


## Halal certification facilitation for value addition of lemong as a regional culinary identity of Malingping, Lebak Regency

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### Abstract

As a Muslim-majority country, Indonesia has made halal product assurance a central policy to promote global halal tourism and strengthen its national identity. The government, through the Halal Product Assurance Organizing Agency (BPJPH), has mandated halal certification for all businesses. To accelerate this, a free halal certification program has been launched, specifically targeting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). However, this program remains largely unknown, especially in rural and peripheral areas like Malingping, Lebak Regency. This community service initiative aimed to assist local Nasi Lemang producers in Malingping, South Lebak, in obtaining halal certification. Many of these entrepreneurs lack the necessary knowledge about the procedures and requirements for certification. The method employed involved a combination of socialization, mentoring, and technical assistance throughout the halal certification registration process. The outcome of this program was the successful acquisition of halal certificates by the Nasi Lemang entrepreneurs. This not only ensures their products comply with national standards but also enhances the added value of Lemang as a distinctive culinary icon of Malingping. Ultimately, this effort contributes to the preservation of local culinary heritage while supporting Indonesia's broader halal industry development agenda.

**Keywords:** Halal certification; Nasi lemong; MSMEs; Culinary icon

## *Fasilitasi sertifikasi halal untuk nilai tambah 'lemang' sebagai identitas kuliner lokal Malingping, Kabupaten Lebak*

### Abstrak

Sebagai negara dengan mayoritas penduduk muslim, isu produk halal menjadi perhatian utama pemerintah dalam mendorong terciptanya wisata halal dunia sekaligus menjadi identitas negara. Oleh karena itu, pemerintah melalui Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal (BPJPH) memperkenalkan program sertifikasi produk halal yang wajib diikuti oleh semua pelaku usaha. Untuk memastikan program ini, pemerintah juga mengeluarkan program afirmasi khusus untuk pelaku usaha kecil-menengah melalui sertifikasi halal gratis. Namun program ini belum banyak dikenal oleh masyarakat luas. Tujuan kegiatan Pengabdian ini membantu pelaku usaha Nasi Lemang di Malingping, Lebak Selatan untuk mendapatkan sertifikat halal sebab tidak semua pelaku usaha memahami mekanisme pendaftaran sertifikasi. Metode kegiatan pengabdian ini dengan cara sosialisasi, pendampingan, dan asistensi pendaftaran sertifikat produk halal. Hasil kegiatan ini adalah keberhasilan pelaku usaha nasi Lemang dalam memperoleh sertifikat produk halal sekaligus meningkatkan nilai tambah produk Lemang sebagai identitas kuliner khas Malingping.

**Kata Kunci:** Sertifikasi halal; Nasi Lemang; UMKM; Ikon kuliner

Contributions to  
SDGs

3 GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



8 DECENT WORK AND  
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# 1. Introduction

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Halal certification plays a pivotal role in ensuring that food products consumed by Muslim populations align with religious principles. In a country like Indonesia, with a predominantly Muslim population (87.2% or 229.62 million people in 2020), the availability of certified halal products is a matter of both religious observance and consumer protection (Al-Teinaz & Al-Mazeedi, 2020; Anwar et al., 2018; Aziz & Chok, 2013; Haleem et al., 2020). The official halal label provides assurance that products have been rigorously verified in accordance with Islamic law, thereby upholding religious values, fostering consumer confidence, and strengthening regulatory governance in the food industry (Ab-Talib et al., 2016; Faridah, 2019; Latif et al., 2014; Mahpudin & Nurlia, 2024).

The growing demand for halal-certified products necessitates a structured certification system to prevent ambiguity in the market and ensure consumers can distinguish genuinely halal products (Ahmed et al., 2018; Asa, 2017; Khan et al., 2019; Saputri, 2020; Yusuf et al., 2016). This underscores the importance of a regulatory framework that enforces compliance and educates both producers and consumers (Haslinda et al., 2020; Henderson, 2016; Purnomo, 2023; Tajudeen, 2020). The Indonesian government has responded by establishing formal halal certification policies, which are a critical response to both religious obligations and the socioeconomic importance of halal assurance.

Historically, halal certification in Indonesia was voluntary and administered by the Assessment Institute for Foods, Drugs, and Cosmetics (LPPOM) of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) (Faridah, 2019). However, due to the limited implementation of this voluntary scheme, the government enacted Law Number 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Assurance. This legislation led to the establishment of the Halal Product Assurance Organizing Agency (BPJPH) in 2017 and a mandate, effective from October 18, 2024, that all products in Indonesia must be halal certified. To support this widespread implementation, especially for micro and small enterprises (MSE), the government launched a free halal certification program nationwide (Mahpudin & Nurlia, 2024; Nurlia & Mahpudin, 2023).

This program, which targets one million MSE, aims to assist small businesses in obtaining halal certification through a self-declaration scheme. Business actors with processed food products that can be assured as halal are eligible to register via the official BPJPH website. This initiative represents a form of state facilitation designed to increase the competitiveness of MSE products and enhance consumer trust in both domestic and global markets (Ilham, 2022; Nasori et al., 2023; Saefullah, 2023; Sup, 2023).

Despite this government support, the program's implementation is not yet fully optimized. A significant number of MSE actors, particularly in rural areas, remain unaware of the free certification program or the self-declaration scheme procedures. This is further compounded by a generally low level of halal literacy among business owners who tend to adhere to traditional norms and have limited awareness of the importance of halal labeling (Akbar et al., 2023; Rodho & Izaak, 2024).

A case in point is the traditional food producers of Lemang in Banten Province, specifically in the Malingping area of Lebak Regency (Figure 1). Lemang, a dish made from glutinous rice cooked in bamboo over an open fire, holds significant cultural and

religious importance for Minangkabau, Malay, and Betawi communities (Manalu et al., 2018; Rahman et al., 2024; Resiful, 2019). Its historical preparation is linked to the propagation of Islamic teachings on halal food, reinforcing the integration of religious values and local wisdom. Lemang is a culinary icon in Malingping with strong potential for broader market expansion, but it lacks official halal certification.



Figure 1. Lemang product

This community service initiative, therefore, aims to assist Lemang food entrepreneurs in obtaining halal product certification. The program is designed to raise awareness about the importance of halal certification, facilitate the registration process, and ultimately increase the number of MSEs with official halal labels. This will enhance the added value of Lemang as a distinctive culinary icon and contribute to the economic empowerment of the community. This program also contributes to two key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), i.e. SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).

## 2. Method

This community service activity was conducted in the Malingping area, Lebak Regency, from February to May 2025, with a potential extension until the official halal certificate is issued. Malingping was selected as the project site due to its high concentration of Lemang food entrepreneurs, who were the primary target beneficiaries for assistance with the halal certification process.

The methodology for this community service initiative involved three key stages. First, identification of entrepreneurial challenges. The initial phase focused on identifying the specific obstacles faced by Lemang business owners (Figure 2). The project team collected information on whether entrepreneurs had previously attempted to obtain halal certification and, for those who had not, the reasons for their hesitation or inability. This diagnostic approach ensured that the subsequent assistance provided was relevant and directly addressed the needs of the target group.

Second, socialization of the free halal certification program. Following the initial needs assessment, a socialization program was implemented to inform entrepreneurs about the government's free halal certification initiative, which operates through a self-declaration mechanism. This stage was designed to increase awareness regarding the

importance of halal certification and to provide a clear, step-by-step explanation of the registration process.

Third, assistance with halal product registration. The final and most critical stage of the program involved providing direct, hands-on assistance to entrepreneurs throughout the registration process. The team guided the business owners from the initial application to the successful submission of their Lemang products to the Halal Product Assurance Organizing Agency (BPJPH) system for certification. This hands-on support was the core component of the entire community service effort, ensuring that entrepreneurs could navigate the registration process successfully and obtain their certificates.



Figure 2. Identification stage of problems faced by Lemang business actors

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Identification of problems faced by business actors

A community service program is considered ideal when it can offer concrete solutions to the problems faced by its target beneficiaries. These solutions do not emerge from a vacuum but are derived from a precise analysis of needs aimed at fostering change and transformation. In other words, the solutions must reflect the actual needs of the community. In this context, three primary issues have been identified among MSME actors in the Malingping area, Lebak Regency.

First, there is a lack of understanding among MSME actors regarding the urgency of halal product certification. Most locally processed food products have not yet obtained halal certification. This is largely due to limited knowledge about the concept and procedures of halal certification, as well as the perception that the certification process is costly. Some business owners are not aware of how to register their products with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, while others who do understand the process are discouraged by the associated expenses. As a result, local products rarely include a halal label on their packaging. In contrast, halal labels are typically only found on products from large-scale businesses.

Despite this, the production and distribution of food products continue based on mutual trust between producers and consumers. However, the absence of halal information on product packaging cannot be overlooked, as halal labeling plays a crucial role in



enhancing consumer trust and protecting their rights to product information. Furthermore, halal certification can significantly increase the market value and competitiveness of products. Therefore, it is essential to raise awareness among MSME actors particularly the community service partners about the importance of halal certification for local food products.

Second, there is a low level of consumer awareness regarding the importance of halal certification. The lack of understanding is not limited to business owners but is also prevalent among local consumers of MSME products. Initial observations show that consumers in the assisted village do not pay much attention to whether a halal logo appears on product packaging. They place their trust in the safety and halal status of food products simply because they are produced by local businesses. Consumers tend not to inquire about the ingredients or how the products are processed, partly because such information is not typically included on the packaging. This apathy is further influenced by low levels of education and limited literacy capacity. Moreover, there is an absence of a cultural norm that encourages concern for halal certification. Therefore, public awareness campaigns are needed to emphasize the importance of halal labeling to the local community.

Third, observations of the community partners reveal that many MSME actors lack effective marketing capabilities. Currently, their products are sold through conventional means and are limited to local markets. However, in today's digital era, technology offers vast opportunities to expand business reach. MSME actors in rural areas are generally unfamiliar with digital tools, which is understandable given the rural context. Yet digitalization offers significant benefits, such as broader consumer reach, cost-effective marketing through social media platforms, and enhanced consumer trust especially when products are halal certified. For consumers outside the product's area of origin, halal certification serves as a credible assurance of safety and religious compliance. Thus, providing training in digital marketing for MSME actors is crucial for supporting the sustainability and competitiveness of their businesses.

### **3.2. Socialization of the halal certification program**

The socialization process was carried out using a proactive, door-to-door approach, in which the community service team visited each Lemang business actor individually (Figure 3). This approach utilized an informal communication model to foster intensive interaction, allowing business owners to feel more comfortable and relaxed, while gaining knowledge throughout the engagement. The materials delivered during this session focused on two key aspects: first, the urgency of halal certification; and second, the technical procedures for halal product registration.

The material on the urgency of halal certification aimed to raise awareness among business actors regarding the importance of having their processed food products formally certified as halal. Although Lemang is inherently halal being made from plant-based ingredients such as glutinous rice, black-eyed peas, and coconut milk the halal certification process remains essential. It strengthens consumer trust and adds market value to the Lemang product. The session began by explaining the legal foundation of halal certification and the rationale behind the government's policy requiring all food business operators to obtain halal certification for their products.

Subsequently, the team explained the technical procedures for registering halal products. As is known, the certification process is conducted through the official BPJPH

website at <https://ptsp.halal.go.id>, and must be completed entirely online. This presented challenges, as not all business actors possessed adequate digital literacy. Several barriers were identified, including the demographic profile of Lemang producers many of whom are elderly women with only elementary or secondary school education, and are unfamiliar with digital platforms. Furthermore, not all business actors own smartphones or communication devices that support internet access, which is essential for the online registration process. Compounding this is the fact that internet infrastructure in many parts of Malingping remains underdeveloped, exacerbating the digital divide in South Lebak. Despite these challenges, the service team remained committed to aiding.



Figure 3. Door-to-door halal certification socialization for Lemang business actors

To initiate the registration process, business actors were required to have a valid national ID card (KTP) and a phone number connected to WhatsApp. These prerequisites are necessary for creating an account, which is used throughout the certification process. The socialization activities also provided a forum for business actors to ask questions and engage in two-way communication. Following the socialization, the service team conducted observations of the Lemang production process to ensure that the ingredients and methods used were hygienic, safe, and compliant with halal principles.



Figure 4. Business actor explaining the Lemang production process

Lemang is made from glutinous rice, black-eyed peas, and coconut milk. These ingredients are wrapped in banana leaves, placed into bamboo tubes, and roasted over an open fire for approximately three hours. During this phase, the team asked each business actor to explain the production process in detail, from preparation to market sale (Figure 4).

The response from Lemang business actors to the halal certification socialization was largely positive, albeit mixed with varying degrees of readiness and understanding. Many participants expressed appreciation for the door-to-door approach, which they found more approachable and tailored to their needs. The informal yet informative format allowed them to gain a clearer understanding of the importance of halal certification, particularly in terms of enhancing product credibility and marketability. Some business owners, especially those who had previously received support from local cooperatives or food safety training, demonstrated a proactive attitude by promptly preparing the necessary documents. However, several others remained hesitant, citing uncertainty about the online procedures and concerns over the complexity of the registration process.

Despite these concerns, the socialization fostered a sense of encouragement and motivation among the participants. Several business actors voiced a newfound determination to pursue certification, recognizing its potential to expand their consumer base, especially among Muslim buyers outside the immediate region. The community service team observed that peer influence played a significant role in shaping attitudes, as some participants were more willing to engage after witnessing the enthusiasm of their fellow producers. In response to the identified challenges, the service team proposed follow-up mentoring sessions, including group workshops on digital literacy and simulated registration trials. These initiatives aimed to ensure that the initial momentum generated during the socialization would translate into actual certification outcomes, thereby promoting inclusive economic empowerment within the local Lemang industry.

### 3.3. Halal product certification registration

After receiving material on the self-declaration mechanism for halal certification, business actors were directed to independently register their products. The community service team provided technical guidance through simulations of the registration procedures. However, before registering their products on the official website, business actors must first possess a business identification number, as known as Nomor Induk Berusaha (NIB).

A primary obstacle encountered was that most participants had not yet obtained an NIB, which prolonged the halal certification assistance process. Furthermore, several business actors did not have phone numbers connected to WhatsApp or active email accounts, both of which are essential for account creation in both the OSS (Online Single Submission) and BPJPH (Halal Product Assurance Agency) systems. In response, the community service team urged participants to acquire their own phone numbers linked to WhatsApp and valid email accounts.

To facilitate understanding, the team conducted a simulation using the data of one participant who had fulfilled all administrative requirements. The registration process involved the following steps. The first step that must be taken by business actors is registering their businesses officially through the OSS website at <https://oss.go.id>.

Obtaining an NIB ensures that the business is legally recorded by the government and assists in identifying and categorizing business actors. In this step, business owners are required to create an account using an active phone number and email address, then provide detailed information about their business identity and characteristics as specified on the site. Interface of the OSS website registration shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5. Interface of the OSS Website for NIB Registration

Second, registering for halal product certification. Once a business actor obtains an NIB, they can proceed to register for halal certification via the BPJPH official website (Figure 6). This step is crucial as it allows the business actor to apply for a free halal certificate through the self-declaration scheme.

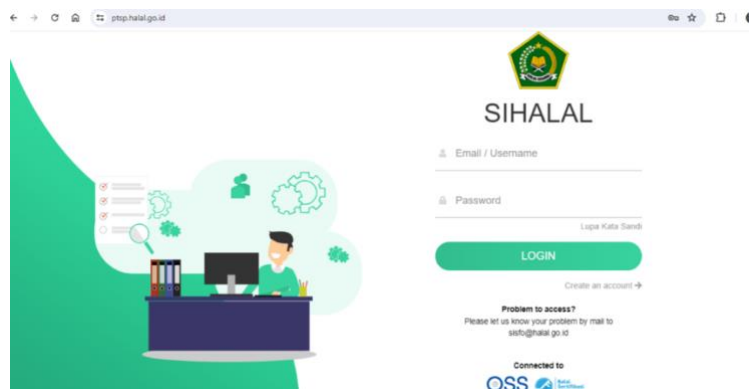


Figure 6. Halal certification registration page interface

Third, verification by halal supervisor and BPJPH. After successfully creating an account and uploading the required documents on the BPJPH platform, the business actor must wait for verification by the halal supervisor and BPJPH. In this process, the community service team also acts as the halal supervisor, which helps minimize data entry errors by the business actors. The verification period typically takes between two to three weeks before the official halal certificate is issued.

These three stages were directly demonstrated by the community service team, equipping participants with the necessary knowledge to apply for halal certification independently. The desired outcomes of this mentoring program include enhancing the knowledge and skills of women entrepreneurs producing Nasi Lemang in Malingping, particularly in navigating the halal certification process. A tangible target is that several participants will successfully obtain official halal certificates.



This mentoring activity is also aligned with the Indonesian government's vision of establishing the country as a global halal tourism hub, where one of the key indicators is that all commercialized food products must be halal certified. The presence of a halal logo on product packaging not only boosts consumer confidence but also increases competitiveness and sales performance. In this context, Nasi Lemang producers are the main target of this initiative, aiming to enhance their business growth in the Malingping region and beyond once halal certification is achieved.



Figure 7. Halal certification

Figure 7 denote that the outcomes of this community service initiative have begun to materialize, as evidenced by several Lemang business actors successfully obtaining their official halal certificates through the self-declaration scheme. This milestone demonstrates not only the effectiveness of the socialization and mentoring processes, but also the commitment of participants in complying with government regulations. These certified businesses have already started displaying the halal logo on their packaging, thereby increasing consumer trust and potentially expanding their market reach. In addition, the achievement aligns with the broader national objective of fostering a halal industry ecosystem, particularly in regions such as South Lebak where small-scale food enterprises form a critical part of the local economy.

Meanwhile, other business actors remain in various stages of the application process due to the procedural complexities and administrative prerequisites involved. The halal certification process, though simplified through self-declaration, still necessitates the completion of specific steps, including securing a valid NIB, establishing a digital identity, and submitting accurate supporting documentation (Mahpudin & Nurlia, 2024; Nurlia & Mahpudin, 2023). These requirements have proven time-consuming for some participants, particularly those with limited digital literacy or constrained access to digital infrastructure. Nonetheless, the community service team continues to provide follow-up assistance and individualized mentoring to ensure that all eligible business actors can complete the certification process in due course. The gradual but steady progress reflects a sustainable impact, contributing to the long-term formalization and empowerment of micro-enterprises in the region.

## 4. Conclusion

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This community service initiative has effectively contributed to enhancing halal awareness, regulatory compliance, and business formalization among Lemang food entrepreneurs in Malingping, Lebak Regency. The program addressed critical gaps in knowledge, digital literacy, and administrative capacity, enabling several business actors to obtain official halal certification while supporting others through the ongoing application process. The success of the program can be attributed to the integration of personalized mentoring, door-to-door socialization, and technical assistance, which proved instrumental in navigating procedural complexities, particularly within a rural context marked by infrastructural limitations. These efforts not only align with Indonesia's broader halal assurance framework but also empower local micro-enterprises to improve product credibility, expand their market reach, and strengthen their contribution to the halal economy. Consequently, this initiative serves as a replicable model for inclusive policy implementation and sustainable community development in other underserved regions.

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## Author Contribution

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Activity implementation: Z, M; Article preparation: M, RH; Analysis of service impact: Z, RH, M; Presentation of service results: Z; Article revision: M, RH.

## Conflict of Interest

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The authors state that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

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