your halal organization accredited by an Accreditation Body? If so, what is its name**?

Halal Correct is accredited by MUI Indonesia, MUIS Singapore, and JAKIM Malaysia.

9- **Why did you choose this Accreditation Body**?

[38] WHC: The World Halal Council (WHC) was established in Indonesia in 1999, which can be a federation of halal certifying bodies worldwide that has international acceptance to their halal certification and accreditation processes. It aims to standardize the halal certification and accreditation process different countries and nationalities worldwide. http://www.worldhalalcouncil.com

Because it is reputable, well-known and acceptable in many countries, which thus allows its clients' Halal food products to be sold worldwide.

10- **How often is your organization visited and inspected by the Accreditation Body**?
The Accreditation Body visits Halal Correct once a year.

11- **Do the General Guidelines for using the term "Halal" by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC/GL 24-1997) have an impact on Halal Certification**?
Codex Guidelines have tried to support Halal food businesses, but unfortunately without success, because they merely introduced the use of the term "Halal" but without defining, organizing or protecting it; for example, the term "Halal", as used in Europe, can still simply be registered as a trademark.

12- **What are the inherent problems of a Halal Certification system**?
Problems are unfortunately many. Halal fraud is widespread because no controls are exercised by Government Agencies. Some Halal Certification bodies do not apply minimum Halal standards, but simply apply a Halal logo to food products which do not qualify for it, thus misleading Muslim consumers.

13- **What do you want from Netherlands Government Agencies in the organization of the Halal market**?
Netherlands Government Agencies should control and regulate the Halal food industry by placing information on their official websites about all Halal food certification organizations in this country, including their standards, certified food products, and Halal logos, in order to ensure that Halal consumers can confidently choose their halal products.

7.2. Halal Quality Control (HQC)

This interview was organized after telephone contact with Halal Quality Control (HQC) when I introduced myself and explained the project. This took place on 6 March 2015 in the main office in The Hague, The Netherlands, with Mr. A.M. Al-Chaman (Chairman of Halal Quality Control), and Mr. Iyad Al-Jendi (General Manager). The interview questions were answered, and more explanation and discussion given by Mr. Al-Chaman and Mr. Al-Jendi about Halal food certification history and their challenges in the Netherlands.

HQC is a non-profit organization established in 1997 in the Netherlands. It is a separate department from the Control Office of Halal Slaughtering (COHS), which was founded in 1980 by Mr. Al-Chaman to direct and control Halal slaughtering methods in the Netherlands. Mr. Al Chaman said "he started his business in the halal certification after the exporter meat scandal happened between Saudi Arabia with Arab countries and the Netherlands in 1978, the Dutch meat exporters send meat products which contains pork products to Saudi Arabia and the Saudi detect the meat and found the pork products which made the Netherlands in blacklisting from Meddle East countries for a while."HQC aims to provide control, inspection and certification of Halal products in the Netherlands and other European countries, in order to provide for consumption by Muslims and export to Muslim countries. HQC is a member of World Halal Council (WHC), an international Halal organization well-known in the Halal market.

These were the replies to interview questions:

1- What are the requirements for establishing a Halal Certification organization?
This depends on regulation in the Netherlands. There are no special requirements for establishing a Company responsible for providing Halal certification. Its starting point is a commercial company registered in a Chamber of Commerce.

2- What are the Primary Processes for Halal Certification?
Halal certification for slaughterhouses - This cannot be provided for pig slaughter and also cannot include any parts of slaughterhouses (such as cooling rooms) where pigs and pig products may be stored. All slaughterers must be Muslims, and have a sound knowledge of slaughtering within Islamic law.

Halal Certification of slaughterhouses must observe the following procedures:

- Documentation - is the first step towards certification by submission of a complete contact form (Halal Application form for a slaughterhouse) to the Control Office of Halal Slaughtering (COHS).
- Pre-audit - done by HQC auditors in order to evaluate a slaughterhouse.
- Pre-assessment - evaluates and assesses the capability of a slaughterhouse to produce Halal products.
- After determining the capability of a slaughterhouse and its Halal production, a written offer should be issued seeking a signature.

- During this step, the slaughterhouse must provide HQC with more documentation and information, including records of cleaning procedures, feeding and animal welfare, handling of livestock instruments and tools, Halal slaughterers, production, storage, labelling, and transportation.
- Regarding slaughterers, HQC will assess them, and then make a training programme, depending on their experience, to be recognized as Halal slaughterers by COHS.
- A Halal slaughterhouse contract will be issued between the slaughterhouse and HQC. This will slaughterhouse information, costs, services provided, Halal policy and standards, rules and rights of COHS to supervise and visit regularly (both scheduled and unannounced), production flows and flow chart, sharing and maintaining confidentiality of information between the two parties, proving all information about safety and quality systems, such as IOS, HACCP[39], BRC and IFS.
- Final assessment - done by a technical committee and chairman. An Islamic committee is to be consulted, if need be.
- A Halal Certificate - issued to confirm that meat and meat products comply with Halal food standards. It is valid for a year.
- Halal Assurance System (HAC) - a recognized system consisting of Halal rules and standards, set by HQC, to be observed and implemented by the slaughterhouse, in order to continue producing Halal products. HAS should be implemented by the slaughterhouse within six months of certification, and is compulsory.
- Slaughterhouse Certification involves three important players; namely, slaughterers, working for a slaughterhouse, and a full knowledge of Halal slaughtering.
- The nominated supervisor, working in the Company, providing supervision and observation of slaughterers working there, having daily contact with HQC, and delivering information to HQC, depending on certification contractual requirements. When something adverse happens during production time, he will contact HQC directly.
- An HQC monitor visits the slaughterhouse three to five times per week, with a special permit to enter directly into the slaughtering area.

Halal Certification for Processed Products - includes food products, cosmetic products, flavours and water. Procedures for Halal Certification of such food products are as follows:

- Documentation is the first step in applying for Halal certification by submission of a complete contact form, Halal Application form, confidentiality agreement, a list of all ingredients with their Supplier Specification documents, together with test results for each product, showing chemical, physical and microbiological properties of final products to the Halal Quality Control (HQC).
- Pre-Assessment of ingredients: This step for evaluate all ingredients if it is halal or not, and to check if the production process can make potential changes in ingredients, also to evaluate the halal certificates for ingredients if is it available.

[39] HACCP: Hazard analysis and critical control points is food safety management system.

- In the case of ingredients with Halal certificates, there are three options for dealing with such certificates: (1) accept, if the Halal certificates are issued by a Halal certifier which is a member of the World Halal Food Council (WBHC); (2) accept, but needs approval to be audited if the Halal certifier is not member of WHC; or (3) reject, requiring a new Halal certificate.
- Pre-audit of the premises in order to make an assessment and evaluation.
- Pre-assessment - in this step, the premises will be evaluated in order to check its capability of producing Halal products.
- After evaluation, HQC sends a letter of evaluation, with advice to the Company, explaining any necessary changes requested, and what its effect on process costs and hazards is likely to be.
- An HQC offer of Halal Certification should be sent to the Food Company, agreeing to start Halal Certification.
- The food premises must provide complete information about cleaning, production, labelling, transportation, recognized Halal Certificates, and Critical Points.
- Training Halal Supervisors must take place within the Food Company, to ensure continuous production of Halal products. HQC offers one month of such training during supervision by HQC auditors.
- A Halal Certification Contract will then be made between HQC and a Food Company. This must include all relevant details, such as plant, costs, service provided, Halal policy and standards, ingredient and supplier matrix, rights for HQC auditors for non-scheduled visits, production flow chart, and food safety management system, such as ISO and HACCP. The food company should also inform HQC about any changes in suppliers, ingredients, and even creating a new product which may affect Halal production (this may not be used until HQC written permission has been obtained).
- A Halal certificate is issued when all requirement and standards have been achieved by the Food Company.
- Halal Assurance System (HAS) is a recognized system consisting of Halal rules and standards set by HQC, to be followed by Food Companies in order to continue producing Halal products. HAS should be implemented by a Food Company within six months of certification, and is compulsory.

A Visiting Schedule for food manufacturers and slaughterhouses to ensure compliance depends on the food products themselves. Risk categories are as follows:

Risk Category	**Products**	**Number of Visits**
High	Meat and poultry during Slaughtering	Daily
Medium	Spices, vitamins, flavours, chocolate	1-4 times a month
Law	Sugar, milk, milk products, water	1-3 times per year

Sometimes, visit frequency depends on the degree of complexity for producing a food product; for example, for water production, processes are very simple, permitting a very low-risk categorization, thus requiring only one visit a year. However, in cases where a Food Company has a non-Halal food production line running next to a Halal food production line, it must be categorized as "high-risk" because of the possibility of cross- contamination.

3- What kinds of Companies may apply for Halal Certification?

Various food companies seek Halal certification, e.g., dairy companies, meat and meat product companies, spices and flavours companies, water, etc. At present, HQC has more than 200 clients in Europe, including 100 food and slaughterhouse clients in the Netherlands.

4- What documents and information are required for Halal Certification?

The following must be completed and sent to HQC - the complete information about the Company and its products; a Confidentiality Agreement; all ingredient suppliers, feed ingredients for slaughter animals; layout plan of Company facilities; a production "flow-chart", and information regarding food product transportation. In instances where non-Halal food products are manufactured beside Halal production lines, cleaning and disinfection documents are required. Food safety and quality documents (such as those relating to HACCP and quality management) are also required.

5- How long does it take to achieve approval of Halal Certification, and how long is it valid?

The Halal Certification process takes between one and five months. It depends on how fast the Company can achieve all the conditions required for Halal production. The minimum contract for Halal Certification is from one to five years, and Halal Certificates remain valid during that contract period.

6- Who is responsible for providing Halal inspection in those companies? How many inspectors would be required, and what level of education should they have?

There are 16 auditors working with HQC, including seven in the Netherlands, three in Germany, and six in France. The minimum education level requirement is a Bachelor degree. An audit team will include different specializations, such as a chemistry, food safety, engineering, and veterinary medicine educational background, and these will have responsibility for inspecting Companies. Furthermore, Islamic consultants are available to research and provide an opinion about Halal matters from their perspective. All members of an audit team should have attended training courses in Halal inspection. In the case of new Halal standards and/or regulation by international authorities, a training course must be provided by them to Halal auditors.

7- What kinds of International/National Regulations and standards are to be used in Halal certification?

HQC is member of the World Halal Council (WHC), and applies its requirements for Halal standards.

8- Is your organization accredited by any International Accreditation body? If so, by which body?

HQC is accredited by MUI Indonesia, MUIS Singapore, JAKIM Malaysia, GCC, and Dubai authority.

9- Why did you choose this particular Accreditation body?

Because its Regulations and standards are accepted in many countries, thus giving its clients the opportunity to sell Halal food products worldwide.

10- How many times a year does the Accreditation body visit your organization?

The Accreditation body checks for correct Halal Certification once a year.

11- Are the general guidelines for using of the term "Halal" by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC/GL 24-1997) appropriate for Halal Certification?

Mr Al-Chaman said, *"The Codex Guidelines for Halal are clear and define Halal very well, but the problem is not enough to protect Halal food and to encourage other international authorities to support and work in this guidelines".*

12- What problems are inherent in the Halal Certification system?

There are many problems. Halal fraud is widespread because there is no control by Government Agencies. Some Halal Certification bodies do not apply minimum Halal standards, and sometimes issue a Halal logo for non-Halal food products, thus misleading Halal consumers. The Halal logo is not protected, and does not therefore genuinely confirm the application of Halal status. Some restaurants in the Netherlands use the Halal logo in pork products to mislead and cheat consumers. There are also fake Halal food products on the market.

13- What assistance do you need from Netherlands Government Agencies to organize the Halal market?

Mr Al-Chaman said, *"We had informed Netherlands Government Agencies about some Chinese restaurants selling pork meat as Halal meat with a Halal logo, but unfortunately, the Government took no action - thus confirming that the word "Halal" is not protected."*

Mr Al-Jendi added, "*The halal food logo should be protected by the Government, so that food products and food premises cannot be permitted to use a Halal food logo without Halal certification from well-known, reputable certifiers"* Also said,*"we are not going to trust the new halal laws set by the government because it may allow non-Muslims to enter into Halal market."*

7.3. Halal International Control (HIC)

This interview was organized after several telephone contact and some emails with Halal International Control (HIC), because they said there were busy and did not understand my mission. This was why they initially refused this interview, but after a direct telephone conversation with Mr. Wahid Ramdjan - when I introduced myself and explained the project, he then agreed that this interview could take place.

It eventually took place on 3 April 2015 in the main office in Zoetermeer, Netherlands, with Mr. Wahid Ramdjan (Chairman of Halal International Control), and Mrs. Ramdjan (his wife and the General Manager), together with and his daughter and son who work as auditors.

The interview started with an explanation of my Project Objectives, as well as the reason for my choice of their company for my interview. Mr Wahid first gave a short history of this Company, prior to the commencement of the interview questions. He explained that "the *Ramdjan family are Muslims originally from Pakistan. They were butchers working in slaughterhouses and with meat products. In 1960, the Ramdjan family came to the Netherlands, when Halal meat was not known*". In 1978, the first Islamic slaughterhouse had been established in the Netherlands by Mr. Wahid Ramdjan in a part of a Kosher slaughterhouse because there were similarities between Kosher and Halal slaughter procedures. By 1980, demand for Halal meat had increased and Mr. Ramdjan could not handle all orders for Halal meat, so he asked a food company to produce Halal meat products for his customers according to his requirements and under his supervision. At that time, Mr. Ramdjan created his own Halal standard and requirements from his own experience, to make clear that food companies should observe and follow his Halal standards. By 1982, Halal International Control commenced as a Halal Certification body to support, provide inspection, control, and audit of Food Companies which were willing to produce Halal food products. This Halal Certification Organization was a model of a family company with family members who worked in the Halal market through their experiences, without studying any special courses in Halal Inspection or Food Safety. Halal International Control (HIC) company services cover small numbers of Food Companies in the Netherlands and part of Belgium. HIC could offer Halal Certification for one period on a specific day's production, leading to Halal Certificates valid for one year of Halal food production. HIC aims to provide control, inspection and certification of Halal products in the Netherlands and Belgium, in order to provide Halal food products for consumption by Muslims.

Replies to interview questions were as follow:

1- What are the requirements for establishing an organization for Halal Certification?
Depends on Regulations in the Netherlands. There are no special requirements for establishing an organization responsible for providing Halal certification. Its starting point would be a commercial Company registered in a Chamber of Commerce.

2- What are the Primary Processes for Halal certification?

International Halal control is nowadays mainly about certifying Food Companies and Manufacturers, without focussing on Halal slaughterhouses. Halal certification of food manufacturers follows these procedures:

- First Step: A Company interested in Halal certification through HIC must first register by completing application forms, and sending them to the HIC.
- The application form contains questions on administrative data, the nature and operation of that Company, which permits access by HIC to administrative data processing, allowing HIC to develop a general idea about the applicability of Halal Certification. The form also includes business information, making it possible to verify the authenticity of the Company.
- Registration is not binding, but is simply to allow evaluation of the capability of the Company in applying Halal standards to its production of Halal food products. The administrative cost of Registration is charged once.
- Second Step: Acceptance of the application forms is followed by an interview which can take place at either HIC Offices or at the Company. The purpose of the interview by HIC is to provide the customer with more information about Halal certification in general, and the methods of HIC in particular. It also gives the potential customer an opportunity to ask questions and get an idea of the feasibility and "added value" of Halal certification.
- Third Step: After the interview, any potential customer has to consider the freedoms of Halal certification. If the customer agrees to certification, a contract must be signed. With this contract signed, HIC will start the Halal Certification process, including both slaughter and production.
- Fourth Step – Review of Documents: After signing the contract, HIC will review all documents for food products and ingredients, to ensure that there are no non-Halal substances in the ingredients. In this case, the company must submit a Formal Declaration of ingredients on Company Business paper. Its contents must comply with the Regulations, and be signed by an authorized representative. Supplier information and documents should be submitted by the Company to facilitate traceability of raw materials, if that is considered necessary. If all ingredients are Halal-certified, HIC will check that with the Halal certifier for validity and reliability. In conclusion, a Final Report will be issued by HIC after reviewing all relevant documents to assess the capability of the Company to produce Halal food.
- Fifth step - Audit: After reviewing the products, ingredient declarations, commodities, statements and Halal certificates, HIC will conduct a Halal audit of the Company's production. The purpose of this audit is to ensure that production processes comply with Halal standards and requirements. HIC will apply and review Halal Critical Control Points (HCCP) to confirm Halal production. Lastly, the Audit Report will be delivered to the Company. It will include the findings and recommendations for Halal production. The Company will then have time to make any necessary adjustments to meet Halal criteria, after which HIC will perform a second audit to verify that the necessary adjustments have been done.

- Sixth step - Certification: HIC will issue a Halal certificate to the Company after successfully completing the certification process. Certificates are usually valid for one year, and can be automatically renewed after further audit. HIC provide different types of halal certificates:
  1- Halal Certificate for slaughterhouses;
  2- Halal Products Certificate - issued only for Halal-certified products;
  3- Halal Batch Certificate - issued only for any specific batch or production run;
  4- Halal Business Certificate - issued after inspection of a "business process" used only for Halal production in, for example, restaurants and cafes.
- All Halal food products certified by HIC must carry the HIC Halal Logo (an HIC "trade mark").
- The Schedule of visiting food manufacturers to ensure compliance with Halal standards is not applicable.
- HIC allowed the slaughtering of stunned animals because they think it is help for bleeding.

3- What kinds of Companies may apply for Halal Certification?

Various food companies seek Halal Certification, e.g., dairy companies, meat and meat product companies, spices and flavours companies. HIC has 35 clients in the Netherlands and Belgium.

4- What documents and information are required for Halal Certification?

The following documentation should be completed and sent to HIC – (a) the complete information about the Company and its products; (b) a confidentiality agreement; (c) a list of all ingredient suppliers, and (d) a Production Flow Chart. In instances where non-Halal food products are also manufactured alongside Halal production lines, details of cleaning and disinfection documents are also required.

5- How long does it take to achieve approval of Halal Certification, and how long is it valid?

The Halal Certification process takes between one and three months. It depends on how quickly a Company can achieve all the conditions required for certified Halal production. There are different types of Halal Certificates; for example, Halal Products, Halal Batch products, and Halal Business.

6- Who is responsible for providing Halal inspection in those companies? How many inspectors would be required, and what level of education should they have?

Because HIC is a family company, Mr. Wahid and his daughter can work as auditors, and also sometimes HIC can ask for audit help from an auditor who works with HIC "part-time". HIC auditors must use their experience for inspecting and certifying food companies.

7- What kinds of International/National Regulations and standards are to be used in Halal certification?

HIC is not currently interested in applying international Halal standards, because all its Halal food production certified by HIC is for local consumers in the Netherlands and Belgium and HIC use the halal standards which made Mr. Wahid based on his practical experience. In case of clients who may need a Halal Certificate for export to Muslim countries, then HIC could obtain help from other Halal Certification bodies.

8- Is your organization accredited by any International Accreditation body? If so, by which body?

Mr. Wahid Ramdjan said "*we don't need to be accredited by an International Halal organization, because they are simply looking for the Membership Fees, while not concentrating on Halal standards"*

9- **Why did you choose this particular Accreditation body?** Not applicable.

10- **How many times a year does the Accreditation body visit your organization?** Not applicable.

11- Are the general guidelines for using of the term "Halal" by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC/GL 24-1997) appropriate for Halal Certification? - Not applicable.

12- What problems are inherent in the Halal Certification system?

There are many problems. Halal fraud is widespread because no control by Government agencies exists.

13- What assistance do you need from Netherlands Government Agencies to organize the Halal market?

Mr. Wahid Ramdjan said, *"We need Netherlands Government Agencies to protect our special Halal market by issuing Regulations which enable all Muslims in the Netherlands to trust Halal food in the market and to feel confident to eat such food".*

7.4. Halal Feed and Food Inspection Authority (HFFIA)

This interview was organized after telephone contact with the Halal Feed and Food Inspection Authority (**HFFIA**) when I introduced myself and explained the project. It took place on 4/2/2015 in the Main Office in The Hague, The Netherlands, with Mr. Mohammad Almohamadi, who is Senior Auditor in HFFIA. The interview questions were answered, and more explanation given by Mr. Almohamadi about Halal Food Certification in the Netherlands. HFFIA is a non-profit organization which was established in 1994 in the Netherland. Its aim is the control, inspection and certification of Halal products, and its service covers many European countries. HFFIA is under the guidance and jurisdiction of the Majlis Al-Ifta, Europe.

Replies to interview questions were as follow:

1- What are the requirements for establishing an organization for Halal Certification?
Depends on regulation in the Netherlands, There are no special requirements to establish a Halal Certification company. Its starting point is a commercial company registered in a Chamber of Commerce.

2- What are the Primary Processes for Halal certification?
In cases of requests for halal certification at slaughterhouses: it cannot be for pig slaughter

products are stored. The slaughterers must be Muslims, and have a sound knowledge of slaughtering within Islamic law. Auditors of HFFIA will undertake a pre-accreditation assessment to evaluate the capability of a slaughterhouse's application of Halal standards. Regarding Halal processing at slaughterhouses, Mr. Almohamdi said, "*It is easy - and not a big problem - for auditors and slaughterhouse management, because there are not many processes where Halal certification is applicable, and where clear requirements apply at only a few steps*". After all Halal requirements are achieved by a slaughterhouse, Halal certificates can be issued. The inspection visit will be daily during slaughtering times. Halal Certificates will be valid for a period of between one and five years.

In cases of food manufacturing, he said that *"it is more complicated and risky, because it is necessary to know and trace the precise origin of all substances in every food product"*. The process begins by receipt of a request from a food company which wishes to produce Halal food products. HFFIA does not certify food companies which produce pork products, even if it has its own separate production line, because of the risk of cross- contamination. Halal food standards conditions require a food company to know its Halal standards. The pre- approval assessment visit will be done by three auditors to evaluate a company's facilities, and may request amendments, in order to facilitate production of Halal food. If the food company agrees to implement all requirements of Halal, a contract will be signed between HFFIA and the food company, where the contract includes maintaining confidentiality of information between the two parties, and also the agreement of the food company to provide all material assistance when auditors need it. Furthermore, the company should provide to HFFIA all information about the raw materials suppliers (as HFFIA has the right to inspect such suppliers). In cases where a food company wishes to create a novel food product, the food

company must receive the HFFIA approval for it. This phase of Halal Certification takes time for a food company to comply with all requirements for Halal standards. When such requirements have been met by the food company, it applies for a visit by HFFIA auditors to do a final check before granting approval. Halal inspections include all the entire food production chain from raw materials, preparation, processing, packaging, storage and transportation, as well as cleaning procedures in cases where non-Halal food products are manufactured. The Halal Certificate will be valid for five years. The schedule for visiting food manufacturers and slaughterhouses to ensure compliance depends on the food products and the categories of risk as follows:

Risk category	Products	Number of visits
High	Meat and poultry during Slaughtering	Daily
Medium	Spices, vitamins, flavours, chocolate	Once a month
Law	Sugar, milk, milk products	4-6 times per year

3- What kinds of companies apply for Halal Certification?

Various food companies are seeking Halal Certification, e.g., dairy companies, meat and meat product companies, spices and flavours companies, etc. At present, HFFIA has more than 200 clients (food companies and slaughterhouses).

4- What documents and information are required for Halal Certification?

The following documentations should be completed and sent to HFFIA:- the complete information about the company and its products; a confidentiality agreement: all ingredient suppliers, feed ingredients for slaughter animals; plan of company facilities; a production flow chart, and information regarding food product transportation. In instances where non- Halal food products are manufactured beside Halal production lines, the cleaning and disinfection documents are required. Food safety and quality documents such as those relating to HACCP and quality management are also required.

5- How long does it take to achieve approval of Halal Certification? How long is it valid?

The Halal Certification process takes between two and eight weeks. It depends on how fast the company can achieve all the conditions required for Halal production. The minimum contract for Halal Certification is five years, and Halal Certificates remain valid during the contract period.

6- Who is responsible for providing Halal inspection in those companies? How many inspectors would be required, and what level of education should they have?

There are 24 auditors who are working with HFFIA, and the minimum education level requirement is bachelor degree. The auditor's team includes different specification such as, chemistry, food safety, engineering, and veterinary medicine education background, and *they* have responsibilities of inspection companies. Furthermore, there are Islamic consultants to search and give their opinion about halal matters from their prospective. All the member of

auditors team should have training and courses in halal inspection, and also HFFIA have weekly meeting for Islamic law courses to educate their technical team in halal regulation form legal prospective.

7- What kinds of International/National Regulations and standards are to be used in Halal certification?

HFFIA is member of the World Halal Council (WHC), and applies its requirements for Halal standards. HFFIA is under the guidance and jurisdiction of the Majlis Al-Ifta Europe, which determines the rules and regulations to be implemented by the HFFIA.

8- Is your organization accredited by any International Accreditation body? If so, by which body?

HFFIA is accredited by MUI Indonesia, MUIS Singapore, JAKIM Malaysia, GCC, and Dubai authority.

9- Why did you choose this particular Accreditation body?

Because its Regulations and standards are accepted in many countries, thus giving its clients the opportunity to sell Halal food products worldwide.

10- How many times a year does the Accreditation body visit your organization?

The Accreditation body checks for correct Halal Certification once a year.

11- Are the general guidelines for using of the term "Halal" by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC/GL 24-1997) appropriate for Halal Certification?

Unfortunately, there is no interest in Codex Halal Guidelines in a Halal food business.

12- What problems are inherent in the Halal Certification system?

There are many problems. Halal fraud is widespread because there is no control by Governmental Agencies. Some Halal Certification bodies do not apply minimum Halal standards, and give a Halal logo to non-Halal food products which thus misleads Halal consumers. The Halal logo is not protected, and does not therefore confirm the application of Halal status.

13- What assistance do you need from Netherlands Government Agencies to organize the Halal market?

Mr Almohamdi said, "*We don't expect or need any interference from Government bodies in the Netherlands because we are working in professional ways, and are well known in the Halal market. Customers who wish to produce Halal food come to us*".