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Do you have any questions about the Description of the Certification Procedure for IFS? We will be pleased to help.

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The rules and performance description regarding IFS certification form an integral part of the offer. They are supplementary to the General Conditions for Certification of Food and Feed Safety Systems. The IFS Standards and the IFS-Doctrine are nominative documents for the certification process and available on [www.ifs-certification.com](http://www.ifs-certification.com)

The IFS series of standards currently comprises:

- IFS Food Version 8
- IFS Logistics Version 2.3
- IFS Logistics Version 3 mandatory from 01.12.2024
- IFS Broker Version 3.1
- IFS Broker Version 3.2 mandatory from 01.07.2024
- IFS Wholesale / Cash & Carry Version 2
- IFS HPC Version 3

## **1. CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE**

### **1.1. Audit preparation**

In order that the certification audit can be prepared and planned, the company shall provide to the auditor at least the following documents:

- Extract from a commercial register (or comparable evidence, if applicable),
- Overview of management system documentation (e.g.: Table of contents or presentation of the structure of the management system documentation, process map),
- management review (e.g.: cover sheet or table of contents with date and signature),
- current annual planning of internal audits and evidence of audit report(s) (e.g.: cover sheet with date and signature),
- Company organisation chart or other documents which show the organisational structure.
- HACCP Plans inclusive the determined CCPs/CPs
- Documentation of Quality Management
- Summary of Products / Product groups

If considered necessary, the auditor can request further documents.

The detailed document review can be performed before the certification audit, but it will not influence the audit time on site. Any deviations or non-conformities will be included in the overall audit evaluation, i.e., any deviations and non-conformities that are identified must be counted as such in the certification audit; it is not possible to carry out corrections before the audit.

### **1.2. Certification Audit**

A detailed description of the certification audit is determined in the IFS Standard.

An essential part of the Audit is the interview of individual employees at their workstations and evaluation of applicable documents, records, orders, standards, guidelines etc.

The task of the company during the audit is to demonstrate the practical application of its documented procedures. For this purpose, all product groups and processes which are to be included in the scope of the certification must be in the course of production or running at the time of the audit. If this is not the case, it will be necessary to exclude the product groups/processes from the Certificate and undertake an additional audit of these product groups/processes, which will involve additional time and therefore additional costs for the client. Following the end of the audit, the client is informed of the audit findings in a final meeting. The auditor can submit an estimate of the audit result but cannot state the result in final form. The findings of the audit are documented in a report; the non-conformities are documented in an action plan. An audit is a procedure based on the principle of random sampling. Therefore, non-conformities or weaknesses may still exist but were not subject of the final meeting or in the audit report. The audit can cover only one operating/production site.

Further rules and arrangements regarding the certification procedure for announced or unannounced recertification audits or follow-up and extension audits are described in the IFS Food and HPC Standard. These rules and arrangements are mandatory. Companies who want to participate the unannounced audit procedure have to inform the Certification Body at least 20 weeks before the anniversary day of the certification audit. For the IFS Food and Logistics standard, at least 1 unannounced audit in a 3-year cycle is mandatory.

### **1.3. Conducting of Audits using Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

The standard method for conducting audits is a full on-site audit. The company can now apply for an audit as split process utilizing ICT, but this is only possible for recertification audits. This is applicable for all IFS standards where a regular on-site audit is not possible (i.e., pandemic situation). Excepted is IFS Broker as it has a separate specific audit remote protocol.

The assessed company should clarify in advance with its customers whether they accept a certificated based on the IFS split audit.

The use of ICT during the audit process shall only be permitted with the written agreement of both parties involved. The certification body/auditor and the site under audit shall have appropriate information technology and environment in place. The assessed company shall have all relevant documents available online.

The TÜV NORD CERT conducts an initial risk assessment prior to the audit to ensure that the realization of such is feasible.

The ICT audit approach consist of 2 parts:

1. On-site part which has to be performed first: focusing on the production, GMPs, product development, laboratory, maintenance, implementation and verification of the product safety and quality management system, CCPs monitoring, interview and taking samples for further cross-checking.
2. Remote part: Documentation and record review including cross-checking of relating documents.

The audit is finalized when both parts are finished.

The timeline for completion of the audit (remote + on-site) shall not exceeded 14 days. On site and remote part have to be completed within the general audit time window in order to keep the certification cycle.

The ICT will be tested with the company before the planned remote audit to confirm that the ICT is appropriate, suitable, and effective.

Where the ICT utilized is not functioning properly or preventing/ hampering a robust audit, the audit will be aborted.

The calculation of audit time: 2 additional hours will be added to cover the time needed for the split audit approach.

The scoring of the checklist requirements as well as the corrections and corrective actions, follows with the requirements of the respective IFS standard.

The certification cycle: the date of the renewal audit will be calculated from the last day of the original initial audit.

#### **1.4. Issue of the certificate**

The certificate is issued after a successful technical review and a positive certification decision by the certification body.

Therefore, correction of all major and KO non-conformities have been confirmed in a follow-up or certification audit. Corrections including suitable evidence of implementation and corrective actions are present and have been verified and accepted by the auditor.

The certificate is valid for 1 (one) year. The term of validity is calculated from the day of the first audit plus 8 weeks.

The audit report, action plan and the certificate are registered in the IFS Audit-Portal ([www.IFS-certification.com](http://www.IFS-certification.com)) IFS charges 495 €<sup>1</sup> per site for registration in the IFS Audit-Portal. This amount is invoiced by TÜV NORD CERT and then passed on to IFS Management GmbH. Audit report and Certificate are available to the company as downloads from the IFS Audit-Portal.

#### **1.5. Withdraw/suspension of certificate**

An IFS Certificate shall be withdrawn or suspended by TÜV NORD CERT in situations as described in the relevant IFS standard.

If the suspension is lifted, or if a decision to reduce the scope of certification is made as a condition of reinstatement, TÜV NORD CERT shall make all necessary modifications to public information, authorizations for use of brands, etc. to ensure transparency and that the products/processes continue to be certified.

## **2. AUDITS FOR SPECIFIC REASON**

If the client becomes aware that legal action could be taken with regard to the safety or legality of a product, he shall inform TÜV NORD CERT immediately. TÜV NORD CERT will instigate suitable steps in order to assess the situation and its impact on the certification and will take appropriate action.

If the TÜV NORD CERT gains knowledge of incidents which have an impact on the safety or legality of the product, the certification body is entitled to perform announced or unannounced audits at any time, and, following audit of the situation and its effects, to withdraw the certificate(s).

Further reason for notifying TÜV NORD CERT is defined in the IFS Standard. The client shall inform TÜV NORD CERT within 3 working days after the incident took place and provides documents for further evaluation within 7 working days. TÜV NORD CERT will take corresponding steps for audit of the situation

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<sup>1</sup> This amount is continuously updated to correspond to the current fees of IFS Management

and its impact on the certification, this might be an extraordinary audit. The information regarding the product recall shall be sent either to [TNCert-Food-Recall@tuev-nord.de](mailto:TNCert-Food-Recall@tuev-nord.de) or can be submitted directly through our Homepage [Recall-Management](#).

### **3. TAKEOVER OF CERTIFICATIONS FROM OTHER CERTIFICATION BODIES**

Generally speaking, only certificates from accredited certification bodies can be taken over. Organisations with certificates that were issued by non-accredited certification bodies are treated as new clients.

For implementation of the takeover, the client presents the last audit report, action plan and the certificate, as well as the information of the last unannounced audit on site to the auditor at least 14 days prior to the audit. Transfer can only take place within the framework of a re-audit. Before the re-audit, the client shall ensure that TÜV NORD CERT is selected in the IFS Audit-Portal as the responsible certification body.

### **4. CERTIFICATION OF COMPANIES WITH SEVERAL SITES (MULTI-SITE CERTIFICATION)**

The rules regarding multisite certification are described in the relevant standard.

Multisite certification where a site sampling procedure is used are only possible for IFS Logistics and IFS Wholesale / Cash & Carry. The rules for sampling procedures as described in the relevant standard apply.

### **5. MANAGEMENT OF DEVIATIONS AND NONCONFORMITIES**

Deviations and nonconformities are documented in an action plan. The client receives the action plan within 14 days after the audit in order to lay down corrective actions.

The client sends the action plan with correction and corrective actions to the Auditor within 14 days after receipt of the action plan. Within 28 days after receipt of the action plan the client has to provide evidence about the implemented corrections. If the action plan is not presented within the 28 days or if the corrections including evidence of implementation or corrective actions are not sufficient, the audit is closed as "failed". The Auditor generates the final report after a positive assessment of the action plan. If one or more Major or KO nonconformities are assigned in the audit, the certificates must be blocked in the IFS Portal within 48 hours. All users with access to the IFS Portal which the client has listed in his favourites are informed by the IFS Portal regarding the withdrawal of the current certificate. The information is sent by e-mail and includes an explanation of the nonconformities that have been identified.

If one Major nonconformity/nonconformities are present, a follow-up audit is necessary. The rules regarding the follow-up audit are described in the IFS standards. A follow-up audit must always be carried out on-site i.e., at the client's premises. The Audit Team Leader makes the decision regarding the scope of the follow-up audit; however, only the requirements of the standard which are affected by the nonconformity are verified. Follow-up audits will be charged according to the audit duration and based on the daily rates plus travel costs stated in the offer.

In the case of > 1 Major and / or K.O. evaluation or ≤ 75% result, in accordance with IFS rules, a completely new audit must be carried out. If the audit is broken off (aborted), this must be stated in the report. However, continuation of the audit is always recommended.

## 6. INTEGRITY PROGRAM

The company states to agree with and to be aware of the "Integrity Program" of the owners of the IFS certification system. The Integrity Program aims a number of measures to ensure a maximum quality and reliability of the IFS certification system. The resources which can be used are quality assurance activities, complaints treatment system, audits in the company by the owners of the IFS certification system.

After the auditing of the company by TÜV NORD CERT, IFS Management is entitled to carry out so-called Integrity on-site Checks or Integrity Witness Audits at the company at any time in order to disclose and foreclose mis usages and breaches of IFS or can be planned by IFS Quality Assurance on a risk-based approach.

In general, IFS Management will perform unannounced Integrity on-site Checks. If IFS Management decides that based on the issue to be investigated (e.g., complaints, special topics to be clarified with the need to have certain company's representative available) an announced Integrity on-site Check is necessary IFS Management will notify the certified company and in certain circumstances the Certification Body 0 – 48 hours prior to the date of the Integrity on-site Check.

The company is obliged to provide IFS Management and the auditor assigned by IFS Management access to his premises. The company is furthermore obliged to support the auditor in the realisation of the control audit wherever he can.

IFS Integrity Witness audits are IFS audits, whereby a regular IFS certification audit is attended by a witness auditor employed or commissioned by IFS Management. The aim is to examine the work of the auditor in an audit situation by observing the auditor's method and audits of the IFS requirements.

Integrity Witness Audits may be based on a complaint received by IFS Quality Assurance for an auditor or internal investigations of IFS Quality Assurance.

More information about the integrity program on [Quality-Assurance](#)

## 7. OTHER REGULATIONS

The company furthermore agrees to

- Witness audits by the IFS/ certification body or owner of a specific voluntary audit module, if this is integrated into the certification

IFS offers other audit modules that can be carried out in addition to an IFS standard. The information obtained during the audit is treated equally confidentially by TÜV NORD CERT.

## 8. INFORMATION ON DATA PRIVACY PROTECTION

Employees of the certified companies

IFS Management GmbH informs that data about you (name, contact data, position within your company) will be stored at IFS Management GmbH ("Data"). This is done in conjunction with the audit against an IFS standard of your company. The Data is included in the audit report that IFS Management GmbH receives from your company, the auditor, or the certification body. The Data may also be displayed in the IFS Audit-Portal under [www.ifs.certification.com](http://www.ifs.certification.com). There the Data can be viewed by retailers that have been registered for using the IFS Audit-Portal.

### 1. Name and contact details of the responsible company:

IFS Management GmbH, am Weidendamm 1A, 10117 Berlin, Phone +49 (0) 3072625074, Fax: +49 (0) 030726 250 79,

[dataprotection@ifs-certification.com](mailto:dataprotection@ifs-certification.com)

[www.ifs-certification.com](http://www.ifs-certification.com)

### 2. Contact data of the data protection officer

Nils Gustke, Gesellschaft für Personaldienstleistungen mbH Pestalozzistraße 27, 34119 Kassel, Phone +49 (0) 561 7896868, Fax: +49 (0) 0561 7896861, [gustke@gfp24.de](mailto:gustke@gfp24.de), [www.gfp24.de](http://www.gfp24.de)

### 3. Processing purposes

IFS Management GmbH stores the data for internal administrative and own business purposes, The Data, together with the audit reports, documents that your company has been assessed against a specific audit of an IFS standard.

### 4. Legal basis

The processing of the Data is permitted in accordance with article 6 (1) (f) GDPR. The processing of the Data is necessary so that IFS Management GmbH can maintain its legitimate interests (internal administration and own business purposes)

### 5. Data origin

You have provided the Data from your company to an auditor in connection with the audit of your company, IFS Management GmbH receives the audit report from your company, the auditor, or TÜV NORD CERT

### 6. Duration of storage

The Data is stored by IFS Management GmbH as long as Data on your company are available in the IFS portal at [www.ifs-certification.com](http://www.ifs-certification.com) or as long as TÜV NORD CERT which has certifies your company or the auditor who has assessed your company are still active for IFS Management GmbH. IFS Management GmbH also stores the data if it is obliged to store the data due to statutory retention periods. The statutory retention period are six years according to the section 257 German Commercial Code (HGB) and ten years according to section 147 German Tax Code (AO).

### 7. Rights of the person concerned.

If the legal requirements are met, you are entitled to the following rights under articles 15 to 22 GDPR: rights to information, rectification, erasure, restriction of processing, object, and data portability.



#### 8. Right of appeal to the supervisory authority

You have the right to complain to the supervisory authority in accordance with article 77 GDPR if you consider that the processing of your Data is not lawful. The address of the supervisory authority responsible for the IFS Management GmbH is:

Berliner Beauftragte für Datenschutz und Informationsfreiheit (Commissioner for data protection and freedom of information), Friedrichstraße 219, 10969 Berlin

#### 9. IFS LOGOS.

The company should fulfil the 'Terms and Conditions for using IFS Logo' as described in the IFS database [Terms and Conditions for using the IFS Logos \(ifs-certification.com\)](https://www.ifs-certification.com/terms-conditions-for-using-the-ifs-logos)