

SMART MEANS IN MINIMIZING GAPS IN HALAL PRODUCTS

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This presentation is about minimizing (or better said closing) GAPS in the process of producing Halal products through the implementation of the Halal Quality Assurance System (HQAS®/©).

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Producers are influenced by the Muslim consumer awareness on the importance of the consumption of Halal food in their daily life. As the demand for Halal products is growing producers are more likely to produce such products. For this the producer needs first to have the right knowledge about Halal, Halal processing and Halal certification.

If they produce Halal products which are certified by a Halal Certification Body (HCB), it is important that the Halalness is maintained and guaranteed through a Halal Quality Assurance System (HQAS®/©) such as is developed by Halal Feed and Food Inspection Authority (HFFIA)-The Netherlands. The implementation of this system in the current systems of producers needs to be verifiable and needs to be validated frequently.

The following questions arise:

- How can producers implement such a system to achieve that the Halalness of products is maintained and guaranteed?,
- Is this goal achievable in terms of SMART?
- If producers focus on Halal productions, what do they have to implement in their current systems?
- What are the GAPS between the current situation and the goal to be achieved?

SMART:

When applying the SMART method to the field of Halal productions, we can create criteria to guide us in the setting of objectives. This is important as there is a relevant need for Halal produced products especially for Muslims all over the world. However, not all parties involved in the supply chain of consumer products are knowledgeable about what it takes to produce Halal products.

If the production of Halal products has become an objective for a producer the SMART method can give the criteria to guide them in the setting of this objective and can result in the following objectives:

- **Specific:** Producers must produce Halal products which are HQAS®/© proof.

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- **Measurable:** Traceability of production from purchasing (raw) materials until the dispatch of a product to a customer should be in place.
- **Attainable:** Production of a Halal product should be achievable. If a company is producing Haram materials on a line, production of a Halal product on such a production line is not possible.
- **Relevant:** Achievable goals are based on the current request from customers to receive Halal products. Creating Consumer awareness and industry awareness is important.
- **Time-Based:** a company who wants to produce Halal products needs to realize that they need to implement a HQAS^{®/©} system to maintain the Halal status.

However we need to take into account that there is a **friction between what producers want** (to produce Halal products as soon as possible with no restrictions what so ever) **and what the duty of a Halal Certification Body (HCB) is** (to make sure through auditing, screening, communication, validation of Halal procedures and introduction of a HQAS^{®/©} that products are indeed Halal and there will therefore be restrictions which need to be followed by the producer).

The goal of the producer becomes then to produce a Halal product conform the rules and regulations for Halal productions and to maintain that status by setting up a HQAS^{®/©} to ensure and maintain the Halalness of the products produced by them. For the HCB the goal must be to educate and create awareness concerning Halal productions; to give the guidelines for Halal productions, to screen, certify materials and products and to inspect the implemented HQAS^{®/©} system at the producer.

The HQAS^{®/©} is a system which can be implemented by producers in their current systems. This system ensures the guarantee and maintenance of the Halal status of products. It educates and creates Halal awareness at all levels within a company. Producers can implement this system by adding Halal chapters (check points) in the existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) or by creating new SOPs for Halal and by creating a HQAS^{®/©} manual: the Halal Master File. In this manual the Critical Points (CPs.) need to be defined as well.

The principles of HQAS^{®/©}:

The HQAS^{®/©} is based on several principles which are familiar to all who have worked with for example HACCP, ISO and other hygienic standards. For this presentation, a few examples will be discussed. The complete set of principles are: 1) Persons, 2) Product, 3) Purchase, 4) Place, 5) Process, 6) Purification, 7) Packaging, 8) Storage, 9) Logistics, 10) Track and Traceability, 11) Education and Validation.

To start with, the company needs to have a Halal policy and must have a Halal commitment statement. The company must have this policy and commitment statement in writing and must communicate this to all levels in the company. This declaration should state that the company is committed to produce Halal products continuously and will maintain the Halal status of their products by introduction of HQAS^{®/©} in their existing system.

A few of the principles highlighted:

- **1P = Persons:** Team needs to be formed involving persons who must be aware of all aspects of producing Halal products at different levels within the company. This team and its coordinator must be trained, and educated in the HQAS^{®/©}.

- **2P = Product:** A product includes all **raw materials, additives, processing aids** used to produce a product which is a part of the composition of a product.
- **3P = Purchase:** A Halal Change Control Procedure for handling and accepting new raw materials, producers and suppliers must be included in the HQAS^{®/©} and implemented in the purchasing department.
- **4P = Place:** Production plants where products and materials are stored, toll manufactures, subcontractors, repacking plants, mixing plants, storage areas, docking areas, etc.. All these places must be under HQAS^{®/©}.
- **E&V = Education and Validation:** The purpose of education is to provide persons involved within the company knowledge and knowhow about Halal productions and awareness for Halal.

As a producer wants to start producing Halal productions he should, together with the HCB, perform an initial GAP analysis on each principle of the HQAS^{®/©}. Through GAP analyses a HCB and a producer can measure what is needed for and is lacking concerning the production of Halal products. A GAP analysis will help bridge that space by highlighting which requirements are being met and which are not being met. After implementation of the needed SOP-s the implementation needs to be audited and GAP analysis needs to be regularly performed in order to identify and to control potential problems/ GAPS.

If we consider the Halal certification and perform a GAP analysis we can define for example the following questions and GAPS:

Concerning Halal certification of a product the HCB and the producer should identify if the producer has certain SOP-s in place for purchasing Halal materials. If not these SOP-s need to be implemented. Furthermore the producer should have a SOP stating which documentation is needed to prove to the HCB the Halalness of a material and that these documents will be submitted to the HCB for evaluation and should have a SOP stating that only after approval of a material by the HCB the material can be used in Halal productions. It should never occur that a material is already used in Halal production without the approval of the HCB. If incoming materials are not approved by HCB for Halal productions then the end products are not proven to be Halal and the HQAS^{®/©} has not been properly implemented or followed by the producer.

If we consider the principles of HQAS^{®/©} and perform a GAP analysis, we can define other questions and GAPS:

GAP analysis: A few of the HQAS^{®/©} principles highlighted:

Halal policy:

The company needs to have a Halal policy and must have a Halal commitment statement. The company must have this policy and commitment statement in writing and must communicate this to all levels in the company. Declaration should state that the company is committed to produce Halal products continuously and will maintain the Halal status of their products by introduction of HQAS^{®/©} in their existing system. The reason for this policy and statement is to make sure that everyone who is involved with Halal productions is aware of what Halal entails and why this is important for the company and its buyers. If awareness is created employees are more likely to accept "additional" requirements for production of products.

	HQAS ^{®/©}	GAP	Follow up	Due date
1.	Commitment statement	Do they have such a statement?	No

1P = Persons:

HQAS ^{®/©}	GAP	Follow up	Due date
Halal team and coordinator	Do they have a Halal team and coordinator?	No
Responsibilities of Halal team and coordinator	Are the responsibilities of Halal team and coordinator defined?	No	-----

2P = Product:

HQAS ^{®/©}	GAP	Follow up	Due date
Halal raw materials	Are raw materials defined as Halal in the system?	No	-----
Critical materials	Are critical materials defined?	No	-----
Halal recipes	Are Halal recipes defined with code numbers?	No	-----
R & D	Are there SOP concerning Halal and R & D for developing new recipes or using new materials?	No	-----

3P = Purchase:

HQAS ^{®/©}	GAP	Follow up	Due date
Confirmation Halal status materials	Is date of material approval stated in the Halal approved materials?	No	-----
Documentation of materials	Is documentation (MDS, Halal certificate and other documentation needed for materials up to date and valid?	No	-----

4P = Place:

HQAS ^{®/©}	GAP	Follow up	Due date
Defining places	Are all places where processing, packaging, storage of materials, end products take place defined?	No	-----
HQAS^{®/©} implementation for outsourced processes	Are all outsourced processes under HQAS ^{®/©} ?	No	-----

E&V = Education and Validation:

HQAS ^{®/©}	GAP	Follow up	Due date
Auditing	Does the company conduct internal audits in regards to Halal productions and is this recorded?	No	-----
Training on Halal	Does the company conduct internal training about Halal and is this recorded?	No	-----

HQAS^{®/©} is needed:

A HQAS^{®/©} implemented by producers is needed to manage the implementation of Halal requirements and to make sure that producers are able and will be able to produce Halal products. The introduction of HQAS^{®/©} is a tool to validate that the Halal products meet the requirements of the buyers of the products.

With the before mentioned examples we can conclude the following:

Close the GAPS through introducing the HQAS^{®/©} and maintain the Halalness of products.