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[Home](#) / [2023](#) / [September](#) / UiTM, UMA and ANIC Australia Exploring a Potential Deal

SINERGI

13/09/2023 / UiTM Global



SYDNEY, 1st September 2023 – Delegation of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) met Sheikh Shadi Alsuleiman who is a prominent Imam, Community Leader and Dae'e (Preacher) based in Sydney, Australia. He is the founder of the United Muslims of Australia (UMA), currently the President of the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) and a founding member and Chair of the Alliance of Australian Muslims (AAM). Sheikh Shadi is also an international speaker who frequently travels to numerous interstate and international countries in which he delivers lectures and participates in many other global Islamic conferences and major events. On September 1, 2023, at the UMA's Centre, 15-21 Enterprise Avenue, Padstow NSW 2211, Sydney Australia, representing UiTM were the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Internationalization) UiTM, Prof Dr Shahrman Zainal Abidin; the Director of Strategic Partnership

(DSP), Prof Dr Ahmad Naqiyuddin Bakar and Ms Eva Salmee Mohd Salleh, Head of Administration, UiTM Global. Also at the meeting was the Director of Education Malaysia, Dr Fahmi Rahim.

ANIC's function aims to preserve mainstream understanding and teachings of Islam in accordance with the Quran and Sunnah, and the traditional understanding of the Muslim scholars, both past and present. Also, it seeks to unite the Councils of Imams of the various Australian states and territories by streamlining their activities and those of other respected scholars and clerics. It therefore represents the wider interests of the Australian Muslim community in different domains, thereby, leading to greater benefits to all constituencies. ANIC is governed by a General Assembly of member imams, electing an ANIC executive board of 20 members representing all state imams' councils for every three-years. At ANIC's Inaugural General Assembly Meeting held in March of 2006 in Sydney, a key resolution was passed to empower the executive board to elect and appoint the position of the Grand Mufti of Australia.

On the other hand, the United Muslims of Australia (UMA) is a nonprofit community and Islamic Dawah organisation that focuses on reviving the Islamic spirit in people's lives in accordance with the Quran and Sunnah within a balanced framework of Islamic teachings.



The follow-up meeting with Sheikh Shadi was planned with UiTM's contact point and halal expert, Prof Faridah Hj Hassan, who is also the current President of the World Academy of Islamic Management (WAIM). WAIM serves as a professional organization that comprehends its role in facilitating various activities, including conferences, publications, training, and consultancy services related to Islamic matters. It shares similarities with Halal Centre of UiTM (comprising of ACIS, FBM's iHALALMAS and Halal Innovation, MITRANS, and UiTM Sarawak), which offers a range of research and educational programmes from undergraduate to PhD levels in the field of halal studies, in addition to providing halal services, training, and consultancy services across diverse sectors such as food,

hospitality, tourism, transportation logistics, fashion, art, media, laboratory testing, and Islamic finance. Halal Centre UiTM also has projects with Association of Islamic Banking Institution Malaysia (AIBIM) in 2018.

The collaboration between Halal Centre UiTM and WAIM strengthens their existing memorandum of understanding, further enhanced by partnerships with the Halal Science Centre at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok and the Institute Darul Quran in Jakarta. Along with future strategic partnership with UMA and ANIC, WAIM which already comprises prominent institutions like IIUM, UM, UiTM, USM, UniIKL, UniBrunei, UniGhana and Putrajaya Holding, plus an accounting firm serving as an executive member can set up a consortium and further actively engaged in the realms of halal certification, Islamic management, and Islamic banking.

It is important to note that the aim is not to highlight differences or establish superiority between these organizations, but rather to emphasize their collaborative effort contributions to the growth and development of Halal Centre UiTM, as seen in similar initiatives like HPPC-UPM, INHART-IIUM, IHARAM-USIM to offer healthy competition locally and globally for example with renowned Halal Science Centre at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, as this center has enjoyed the patronage since HRH King Bhumibol and has made significant contributions to the Thai economy from global demand.

Within UiTM, the endeavors related to halal innovation and development were not without challenges such as in the areas of halal supply chain and applied science. When UiTM presented its halal management services to Thailand in 2010, there was significant interest in collaboration due to their existing expertise in halal science but not social science. An MOU CU-UiTM was signed in 2011 witnessed by the Deputy Minister MITI then. Consequently, Thailand has sought to enter the halal marketing and tourism sectors, as these were not previously explored avenues. It should be noted that Thailand's primary focus is on halal science. This is why IIUM collaborated yearly with Halal Centre UiTM for Kyoto University, Japan since 2020, as Japan requires expertise in halal management and science and sought to expand into business-related aspects. However, this collaboration needs some boosters. In retrospect, Halal Center UiTM was also entrusted with coordinating all the universities halal center of excellence in Malaysia during MITI MATRADE Halal Expo at MITEK and KLCC since 2015 before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, some alumnus of halal UiTM have diverse backgrounds, including for instance, the former Director of Halal F&B at MATRADE now a council at Perbadanan Putrajaya who oversees SME initiatives, alumnus Deputy Dean at IIUM specializes in halal cosmetics and personal care. Additionally, there was collaboration with halal alumnus at the University of Malaya, Wales, in the field of halal and modest fashion. In response to these developments, the Halal Centre UiTM was already established internationally. Via UiTM Global, Halal Centre UiTM was offered to train Daegu Catholic University Korea in 2018 and Sultan Kudarat State University Philippines in 2020. In July 2023 UiTM was invited for a meeting at IMT.GT Jakarta on the future halal prospects and potential amongst Indonesia Malaysia Thailand Growth Triangle. These international involvements were made after thorough research and consideration of the activities of other institutions. It was crucial not to duplicate existing efforts. While UPM pioneered in the scientific area and IIUM followed suit, the Halal Science Centre in Thailand remains a global leader since 2010.

In summary, the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) is the central and peak Islamic body that holds key representation from Australian-based Muslim (Imams, scholars and clerics. Registered as a public company, ANIC was established in 2006 as an umbrella organisation consisting of a Council of Imams, representing each Australian state and territory. ANIC Halal Authority is a subsidiary company of the ANIC with a vast experience in Halal certification. It is managed by a renowned and well-respected team of Islamic Scholars and experts in food science and technology, ANIC Halal Authority is registered and approved by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources Australia as well as major International Halal Agencies, including JAKIM, Malaysia. Clearly, ANIC and Halal Centre UiTM can be excellent strategic partners.



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