



How to Obtain a Pilgrimage Accommodation & Catering Approvals in Nigeria (Complete Guide 2026)

Description

Religious pilgrimage is one of the largest international travel movements involving Nigerians every year. Thousands of Nigerian pilgrims travel annually to Saudi Arabia for **Hajj and Umrah**, requiring large-scale logistics such as accommodation, feeding, transportation, and welfare services. To ensure quality service delivery, the **National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON)** regulates and approves companies that provide accommodation and catering services for Nigerian pilgrims.

Companies intending to provide **pilgrimage accommodation or catering services** must obtain approval from NAHCON through a structured application and screening process. The approval ensures that service providers meet strict international standards and comply with both Nigerian and Saudi Arabian regulatory requirements.

This comprehensive guide explains **how to obtain Pilgrimage Accommodation & Catering approvals in Nigeria**, including the eligibility criteria, application process, requirements, costs, and common misconceptions.

Overview of Pilgrimage Accommodation & Catering Approvals in Nigeria

Item	Details
Regulator	National Hajj Commission of Nigeria
Applicable Sector	Hajj and Umrah pilgrimage services
Type of Approval	Accommodation Provider Approval & Catering Service Approval
Operational Location	Mainly in Makkah, Madinah, and other Hajj locations
Application Mode	Online via NAHCON portal
Primary Beneficiaries	Nigerian pilgrims and State Pilgrims Welfare Boards
Eligibility	Licensed companies meeting Saudi and NAHCON requirements

The commission sets strict guidelines to ensure that accommodation facilities and food services provided to Nigerian pilgrims meet **health, safety, and religious standards** during the pilgrimage season.

What is Pilgrimage Accommodation Approval?

Pilgrimage accommodation approval is the authorisation granted by NAHCON to companies that provide **housing facilities for Nigerian pilgrims in Makkah and Madinah during Hajj operations**.

The approval ensures that buildings used for pilgrims meet certain standards, including:

- Safety
- Accessibility to the Haram
- Adequate facilities
- Compliance with Saudi regulations

Accommodation providers must also demonstrate previous experience and operational capacity to host large numbers of pilgrims.

What is Pilgrimage Catering Approval?

Pilgrimage catering approval authorises companies to **prepare and supply meals to Nigerian pilgrims during Hajj operations.**

Approved catering companies are responsible for:

- Preparing Nigerian-style meals
- Packaging and delivering food
- Maintaining hygiene standards
- Providing feeding services at designated locations including Makkah, Madinah, Jeddah Airport, Mina, and Arafat.

Regulatory Authority Responsible for the Approval

National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON)

<https://cdn.businessday.ng/2020/09/Untitled20design20-202020-09-28T134558.180.png>
<https://cdn.pmnewsnigeria.com/2019/10/NAHCON-Hajj-House-Abuja-e1571808668201.jpg>



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The **National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON)** is the government agency responsible for regulating and supervising Hajj and Umrah operations for Nigerian pilgrims.

Its mandate includes:

- Licensing Hajj operators
- Coordinating pilgrimage logistics

- Supervising service providers
- Approving accommodation and catering companies

The commission works closely with **Saudi authorities and State Pilgrims Welfare Boards** to ensure smooth pilgrimage operations.

Key Eligibility Criteria for Applicants

Before applying, companies must meet strict eligibility conditions set by NAHCON.

1. Corporate Registration Requirements

Accommodation or catering providers must:

- Be **registered as a corporate entity by Saudi authorities**
- Have a minimum share capital requirement depending on the service category
- Be licensed to operate within Saudi Arabia.

2. Experience Requirements

Applicants must demonstrate experience providing services to pilgrims.

Service	Experience Requirement
Accommodation Providers	At least 5 years experience or verifiable capacity
Catering Providers	At least 3 years experience feeding Nigerian pilgrims

Applicants must also provide evidence that their previous services were satisfactory to NAHCON.

3. Financial Capacity Requirements

Applicants must demonstrate strong financial capability.

Category	Minimum Capital Requirement
Accommodation Providers	SR 5,000,000
Catering Providers	SR 2,000,000

Companies must also provide financial statements showing adequate turnover in the previous two years.

Requirements for Pilgrimage Accommodation Approval

The following documents are required when applying.

Corporate Documents

Applicants must submit:

- Commercial registration certificate
- Chamber of Commerce membership
- Municipal license specifying company address
- Social Insurance Institute certificate listing employees
- Company profile

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- Declaration of compliance with NAHCON guidelines.
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Property and Infrastructure Requirements

Accommodation buildings must:

- Be licensed by Saudi authorities
 - Have capacity for **at least 500 bed spaces**
 - Be located **within 1 km of the Haram** or provide shuttle services
 - Provide adequate toilets, lifts, and safety exits
 - Provide clean bedding facilities and air conditioning.
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Operational Requirements

Accommodation facilities must also include:

- Dining areas
 - Adequate water supply
 - First aid kits
 - Emergency exits and staircases
 - Functional elevators.
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Requirements for Pilgrimage Catering Approval

Companies providing catering services must meet strict operational requirements.

Corporate Documents

Applicants must provide:

- Saudi commercial registration
- Chamber of Commerce membership
- Municipal license
- Social insurance certificate
- Bank statements showing financial capacity.

Kitchen Requirements

The catering facility must:

- Be an international standard kitchen
- Have modern equipment
- Be licensed by Saudi authorities

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- Operate year-round.
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Operational Capacity

Catering providers must demonstrate ability to:

- Feed **at least 3,000 pilgrims at once**
 - Deliver meals on schedule
 - Maintain hygiene standards
 - Provide Nigerian menus.
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Step-by-Step Process to Obtain Pilgrimage Accommodation & Catering Approval

Step 1: Verify Eligibility

Applicants must confirm they meet the corporate, operational, and financial requirements.

This includes:

- Saudi registration
 - Experience with pilgrims
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- Adequate infrastructure.

Step 2: Prepare Application Documents

All required documents must be compiled including:

- Company registration
- Licenses
- Bank statements
- Proof of experience
- Kitchen or building documentation.

Arabic documents must be **certified and translated into English** before submission.

Step 3: Apply Through the NAHCON Portal

Applicants must complete and submit the online application via the NAHCON portal.

Key application features include:

- Online form submission
- Upload of supporting documents
- Declaration of compliance.

The portal typically opens during the **annual Hajj preparation period**.

Step 4: Screening and Evaluation

The NAHCON evaluation team reviews submitted applications and verifies:

- Document authenticity
- Financial capability
- Experience
- Infrastructure capacity.

Original documents may be requested for verification.

Step 5: Shortlisting of Qualified Applicants

Only companies that meet the eligibility criteria are shortlisted.

Companies may be disqualified for:

- Incomplete documentation
 - Past performance issues
 - Integrity concerns or contractual violations.
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Step 6: Final Approval and Contract Agreement

Successful applicants will:

- Receive approval to provide services
- Enter contractual arrangements with State Pilgrims Welfare Boards
- Participate in Hajj operations for the relevant season.

Cost of Pilgrimage Accommodation & Catering Approval

NAHCON guidelines typically do not publicly publish a fixed processing fee for service providers. However, companies must demonstrate strong financial capacity.

Category	Financial Requirement
Accommodation Provider	Minimum share capital of SR5,000,000
Catering Provider	Minimum share capital of SR2,000,000
Additional Costs	Operational costs, logistics, staffing

Financial strength is used as a key indicator of the company's ability to deliver services during Hajj operations.

Processing Timeline

Stage	Estimated Duration
Application submission	During announced application window
Screening	Several weeks
Shortlisting	After review
Final approval	Before Hajj season

Applications typically open **a few months before the Hajj season** and close once the submission window expires.

Compliance Obligations for Approved Companies

Approved companies must:

- Deliver services according to NAHCON guidelines
- Maintain hygiene and safety standards
- Provide timely food delivery
- Ensure accommodation quality for pilgrims.

Failure to comply may lead to sanctions or removal from the approved service provider list.

Common Misconceptions About Pilgrimage Service Approvals

Misconception 1: Nigerian companies can easily obtain the approval

In reality, most service providers must also comply with **Saudi regulatory requirements**, which significantly increases the qualification threshold.

Misconception 2: Any hotel can host Nigerian pilgrims

Accommodation facilities must meet strict standards including **capacity, proximity to Haram, and safety infrastructure**.

Misconception 3: Catering approval only requires a restaurant

Catering companies must operate **large-scale kitchens capable of feeding thousands of pilgrims simultaneously**.

Benefits of Obtaining the Approval

Companies that obtain NAHCON approval enjoy several advantages:

- Access to the lucrative Hajj service market
 - Long-term partnership with pilgrim boards
 - High-volume service contracts
 - International business exposure.
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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Who regulates pilgrimage accommodation and catering services in Nigeria?

The services are regulated by the **National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON)**.

Can Nigerian companies apply for the approval?

Yes, but the company must also be **registered and licensed under Saudi authorities** to operate in the pilgrimage locations.

How many pilgrims must catering providers serve?

Catering providers must demonstrate the ability to serve **at least 3,000 pilgrims at once**.

What is the minimum capital requirement?

Accommodation providers must show **SR5 million share capital**, while catering companies require **SR2 million share capital**.

How often must companies apply?

Approvals are typically **seasonal**, meaning companies must apply for each Hajj season.

What happens if a company fails to meet standards?

The company may:

- Lose its service contract
 - Be disqualified
 - Face sanctions from NAHCON.
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Conclusion

Obtaining **Pilgrimage Accommodation and Catering Approval in Nigeria** is a highly regulated process overseen by the **National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON)**. The approval ensures that accommodation facilities and catering services provided to Nigerian pilgrims meet international standards of safety, hygiene, and operational capacity.

Companies seeking to participate in the Hajj logistics sector must demonstrate:

- Strong financial capacity
- Saudi regulatory compliance
- Proven experience in pilgrim services
- Adequate infrastructure.

With thousands of Nigerian pilgrims traveling to Saudi Arabia every year, the pilgrimage services industry represents a significant opportunity for qualified service providers.

Category

1. Industry Insights