

# MUIS, UMS to research on halal products, food

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**KOTA KINABALU:** The Sabah Islamic Religious Council (MUIS) and University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) yesterday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to coordinate research initiatives in the management, production, manufacturing, and all activities related to halal products and food.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Dr Mohd Arifin Arif who is also the minister in charge of Islamic affairs in the state.

Arifin when speaking to reporters after the ceremony said that the MoU is crucial in three aspects as mentioned by the Vice-Chancellor of UMS, Professor Datuk Dr Kasim Hj. Mansor, namely development and research, training and assistance to entrepreneurs in the state.

It is also essential to note that UMS and MUIS will develop modules related to the halal industry in the state, said Arifin.

According to him, MUIS has established the 'MUIS Halal Hub', which serves as a platform to strengthen the halal industry in Sabah.

"In this aspect, there are several considerations, particularly from the Shariah perspective, on how we can safeguard halal in this state. Yesterday's MoU is part of the activities and core elements that will support the MUIS Halal Hub from the perspective of research and development, module development, and continuous cooperation from experts at UMS.



Dr Kasim (left) and Yahya (right) with the signed MoU while Arifin (middle) looks on.

"Secondly, with the establishment of this cooperation, we can at least assist our small entrepreneurs in empowering their small industries, particularly in terms of halal certification or Shariah compliance certification that will be introduced. This is also done in collaboration with JAKIM, which has the authority on halal certification," said Arifin who expressed his gratitude to UMS for the continuous cooperation provided to MUIS all this while.

UMS involvement, he said includes research and development, training modules and providing guidance to the staff at the halal hub regarding the establishment of the laboratory.

Meanwhile the head of MUIS, Datuk Seri Panglima Yahya Hussin, disclosed that since the establishment of the MUIS Halal Hub on September 16, 2021, numerous ideas have been implemented, including the development of inspection services and initiatives to establish a halal laboratory, which is currently being pursued under MUIS.

MUIS, Yahya explained, has taken on the role of Malaysian halal certification, management, and development, while simultaneously striving to empower the halal industry to be more competitive in generating economic benefits for the Muslim community in this state, in line with the rapid

development of the Malaysian halal industry.

MUIS, according to him, seized this opportunity to strengthen and enhance the halal industry in collaboration with various local and international stakeholders.

"I believe that the implementing and expert parties need to work hand in hand to study and pioneer programs that support the development and advancement of the halal industry in this state," he added.

As an initial and forward-looking step, MUIS together with UMS has agreed to establish a MoU and will be coordinating research initiatives in the management, production, manufacturing, and all activities

related to halal products and food.

Under the MoU, MUIS and UMS would be conducting research and consultations collaboratively, training and empowering human resources' expertise and competency in the production of halal products and food, establishing and supervising methodologies for research and studies and developing modules and conducting courses related to the production and certification of halal products and food collaboratively.

MUIS is also collaborating with Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), particularly in Shariah research and consultation, as well as sharing expertise in the development

of halal certification and the micro-industry, including the establishment of a Halal Laboratory in Sabah, said Yahya.

Furthermore, cooperation between the Council and Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) has been established to develop the Sabah Halal Action Plan, he disclosed.

"Therefore, I have high hopes that this MoU signed today will add value in empowering the development of halal in this state. I believe that both parties will commit wholeheartedly to benefit the Muslim community and the development of the halal industry in Sabah," he said.

Dr Kasim in his speech said that cooperation initiative between UMS and MUIS was a commendable form of collaboration in disseminating knowledge and professional training related to halal, particularly within the food industry in the state of Sabah.

"I was informed that cooperation between both parties has already been established in the past, where several academics from the Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition (FSMP) have been appointed as technical auditors for Malaysian halal certification and as advisory panel members in the development of the Shariah Compliance Certification Guidelines under MUIS.

"I sincerely hope that this cooperation will continue in the future and be further developed in research aspects between MUIS and UMS," he said.