



# NEW ZEALAND EXPORT HALAL SCHEME

Scheme Owner Expectations for AHOs and Periodic  
Assessments

The Ministry for Primary Industries

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

- 1) The purpose of this accreditation scheme ('the New Zealand Export Halal Scheme) is to provide the requirements for certification bodies seeking to be recognised as Approved Halal Organisations [AHO] under the 'Animal Products Notice: General Export Requirements for Halal Animal Material and Halal Animal Products' (Halal Meat Notice) and 'Animal Products Notice: General Export Requirements for Halal Dairy Material and Halal Dairy Products' (Halal Dairy Notice). The above Notices will be referred to as 'Halal Export Notices' going forward in this document.
- 2) The New Zealand Export Halal Scheme will clarify the **scheme owner's** (i.e. the Ministry for Primary Industries' [MPI]) expectations of **Halal certification bodies** (i.e. AHOs) for halal certification activities and periodic assessments. This will help the **scheme manager** (i.e. the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand [JAS-ANZ]) conduct their assessments and audits so that the AHOs can receive and retain the AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17065: 2013 accreditation.

## 1.2 Scope

- 1) The New Zealand Export Halal Scheme contains the requirements/expectations for accredited AHOs to certify product intended to be labelled as halal by the operator and supplied to consumers in overseas markets.
- 2) The specified material and products in the Notices include the following:
  - a) meat and meat products derived from halal species,
  - b) non-dairy animal fats and oils derived from halal species,
  - c) gelatine derived from halal species,
  - d) poultry meat and poultry meat products, and
  - e) dairy material and dairy products.
- 3) Material and product outside the scope of the Notices are:
  - a) animal material, animal products, dairy material, or dairy products that are only intended for domestic consumption, and
  - b) dietary supplements containing animal or dairy material for export.
- 4) Transitional arrangements apply for persons already recognised as being competent halal slaughter persons, premises already deemed to be approved slaughter premises, and organisations deemed to be approved halal organisations.

## 1.3 Normative References

- 1) [Animal Products Act 1999.](#)
- 2) [Animal Products Notice: General Export Requirements for Halal Animal Material and Halal Animal Products.](#)
- 3) [Animal Products Notice: General Export Requirements for Halal Dairy Material and Halal Dairy Products.](#)
- 4) AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17065:2013 Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services.
- 5) IAF MD 4:2018 – IAF Mandatory Document for the Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes.
- 6) JAS-ANZ Policy 3/13. Providing conformity assessment in countries without the country's relevant authority's approval.

## 1.4 Definitions

- 1) For the purposes of this Scheme document, the below terms and phrases have these assigned meanings. All other terms used in this document shall have the applicable meanings assigned to them in either the Animal Products Act 1999, the relevant Halal Export Notice or the AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17065:2013 standard.

### **Acceptable outcome**

An acceptable outcome is achieved when an AHO is satisfied that:

- the operator is substantially complying with all applicable requirements in the Halal Export Notices, and where there have not been any departures from those requirements, the operator's corrective actions have been, or are, appropriate and effective.

### **Animal Products Act**

The Animal Products Act 1999.

### **Animal Products Notice: General Export Requirements for Halal Animal Material and Halal Animal Products**

This Notice is issued under the Animal Products Act and specifies the requirements that must be met in order for animal material and animal products to be eligible to be labelled as halal when exported; or for export with a halal certificate.

### **Animal Products Notice: General Export Requirements for Halal Dairy Material and Halal Dairy Products**

This Notice is issued under the Animal Products Act and specifies the requirements that must be met in order for dairy material and dairy products to be eligible to be labelled as halal when exported; or for export with a halal certificate.

### **Annual Periodic Assessment Plan**

A plan which sets out what and how the AHO will cover site periodic assessment activities of all halal premises to which it is contracted to provide certification services.

### **AP E-cert**

The Animal Products Electronic Certification System of MPI specified for the raising and issuing of export declarations, halal certificates, official assurances and transfer documents.

### **Approved Halal Organisation (AHO)**

An Islamic organisation approved and listed by the Director-General of the Ministry for Primary Industries under Part 6 of the Notices and includes deemed AHOs under Parts 11 or 13 of the Notices (i.e., a 'certification body' under AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17065:2013).

### **Assessment of Halal Premises**

The evaluation activities required to determine whether a halal premises is conforming with its approved halal programme(s). The activities include an inspection of the site to determine its compliance with the approved halal programme(s) and that premises have appropriate standard operating procedures for fulfilling notified country specific halal requirements for markets the products are intended to be supplied to.

**Assessment of Halal Programmes**

The evaluation activities required to determine whether a halal programme owned by a halal premises meet the requirements of the applicable Halal Export Notices.

**Assessment of Competent Halal Slaughter Persons**

The activities required to determine whether persons authorised by a halal premises to slaughter animals intended to be labelled meet the competency criteria prescribed under clause 8.2 of the Animal Products Notice: General Export Requirements for Halal Animal Material and Halal Animal Products.

**Certification Services**

The activities undertaken by an AHO as part of their roles under the Notices.

**Competent Halal Slaughter Person**

A person who has met the halal competency criteria for a slaughter person.

**Conformance**

Fulfilment of the applicable requirements of this accreditation scheme and its normative requirements, including those in the relevant Halal Export Notices.

**Critical Non-Conformance**

This is an event which happens any time a regulatory requirement is not met and is reasonably likely to:

- result in non-halal products or haram products which have not been managed as per the relevant Halal Export Notice,
- result in halal product that have false or misleading labelling, and/or
- jeopardise overseas market access.

**Halal Certificate**

The certificate issued by the issuing officer under the relevant Halal Export Notice which certifies that the products have been produced as per the relevant Halal Export Notice.

**Halal Assessment and Approval Persons**

Persons authorised by the AHO to undertake:

- approval, suspension and renewal of halal programmes;
- periodic assessment of halal premises; and
- assessment of whether or not any cleaning regime carried out under the Halal Export Notices is acceptable.

**Halal Premises**

Any premises covered under the Halal Export Notices which manages, handles, stores, processes, or produces material intended for human consumption as a halal product. All halal premises operate in accordance with their own halal programme.

**Halal Premises Registration Certificate**

The premises registration certificate which is issued to the premises operator by the AHO's issuing officer as soon as practicable after the halal programme has been approved.

**Halal Programme**

A programme designed to control and manage halal processing of animal material and animal products at halal premises to ensure compliance with the Halal Meat Notice; or, a documented

system designed for the control and management of halal processing of dairy material and dairy products at halal premises to ensure compliance with the Halal Dairy Notice.

Halal programmes are unique to each halal premises, and cannot be sold, bestowed, or otherwise transferred to another premises. AHOs must evaluate halal programmes to determine whether they meet criteria for approval.

#### **Issuing Officer**

The statutory role under the Halal Notices who issues Halal Certificates for compliant export product and issues halal premises registration certificates.

#### **JAS-ANZ**

The Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand.

#### **Non-Conformance**

Non-fulfilment of a requirement of this accreditation scheme and its requirements, including those in the relevant Halal Export Notice.

Non-conformances include any animal material or products derived from a halal species, which were intended to be or were handled, processed or produced as halal but were subsequently declared by an operator, slaughter person, an AHO, or an animal product officer to be non-compliant with requirements of one or both Notices.

#### **NZQA**

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

#### **Significant Amendments**

Amendment(s) to a halal programme that include but are not limited to:

- major alterations to processing facilities or equipment; the relocation of the business or operation;
- the inclusion of a new type of halal material or products for export, to be processed in the premises to which the programme relates;
- the introduction of any new processes or process modifications, for the production and processing of halal material or products for export; and
- the merging or splitting of existing approved halal programmes.

#### **Scheme**

The New Zealand Export Halal Scheme.

#### **Halal Overseas Market Access Requirements**

Halal Overseas Market Access Requirements (Halal OMARs) outline the requirements that different overseas markets have for the halal products they import from New Zealand. There are country specific OMARs specifically for Halal (see [MPI's website for Exporting Halal products](#)).

#### **Unacceptable Outcome**

A critical non-conformance in a halal premises that necessitates an increase in the surveillance frequency, or suspension or revocation of certification, as appropriate.

## **1.5 Context**

- 1) The Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ) advised that AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17065:2013 contains minimal information on the activities to be undertaken for what it

calls 'audits/periodic assessment' or 'evaluation' of the 'object of conformity'. This means that the Scheme owner must identify its expectations in relation to how a site periodic assessment will be conducted, so that these requirements can be reflected in the accreditation requirements for the Scheme.

## 2 Scheme Owner Expectations of AHOs

This section sets out the performance expectations of AHOs (including the Halal Assessment and Approval Persons, and the Issuing Officers) in carrying out their statutory roles set out in each of the two Halal Export Notices.

### 2.1 Expectations for Statutory Roles

#### 2.1.1 AHO Framework for Site Periodic Assessment Activities

1) AHOs shall:

- a) ensure the Halal Assessment and Approval Persons develops an annual periodic assessment plan that sets out how it will cover all relevant aspects of the operation of each halal operator's premises they are contracted to provide certification services.
- b) show how the annual periodic assessment plan can be implemented with its resources, and shall identify minimum core requirements for each assessment.
- c) develop an annual schedule for when periodic assessments are expected to occur at all the halal premises the AHOs are responsible for.
- d) ensure their staff conduct site periodic assessment in the course of delivering services as per the frequency required under the Halal Export Notices and follow the Scheme's site periodic assessment process established for the purposes of the AHO's accreditation to AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17065:2013.

- 2) Where an operator's halal programme covers multiple premises (dairy premises only) and it is not possible for an AHO to perform a site periodic assessment of every premises annually, the periodic assessment plan may stage these over the three-year period of registration of the operator. This means that the AHO must perform a third of the periodic assessment activities which would normally occur in one year, over a 3-year period. The full annual periodic assessment plan must be completed within 3 years.

#### 2.1.2 Assess Halal Premises/ Periodic Assessment

1) AHOs must:

- a) comply with IAF MD 4:2018 – IAF Mandatory Document for the Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes when conducting off-site periodic assessments or inspections.
- b) assure themselves that halal premises are meeting the requirements of their approved halal programme and any other applicable requirements of the applicable Halal Export Notices.
- c) ensure that Halal Assessment and Approval Persons have sound knowledge of the requirements of the relevant Halal Export Notice and any relevant Halal OMARs and shall only assess against those requirements.
- d) comply with the workplace health and safety procedures of the halal premises when conducting site periodic assessments.
- e) be able to demonstrate a robust process for making decisions after conducting a periodic assessment.

- f) conduct periodic assessments of premises to the applicable assessment frequency timeframes in the Notices. The ceiling frequency must not be exceeded.
  - g) not disclose to any person (unless legally required) any confidential or commercially sensitive information they receive in the course of any of their activities as an AHO or use such information inappropriately.
  - h) have access to a Halal Islamic Affairs Expert who may participate in the periodic assessments. When AHOs decide to use a Halal Islamic Affairs Expert, a properly documented agreement covering the arrangements including confidentiality and conflict of interest must be drawn up.
  - i) have a process for ensuring they remain up to date with changes to Halal OMAR requirements and the Halal Export Notices.
  - j)
- 2) AHOs shall ensure that at least one experienced and appropriately qualified Halal Assessment and Approval Persons is present to conduct assessments of halal premises. This does not apply to newly approved halal organisations as all Halal Assessment and Approval Persons would be considered new.
  - 3) AHOs shall not assess a halal premises on requirements which are not matters covered by the relevant Halal Export Notice or any specific country Halal OMARs.

#### 2.1.3 Assessment of the competency of halal slaughter persons

- 1) AHOs must have a process for the assessment of the competency of halal slaughter persons employed by the premises to which they provide certification services.

#### 2.1.4 Competencies of the AHO's Halal Assessment and Approval Persons and Issuing Officers

- 1) AHOs must:
  - a) hold a list of the individuals in these roles with the relevant New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) competency standards attained or approval of training equivalency by MPI.
  - b) have a documented training programme for training of their Halal Assessment and Approval Persons, and their Issuing Officers. The core requirements of this training programme must include the matters set out the Halal Export Notices.
  - c) have documented procedures to prevent false or misleading certification by issuing officers.
  - d) ensure Halal Assessment and Approval Persons and Issuing Officer have knowledge and/or skills in:
    - i) product/service certification/or management system and other reference Halal Standards,
    - ii) the organisations operational context, and
    - iii) the Animal Products Act and Halal Export Notice requirements.
  - e) ensure that the Halal Assessment and Approval Persons demonstrates their ability to apply terminology, knowledge, and skills for products, processes and practices of the specific industry sector(s) which would use the Halal Export Notices.
  - f) ensure issuing officers issue halal certificates within 24 hours of the application being raised by the exporter in AP E-cert.



- 2) AHOs may use a Halal Islamic Affairs Expert during periodic assessment and certifying activities.

## 2.2 Other Scheme Owner Expectations

### 2.2.1 Code of Conduct

- 1) A contract with AHO personnel shall also require that all personnel, including Halal Assessment and Approval Persons, interact in a cooperative manner with personnel from other AHOs in providing services to halal premises under this scheme.
- 2) Any complaints from halal premises, the Scheme owner, or other AHOs alleging personnel have not been fulfilling this expectation shall be considered to be a formal complaint and handled accordingly.

### 2.2.2 Maintaining Accreditation

- 1) AHOs must participate in regular surveillance periodic assessments conducted by JAS-ANZ to demonstrate that they continue to maintain the appropriate competencies and meet the other requirements of accreditation to AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17065:2013 on an ongoing basis.

### 2.2.3 Keeping MPI informed

- 1) AHOs must notify the Food Assurance Team at MPI on [Food.Assurance@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:Food.Assurance@mpi.govt.nz) , as soon as practicable, of any critical non-conformance affecting the approved status of any approved halal premises, halal programme, any halal meat and/or dairy products within the scope of the Notices, and/or the competency of any halal slaughter persons.

### 2.2.4 International Markets

- 1) AHOs must:
  - a) advise MPI of any additional halal requirements that may be required by an importing market's competent authority.
  - b) respond, as soon as practicable, to requests from MPI to participate in periodic assessments carried out by importing market competent authorities or MPI.
  - c) not initiate or respond to communication with overseas regulatory authorities about New Zealand's halal export system without first consulting MPI.

### 2.2.5 Complaints, Appeals, and Disputes

- 1) A complaint or appeal in relation to an AHO services is to be directed to the AHO.
- 2) AHOs must:
  - a) have a documented procedure for handling and resolving appeals and complaints about its activities and decisions made.
  - b) investigate and resolve the complaint without undue delay. The majority of such matters shall be resolved within one month of receipt.
  - c) document its procedure for handling and resolving appeals and complaints made against the AHO.
- 3) Complaints include concerns, comments, questions or anything that questions the periodic assessment or certification by the AHO.
- 4) A formal notification of the final outcome shall be communicated by the AHO to the complainant. Records of complaints and investigations must be available upon request.

## 2.3 Halal Premises with more than one AHO

### 2.3.1 Halal Premises to inform AHOs

- 1) The halal premises must notify all AHOs providing the same halal premises with services of each other. This requirement could be incorporated in a contract between the halal premises and AHO.

### 2.3.2 Avoiding Duplication for Conformity Assessment Schemes

- 1) In a periodic assessment that covers more than one type of accredited certification activity (combined periodic assessment of e.g. ISO 9001 in addition to MPI Halal requirements), the report shall clearly map areas of equivalence and address any gaps such that all requirements of the standards have been addressed.
- 2) The AHO shall also ensure that all relevant standards (or indicators) are assessed by periodic assessment teams conforming with all the relevant requirements of this scheme.

### 2.3.3 Sharing information between AHOs

- 1) AHOs who provide halal services to the same client must share the following information with each other within 10 working days:
  - a) The number of minor, major, and critical non-conformances following a periodic assessment.
  - b) Periodic assessment report conclusion.

## 3 Scheme Owner Expectations for Halal Programme Approval and Halal Premises Registration Certificate Issuance

### 3.1 Assessment and Approval of Halal Programmes

- 1) One of the responsibilities of AHOs is to assess and approve halal programmes and any significant amendments to halal programmes.
- 2) AHOs must:
  - a) ensure that halal programmes are only approved, suspended and/or renewed by Halal Assessment and Approval Persons.
  - b) ensure that a halal premises' halal programme complies with the specified requirements in the relevant Halal Export Notice and is a true reflection of the actual activities occurring at the halal premises when assessing and approving halal programmes.
  - c) consult and agree on the same version of the halal programme with the relevant Halal Assessment and Approvals Persons of any other AHOs who are providing halal certification services to the halal premises.
  - d) Conduct an inspection before the initial approval of a halal programme or renewal of a halal programme. The inspection must be conducted on site unless the AHO has sufficient understanding of and familiarity with the operation to be able to determine the acceptability of the amendment without such a visit.
  - e) conduct a site inspection before either the:
    - i) initial approval of a halal programme, and/or
    - ii) approval of a significant amendment to the halal programme.

- f) consider the results of the periodic assessment and not renew any halal programmes until satisfied that the operator has committed to appropriate corrective action for any non-conformances.
  - g) approve a halal programme if satisfied that it complies with the relevant Halal Export Notice.  
**Note:** If a halal premises has more than one AHO providing certification services, all AHOs must agree on the content of the halal programme.
  - h) issue the halal premises with a halal premises registration certificate (see section 3.2) or, if there is more than one AHO providing certification services, each AHO must agree which AHO will issue the halal premises registration certificate (dairy only).
  - i) comply with the requirements of the Halal Export Notices for suspension or refusal of halal programmes which includes justifying the decision and notifying the operator and MPI.
  - j) when suspending halal programmes, ensure that any corrective actions that should be taken by the relevant parties are identified, including those to restore control, manage any non-conforming products and prevent recurrence of the problem.
  - k) clarify the steps needed for reinstatement of the programme.
  - l) conduct a periodic assessment as per section 4 of this Scheme within one month of the approval to significantly amended halal programmes.
- 3) AHOs shall not suspend an approved halal programme due to issues that are not concerned with the matters under the relevant Halal Export Notices.
  - 4) An AHO may only assess and approve halal programmes for premises producing products within the scope of the Halal Export Notice under which the AHO has approval.

### 3.2 Halal Premises Registration Certificates

- 1) AHOs must:
  - a) ensure that only the issuing officer issues the halal premises registration certificate.
  - b) issue the halal premises operator with a halal premises registration certificate (valid for a 3-year period) as soon as practicable after the AHO has approved the halal programme.
  - c) not reference any other accreditation standard and/or scheme JAS-ANZ approved the AHO for.

## 4 Scheme Owner Expectations for Annual Periodic Assessment Approach

### 4.1 General Principles

- 1) The principles provided in Annex A (Principles for Product Certification Bodies and their Certification Activities) of AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17065:2013 shall be applied as guidance for the decisions that may need to be made for unanticipated situations.
- 2) AHOs shall take all steps that are necessary to evaluate conformance with the relevant Halal Export Notices. The AHOs shall specify the relevant parts or clauses and any other requirements such as sampling, testing and inspection requirements which form the basis for the applicable Halal certification system.
- 3) The AHO shall require its personnel involved in the Halal certification to sign a contract or other documents in which they commit themselves to:

- a) comply with the rules defined by the AHO, including those relating to confidentiality and independence from commercial and other interest(s).
  - b) declare any previous and/or present association on their own part, or on the part of their employer, with a designer, producer or supplier of products to the Halal periodic assessment or certification of which they are to be assigned.
- 4) AHOs shall ensure that the personnel carrying out contract reviews shall have successfully completed training(s) as required in the Halal Export Notices.

#### 4.2 AHOs preparing an Annual Programme for On-site Periodic Assessments

- 1) It is not necessary for the AHO to visit each and every site where a halal programme covers multiple sites (for example, dairy material and dairy products), and the sites operate with central management of defined processes. However, the annual periodic assessment plan shall show how the AHO will assure itself as to the operations of each site.
- 2) AHOs are expected to conduct periodic assessments in the following situations:
  - a) the approval, suspension and renewal of halal programmes.
  - b) significant amendments to halal programmes as per the Halal Animal Products Notice.
  - c) amendments to halal programmes as per the Halal Dairy Notice.
  - d) periodic assessment of the premises (including any follow-up visits that may be necessary to confirm that any corrective action has been taken).
  - e) assessment of cleaning regime (conversion and reversion). This shall involve only targeted activity when an operator is undertaking conversion and reversion.
  - f) recovery verification in accordance with the requirement of the Halal Export Notices.
  - g) assessment of the competency of halal slaughter persons.
- 3) In the case of activities with a broad scope (e.g. approval of a halal programme, and periodic assessment of activities), it is not expected that an AHO will physically check every relevant aspect of the halal premises' operations during every site periodic assessment. However, AHOs shall identify the core non-negotiable areas that must be checked at every visit (e.g. slaughter person competencies, stunning process etc.) and shall also demonstrate through planning how they will cover all activities over a 3-year period.
- 4) To reduce the impact on the operator, AHOs are encouraged to 'group' site periodic assessment activities where possible. For example, the assessment of slaughter person competencies shall be done concurrently with a periodic assessment.

#### 4.3 Generic Site Periodic Assessment

- 1) Site periodic assessment provides an opportunity for the AHO to observe the operator's practical implementation of the requirements of the relevant Halal Export Notice and the approved halal programme.
- 2) The site periodic assessment shall be conducted on site by the AHO's nominated Halal Assessment and Approval Persons on a date and at a time agreed in advance between the halal premises operator and the Halal Assessment and Approvals Persons or AHO.
- 3) Subject to the purpose of the site periodic assessment, it shall include a broad review of operations across the entire site (e.g. approval of a new halal programme).
- 4) A site periodic assessment shall cover the following key elements specified in the Key Elements for Site periodic assessment section.

## 4.4 Key Elements for Site Periodic Assessments

### 4.4.1 Confirm Site Access

- 1) AHOs shall:
  - a) work with operators to agree in advance on the date, time and scope/purpose of the periodic assessment.
  - b) have a process for selecting the periodic assessment day, time and season so that the periodic assessment team has the opportunity for assessing the halal premises operating on a representative number of product lines, categories and sectors covered by the scope.
- 2) When determining the assessing time, AHO shall consider:
  - a) requirements of the Halal Notices,
  - b) size and complexity of the organisation,
  - c) technological and regulatory context,
  - d) results from previous periodic assessments,
  - e) number of sites or establishments with multiple sites, and
  - f) the scope of the activities to be assessed as identified in section 4.2.3 of this Halal Scheme.

### 4.4.2 Opening Meeting

- 1) AHO representative(s) meet with operator of the halal premises. Attendees to be introduced and an outline of their roles given.
- 2) Confirm site health and safety procedures and obtain any safety equipment necessary for the AHO representative(s). AHO representative(s) are expected to comply with procedures and wear the safety equipment provided.
- 3) AHOs shall provide a short explanation of how the periodic assessment activities will be undertaken. The degree of detail shall be consistent with the familiarity of the halal premises with the periodic assessment process but shall consider the following:
  - a) confirm the scope of the periodic assessment, and the plan for the periodic assessment activities.
  - b) confirm communication channel between the AHO and the client.
  - c) confirm matters relating to confidentiality.
  - d) advise the estimated duration of the periodic assessment, including likely timing of the closing meeting.
  - e) confirm that during the periodic assessment, the operator will be kept informed of progress and any areas of concern.
  - f) ensure the operator has the opportunity to ask questions before conclusion of the opening meeting; the AHO shall respond to these.
- 4) AHO to review any documentation required to support the purpose of the periodic assessment.

### 4.4.3 AHO Representation

- 1) The AHO must be represented by at least one appropriately qualified person with experience in assessing (i.e. the Halal Assessment and Approvals Persons) to lead the periodic assessment.
- 2) New employees and employees in training are expected to be accompanied by Halal Assessment and Approvals Persons who is experienced. The Halal Assessment and Approvals Persons shall confirm in advance that attendance of these additional individuals is acceptable to the operator.

#### 4.4.4 Communication during the Periodic Assessment

- 1) The AHO must ensure the operator has the ability to ask and respond to questions relevant to the periodic assessment during the periodic assessment.
- 2) If emerging periodic assessment evidence suggests that a modification is needed to the annual periodic assessment plan, the Halal Assessment and Approvals Persons must advise the operator immediately and give reasons and seek the operator's agreement to the amended annual periodic assessment plan.
- 3) It is expected that information to support most periodic assessments will be obtained through observation of processes and activities, and review of documentation, interviews with halal premises staff and records.

#### 4.4.5 Review of Processes

- 1) The AHOs must assess whether the halal premises operations are compliant with their halal programme, the relevant Halal Export Notice and relevant Halal OMARs.

#### 4.4.6 Periodic Assessment Approach and Duration

- 1) It is expected that the AHO will spend an appropriate amount of time:
  - a) assessing:
    - i) the entire halal premises (including the inside and outside of the building) to ensure compliance with the Halal Export Notices (if it is the first periodic assessment for the halal premises); or
    - ii) the necessary components of the halal premises which were determined to be in scope for the periodic assessment,
  - b) observing processes and activities (including halal related cleaning),
  - c) interviewing halal premises staff, and
  - d) assessing documentation in production areas.
- 2) The periodic assessment shall not be longer than the time it takes for the AHO to be satisfied that the information gained during the visit will support a robust assessment of the operation.
- 3) AHOs shall:
  - a) identify minimum core requirements for each assessment.
  - b) require the halal premises operator to provide detailed information concerning its raw materials and operations related issues i.e. the number of shifts and number of employees in each shift etc. AHOs shall not request that the halal premises operator provides information that is outside the scope of halal assessment activities.
  - c) document a summary of conformance and make detailed notes about any non-conformances identified or confirmed during the periodic assessment visit. These summaries shall be used as the basis for the periodic assessment report and to support any decisions regarding ongoing operation of the halal programme.
- 4) A finding of a non-conformance shall be recorded against a specific requirement in the Halal programme, the relevant Notice, or OMAR and shall contain a clear statement of the non-conformance, identifying in detail the objective evidence on which the non-conformance is based.

#### 4.4.7 Managing Corrective Actions and Non-Conformances

- 1) The AHO shall discuss any non-conformance with the operator at the point at which they are identified to ensure the evidence is accurate and that the non-conformance are understood.
- 2) AHOs shall determine the level of the products non-conformance based on the Table 1.

**Table 1: Levels of non-conformance**

<b>Status of halal programme &amp; Premises Assessment/ Product</b>	<b>Non-conformance</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date for effective corrective action by company</b>	<b>Action by AHO</b>
Pass/certified	None	Requirements have met or exceeded the Halal Export Notices.	Not applicable	
Pass/certified	Minor	Business is generally compliant, and any non-conformances do not impact on the halal status of the product.	90 days	The business must be notified, and their corrective action checked.
Pass/certified	Major	Business is generally compliant but some non-conformances impact on the halal status of the product. The business has managed the non-conforming product appropriately.	10 days	The business and their RMP verifier must be notified.
Fail /not certified	Critical	Business is not generally compliant or some non-conformances which impact on the halal status of the product have not been managed appropriately. Corrective action required is within 24 hours.	24 hours	If not rectified within 24 hours, certification can be withheld or withdrawn for product where evidence is provided and justified.

- 3) AHOs must:
  - a) initiate corrective actions with halal premises operators to address non-conformances. AHOs shall obtain and agree to a corrective action plan provided by the operator but, to avoid conflicts of interest with their statutory role, must not give advice or identify the solution.
  - b) consider the corrective actions taken for any non-conformances if certification has been revoked and the operator wants it reinstated. AHOs must not certify product until satisfied that the operation/product is generally compliant.

#### 4.4.8 Preparing Periodic Assessment Conclusions

- 1) The Halal Assessment and Approvals Persons must:
  - a) prepare for the closing meeting by reviewing the Periodic Assessment findings and come to conclusions based on the observations of performance against the relevant requirements of the approved halal programme, the relevant Halal Export Notice, and Halal OMAR.

- b) identify where follow-up actions are necessary.
- c) either confirm the appropriateness of the current annual periodic assessment plan for the next periodic assessment, or identify any modification required for future periodic assessments taking into account the Halal Export Notices (e.g. timing, scope).

**Note:** The scope of the periodic assessment may not be broader than the scope required to achieve the purpose of the Periodic Assessment.

#### 4.4.9 Closing Meeting

- 1) The closing meeting must be held before the Halal Assessment and Approvals Persons leaves the premises.
- 2) The purpose of the closing meeting is to:
  - a) present and review the periodic assessment findings with the operator,
  - b) reconfirm all non-conformances identified during the visit and provide the operator with a draft copy in writing so the operator can initiate corrective actions as soon as practicable, and
  - c) give information to the operator on the process and timeframes for the operator to provide evidence to the AHO of the corrective actions that the operator will take to address the non-conformances identified.
- 3) The AHO must advise whether the outcome of the periodic assessment is acceptable or unacceptable. In making this decision the AHO shall consider the nature of the non-conformances, and their consequences/impacts while they remain non-compliant. The AHO may also consider the performance history of the operator.
- 4) For periodic assessment outcomes which are unacceptable, the AHO must:
  - a) change the frequency of site periodic assessment,
  - b) notify the Director-General of MPI at [Food.Assurance@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:Food.Assurance@mpi.govt.nz),
  - c) determine whether the certification is still appropriate (based on the reason for the unacceptable periodic assessment outcome),
  - d) determine and justify the breadth of certification which will be affected due to unacceptable periodic assessment outcome,
  - e) ensure that the operator of the halal premises takes appropriate corrective actions to become compliant, and
  - f) notify the RMP verifier.
- 5) AHOs shall set the date for next site periodic assessment. This shall be in accordance with the frequency set by the Notices, if applicable (e.g. for periodic assessment).

**Note:** AHOs may not change the timeframes for periodic assessment (to be more frequent, or less frequent) for any reasons other than those set out in the Halal Export Notices.

#### 4.4.10 Generating the Periodic Assessment Report

- 1) AHOs shall provide a written report for each periodic assessment as soon as practicable but within 10 working days.
- 2) The periodic assessment team may identify opportunities for improvement but shall not recommend specific solutions perceived as consultancy. Ownership of the periodic assessment report shall be maintained by the AHO.

#### 4.4.11 Right of Review

- 1) AHOs must take care to ensure that their decisions are based only on the requirements of the halal programme, relevant Halal Export Notice or any relevant Halal OMARs.



- 2) The operator has the right to request a review of an AHO decision to the Director-General of MPI. Review by the Director-General is only to ensure that due process was followed in the making of the decision by the AHO.

## 5 Scheme Owner Expectation for Issuing Certificates

### 5.1.1 Issuance of Halal Certificates for Consignments of Halal Products

- 1) AHOs must:
  - a) ensure that only Issuing Officers issue and sign the halal certificates.
  - b) meet the requirements for issuing halal certificates under the Halal Export Notices.
  - c) only certify products for countries listed in Annex 1 of the relevant Halal Export Notice if they have approval from the relevant authority in that country and their listing in the Approved Halal Organisations list on the MPI website includes that country.
  - d) ensure Issuing Officers do not refuse the issuance of a halal certificate due to issues that are not concerned with the matters under the relevant Halal Export Notice, halal programme, or any country-specific Halal OMARs.
  - e) notify the exporter and MPI of refusing to issue the Halal Certificate and providing reasonable opportunity for them to respond, if applicable.
- 2) AHOs shall ensure Issuing Officers endeavour to issue certificates within 24 hours of the application being raised by the exporter in MPI's Animal Products E-cert system.
- 3) AHOs may:
  - a) only request certificates for products within the scope of the Halal Export Notice under which the AHO has approval.
  - b) revoke halal certificates if there are reasonable grounds taking into account the Halal Export Notices, halal programme, and OMARs.

## 6 Records

- 1) AHOs records shall include clear, up to date information on which other AHOs are providing services to clients under this scheme, if applicable.
- 2) A documented rationale of how information from other AHOs is being utilised for periodic assessment planning, sampling, testing and inspection activities of clients with multiple AHOs under this scheme.

## Annex A - Code of conduct for Periodic Assessment and Certification in the AHO Scheme

1. Halal Assessment and Approvals Persons, Halal Islamic Affairs Experts and other personnel in AHOs shall, at all times, act with honesty and professionalism. This includes a demonstrated commitment to upholding the integrity of this scheme, and genuinely cooperating with other AHOs to fulfil its requirements at all times.