

Richard Scott – Editor, Personal Care
Markus Steffen – BASF, Germany

With 1.8bn Muslims in the world (representing almost a quarter of the global population), more consumer goods manufacturers are looking for ways to make their products align with the lives of their users.

We often discuss the importance of ensuring that products fit the needs of modern lifestyles and this includes consumers who would like their products to align with their spiritual beliefs. Islamic certification bodies have in the past focused primarily on food and financial services, but there is an increasing demand for other products to be certified.

BASF Personal Care Europe now offers more than 830 certified ingredients for personal care products which have been certified according to the international Halal standard HAS 23000:2.

The portfolio of Halal ingredients for personal care applications includes e.g. sugar-based surfactants, pearlisers, emollients, proteint derivatives and many more.

Markus Steffen from BASF (Quality Manager Europe) talks about the Halal certification process and overcoming challenges in guaranteeing Halal compliance and gives an outlook on the growing demand for certified ingredients.

PERSONAL CARE: How does BASF approach the Halal sector? What do you define Halal as meaning in the personal care industry?

MARKUS STEFFEN: Based on the growing importance of Halal-certified products for the global personal care market and the fact that Halal certifications are increasingly becoming a customer requirement, BASF Personal Care Europe decided to ensure Halal compliance for its complete product portfolio step by step. Today, we offer about 830 halal-certified ingredients for personal care products from eight locations in Europe. To continue to meet the steadily increasing requirements of the certifying bodies, BASF Personal Care Europe undertakes significant actions in shaping the produced product portfolio per site. Ensuring the ritual purity of products is crucial to comply

with the HAS 23000:2 standard. To secure this, Halal certified products must be traceable from the raw material sources through production to the final goods. The production facility must not be contaminated and prevent contact with haram materials (= prohibited/unlawful according to Islamic Sharia law) or najjis (= things or persons regarded as ritually unclean). Halal certification secures business opportunities, especially in countries with a high Muslim population, and opens up new markets.

PCG: Has certification criteria become more consistent and clear?

MS: Strict guidelines around raw material purchasing, manufacturing and filling must be followed along the entire value chain in order to ensure product purity in compliance with Islamic law. As mentioned before, to comply with HAS 23000:2, it is crucial to ensure the purity of products. Production lines carrying Halal-compliant ingredients must be separated from those carrying products that have come into contact with substances considered to be impure under Islamic law, such as pork derivatives. In the specific production lines animal materials are strictly prohibited. Equally strict guidelines apply to raw materials – their origins must be fully documented to ensure the entire value chain is Halal compliant. We evaluate all materials used for Halal criticality. The update of the guideline for non-critical materials by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) published in 2020 brings clarity into what are critical or non-critical materials.

To obtain halal certification, production facilities must successfully go through an on-site audit to demonstrate that the facility, equipment, processes etc. are Halal compliant.



INTERVIEW

Growing demand for Halal-certified ingredients

Additionally, Halal assurance must be documented to prove that the products chosen for certification, as well as all raw materials (including process additives, solvents, auxiliaries, etc.), qualify for halal.

PCG: Are there any other regulatory challenges in this sector?

MS: Beyond the process I just described, all certifying organisations require implementation of a Halal assurance system, stipulating detailed criteria like the implementation of the Halal guidelines in the company, training concepts, establishment of a Halal management team, raw material management, traceability and others.

Criticality of materials and halal compliance are continuously monitored and rechecked at least once a year or when there is any change in the supplier or input materials. We have committed ourselves to this so that we can continue to comply with the criteria.

PCG: Which regions are requesting Halal products the most?

MS: The driving force behind the growing demand for halal products is Indonesia, with more than 190 million Muslims living in the Asian island state. Malaysia, where 60% of the population is Muslim, also contributes to increased demand for Halal products. Starting in

October 2026, halal certification will be mandatory for all cosmetic products (and other consumer goods) that are imported, traded or distributed on Indonesian territory. We can see that Western consumers are also increasingly starting to request Halal-certified products. The Asian market attaches importance to quality assurance, while in Europe, the focus is often on the label and what a cosmetic product provides. So, demand for Halal-compliant ingredients is expected to continue to grow, not least because this certification also comprises the vegan aspect of products.

PCG: From a technical perspective, which ingredients have been most challenging to include as Halal and how have you overcome the challenges?

MS: There is a list of critical substance groups that we pay special attention to. These include fatty acids, fatty alcohols and glycerine. For those as for any other so-called critical material we must present certificates from our suppliers. Halal certification is obligatory for these critical substances and they are constantly



Markus Steffen, Quality Manager Europe.

checked across all sites. This way, we secure transparency across the entire production and supply chain.

A Halal self-statement from the supplier is not deemed sufficient, as no external source approved halal compliance. If a supplier is not Halal compliant, they will be replaced in case our Halal demand cannot be satisfied on short term. This leads to higher complexity in our purchasing processes and, if necessary, repeated verification of the promised quantities. Therefore,

our procurement process has been turned into a check and release process for Halal ingredients and buyers are continuously trained.

PCG: How important do you see Halal ingredients becoming over the next few years?

MS: The global market for Halal-certified personal care products is expected to grow by 2.9% each year up to 2024 according to the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2020/21. With the increasing prosperity in some countries, demand for cosmetic products is on the rise. It goes without saying that we want to continue to meet the requirements of the growing cosmetics market, especially in Asia. The demands of multiregional customers are understandable: they want to be able to use our products worldwide and appreciate the best level of conformance to different standards. Our certification ensures this.

PCG: What plans do you have on the horizon for your Halal certified portfolio?

MS: Halal compliance and the integration of certification into the

management system underpins our efforts to guarantee halal conformity in the long term and across all our processes. With our expanded portfolio of Halal-certified cosmetic ingredients, we are responding to the growing global demand for personal care products that adhere to Islamic law. This means we can better serve our customers – especially those in predominantly Muslim countries, e.g. the Maghreb region, the Middle East and some countries in Asia.

The fact that, in late 2026, Halal certification will become mandatory for all cosmetic products (and other consumer goods) imported, traded, or distributed on Indonesian territory is a driving force. The market for Halal-certified products is today biggest in Muslim-majority countries in Asia, but the growing Muslim population in Western countries is driving demand there as well. Non-Muslims are also increasingly turning to these certified products.

The holistic transition to Halal-compliant products throughout the entire production and supply chain secures customers' trust and business opportunities. **PC**

For Anna, Naomi, and Carl, living in the city and being connected to nature are not mutually exclusive. They live and love a green life.

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