

# Review of Regulatory Aspects of Halal Consultant in Malaysia's Halal Certification

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study aims to review the regulatory perspective of Halal Consultant whose services are engaged as private consultants and those engaged through government authorities and agencies within Malaysia's halal certification process.

**Design/methodology/approach:** A qualitative approach using a library research method was employed. Multiple sources of literature are collected and analysed from the guidelines, standards, technical reports, websites, books, and journal articles published between 2020 and 2025. Thematic document analysis was used to examine the definition, roles, and the regulatory context of Halal Consultant in Malaysia.

**Findings:** The study reveals the ambiguity and inconsistency of the current guidelines and standards regarding the roles of Halal Consultant and the lack of regulatory oversight by the Halal competent authorities. Between Halal Consultant coming from privately owned companies and government authorities and agencies, they provide similar outcomes of consultancy services, but with different objectives. A private consultant operates for profit while government authorities and agencies act within the agency mandates, which are tied to the national halal agenda. Hence, a key gap identified is the absence of standardized Halal Consultant guidelines to supervise Halal Consultant practice.

**Research limitations/implications:** This research is based on primary and secondary sources of data. Further studies could incorporate empirical fieldwork to validate conceptual frameworks.

**Practical implications:** This study emphasizes the need for a comprehensive regulatory framework governing the conduct and practice of Halal Consultant to ensure quality service in assisting entrepreneurs, particularly the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the halal certification process.

**Originality/value:** This study is a pioneering work that conceptualizes Halal Consultant in Malaysia's halal certification ecosystem by integrating perspectives from existing guidelines, standards, technical reports, websites, books, and journal articles. It clarifies the role of Halal Consultant as compared to other halal personnel, and the differences of private and public-sector consultants. It also proffers a foundation for future policy making scholarship and professional training programs for Halal Consultant.

**Keywords:** Halal Consultant, Halal Certification, Consultancy Services, Halal Competent Authorities

### **Introduction**

In Malaysia, MSMEs' export value increased from RM149.9 billion in 2023 to RM196.8 billion in 2024, while their contribution to Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rose from RM616.6 billion in 2023 to RM652.4 billion in 2024, surpassing the GDP contribution of non-MSMEs's (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2025). This highlights the MSMEs as key drivers of economic growth and national stability (SME Corp. Malaysia, 2025).

Beyond their current economic contributions, the halal industry represents a key market opportunity for MSMEs to expand their businesses. The halal industry has shown significant growth following the increase in the global Muslim population, coupled with the rising demand from non-Muslim consumers driven by the perceived quality of the product based on the halalan toyyiban concept, safety, and ethical values (Abu Bakar et al., 2025; Rahmawati et al., 2022). Such trends highlight the strong potential for MSMEs to actively grow and engage in the halal industry market. This potential is particularly in the food sector as the main contributor to halal and MSMEs market (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2025; DinarStandard, 2025).

However, MSMEs still struggle to obtain halal certification, which serves as the key pathway for their entry into the halal industry, due to several challenges. For example, lack of knowledge regarding the process and the procedure of halal certification application, lack of expert guidance on how to ensure technical and syariah requirements under the halal assurance system are complied with (A Mohd Yunos et al., 2025), experiencing shortage of staff, which limits their ability to effectively manage halal affairs, and limited technical skills among staff to manage MYeHALAL system (Md Rosdy et al., 2024). This highlights the critical need for Halal Consultant to assist entrepreneurs throughout the certification process.

In this context, competence is crucial to ensure that Halal Consultant own the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their roles effectively. Abdul Latif (2020) addresses the increasing presence of Halal Consultant who lack proper qualifications. This view is supported by Hashmi & Ali (2021) who claim that only a small number of Halal Consultant demonstrate genuine competency. Harun et al. (2021) highlights that some participants in Halal Executive training assume that they can start a consultancy firm with that certificate alone. This mindset encourages individuals to provide consultation with inadequate competence and insufficient industry experience, which leads to an increase in underqualified Halal Consultant. Findings from that study emphasized the need for individuals to have experience working in the related field for at least five to six years to fully understand halal requirements.

The absence of standardized guidelines for Halal Consultant practice allows companies to set their respective methods of operation, which can cause the tendency to exploit their clients who are unfamiliar with halal certification while desperate for assistance. This situation underscores the urgent need for regulation to supervise Halal Consultant practice across this industry. In response to these gaps, this qualitative study intended to explore the underlying concept of Halal Consultant within Malaysia's halal certification ecosystem. The concept of the Halal Consultant encompasses their definition, roles and responsibilities in assisting businesses throughout the halal certification process.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Integrity as Regulatory Concept***

Integrity is recognized globally as the foundation for establishing a proper halal regulatory regime (Abdullah & E Azam, 2020; Ellahi et al., 2025; Idris et al., 2025; Nugroho et al., 2024; Shariff et al., 2024). Ensuring integrity is non-negotiable and important to ensure syariah compliance, foster customer trust and confidence in the product, and guarantee the authenticity of the product's origin (Che Hassan & Osman, 2024; Mohamed et al., 2024; Nugroho et al., 2024). Integrity from the halal certification perspectives engages in the end-to-end halal certification process, often described as "from farm to fork" (Kurniawati & Cakravastia, 2023). The halal certification process involves the entire supply chain that needs to be monitored to ensure the halal integrity remains preserved, and to prevent any contamination that could compromise the halal status (Shahrudin et al., 2025). A holistic approach to halal is required to ensure integrity in the halal industry ecosystem, which encompasses the elements of 4Ms (materials, machines, men, and management).

The Manual Procedure for Malaysian Halal Certification (MPPHM) 2020 and Malaysian Halal Management System (MHMS) 2020 specify the requirements to be followed concerning the 4Ms. For example, the raw material used for the products, including packaging, must be halal and adhere to the requirements of JAKIM (Ariffin et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2024). The equipment, tools, and machinery used must be free from impure elements as outlined by syariah law (Mohd Sirajuddin, 2024). To monitor halal compliance in the company, it is compulsory to have the men or the personnel in charge of it, such as Halal Executive and Halal Supervisor (Jamil Nasri et al., 2025). On top of that, commitment of top management as a decision maker which also involved in the Internal Halal Committee plays a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of the company's halal integrity and the overall halal compliance in the company (Md Nawi et al., 2023; Ramli, 2020). Their full commitment will determine the successful implementation and effectiveness of the internal halal system, such as Halal Assurance System (HAS) or Internal Halal Control System (IHCS).

This paper is intended to focus on the integrity of the men (halal personnel). The halal personnel may come from either an internal or external source. Halal Executive is internal halal personnel (Jamil Nasri et al., 2025), while Halal Consultant is external halal personnel. However, Halal Consultant must be qualified as an Internal Halal Auditor (Ahmad Rofaie et al., 2024) in order to effectively provide proper consulting services that particularly address halal compliance of the company. This means that Halal Consultant need to be competent to ensure the halal integrity of the companies that hire them. Unlike the internal halal personnel who are bound by halal guidelines, the current guidelines do not adequately oversee the Halal Consultants' professional conduct, nor do they provide for deregistration in cases of misconduct.

### ***Halal Personnel as a Regulatory Requirement in Halal Certification***

Halal Personnel must be knowledgeable and competent to carry out their roles effectively. They are required to have a broad knowledge of halal, related regulations, Shariah law (Affendi et al., 2022) and relevant technical knowledge and skills, such as in MYeHALAL system (Muhammad et al., 2020), documentation, auditing, and training (Abdul Aziz & Che Hussin, 2024; Jamil Nasri et al., 2025). The Halal personnel include Halal Executive, Halal Supervisor, Internal Halal Auditor, and Halal Consultant.

***a) Halal Executive and Halal Supervisor***

According to the MPPHM 2020 and MHMS 2020, a Halal Executive must be appointed to large and medium-sized companies and must have a valid Professional Halal Executive certificate (Ahmad Rofaie et al., 2024), while a Halal Supervisor is required for small-sized companies. They are responsible for ensuring that every stage of the production and certification process within the company adheres to relevant halal guidelines and standards (Ahmad Nizar et al., 2022; Jamil Nasri et al., 2025).

***b) Internal Halal Auditor***

An Internal Halal Auditor is a halal personnel member who has undergone and completed the Internal Halal Auditing training, which qualifies them to conduct the internal halal audit within their company or for other organizations (Ahmad Rofaie et al., 2024). According to MHMS 2020, they are required to possess a Professional Halal Executive or Internal Halal Auditing certificate for external auditor (Abdul Aziz & Che Hussin, 2024; Kamaruddin et al., 2021). An internal Halal Auditor is responsible for evaluating whether the system, raw materials, documentation, and product comply with Shariah law and halal regulations (Abdul Aziz & Che Hussin, 2024).

***c) Halal Consultant***

Halal Consultant is a third-party professional that provides halal consultation services and advice to companies seeking to obtain halal certification (Idris et al., 2025; Saiman & Yusma, 2022). Their services include offering expert advice related to halal matters, training, and assisting companies throughout the halal certification process (Md Rosdy et al., 2024) to prevent any potential future obstacles that could lead to delays in the certification process (Hashim et al., 2023). Hence, the Halal Consultant plays an active role in keeping track of clients' readiness to apply for halal certification (Nordin et al., 2022). Internal Halal Auditing is one of the main roles of a Halal Consultant, which qualifies them to act as an Internal Halal Auditor if they hold a Professional Internal Halal Auditing certificate.

**Method*****Research Design***

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method (Ayton et al., 2023) which typically deals with non-numeric data (Hurst, 2023). The purpose of qualitative research is to bring attention to perspectives that are often overlooked by exploring unique experiences from minority and majority groups, identifying patterns, or highlighting special phenomena (Hurst, 2023). The library research method was adopted to explore issues related to the lack of a clear and standardized definition of Halal Consultant, their roles, and the absence of guidelines governing and supervising halal consultancy practice.

***Data Collection***

This study adopted a library research method that involved primary and secondary sources of data (Wahyuni, 2012). The primary sources of data were obtained from the guidelines and standards on halal certification and the ecosystem. The secondary sources were extracted from published literature in books, journal articles, technical reports, and websites.

To ensure the relevance of the topic and its significance to the current halal consulting practices, the selection of past literature was confined to publications between 2020 and 2025. Considering the overlapping role of Halal Consultant with other halal personnel as legally required for the halal assurance management system and halal certification application, the

literature concerning the role of Halal Executive, Halal Supervisor, and Internal Halal Auditor will be included in the study. Reference to the current guidelines, standards, technical reports, and websites will be made when necessary.

### **Data Analysis**

The literature was using qualitative document analysis (Busetto et al., 2020) adopting Bowen (2009) systematic procedure that examines and interprets documents from printed text or digital materials by combining content analysis and thematic analysis elements. First, the analysis will begin with content analysis, in which the collected documents will be skimmed and reviewed to identify relevant content related to definitions and roles of Halal Consultant and related personnel. This will be followed by thematic analysis, which involves several steps: (i) read the selected documents several times to gain a deep understanding; (ii) code the key ideas; (iii) organize codes into groups of similar categories; (iv) combine categories into broader themes. The result of this analysis will be presented in the thematic narrative form to offer a comprehensive understanding of Halal Consultant within the Malaysian halal ecosystem. The thematic analysis helps to see the current pattern in research, identify underexplored areas or gaps, and track how methods develop over time (Techakosit et al., 2025).

### **Findings**

#### ***Similar Roles, but Different Regulatory Control over Halal Consultant***

The scope of services offered by Halal Consultant is almost similar to the functions of other halal personnel. While similarity prevails, the regulatory controls over Halal Consultant remain loose. An analysis of six private consultancy companies registered as MIHA Strategic Partner (Malaysia Halal Council Secretariat, 2025) reveals that Halal Consultants' common service includes halal coaching, such as guidance on halal application, conducting pre-audit (also referred to as an internal halal audit), and providing halal training. Some firms also offer additional services such as gap analysis and maintaining post-certification compliance (renewal application).

Table 1: Halal Consultancy Services by MIHA Strategic Partner

No.	Private Consultancy Company	Services
1	PIJ Halal Ventures Sdn Bhd.	1. Halal Coaching (Certification and compliance) 2. Halal Training
2	Al-Barakah Training Solution	1. Halal Coaching (Gap Analysis, Application, Pre-Audit (Internal Halal Audit)) 2. Halal Training
3	GAE Resources Sdn Bhd (Halal Academy)	1. Halal Coaching (Gap Analysis, Application, Pre-Audit (Internal Halal Audit), Post-Certification Compliance Support) 2. Halal Training
4	Iktisad Global Marketing	1. Halal Coaching (Gap Analysis, Application, Pre-Audit (Internal Halal Audit), Post-Certification Compliance Support) 2. Halal Training
5	HQC Commerce	1. Halal Coaching (Application, Pre-Audit (Internal Halal Audit)) 2. Halal Training
6	Humaira Global Management & Services	1. Halal Coaching (Application, Pre-Audit (Internal Halal Audit)) 2. Halal Training

Sources: (Al-Barakah Training Solution, n.d.; Halal Academy, n.d.; HQC Commerce, n.d.; Humaira Global Management & Services, n.d.; Iktisad Global Marketing, n.d.; PIJ Halal Ventures, n.d.)



The roles identified in Table 1 above show significant overlap with the responsibilities of Halal Executives, Halal Supervisor, and Internal Halal Auditor. However, despite similar roles, there are few distinctions observed in terms of regulatory oversight. Halal Executive, Halal Supervisor, and Internal Halal Auditor were regulated under Manual Procedure for Malaysian Halal Certification (MPPHM) 2020 and Malaysian Halal Management System (MHMS) 2020 (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), 2020a, 2020b). While Halal Facilitator under MIHA Strategic Partner was regulated under *Garis Panduan Pendaftaran Rakan Strategik MIHA 2019* (Guidelines on Registration of Strategic Partners MIHA 2019) (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), 2019). Although Halal Facilitator and Halal Consultant both come from private consultancy companies, the guidelines do not specifically mention Halal Consultant, leaving the Halal Consultant unregulated. The study by Darmawan & Sumartik (2023) highlights the importance of supervision in improving employees' work performance and ensuring they carry out the work following the set standard.

In terms of scope of authority, Halal Consultant as an external party does not hold authority in a company's decision-making process, unlike Halal Executive and Halal Supervisor who are authorized under MPPHM 2020 and MHMS 2020. This distinction aligns with a study by Kirkpatrick et al. (2023), which indicates that consultants are typically engaged for their advisory roles while internal personnel are primarily responsible for implementing the organizational plan. Halal Consultant is also not permitted to liaise directly with the halal competent authorities, provided that MPPHM 2020 Section 21(12) requires halal applicants, commonly through Halal Executive, to engage directly with JAKIM or MAIN/JAIN. This shows the limitations of Halal Consultant's roles as compared to the internal halal personnel.

#### ***Mandate-driven and Non-profit Orientation of Halal Consultancy Services by Government Authorities and Agencies***

The types of services offered by government authorities and agencies and private consultancy companies may appear similar; however, they are driven by different objectives. While private consultancy companies are business-oriented companies that are profit-driven (Gallay, 2013; Vukotic et al., 2017), government authorities and agencies operate within their national mandates. To support more businesses in obtaining halal certification, nine government authorities and agencies found involved in providing halal consultancy services. Related government authorities and agencies were identified through the Occupational Framework Halal Industry report (Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran, 2021) and online search using specific keywords such as 'bantuan halal kerajaan', 'bimbingan halal agensi', 'bimbingan halal agensi kerajaan', 'bantuan halal usahawan desa', and 'latihan dan bimbingan usahawan halal'. These keywords were selected to capture official services and halal initiatives by government bodies.

Table 2: Halal Consultancy Services by Government Authorities and Agencies

No.	Government Authorities and Agencies	Services
1	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries (MAFI)	1. Halal Coaching (Application, Pre-Audit (Internal Halal Audit)) 2. Halal Training
2	Malaysian Fisheries Development Authority (LKIM)	1. Halal Coaching 2. Halal Training
3	Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA)	1. Halal Coaching 2. Halal Training
4	Ministry of Entrepreneur and Co-operative Development (KUSKOP)	1. Halal Coaching 2. Halal Training
5	Halal Development Corporation Berhad (HDC)	1. Halal Coaching (Application, Pre-Audit (Internal Halal Audit)) 2. Halal Training
6	Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA)	1. Internal Halal Audit 2. Halal Training
7	Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (FELCRA)	1. Halal Certification 2. Halal Coaching
8	Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA)	1. Halal Coaching

Sources: (FELCRA Berhad, n.d.; Halal Development Corporation, n.d.; Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran, 2021; Kementerian Pembangunan Usahawan Dan Koperasi, n.d.; Lembaga Pemasaran Pertanian Persekutuan (FAMA), n.d.; Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA), n.d.-a; Pihak Berkuasa Kemajuan Pekebun Kecil dan Perusahaan Getah (RISDA), n.d.)

Based on Table 2, halal consultancy services offered generally focused on halal training and coaching. Among them, MAFI and HDC provide more specific information on their services, such as halal application assistance and pre-audit support, whereas RISDA only mentions audit in general. FELCRA, on the other hand, refers in general to halal certification service without specifying the exact scope. These roles demonstrate the importance of government authorities and agencies in supporting businesses to build their halal identity and strengthening their position in the global halal market (Ahmad et al., 2024)

### ***Ambiguous Definition of Halal Consultant***

The service of a Halal Consultant might be sourced from government authorities and agencies or engaged through private consultancy companies. Despite sharing similar functions of providing halal consultancy services, there is an inconsistency in defining them. The terminology used to describe Halal Consultant roles also varies from one entity to another. Government authorities and agencies tend to use an alternative designation for personnel involved in halal consultancy services or do not specify it, while private consultancy companies commonly adopt the ‘Halal Consultant’ title to describe this role.

For example, Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA), which is an agency under the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, uses the term ‘Pakar Perunding’ to refer to the individuals under MARA who consist of industry players, academics and corporate companies that provide advisory services, including halal, and serve as trainers for entrepreneurship courses for new and existing entrepreneurs (Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA), n.d.-b). JAKIM used the term ‘Rakan Strategik’ to refer to the government agency or non-government companies registered under MIHA, operating in Malaysia and providing halal training and coaching services under the supervision of JAKIM (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), 2019). Ministry of

Entrepreneur and Co-operative Development (KUSKOP), Halal Development Corporation Berhad (HDC), Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA), Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA), and Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (FELCRA) do not explicitly mention the position or job title of 'Halal Consultant' for this role, even though they offer halal consultancy services (FELCRA Berhad, n.d.; Halal Development Corporation, n.d.; Kementerian Pembangunan Usahawan Dan Koperasi, n.d.; Lembaga Pemasaran Pertanian Persekutuan (FAMA), n.d.; Pihak Berkuasa Kemajuan Pekebun Kecil dan Perusahaan Getah (RISDA), n.d.).

Private halal consultancy companies were identified through the search keywords 'Halal Consultant'. Al-Barakah Training Solution, Humaira Global Management & Services, and HQC Commerce use the term 'Halal Consultant' as a person in charge (Al-Barakah Training Solution, n.d.; HQC Commerce, n.d.; Humaira Global Management & Services, n.d.). This pattern suggests that, at least in the private sector, halal consultancy is viewed as a specialized professional service. Pemer (2020) argues that professional services involve solving specific problems that require specialized knowledge and usually involve direct, personal interaction between the service provider and client. This is reflected in the advisory roles played by Halal Consultant that provide expert advice for Halal related affairs.

Similarly, the Halal Profession standard provides the general requirements for certifying and recognizing individuals working in the halal industry as qualified professionals. This standard aims to improve the quality benchmark and professionalism of halal professionals, strengthen the credibility of the halal industry, and develop halal-related careers to meet the demand of this sector (Department of Standards Malaysia, 2021; Mohd Nor et al., 2024; Tukiran et al., 2025). Based on this standard, a Halal Consultant may be categorized as a Halal Expert, who conducts gap analysis and internal halal audit for the client's company (Abdul Aziz & Che Hussin, 2024) provided that they own a Malaysian Skills Certificate (SKM) Level 4 and 5 (Department of Skills Development (DSD), n.d.).

### ***Absence of Guidelines on the Practice and Conduct of Halal Consultant***

The existing guidelines and standards pertaining to Malaysia's halal certification, do not provide clear regulatory oversight and control over the practices and conduct of Halal Consultant. Instead, they primarily focus on the personnel within the organization, such as Halal Executive, Halal Supervisor, and Internal Halal Auditor.

Whereas the Halal Consultant are outside of the organization and should be subject to a certain regulatory control. Due to the lack of clear and standardized guidelines, the practice of halal consultancy cannot be properly supervised, particularly given the variations in management approaches across different consultancy companies. This then creates inconsistency in the quality of the service delivered by different Halal Consultant. This regulatory gap is undermining the assurance of Halal Consultant integrity as they are not subject to the same requirements as other halal personnel despite their roles in guiding companies on halal compliance.

Abdul Latif (2020) emphasized that Halal Consultant should be governed by a dedicated authority to oversee their competence in both shariah and technical matters, as well as establish specific criteria and registration for Halal Consultant. Although the halal certification approval is upon halal competent authorities, the competency and integrity of Halal Consultant in performing their roles can significantly increase the likelihood of successful halal application.



### Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the findings in this study, a clearer conceptualization of the Halal Consultant is proposed. Halal Consultant can be defined as third-party professionals who operate either within a private consultancy company or government authorities and agencies and offer training and/or coaching services to assist companies in obtaining and maintaining halal certification. This definition recognizes that their service delivery aims to achieve two objectives: operating on a commercial basis in the private sector and the fulfillment of national priorities as overseen by government authorities and agencies. This dual structure results in duplication of services as well as presenting an opportunity for collaboration.

The findings highlight that the primary roles of Halal Consultant revolve around coaching and training services. Their involvement often extends throughout the certification process, including assisting with halal application, executing pre-audit or internal halal audit, and conducting halal training. However, they do not act as intermediaries between the company and the halal competent authorities, nor do they hold decision-making authority within company operations.

The absence of specific and clear guidelines for Halal Consultant creates risks, including the possibility of underqualified Halal Consultant entering the field, which leads to inconsistent service quality. Hence, establishing it would support businesses more effectively, recognizing their functions professionally in Malaysia's halal ecosystem, and enhancing the credibility of the certification process by formally supervising their professional practice within the industry. Further research suggested incorporating empirical fieldwork to validate this conceptual framework.

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