



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEx COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

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PROPOSAL TO REVISE THE *GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF THE TERM "HALAL"* (CAC/GL 24-1997)

(Prepared by Egypt)

Introduction

1. At the 36th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the importance of Halal foods was recognized and the Commission requested the Member proposing new work (Egypt) to re-scope the project document in order to identify gaps with existing relevant Codex texts, and seek advice of CCFL and CCFICS to assist the CCEXEC and Commission to take a decision.
2. Egypt took this forward and has prepared a proposal for new work aiming to revise the *General Guidelines for Use of the Term "Halal"* (CAC/GL 24-1997). A project document is attached as an Annex to this document (Annex I: Project Document).

Background

3. At the sixth session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNEA6 in 2011) the delegation of Saudi Arabia proposed new work on development of Codex guidance on halal products, which should address all issues related to the international trade of halal food products. The CCNEA6 agreed to request Egypt to submit a discussion paper on the issue for the next session.
4. The Discussion paper was presented by Egypt to the CCNEA7 (2013). The CCNEA7 agreed that the delegation of Egypt with the assistance of interested countries of the region would present a project document to the Executive Committee for consideration as to the best way to move forward with the development of these standards i.e. either within the CCNEA or at international level. The project document would take into consideration all relevant Codex texts currently available for meat and meat products; would identify gaps in these texts; would make proposals how to address these gaps e.g. by either revising existing Codex texts or by further developing additional Codex texts to address quality and safety characteristics of the final product and/or other aspects relating to the production, processing, handling, storage, transport, etc. of these products.
5. The 68th session of the Executive Committee (CCEXEC68) considered the request for new work proposed by the delegation of Egypt. The Committee recognized the importance of consumption and trade of halal products worldwide and agreed that, in the context of this new work proposal, the project document should be re-scoped in order to identify gaps with existing relevant Codex texts, and that the Member proposing new work should seek the advice of CCFL and CCFICS to assist the CCEXEC and Commission to take a decision.
6. CAC36 recognized the importance of halal products worldwide and requested Egypt to re- scope the project document in line with the recommendation of the CCEXEC68 and to take into account, as appropriate, relevant OIE work.
7. The 21st session of CCFICS (2014) held a discussion on Halal food. The Chairperson concluded that there was an appreciation in the Committee of the importance of halal food trade and the need for harmonized guidance. However, it was still unclear how, and through which Committee(s), Codex could best provide this guidance. More reflection was needed in regard to what should be the international guidance, including common views from countries concerned on the interpretation of halal rule, and what could be the role of CCFICS. Possible CCFICS work might include developing appropriate guidance for providing assurances that halal requirements have been met.

8. The delegation of Egypt presented the proposal to revise the *General Guidelines for Use of the Term Halal* (CAC/GL 24-1997) to CCFL42 (2014)¹, but due to the time constraints, the CCFL42 agreed to defer the discussion on the proposal to revise the *General Guidelines for Use of the Term "Halal"* (CAC/GL 24-1997) to the next session (CCFL43 in 2016).

Scope or review

9. The current proposal (Annex I: Project Document) is to revise the *General Guidelines for Use of the Term "Halal"* (CAC/GL24-1997) in the following:

- a) To consider including relevant definitions in accordance with the Islamic Sharia rules.
- b) To consider restructuring of the Guidelines to be more comprehensive and applicable for the international trade.
- c) To revise sections 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and Section 3.
- d) To include a provision on traceability of halal food and halal packaging materials.
- e) The current codex Halal Guidelines does not cover all Halal Rules as per Islamic rules and as per the following defined gaps:
 - Definitions in the current Guidelines don't cover important aspects of Islamic Laws example: Islamic Sharia, Zabah / Slaughtering, Stunning. These missing items can cause a negative impact on the international trade and lead to a need for adapting National Legislation for every market.
 - The current Criteria for use of the term Halal need more clarification to ensure the right application to guarantee consumer rights.
 - Regarding Slaughtering & Stunning, it should be revised to include that the person can be Muslim or Jewish or Christian, also for the place of Slaughtering it should be mentioned that it is clean and free of any source of Non Halal.
 - The Guidelines should also consider the safety of food (non-harmful food) to be compliant with Islamic Sharia and should address animal welfare.
 - The Guidelines should be revised to include that the packaging material should be halal and that during processing, preparation, storing or transportation of packaging materials, it should be totally separated from any source of non Halal materials.

Recommendation

10. It is recommended that the Committee consider the project document and agree to request the Codex Alimentarius Commission to initiate new work to revise the *General Guidelines for Use of the Term Halal* (CAC/GL 24-1997) as proposed and to submit the attached project document for approval by the Commission.

¹ [CX/FL 14/42/8](#)

**PROPOSAL TO REVISE THE GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR USE OF THE TERM HALAL'
(CAC/GL24-1997)
PROJECT DOCUMENT**

1. PURPOSE AND THE SCOPE OF THE NEW WORK

The purpose of this new work is to review and revise *General Guidelines for Use of the term 'Halal'* (CAC/GL 24-1997). The existing guidelines do not cover all the requirements of Halal according to Islamic Sharia and do not provide adequate guidance to countries. A uniform, transparent and harmonized guideline would ensure consumer protection from fraud, and promote fair practices in food trade.

The scope of the work will address gaps between the existing guidelines with the requirements for Halal foods based on Islamic Sharia.

2. RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS

Halal food market in the world is estimated at about USD 2.3 trillion, which represents more than 20 percent of the total food market in the world. It is expected that Halal food will continue to grow by more than 4.8% to reach about USD 6.4 trillion by 2020.

There is an urgent need to review and clarify the existing text in the *General Guidelines for Use of the Term "Halal"* to ensure it provides a clear set of international guidelines on use of the term "Halal" to prevent fraud and facilitate international food trade. It is the right of consumers not to be misled by food which are labelled as "Halal" that is complying with the Islamic Sharia. Globalization and increase in consumer awareness have given rise to the need to revise the *Guidelines*.

3. MAIN ASPECTS TO BE COVERED

The proposed revision will address gaps in the existing guidelines as follows:

- i. To include other relevant definitions according to the Islamic Sharia rules.
- ii. The Guidelines will be restructured to be more comprehensive as well as to fully complying with Islamic Sharia rules.
- iii. To review Section 2.2.1 for clarification on the need to ensure separation of halal food from non-halal food according to Islamic Sharia.
- iv. To include in Section 2.2.2, the number of times allowed for using facilities which have been previously used for non-halal food that are properly cleaned according to Islamic requirements, for preparation, processing, transport and storing halal food.
- v. To revise Section 3: Criteria for use of the term "Halal" to provide clarity such as on the description of unlawful foods, the status of stunning in Islamic Sharia, all requirements for halal slaughtering as prescribed by the Islamic Sharia and conditions for preparation, processing, packaging, transportation and storage to fulfill Islamic Sharia of Halal food.
- vi. To include provisions on traceability of halal food.
- vii. To include provisions on halal packaging material.

4. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WORK PRIORITIES

General criteria

Consumer protection from the point of view of health, food safety, ensuring fair practices in the food trade and taking into account the specific needs of developing countries.

This new work will ensure fair practices in halal food trade and protect consumers from misleading product labelling.

Criteria applicable for general subjects

- (a) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade:

This new work will help to facilitate international trade of halal foods through further strengthening of the existing *General Guidelines for Use of the Term "Halal"* with a view to enhance understanding of halal concept based on Islamic Sharia.

- (b) Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of the work

It is proposed that a review of the guidelines focuses on: Section 1 on Scope; Section 2 on Definition; and Section 3 Criteria for use of the term "Halal"; as well as restructuring of the existing Guidelines to be more comprehensive.

- (c) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body (ies).

At the moment, there is a standard developed by the Standard and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) on General Guidelines on Halal Food. However the membership of SMIIC is only limited to several countries who are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). During drafting of the updated Codex Guidelines, SMIC opinion will be taken into consideration for complete alignment Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardization.

- (d) Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardization

Countries worldwide are looking to Codex for clear and unambiguous guidance on use of the term "Halal". The purpose of the new work proposal is to review and clarify the existing text to ensure it provides a clear set of international guidelines on use of the term "Halal".

- (e) Consideration of the global magnitude of the problem or the source.

The 36th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission recognized the importance of halal foods worldwide and requested Egypt to re-scope the project document in line with the recommendation of the Executive Committee (CCEXEC) i.e. to identify gaps with existing relevant Codex texts, and to seek the advice of CCFL and to take into account, as appropriate, relevant OIE work to assist the CCEXEC and the Commission to take a decision.

The Current Guidelines Should be revised to ensure the right application of Halal aspects and guarantee consumer rights in having Halal food, specially since the halal food market is expected to grow by more than 4.8% to reach about USD 6.4 trillion by 2020.

There is an urgent need in every Muslim market to develop national Local legislation for Halal, this can lead to several national legislation, causing challenges to international trade. By revising the Current Codex Guidelines for Halal, the aim is to have one International Unified Guideline for Halal instead of several national legislation to facilitate international trade of Halal food.

5. RELEVANCE TO THE CODEX STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The new work proposal is in line with the Codex strategic objectives (2014-2019) to promote the maximum application of Codex standard by countries in their national legislation and to facilitate international trade.

It contributes in advancing Goal 1: Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues. Through further strengthening of the existing general guidelines on halal food, which will assist in the worldwide harmonization regarding the use of the term "Halal".

6. RELATION BETWEEN THE PROPOSAL AND OTHER EXISTING CODEX DOCUMENTS

General Guidelines for Use of the Term 'Halal' (CAC/GL 24–1997) will be reviewed and revised.

Other relevant Codex documents are as follows:

General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985)

General Guidelines on Claims (CAC/GL 1-1979)

General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969)

Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat (CAC/RCP 58-2005)

Code of Practice on Good Animal Feeding (CAC/RCP 54-2004)

7. REQUIREMENT FOR AND AVAILABILITY OF EXPERT SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

Not required

8. NEED FOR TECHNICAL INPUT TO THE STANDARD FROM EXTERNAL BODIES

None

9. PROPOSED TIME-LINE

CCFL43 (2016):	Endorsement of new work proposal by CCFL
CAC39 (2016):	Approval of new work by CAC
CCFL44 (2018):	Consideration of the revised draft at Step 4 and advancement to Step 5
CAC41 (2018):	Adoption of draft guidelines at Step 5 and circulate at Step 6 for comments
CCFL45 (2019):	Discussion of Draft guidelines at Step 7 and advancement to Step 8
CAC42(2019):	Adoption by CAC at Step 8