Legal Regulation of *Halal* Industries in Nigeria: Opportunities and Challenges

By

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Abstract

Nigeria, home to an estimated Muslim population of over 100 million, constitutes one of Africa's largest halal consumer markets and possesses significant potential to participate in the rapidly expanding global halal economy. Notwithstanding this strategic advantage, the country lacks a comprehensive statutory framework for halal regulation, relying instead on a fragmented system of general consumer protection laws, food safety regulations, standards enforcement mechanisms, and private Islamic certification bodies. The paper examines the existing legal and institutional architecture governing the halal industry in Nigeria, with particular attention to the regulatory roles of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, the Standards Organisation of Nigeria, the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, and private halal certifiers. Through a comparative analysis of established halal regulatory models in Malaysia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Australia, and by situating the discussion within the broader framework of international trade law, including the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the study identifies the principal opportunities and challenges shaping Nigeria's halal sector. It asserts that achieving economic diversification, export competitiveness, and regional leadership in the global halal market requires comprehensive legal reform, the establishment of a centralised National Halal Regulatory Authority, and harmonisation with internationally recognised halal standards. The paper concludes with legislative and policy recommendations aimed at strengthening regulatory certainty and positioning Nigeria as a credible participant in the global halal economy.

***Keywords*:** *Halal* Industries and *Halal* Regulation, *Sharia* Consumer Protection, *Halal* Certification, Global *Halal* Economy, Food Safety

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The global *halal* industry has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past three decades, evolving from a small religious market into one of the most dynamic and economically significant sectors of international commerce. Encompassing food and beverages, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, personal care products, logistics, tourism, fashion, and Islamic finance, the global *halal* economy is estimated to be worth more than two trillion United States dollars annually[1]. Its growth is driven not only by a global Muslim population exceeding two billion people but also by increasing demand among non-Muslim consumers who associate *halal* certified products with high standards of quality, safety, hygiene, and ethical production.

Against this backdrop, effective legal regulation has become essential for preserving the integrity, credibility, and commercial viability of the *halal* industry. *Halal* regulation extends beyond religious compliance to include laws, standards, certification procedures, accreditation systems, and enforcement mechanisms that ensure products and services marketed as *halal* genuinely satisfy the requirements of Islamic law while meeting contemporary expectations of consumer protection and quality assurance. Regulatory models vary significantly across jurisdictions, reflecting differences in constitutional arrangements, legal traditions, demographic realities, and economic priorities.

Nigeria occupies a strategically important position within the global *halal* economy. With an estimated Muslim population of over 100 million people[2], it represents one of the largest *halal* consumer markets in Africa and possesses considerable potential to become a leading producer and exporter of *halal* certified goods. The country's comparative advantages in agriculture, livestock production, and agro-processing provide a strong foundation for participation in regional and international *halal* markets, including those of the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and the wider African continent. This potential has been recognised through initiatives such as the National *Halal* Economy Strategy, which seeks to integrate Nigeria more effectively into the global *halal* value chain[3].

Despite these advantages, Nigeria's legal and institutional framework for *halal* regulation remains fragmented and underdeveloped. Unlike jurisdictions such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, Nigeria has not enacted a dedicated *Halal* Industries Act or

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[1] Dinar Standard, 2023, *"State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2023/24"*, Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), Salaam Gateway, and Dinar Standard, https://www.salaamgateway.com, accessed 5 June, 2026.

[2] Pew Research Center, 2011, "The future of the global Muslim population: Projections for 2010–2030", Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/, 5 June, 2026.

[3] Islamic Development Bank Institute, 2022, "*Halal* economy: Driving sustainable growth in OIC member countries", Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: Islamic Development Bank Institute, https://www.isdb.org, 6 June, 2026.

established a centralised statutory authority responsible for *halal* certification and oversight. Instead, regulation is dispersed across general consumer protection legislation, food safety laws, standards enforcement mechanisms, and private Islamic certification bodies. This fragmented approach creates regulatory inconsistencies, limits effective oversight, and presents challenges for businesses seeking credibility and access in international *halal* markets.

This paper thus examines the legal and institutional framework for *halal* regulation in Nigeria, assesses its adequacy in light of comparative international practices, and identifies the principal opportunities and challenges confronting the sector. It adopts the analytical premise that each significant opportunity within Nigeria's *halal* industry is accompanied by a corresponding regulatory challenge that must be addressed through effective legal governance. The paper concludes by proposing legislative, institutional, and policy reforms necessary to establish a coherent, credible, and internationally competitive *halal* regulatory system in Nigeria.

2.0 CONCEPTUAL AND LEGAL FOUNDATIONS OF *HALAL* REGULATION

A proper understanding of *halal* regulation requires an examination of both its underlying conceptual basis in Islamic jurisprudence and the legal principles that govern its implementation within contemporary regulatory and commercial systems[4].

The Concept of *Halal* in Islamic Law

The Arabic term "*halal*" denotes that which is permissible under Islamic law. It is distinguished from "*haram*", which denotes that which is prohibited, and from "*mashbuh*", which refers to that which is doubtful or uncertain in its legal status[5].

In the context of food and consumer goods, the concept of *halal* encompasses both religious permissibility and the broader Islamic standard of "*halalan tayyiban*"[6], that is, products must be not only religiously lawful but also wholesome, pure, hygienic, safe, and ethically produced[7]. This dual standard constitutes the philosophical and legal foundation of modern *halal* regulatory systems.

[4] Bonne. K., & Verbeke. W, 2008, *"Muslim Consumer Trust in Halal Meat Status and Control in Belgium"*, Meat Science, Vol. 79, Issue 1, Pp 113 to 123, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.meatsci.2007.08.007, accessed 5 June 2026.

[5] *Al-Qaradawi,* Y, 2013, "The lawful and the prohibited in Islam", K. El-Helbawy, M. Moinuddin Siddiqui, & S. Shukry, Trans, American Trust Publications, Pp 45 to 46.

[6] Meaning "lawful and wholesome".

[7] Ibid

The primary sources of Islamic law governing *halal* and *haram* are the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*. The *Qur'an* explicitly prohibits the consumption of carrion, blood, pork, and any animal over which a name other than that of Allah has been invoked at the time of slaughter. Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), as developed by the four major Sunni schools of law, the *Hanafi*, *Maliki*, *Shafiʿi*, and *Hanbali* schools, further elaborates the conditions for lawful slaughter, the treatment of intoxicants, and the requirements for contamination prevention[8]. These jurisprudential sources form the substantive content of *halal* standards as applied by certification bodies worldwide.

The Scope of Modern *Halal* Regulation

Contemporary *halal* regulation extends far beyond the simple prohibition of pork and alcohol. Modern regulatory frameworks address the entire lifecycle of a product, from the sourcing of raw materials through manufacturing, processing, packaging, storage, transportation, and retail marketing[9]. The scope of *halal* regulation has expanded considerably to encompass pharmaceuticals, vaccines, cosmetics, nutraceuticals, biotechnology products, logistics and warehousing services, hospitality and tourism, fashion, and digital commerce[10]. This expansion necessitates the development of more sophisticated regulatory frameworks capable of addressing complex scientific and commercial realities, including the permissibility of genetically modified organisms, cultured meat, and pharmaceutical products derived from animal sources.

***Halal* Certification as the Cornerstone of Legal Regulation**

Halal certification is the formal recognition granted by an authorised Islamic institution or accredited certification body that a product, service, or manufacturing process complies with *Sharia* principles and applicable technical standards. It serves simultaneously as a consumer protection instrument, a trade facilitation tool, and a mechanism for ensuring religious compliance[11].

It is essential to distinguish conceptually between government regulation, which establishes legal standards, enforcement mechanisms, and institutional accountability, and private religious certification, which provides the substantive religious assessment of product compliance with

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[8] Kamali, M. H, 2003, *"Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence",* 3rd rev. ed., Islamic Texts Society, Pp 16 to 228

[9] Tieman, M, 2011, "*The Application of Halal in Supply Chain Management: In-depth Interviews*", Journal of Islamic Marketing*,* Vol. 2, Issue 2*,* Pp 186 to 195.

[10] Wilson, J. A. J., & Liu, J, 2010, *"Shaping the Halal into a Brand?",* Journal of Islamic Marketing, Vol. 1, Issue 2, Pp 107 to 123, https://doi.org/10.1108/17590831011055851, accessed 5 June, 2026.

[11] Riaz, M. N., & Chaudry, M. M, 2004, *"Halal Food Production"*, CRC Press, Pp. 1 to 25, 31 to 52, 389 to 406.

Sharia. These are distinct functions that may be performed by the same or different bodies depending on the regulatory model adopted.

3.0 THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR *HALAL* REGULATION IN NIGERIA

The legal and institutional framework for *halal* regulation in Nigeria is essential to understanding the mechanisms through which *halal* standards are governed, enforced, and integrated into the country's broader system of consumer protection, food safety, and commercial regulation.

Constitutional Foundations

The legal foundation for *halal* regulation in Nigeria must be understood within the framework of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended). Section 38 guarantees freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including the freedom to manifest and practice one's religion, implicitly protecting the right of Muslim consumers to seek products conforming to Islamic dietary laws.

The Exclusive Legislative List in Part I of the Second Schedule vests legislative competence over trade, commerce, and food and drug regulation in the Federal Government[12], making a federal *Halal* Industries Law, constitutionally supportable, as an exercise of federal legislative competence over trade and consumer protection, provided it does not purport to legislate on matters of Islamic personal law within the domain of State *Sharia* Courts[13].

The constitutional prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion under section 42, further requires that any *halal* regulatory framework protect Muslim consumers' religious rights without imposing discriminatory burdens on non-Muslim businesses[14].

The Role of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC)

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, established under the NAFDAC Act[15], is the principa*l governmental institution involved in halal related regulation. While NAFDAC does not issue halal* certificates or determine the religious status of products, it

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[12] Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), Part I of the Second Schedule, Exclusive Legislative List, Items 62 and 68.

[13] Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), s 277.

[14] Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), s 42 (1) to (3), prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion and guarantees equal treatment of citizens before the law.

[15] Cap N1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004.

exercises a critical regulatory function by ensuring that *halal* representations on products are not false or misleading.

However, NAFDAC has not to date developed formal published guidelines specifically addressing *halal* labelling requirements, the criteria for recognizing *halal* certification bodies, or the procedures for verifying the validity of *halal* claims on imported products. This absence of specific *halal* related guidelines within NAFDAC's regulatory framework represents a significant gap that limits the agency's effectiveness as an instrument of *halal* consumer protection.

Standards Organisation of Nigeria and the FCCPC

The Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) contributes to the regulatory environment through the establishment and enforcement of national quality standards. SON has not to date developed standards specifically applicable to *halal* products, a notable gap in the national technical standards architecture. Nigerian *halal* certifiers consequently rely on international standards developed by the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries and Gulf Standardization Organization[16] rather than domestically promulgated standards, which creates challenges for international recognition of Nigerian *halal* certification.

The Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), established under the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2018[17], protects consumers against unfair trade practices, false advertising, and deceptive labelling. If a business falsely markets a product as *halal* without a legitimate basis or valid certification, such conduct constitutes a misleading representation capable of attracting administrative sanctions, product withdrawal, financial penalties, and civil liability. The FCCPC thus provides an important backstop mechanism against fraudulent *halal* claims, though its generic mandate does not extend to verify substantive *Sharia* compliance.

[16] The Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) and the Gulf Standardization Organization (GSO) are two of the most influential international bodies involved in *halal* standardization. While SMIIC develops harmonized *halal* standards for member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), GSO develops regional standards for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Both institutions play a significant role in promoting consistency, mutual recognition, and international trade in *halal* products, although their geographical scope and institutional mandates differ.

[17] Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2018, Act No. 1 of 2019, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria.

Islamic Law and Private Certification Authorities

The substantive content of *halal* regulation in Nigeria is derived primarily from *Sharia*. Products certified as *halal* must not contain pork or pork derivatives; alcohol, blood, carrion, or ingredients derived from animals not slaughtered in accordance with Islamic rites.

Nigeria relies primarily on independent Islamic organisations and private certification bodies for the substantive religious determination of *halal* status. Among the most prominent is the *Halal* Certification Authority (HCA).

The relationship between Nigerian certifiers and internationally recognised bodies such as *Jabatan Kemajuan* Islam Malaysia[18] and the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America[19], remains informal and lacks the structural framework of mutual recognition that characterises more developed *halal* regulatory systems.

Nigeria's National *Halal* Economy Strategy

The National *Halal* Economy Strategy represents the most significant recent governmental policy initiative in the *halal* sector, seeking to position Nigeria as a major participant in the global *halal* economy across food production, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, leather products, fashion, tourism, logistics, and Islamic finance.

However, the Strategy currently lacks the legislative foundation necessary to give effect to its ambitions, and implementation has been constrained by institutional fragmentation and inadequate inter-agency coordination. The enactment of comprehensive *halal* legislation is essential for translating the Strategy's policy objectives into legally enforceable regulatory requirements.

[18] The Department of Islamic Development Malaysia.

[19] Established in 1982, IFANCA is one of the world's most prominent *halal* certification organizations. It certifies food, beverages, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and other consumer products and is recognized by numerous *halal* authorities worldwide, including JAKIM (Malaysia) and several authorities in the Gulf region.

4.0 HALAL REGULATION AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE LAW

The increasing globalisation of the *halal* industry has made the relationship between *halal* regulation and international trade law increasingly significant, requiring domestic regulatory frameworks to balance religious compliance with international obligations governing trade, standards, and market access[20].

The WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade

The relationship between *halal* regulation and International Trade Law is of fundamental importance for Nigeria's ambitions as a *halal* exporter[21]. The WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) governs the use of technical regulations, standards, and conformity assessment procedures in ways that may affect international trade[22].

Halal certification requirements imposed by importing countries constitute technical regulations within the meaning of the TBT Agreement and must comply with its non-discrimination, proportionality, and transparency obligations. For Nigeria, the TBT Agreement underscores the importance of aligning Nigerian *halal* standards with internationally recognised frameworks developed by Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries and the *Codex Alimentarius* Commission[23], since compliance with internationally recognised standards creates a presumption of TBT Agreement conformity and reduces the risk of market access disputes.

The WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

The Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) governs measures applied to protect human, animal, or plant life or health from risks arising from food additives, contaminants, and disease causing organisms. Aspects of *halal* regulation that intersect with food safety, such as slaughter hygiene requirements, contamination prevention standards, and the regulation of animal-derived ingredients, may fall within its scope[24].

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[20] World Trade Organization (WTO), 1995, Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement), Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO, https://www.wto.org.

[21] E Johan and H Schebesta, 2022, *"Religious Regulation Meets International Trade Law: Halal Measures, a Trade Obstacle? Evidence from the SPS and TBT Committees",* Vol. 25 Issue 1, Journal of International Economic Law, p 61.

[22] Ibid, p 63.

[23] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations & World Health Organization, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Rome: FAO/WHO, https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius, accessed 6 June, 2026.

[24] World Trade Organization, 1995, Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, https://www.wto.org, 6 June, 2026.

The SPS Agreement requires that such measures be based on scientific evidence and applied only to the extent necessary to protect health. Nigeria must ensure that its *halal* food safety requirements are designed and implemented consistently with these obligations, both to avoid trade disputes as an importer and to facilitate acceptance of its *halal* exports in foreign markets.

The African Continental Free Trade Area

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)[25], which entered into force in January 2021, presents a transformative opportunity for the development of an African *halal* market. Nigeria, as one of AfCFTA's largest economies and home to the continent's largest Muslim population, is uniquely positioned to play a leadership role in shaping the *halal* dimension of African trade integration.

The development of harmonised African *halal* standards and mutual recognition arrangements among AfCFTA member states would significantly reduce intra-African trade barriers for *halal* products and create a more integrated continental *halal* supply chain. Nigeria's proactive engagement in the development of AfCFTA's TBT and SPS frameworks could advance both its national *halal* economy objectives and the broader continental goal of economic integration.

5.0 OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY THE LEGAL REGULATION OF THE *HALAL* INDUSTRIES IN NIGERIA

The opportunities available to Nigeria in the *halal* sector are substantial, wide-ranging, and directly tied to the establishment of an effective legal and regulatory framework. It is important to emphasise that these opportunities do not arise merely from Nigeria's large Muslim population or abundant natural resources.

They arise specifically from what effective legal regulation makes possible: market credibility, consumer confidence, international recognition, and institutional capacity[26]. The following subsections analyse each major opportunity and demonstrate why legal regulation is the indispensable foundation for realising it.

Access to the Global *Halal* Market

One of the most significant opportunities arising from effective legal regulation of the *halal* industries in Nigeria is enhanced access to the expansive global *halal* market, estimated at over

[25] The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a flagship project of the African Union (AU) establishing a single continental market for goods and services across Africa, with progressive elimination of tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade.

[26] Mohammad Hashim Kamali, 2020, *"Halal Industry and Islamic Economy"*, IAIS Malaysia, Pp 45 to 49.

two trillion United States dollars annually[27]. Countries that establish credible, internationally recognised *halal* certification systems are substantially better positioned to benefit from this market[28].

Nigeria's potential as a major *halal* exporter is considerable, with abundant agricultural resources, extensive cattle and poultry sectors, and a large established food processing industry. Agricultural products, processed foods, leather goods, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics derived from Nigeria's natural resources could all achieve significant export growth if supported by a robust and internationally recognised *halal* certification framework[29].

It is the existence of a legally grounded, internationally accredited certification system that unlocks this market access. Without such a framework, Nigerian exporters must obtain foreign certification at additional cost, diminishing their price competitiveness and limiting their market reach[30]. Effective *halal* legislation is therefore not merely a regulatory formality but the commercial passport to global *halal* markets.

Economic Diversification and Industrial Development

The *halal* industries extend far beyond traditional food production, offering opportunities for economic diversification across pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, cosmetics, personal care products, logistics and warehousing, tourism and hospitality, fashion and textiles, and Islamic finance and financial services[31]. In the context of Nigeria's longstanding objective of reducing hydrocarbon revenue dependence, the *halal* industries present a strategically important avenue for growth, investment, and employment creation[32].

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[27] Dinar Standard, 2024*, State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2024/25*, DinarStandard, p 22.

[28] Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), OIC/SMIIC 3:2019 Guidelines for Accrediting *Halal* Certification Bodies, 2019, https://www.smiic.org accessed 20 June 2026.

[29] Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2022, National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP) 2022–2027, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja, https://fmard.gov.ng, accessed 20 June 2026.

[30] COMCEC Coordination Office, 2023, *Improving the Halal Accreditation System in OIC Member Countries*, Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Ankara, Republic of *Türkiye*, Pp 18 to 23, https://www.comcec.org, accessed 17 June 2026.

[31] n 40, 35 to 68.

[32] Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021, *National Development Plan 2021 to 2025*, Vol. I, 2021 to 2025, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Abuja 2021, Pp 45 to 49, https://nationalplanning.gov.ng accessed 16 June 2026.

A well-regulated *halal* economy could stimulate innovation, attract foreign direct investment from *halal* importing countries, develop specialised industrial clusters, and create substantial employment particularly in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors[33].

Economic diversification through the *halal* industries, however, requires the legal infrastructure to certify, standardise, and regulate a wide range of products and services. The enactment of a comprehensive *Halal* Industries Act is therefore simultaneously a legal reform and an economic development imperative[34].

Growth of *Halal* Pharmaceuticals and Cosmetics

A particularly significant growth sector within the global *halal* economy is *halal* pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and personal care products. Many conventional pharmaceutical products contain gelatin capsules, animal derived excipients, or alcohol based solvents that render them non-compliant with *halal* requirements[35].

The global demand for *halal* certified pharmaceuticals and cosmetics is growing rapidly, particularly in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa[36]. Nigeria, with its existing pharmaceutical manufacturing base and significant agricultural raw material resources, is well positioned to develop and export *halal* certified pharmaceutical and cosmetic products.

Realising this opportunity requires not merely general food safety regulation but sector specific *halal* standards for pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, standards that Nigeria's existing regulatory framework does not currently provide[37]. The development of such standards within a statutory *halal* regulatory framework would open significant new export markets and stimulate domestic pharmaceutical and cosmetic innovation.

Consumer Protection and Market Integrity

Effective *legal* regulation of the *halal* industries strengthens consumer protection and market integrity for both Muslim consumers and the broader commercial community. A credible and enforceable *halal* regulatory framework ensures that products labelled as *halal* genuinely comply

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[33] Islamic Development Bank, 2022, *The Halal Industry as a Driver of Economic Development*, IsDB, Pp 14 to 19

[34] Yusuf al-Qaradawi, 2013, *"The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam"*, translated by Kamal El-Helbawy, M Moinuddin Siddiqui and Syed Shukry, Islamic Book Trust, Kuala Lumpur, revised edn., Pp 17 to 25.

[35] Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), OIC/SMIIC 35:2020 General Requirements for *Halal* Pharmaceuticals, Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries, Istanbul, Republic of Türkiye, https://www.smiic.org, Pp 12 to 15, accessed 14 June, 2026.

[36] n 40, Pp 102 to 110.

[37] National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control Act, Cap N1 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004.

with Islamic requirements, protecting Muslim consumers from fraud and inadvertent exposure to prohibited substances[38]. It also creates a level playing field for businesses, preventing fraudulent operators from gaining commercial advantages through false *halal* claims[39]. The establishment of reliably enforced *halal* standards enhances consumer confidence, reduces information asymmetries, and contributes to the long-term sustainability of the Nigerian *halal* market.

Consumer protection is an opportunity not only for Muslim consumers but for the Nigerian market as a whole. When *halal* standards are reliable and enforceable, non-Muslim consumers and businesses also benefit from clearer product information, higher quality standards, and greater commercial transparency[40]. *Halal* regulation serves the broader public interest and is therefore justifiable as a matter of general consumer protection law rather than exclusively as a matter of religious accommodation.

Advancement of Food Safety and Public Health Objectives

Modern *halal* regulation is closely aligned with internationally accepted principles of food safety, hygiene, quality assurance, and risk management. Compliance with *halal* standards typically requires businesses to implement internationally recognised quality management systems, including Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and ISO 22000 Food Safety Management Systems[41].

Halal regulation thus contributes not only to religious compliance but also to broadening public health and food safety objectives. The integration of *halal* requirements with food safety standards presents an opportunity for Nigeria to advance consumer protection, public health, and export competitiveness through a unified regulatory approach, reducing the administrative burden of operating separate food safety and *halal* compliance systems[42].

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[38] Muhammad Munir Chaudry, 2018, *"Halal Certification and Consumer Protection"*, Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA), Des Plaines, Illinois, United States of America, Pp 11 to 16.

[39] Ibid

[40] Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2018, Act No 1 of 2019, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, s 114 to 127.

[41] Codex Alimentarius Commission, 2022, *General Principles of Food Hygiene*, CXC 1-1969, adopted 1969, revised 2022, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO), Rome, https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius, accessed 17 June 2026.

[42] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2021, Food Safety and Quality Systems in Developing Countries, FAO, Rome, https://www.fao.org, accessed 17 June 2026.

Promotion of Foreign Investment and International Partnerships

A credible and internationally recognised *halal* regulatory framework would substantially enhance Nigeria's attractiveness as a destination for investment from *halal* importing countries and multinational *halal* companies[43]. Bilateral *halal* cooperation agreements, mutual recognition arrangements, and joint certification programmes could facilitate greater integration of Nigeria into global *halal* supply chains and generate significant transfer of technical expertise and capital[44]. Nigeria's active engagement in SMIIC, OIC-COMCEC, and AfCFTA *halal* governance processes could further strengthen its position in negotiations relating to preferential trade arrangements and export market access[45].

Regional Leadership and Africa's Emerging *Halal* Economy

An opportunity that deserves specific and prominent attention is Nigeria's potential to emerge as Africa's leading *halal* certification and export hub. No African country has yet established itself as the dominant continental *halal* regulatory leader[46].

Nigeria is uniquely positioned to fill this role by virtue of its large domestic Muslim population, its agricultural and livestock base, its strategic role within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the AfCFTA, its growing Islamic finance sector, and its existing pharmaceutical and food manufacturing industries[47].

Were Nigeria to establish a credible national *halal* accreditation system aligned with OIC/SMIIC standards and to actively champion the development of harmonised African *halal* standards within the AfCFTA framework, it could become the certification and export hub through which *halal* products from across West Africa and the broader continent reach global markets[48].

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[43] n 46, Pp 22 to 29.

[44] n 43, Pp 31 to 39.

[45] Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), Statute of the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries, entered into force 2010, Istanbul, Republic of Türkiye, https://www.smiic.org, accessed 20 June 2026.

[46] Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), 2022, *Halal Market Trends in Africa: Opportunities, Challenges and Prospects for OIC Member States*, COMCEC Coordination Office, Ankara, Republic of Türkiye, Pp 12 to 18.

[47] National Bureau of Statistics, 2025, *Nigerian Gross Domestic Product Report*, Annual Report 2024, National Bureau of Statistics, Abuja, Pp 8 to 15.

[48] n 41

This regional leadership role would generate not only commercial and economic benefits but also diplomatic and institutional influence within the OIC, ECOWAS, and the African Union[49]. The opportunity for continental *halal* leadership is currently available, but it will not remain so indefinitely, and it can only be seized through the prompt establishment of an effective legal and regulatory framework.

6.0 CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE NIGERIAN *HALAL* INDUSTRIES

The challenges confronting the Nigerian *halal* industries are not merely operational or commercial difficulties. They are, at their root, legal and institutional challenges, and the product of a regulatory framework that is structurally inadequate to the demands of a modern *halal* economy. Each challenge corresponds directly to one of the opportunities identified in the preceding section, demonstrating that the gap between Nigeria's *halal* potential and its current performance is, at its core, a regulatory and legal governance gap. The following mirrored analysis makes this correspondence explicit.

Absence of Dedicated *Halal* Legislation

The most fundamental challenge confronting the *halal* industries in Nigeria is the absence of a dedicated *Halal* Industries Act or comprehensive statutory framework governing *halal* certification, standards, accreditation, and enforcement[50]. This regulatory gap is the root cause from which most other challenges flow. It creates significant ambiguities in the legal obligations of businesses, uncertainties regarding the consequences of non-compliance, and a lack of institutional commitment that deters investment and undermines international confidence in Nigerian *halal* certification[51].

Without dedicated legislation, no regulatory body has a clear and specific statutory mandate to govern the *halal* industries, and no person or institution is definitively accountable for the integrity of the Nigerian *halal* market. This directly frustrates the opportunity for economic diversification

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[49] Charter of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, adopted at the Eleventh Islamic Summit Conference, Dakar, Senegal, 13 to 14 March 2008, entered into force 1 January 2010, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, https://www.oic-oci.org, accessed 20 June 2026.

[50] Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), s 4(2) to (4), read together with Items 62, 68 and 81 of Part I (Exclusive Legislative List) of the Second Schedule; s 5(a), (b), (c), (d), 7 and 26, of the Standards Organisation of Nigeria Act 2015; s 5(a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and 30 of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control Act, Cap N1 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004.

[51] United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), 2021, *The Role of Standards and Conformity Assessment in Enhancing Competitiveness and Facilitating Trade*, UNIDO, Pp 8 to 22.

through the *halal* industries, because investors and trading partners require legislative certainty before committing capital and market access agreements[52].

Lack of a Centralised National *Halal* Accreditation Authority

The absence of a centralised national *halal* accreditation mechanism represents a critical structural weakness of the Nigerian regulatory framework. Without a single authoritative national *halal* accreditation body, there is no common standard against which private certifiers can be evaluated, no mechanism for ensuring consistency in certification procedures, and no recognised national focal point for engagement with foreign *halal* regulators[53].

This fragmentation directly undermines the opportunity for access to global *halal* markets: Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, the UAE, and Indonesia will not recognise Nigerian *halal* certification unless it is issued by bodies accredited by a nationally recognised authority whose standards are aligned with international frameworks[54]. The absence of such an authority is the single most significant barrier between Nigeria's *halal* export aspirations and their commercial realisation.

Inconsistency in Certification Standards and Fraudulent Practices

The multiplicity of private *halal* certification bodies in Nigeria, each applying its own interpretation of *Sharia* requirements and its own certification procedures, generates inconsistency in standards and practices across the *halal* industries. Different certifiers may adopt varying positions on slaughter methods, stunning practices, the permissibility of certain food additives, enzymes, and genetically modified ingredients, and the requirements for supply chain segregation[55].

Cases of fraudulent *halal* labelling, misuse of certification marks, and deceptive marketing practices have been reported, reflecting the gap between formal legal requirements and practical enforcement[56]. This inconsistency and fraud directly undermine the opportunity for consumer

[52] Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture Research Centre (ICIEC), 2023, *Global Islamic Economy and Halal Industry Development Report*, ICIEC, Pp 45 to 49.

[53] Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), 2019, OIC/SMIIC 2:2019 Conformity Assessment, *Requirements for Bodies Providing Halal Certification*, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation/Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries, Istanbul.

[54] Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), 2020, *Manual Procedure for Malaysia Halal Certification (Domestic) 2020*, Department of Islamic Development Malaysia, Putrajaya; Gulf Cooperation Council Standardization Organization (GSO), 2015, GSO 2055, 2:2015 *Halal* Products, Part 2, *Requirements for Halal Certification Bodies*, GSO, Riyadh.

[55] Muhammad Munir Chaudry and Halima A. Jan, 2021, *"Challenges of Global Halal Standardisation and Certification"*, Vol. 4 Journal of *Halal* Industry and Services, Pp 15, 19 to 24

[56] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2022, *Ensuring Food Integrity and Consumer Confidence in Halal Food Supply Chains*, FAO, Pp 31 to 35

confidence and market integrity that an effective *halal* regulatory framework should provide, eroding Muslim consumers' trust and damaging the reputation of Nigerian *halal* certification in international markets[57].

Absence of NAFDAC *Halal* Guidelines and SON *Halal* Standards

NAFDAC has not to date developed formal published guidelines specifically addressing *halal* labelling requirements, the criteria for recognizing *halal* certification bodies, or the procedures for verifying the validity of *halal* claims on imported products[58].

Similarly, SON has not developed technical standards specifically applicable to *halal* products, leaving Nigerian *halal* certifiers to rely on international standards that are not domestically promulgated and therefore have no formal legal standing within the Nigerian regulatory framework[59]. This absence of *halal* specific guidelines from both NAFDAC and SON directly frustrates the opportunity for food safety and public health advancement through integrated *halal* and food safety regulation, because the two regulatory systems operate in parallel rather than in a coherent and mutually reinforcing manner[60].

Compliance Costs for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

The costs associated with obtaining and maintaining *halal* certification represent a significant burden for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), which constitute a large proportion of the Nigerian food processing and manufacturing sector. Facility inspections, ingredient verification, supply chain documentation, product testing, audit fees, and quality management system implementation collectively impose costs that many SMEs lack the financial resources or institutional capacity to absorb[61].

This compliance cost barrier risks excluding a significant segment of potentially eligible businesses from the *halal* economy and concentrating its benefits among larger, better resourced enterprises. It directly constrains the opportunity for economic diversification through the *halal*

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[57] Dinar Standard, 2023, *State of the Global Islamic Economy Report*, 2023/24, DinarStandard, New York and Dubai, Pp 98 to 101.

[58] National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control Act, Cap N1 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, s 5(a)–(e); National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, Food Labelling Regulations 2022, Regulations 3 to 10.

[59] Standards Organisation of Nigeria Act 2015, s 5, 7, 26 to 27.

[60] Codex Alimentarius Commission, 2022, *General Principles of Food Hygiene*, CXC 1-1969 (Rev. 2022), Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, Rome.

[61] United Nations Development Programme, 2022, Micro, *Small and Medium Enterprises and Standards Compliance in Developing Economies*, UNDP. Pp 27 to 30.

industries by limiting participation to a narrow tier of larger businesses rather than enabling broad based economic inclusion[62].

Cross Border Recognition and Non-Tariff Trade Barriers

The absence of a nationally recognised and internationally accredited Nigerian *halal* certification authority creates substantial barriers to export market access that function, in the language of international trade law, as non-tariff barriers within the meaning of the WTO TBT Agreement[63]. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Malaysia, and Indonesia require imported *halal* products to be certified by officially recognised or accredited bodies[64].

Nigerian certification bodies, operating without a national accreditation framework aligned with international standards, frequently lack the recognition necessary for their certificates to be accepted in these markets[65]. This directly frustrates the opportunity for AfCFTA regional *halal* leadership. Nigeria cannot champion the development of harmonised African *halal* standards within the AfCFTA framework from a position of regulatory weakness, nor can it serve as a continental *halal* export hub if its own certification lacks international credibility[66].

Emerging Technological and Scientific Challenges

Advances in biotechnology, synthetic biology, cultured meat, genetically modified organisms, nanotechnology, pharmaceutical manufacturing, and artificial intelligence assisted food production present complex challenges that existing Nigerian legal frameworks are ill-equipped to address[67].

The permissibility of genetically modified organisms in *halal* products remains contested among Islamic scholars, with different schools and jurisprudential bodies adopting varying positions[68]. The *halal* status of cultured or laboratory-grown meat, produced from animal cells without

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[62] Islamic Development Bank Institute, 2021, *Halal Economy: Opportunities and Challenges for Developing Countries*, IsDBI, Pp 61 to 65.

[63] Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, adopted 15 April 1994, entered into force 1 January 1995, 1868 UNTS 120.

[64] Gulf Cooperation Council Standardization Organization, GSO 2055 Series on *Halal* Products, Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), Recognised Foreign *Halal* Certification Bodies List.

[65] Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), 2022, *Strategic Roadmap for Global Recognition of Halal Accreditation Systems*, SMIIC.

[66] Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, adopted 21 March 2018, entered into force 30 May 2019, 58 ILM 1027.

[67] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023, *Emerging Technologies and the Future of Food Systems*, OECD.

[68] Mohammad Hashim Kamali, 2021, *"Islam and Biotechnology: Ethical and Jurisprudential Perspectives"*, Islamic Texts Society, Pp 112 to 128.

conventional slaughter, raises fundamental jurisprudential questions that require authoritative scholarly resolution and regulatory guidance[69].

Block chain technology and digital traceability systems offer significant potential for enhancing the transparency and integrity of *halal* supply chains, but their deployment requires regulatory frameworks that existing Nigerian law does not provide[70]. These technological challenges directly frustrate the opportunity for growth in *halal* pharmaceuticals and cosmetics: without regulatory frameworks addressing biotech derived ingredients and novel manufacturing processes, Nigerian pharmaceutical manufacturers cannot obtain credible *halal* certification for innovative products or access the rapidly growing global market for technologically advanced *halal* compliant goods[71].

7.0 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF *HALAL* REGULATORY MODELS

The following comparative analysis examines the *halal* regulatory frameworks of five jurisdictions selected for their diversity of regulatory approaches and their relevance to the development of an appropriate model for Nigeria. The analysis proceeds from the most centralised government led systems to the most market driven private certification models, before synthesising comparative lessons for Nigeria.

Malaysia: The Global Benchmark

Malaysia is universally regarded as having the world's most sophisticated and comprehensive *halal* regulatory framework[72]. The cornerstone of its *halal* legal regime is the Trade Descriptions Act 2011[73], which criminalises false or misleading representations concerning *halal* products[74]. This legislation is supplemented by the Trade Descriptions (Definition of *Halal*) Order 2011[75], the

[69] International Islamic Fiqh Academy, 2023, *Resolutions and Recommendations of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy 1985–2023*, IIFA, Jeddah, Vol 4, Pp 217 223.

[70] Muhammad Tayyab Khan and others, 2023, *"Blockchain-Based Traceability Systems in Halal Supply Chains: Opportunities and Regulatory Challenges"*, Vol. 15, Journal of Islamic Marketing, 1447, Pp 1458 to 1465.

[71] DinarStandard, Global Islamic Economy Report, 2023, *Pharmaceuticals and Cosmetics Sector Analysis*, DinarStandard, Pp 156 to 170.

[72] Department of Islamic Development Malaysia, 2020, *"Manual procedure for Malaysia halal certification (domestic)"*, 3rd ed., Department of Islamic Development Malaysia, (JAKIM), Pp 1 to 15.

[73] 2011, Act 730.

[74] See, Sections 5 and 28 of the Act.

[75] Trade Descriptions (Definition of *Halal*), Order 2011 [P.U. (A) 384/2011], Malaysia.

Trade Descriptions (Certification and Marking of *Halal*) Order 2011[76], and the Malaysian *Halal* Standard[77].

The principal regulatory authority is the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), which administers *halal* certification at the federal level in conjunction with State Islamic Religious Departments. A defining feature is the whole supply chain approach, extending regulatory oversight from ingredient sourcing through to retail distribution.

Foreign *halal* certificates are accepted only from bodies officially recognised by *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia* (JAKIM), ensuring international consistency. Malaysia's centralised governance, legal enforceability, and internationally recognised standards make its certification system a *de facto* international benchmark[78]

Indonesia: The World's Largest Mandatory *Halal* Assurance System

Indonesia enacted Law No. 33 of 2014 on *Halal* Product Assurance[79], establishing one of the most ambitious mandatory *halal* certification regimes globally. The *Halal* Product Assurance Organising Agency administers the system, while the Indonesian *Ulema* Council issues the religious *fatwa* determining *halal* status. The system covers food, beverages, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, chemical products, and medical devices. Non-*halal* products are required to bear clear "Non-*Halal*" labels, and foreign certification bodies must conclude Mutual Recognition Agreements with *Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal*. Despite challenges including administrative bottlenecks and compliance costs for small businesses, the system has significantly strengthened consumer confidence and supply chain standardisation.

Saudi Arabia: Mandatory State Controlled Certification

Saudi Arabia's *halal* regulatory system is deeply integrated into the Kingdom's Islamic constitutional identity. The regime is administered by the Saudi Food and Drug Authority, the Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization, and the Saudi *Halal* Center[80].

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76 Trade Descriptions (Certification and Marking of *Halal*), Order 2011, [P.U. (A) 385/2011], Malaysia.

77 Department of Standards Malaysia, 2019, MS 1500:2019 *Halal* Food, General Requirements, (Third revision), Department of Standards Malaysia.

78 Department of Islamic Development Malaysia, 2025, *Recognised foreign halal certification bodies and authorities*, JAKIM, https://www.halal.gov.my, accessed 21 June, 2026.

79 Indonesia, 2014, Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance (*Undang-Undang Republik* Indonesia *Nomo*r 33 *Tahun* 2014 *tentang Jaminan Produk Halal*), Government of the Republic of Indonesia, https://peraturan.bpk.go.id.

80 Saudi Food and Drug Authority, 2023, *Halal regulations and requirements for food products*, https://www.sfda.gov.sa; Saudi *Halal* Center, 2024, About the Saudi *Halal* Center, https://halal.sa; Saudi Standards, *Metrology and Quality Organization*, 2022, Saudi *Halal* Center regulations and procedures, https://www.saso.gov.sa, accessed 20 June, 2026.

Halal certification is mandatory for a broad range of imported products containing animal derived ingredients, and foreign certification bodies must obtain accreditation from the Saudi *Halal* Center. Technical standards under Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization (SASO) 2172, govern *halal* food production, handling, packaging, and storage. The system's centralised administration and integration with customs and border control mechanisms have achieved a high degree of market effectiveness[81].

United Arab Emirates: Harmonisation with International Trade

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has developed a sophisticated *halal* regulatory system designed to support its ambition of becoming a global centre for halal trade. Administered by the Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology, the framework is based primarily on the UAE *Halal* Standards UAE.S 2055 series[82], integrating Islamic legal principles with international conformity assessment and quality assurance mechanisms.

The UAE's nationally recognised *Halal* National Mark signifies compliance with both *Sharia* requirements and international technical standards. Import regulation is particularly emphasised, requiring foreign *halal* certificates from the Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology accredited bodies and mandating strict supply chain segregation throughout.

Australia: A Hybrid Model

Australia presents a markedly different regulatory model reflecting its status as a secular multicultural state. Without a dedicated *halal* statute, regulation operates through the Competition and Consumer Act 2010[83], administered by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, which prohibits misleading or deceptive conduct, supplemented by private Islamic certification bodies[84]. For export meat products, a more formalised process operates under the Export Control Act 2020[85]. The Australian model demonstrates that effective *halal* regulation is

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[81] Lever, J., & Miele, M, 2012, *"The Growth of Halal Meat Markets in Europe: An Exploration of the Supply Side Theory of Religion"*, Journal of Rural Studies, Vol. 28, 4, Pp 528 to 537, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2012.06.002, accessed 20 June, 2026.

[82] Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology, (n.d.), *UAE National Halal System*, Abu Dhabi: Government of the United Arab Emirates, https://moiat.gov.ae, accessed 18 June, 2026.

[83] Competition and Consumer Act 2010, (Cth), Federal Register of Legislation, https://www.legislation.gov.au, accessed 18 June, 2026.

[84] Unlike countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, Australia does not operate a centralized government *halal* certification system. Rather, *halal* certification is primarily conducted by private Islamic organizations, including the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC), *Halal* Australia Pty Ltd, the Islamic Co-ordinating Council of Victoria (ICCV), the Supreme Islamic Council of *Halal* Meat in Australia (SICHMA), and other accredited certifiers.

[85] Export Control Act 2020, (Cth), Federal Register of Legislation, https://www.legislation.gov.au, accessed 18 June, 2026.

achievable in a secular legal order through robust consumer protection mechanisms, though the multiplicity of private certifiers generates occasional inconsistency.

8.0 COMPARATIVE LESSONS FOR NIGERIA

The comparative analysis yields five significant lessons for Nigeria. First, dedicated *halal* legislation provides greater legal certainty than reliance on general consumer protection frameworks alone. Secondly, centralised national accreditation mechanisms enhance consistency, public confidence, and international recognition. Thirdly, integration of *halal* regulation with customs control provides powerful market incentives for compliance. Fourthly, alignment of national *halal* standards with Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries frameworks facilitates export market access. Fifthly, a clear institutional distinction between government regulation and private religious certification is essential for effective governance.

Nigeria requires a bespoke regulatory model drawing upon the centralised institutional architecture of Malaysia and Indonesia, the trade integration approach of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and the consumer protection foundation of the Australian model, tailored to Nigeria's constitutional structure, demographic profile, and economic objectives.

9.0 REFORMING NIGERIA'S *HALAL* REGULATORY FRAMEWORK: THE WAY FORWARD

Addressing the shortcomings of Nigeria's existing *halal* regulatory system requires a coherent programme of legal, institutional, and policy reforms capable of enhancing regulatory certainty, strengthening consumer confidence, and promoting international competitiveness.

Enactment of a *Halal* Industries Act

The most fundamental and urgent reform is the enactment of a comprehensive *Halal* Industries Act by the National Assembly. Such legislation should establish a legally enforceable definition of *halal* and non-*halal* products and services in conformity with *Sharia* principles[86], create a national *halal* certification and accreditation regime; establish the legal framework for the recognition and oversight of *halal* certification bodies, impose mandatory requirements for *halal* labelling and supply chain traceability, create offences and penalties for fraudulent *halal* claims and misuse of *halal* certification marks, provide for the establishment of a National *Halal*

[86] World *Halal* Council, *General Guidelines for the Use of the Term "Halal"*, WHC 2019.

Regulatory Authority with clear statutory powers and accountability mechanisms, and address the relationship between the Act and applicable WTO and AfCFTA obligations[87].

The legislative drafting process should involve inclusive consultation with Islamic scholars, legal experts, industry stakeholders, consumer organisations, and relevant government agencies, drawing systematically on the legislative experience of Malaysia, Indonesia[88], and other leading *halal* regulating jurisdictions.

Establishment of a National *Halal* Regulatory Authority

Nigeria should establish a National *Halal* Regulatory Authority as the single authoritative national focal point for *halal* regulation. The National *Halal* Regulatory Authority should be responsible for accrediting private *halal* certification bodies against nationally standardised criteria, developing and maintaining national *halal* standards in collaboration with SON[89] and Islamic scholarly bodies, engaging with foreign *halal* regulators to secure mutual recognition of Nigerian *halal* certification, overseeing compliance and enforcement, conducting public education programmes, and representing Nigeria in international *halal* governance forums, including those of the OIC, SMIIC, ECOWAS, and AfCFTA[90].

The National *Halal* Regulatory Authority should maintain a clear institutional distinction between its governmental regulatory functions and the religious certification functions performed by accredited private bodies.

Development of National *Halal* Standards

Nigeria urgently needs to develop comprehensive national *halal* standards covering food and beverages, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, personal care products, logistics and warehousing, hospitality and tourism, and other relevant sectors, including standards specifically addressing genetically modified organisms, cultured meat, nanotechnology derived ingredients, and AI-assisted manufacturing processes.

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[87] World Trade Organization, *Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade* (TBT Agreement) 1995; World Trade Organization, *Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures* (SPS Agreement), 1995; African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat, Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA, 2018.

[88] Malaysia, Trade Descriptions Act 2011 (Act 730) and Trade Descriptions (Certification and Marking of *Halal*) Order 2011; Indonesia, Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning *Halal* Product Assurance; Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), Malaysian *Halal* Certification Manual.

[89] Standards Organisation of Nigeria, Standards Organisation of Nigeria Act 2015; Standards Organisation of Nigeria, Nigerian Industrial Standards Catalogue.

[90] Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Charter of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, 2008; ECOWAS, Revised Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States, 1993; Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), *Halal* Trade and Standards in OIC Member States, 2021.

These standards should be aligned with frameworks developed by SMIIC and the *Codex Alimentarius* Commission[91] to facilitate international recognition and should be subject to regular review to address evolving scientific and jurisprudential developments.

NAFDAC *Halal* Labelling Guidelines and SON *Halal* Standards

In the short term, and pending the enactment of a *Halal* Industries Act, NAFDAC should develop and formally publish specific guidelines addressing *halal* labelling requirements, the criteria for recognising *halal* certification bodies for labelling purposes, and the procedures for verifying *halal* claims on imported products[92].

Similarly, SON should develop national *halal* standards aligned with OIC/SMIIC frameworks, providing the technical foundation upon which a national *halal* certification system can be built. These administrative measures can be taken within existing statutory mandates without awaiting dedicated *halal* legislation and would represent a significant immediate improvement in the Nigerian regulatory framework.

International Engagement, Mutual Recognition, and AfCFTA Leadership

Nigeria should pursue systematic engagement with the *halal* regulatory authorities of major importing countries with the objective of securing mutual recognition of Nigerian *halal* certification. Nigeria should also seek active participation in the work of OIC-COMCEC, SMIIC, and the International *Halal* Accreditation Forum[93].

In the AfCFTA context, Nigeria should champion the development of harmonised African *halal* standards and mutual recognition arrangements among AfCFTA member states[94], positioning itself as the continent's leading *halal* regulatory authority and thereby realising the opportunity for regional *halal* leadership identified in the preceding section.

Capacity Building, SME Support, and Digital Innovation

Effective implementation of a strengthened *halal* regulatory framework requires substantial investment in capacity building across the regulatory, certification, and industry sectors. This

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[91] Codex Alimentarius Commission, General Principles of Food Hygiene CXC 1-1969 (Rev. 2022); Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), OIC/SMIIC 1:2019 General Requirements for *Halal* Food.

[92] National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, NAFDAC Act Cap N1 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004; NAFDAC, Guidelines for Food Labelling and Advertisement.

[93] Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA), Global *Halal* Economy Reports; OIC Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC), *Halal* Industry Strategic Framework, 2022.

[94] African Union Commission, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Implementation Toolkit, 2020; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Trade Facilitation and Regulatory Harmonisation in Africa, 2021.

encompasses training of *halal* inspectors, auditors, and regulatory officials; development of scientific testing capabilities, technical assistance and compliance cost reduction support for SMEs, establishment of dedicated *halal* research centres in Nigerian universities, and sustained public education programmes.

Nigeria should also leverage digital technologies, including block chain traceability systems and AI-assisted supply chain monitoring, to enhance the transparency and integrity of the Nigerian *halal* supply chain, reducing compliance costs, minimising fraud, and facilitating international market access[95].

10.0 CONCLUSION

The legal regulation of the *halal* industries in Nigeria stands at a pivotal stage. As this paper has demonstrated, Nigeria possesses substantial advantages that position it to become a leading participant in the global *halal* economy, including a Muslim population exceeding 100 million, abundant agricultural and livestock resources, a growing manufacturing base, and strategic access to regional and international markets through ECOWAS and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Government recognition of the economic potential of the *halal* sector further strengthens these prospects.

However, these opportunities are matched by significant legal and regulatory challenges. The absence of a comprehensive statutory framework and centralised *halal* regulatory authority has resulted in fragmented governance, inconsistent certification practices, limited international recognition, and barriers to export competitiveness. Regulatory gaps affecting *halal* pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, biotechnology, and food safety, together with weak coordination among relevant agencies and private certifiers, continue to undermine consumer confidence and investment.

The central finding of this study is that the principal obstacle to the growth of Nigeria's *halal* industries is not a lack of economic potential or market demand, but the absence of an effective and coherent legal and institutional framework. Bridging this gap requires comprehensive legal reform, including the enactment of a *Halal* Industries Act, the establishment of a National *Halal* Regulatory Authority, the development of harmonised national *halal* standards, and stronger collaboration between regulatory agencies and private certification bodies. Greater engagement

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[95] World Bank, *Blockchain Technology and Supply Chain Transparency in Food Systems*, 2020; United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Digital Transformation of Agro-Food Value Chains, 2022.

with international accreditation systems and regional initiatives under AfCFTA is equally essential.

Ultimately, the success of Nigeria's *halal* industries will depend on the quality and credibility of the legal structures that govern them. A robust and internationally aligned regulatory framework is indispensable for strengthening consumer confidence, enhancing export competitiveness, and enabling Nigeria to realise its considerable potential as a leading *halal* economy in Africa and beyond.