IFS Food

IFS Food version 8 Doctrine

VERSION 4

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ENGLISH

Foreword

This document provides additional clarification to the IFS Food Standard. The doctrine is available to certification bodies, certified companies and all other IFS users.

All changes are described in the content overview on the first pages. If no changes are marked, it means the content was already in the previous doctrine version. Please note that the comment "reworked wording" indicates a grammatical correction or improvement of the language. Any changes to the content are additionally marked. In the digital version of the doctrine, links allow users to search for specific clarifications.

The numbering of the individual topics in the table of content is made up of the standard section and the chapter (e.g. 1-2.2 means part 1 of the Standard, chapter 2.2). The application of newly introduced or adapted rules is always two (2) months after the publication of the relevant version, if not specified otherwise. In case of a new IFS Standard version, the rules apply from the moment the new version is applicable.

Certification bodies shall ensure that relevant certification body personnel are trained internally on the introduced changes according to their function within the certification body before the rules come into force.

Proof of this training shall be available on request. The duration of the training depends on the extent of the changes. IFS does not request any minimum length of time nor a specific tool to be used for the training as long as it is done face-to-face, online or by webinar (see part 3 of the Standard). Sending an email or a presentation in an email is not considered as a training.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 2.1 MAKING A CONTRACT WITH A CERTIFICATION BODY

PART 1 – IFS Food Certification Protocol

1-2 Before the IFS Food Audit

1-2.1 Making a contract with a certification body

I) Rules about the use of interpreters during an IFS Food Audit

An IFS Food Audit shall be carried out in the language of the production site. The use of an interpreter is not allowed if the production site language is:

- German
- French
- English
- Chinese
- Italian
- Spanish (exempted Central and South America)

In general, the audit shall preferably be carried out in the language of the production site. If this is not possible, it is mandatory to use an interpreter under the following conditions:

- The interpreter shall have a technical background or be an approved auditor for another food safety/quality standard.
- The interpreter shall be independent from the audited company to avoid any conflict of interest.
- 20 % of the total audit duration shall be added to ensure proper audit performance.

Note: In case of use of a professional interpreting service provider, IFS accepts that the respective interpreter doesn't have the required technical background. All further rules remain valid.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 2.1 MAKING A CONTRACT WITH A CERTIFICATION BODY

II) Auditor sharing

There are two (2) possibilities to share auditors between certification bodies:

1) Borrowing of auditors

For the occasional sharing of auditors, both certification bodies shall compose a short agreement concerning the lending / borrowing of the auditor. The agreement shall contain, at a minimum:

- day of audit
- name **and COID** of company
- name of shared auditor
- signature of both certification body managers of the IFS contracted certification bodies
- signature of a responsible person to IFS from both IFS contracted organisations.

2) IFS Certification Body Working Group

If certification bodies wish to share auditors more frequently, a short contract can be requested from the IFS office in Berlin. This agreement allows two (2) or more certification bodies to work together by sharing one pool of auditors. The responsibilities for the audit, training of auditors, reviewing etc. are clearly separated. Only audit date and scope can be seen by the partner; company names are invisible.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 2.1 MAKING A CONTRACT WITH A CERTIFICATION BODY

III) Use of a technical expert within an audit team

In exceptional cases, e.g. when a certification body does not have direct access to an IFS Food Auditor with a qualification in the scope required or cannot sign a short term contract with another certification body to access their auditors, IFS allows the following exception. Audits may be carried out by a team consisting of:

- an approved IFS Food Auditor, and
- a technical expert.

This exception is valid until further notification in all countries outside of Europe. The technical expert shall meet the following criteria:

- Have a contract with the certification body for which the audit is to be undertaken. The contract shall include clauses to ensure confidentiality and prevent conflicts of interest.
- Meet the criteria for work experience laid down in the IFS Food Auditor qualification requirements (product and technology scopes for IFS Food version 8).
- Have completed a training course in HACCP or risk assessment, as defined in the IFS Food Auditor requirements or have demonstrable competence in these areas.
- Have received background training on IFS Food from the certification body.

The certification body shall also ensure the following requirements are met:

- Maintain evidence of the experience and qualifications justifying the person's status as a technical expert. This shall be made available on request to the IFS Offices.
- The role of the technical expert within the audit team shall be clearly defined and the qualified IFS Food Auditor shall be considered as the team leader. The technical expert must be accompanied during the whole audit by the IFS Food Lead Auditor. The benefit for the IFS Food Auditor is that this audit performed with an expert can be used as evidence when applying for a scope extension.
- The technical expert shall appear on the IFS Food Audit Report in the audit overview.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 2.2 SCOPE OF THE IFS FOOD AUDIT

1-2.2 Scope of the IFS Food Audit

I) Which IFS Food Standard version shall be applied in some specific situations?

In case the audit starts on or after 1st of October 2023, IFS Food v8 audits are possible.

In case the audit starts on or after 1st January 2024, IFS Food v8 is mandatory.

In case of unannounced IFS Audits, if the audit window starts on or after 1st October 2023 then the audit shall be performed according to IFS Food v8.

In case of multi-location companies, all sites shall be audited to the same version as that of the head office.

Exceptional situations where the IFS Food v7 can still apply are the following:

- Audit of multi-location companies with central management where the audit of the central managing site started before the 1st October 2023. If it is not possible to perform the central management audit according to v8, all sites shall be audited according to v7 too, also sites having unannounced audits where one or several site(s) has/have their audit window starting on or after 1st of October.
- Follow-up audit when the "main" audit was performed according to v7.
- Extension audit when the "main" audit was performed according to v7.

The general admission of the aforementioned exceptional situations which permit the use of IFS Food v7 after 1st January 2024, shall terminate on 31st December 2024.

ALL CLARIFICATIONS >

CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 2.2 SCOPE OF THE IFS FOOD AUDIT

II) Is it possible to certify a mobile bottling company?

It is not possible to certify a company providing a service. The wineries which use a mobile bottling service and want to have it in the certificate scope shall declare this to the certification body and request to organise the IFS Audit during the bottling step and audit the mobile service when in operation at the production site. In case the audit is unannounced, an extension audit shall be conducted to be able to include this step in the scope. In addition, the bottling service provider shall be covered by the HACCP of the company.

A clear description and the name of the bottling company shall be provided in the company profile.

The type of product being bottled at the time of operation shall be written on the scope of the certificate (e.g. if it was for a specific production line: bottling of white wine in 0,5 l glass bottles)

ALL CLARIFICATIONS ›

1

CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 2.2 SCOPE OF THE IFS FOOD AUDIT

III) Which audit scope applies for a company which produces a wide range of prepacked products with 3 or more than 3 product scopes with High Pressure Processing (HPP)?

In such a case, the following scopes shall be chosen: product scope 7 and processing step P2. The same applies to auditor qualification.

ALL CLARIFICATIONS ›

CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 2.2 SCOPE OF THE IFS FOOD AUDIT

IV) Clarification about how to explain in the report special situations where same or similar raw material are bought than the food processed by the audited production site

Example: A ready-to-eat salad contains toppings that are bought as raw material but the audited production site also processes same or similar toppings.

In such a case, the situation shall be clearly explained in the report (company profile, additional information) and it shall be stated that the finished product contains toppings that are produced by the audited production site as well as toppings that are purchased as raw material.

Note: In case the toppings are produced on behalf of the certified site as partly outsourced processes the sentence "Besides own production, the company has partly outsourced processes" shall be added on the certificate and description of the partly outsourced processes shall be given in the report.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 2.3 TYPE OF IFS FOOD AUDITS

1-2.3 Type of IFS Food Audits

1-2.3.3 Follow-up audit

I) Situations where a remote follow-up audit is acceptable.

The certification body can decide to perform a remote follow-up audit based on a risk assessment and a proper documented justification. This justification shall be available upon request.

The IFS Split Audit Protocol and the Split Audit checklist for the relevant standard shall be used to decide which requirements can be audited remotely and which will need to be audited on-site.

ALL CLARIFICATIONS ›

CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 2.3 TYPE OF IFS FOOD AUDITS

1-2.3.3 Follow-up audit

II) Situations where it is acceptable to perform a follow-up audit in less than six (6) weeks

The certification body can decide to carry out a follow-up audit earlier than six (6) weeks and as early as two (2) weeks after the last day of the main audit if it is based on a risk assessment and a proper documented justification. This justification shall be available upon request.

ALL CLARIFICATIONS ›

CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 2.3 TYPE OF IFS FOOD AUDITS

1-2.3 Type of IFS Food Audits

1-2.3.4 Extension audit

Processing of sparkling wine: when to perform the audit?

For the production of sparkling wine and champagne via bottle fermentation, there are two (2) sensitive processing steps:

- Tirage: operation of re-fermentation in which the bottle is opened again to add extra yeasts before re-closing the bottle after the first bottling step.
- Disgorging: operation after the re-fermentation in which the sediments are removed via the ejection of the previously frozen temporary cork.

Therefore both two (2) steps of tirage and disgorging shall be audited on-site during an IFS Food Audit.

When using tank fermentation procedures, at least the contents must be audited.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 2.4 IFS FOOD ANNOUNCED AND UNANNOUNCED AUDIT OPTIONS

1-2.4 IFS Food Announced and Unannounced Audit options

1-2.4.2 Unannounced Audit option

Clarification about the unannounced Audit registration

An unannounced audit registration will be deactivated in the IFS Database if nothing has been uploaded within three (3) months of the last possible day of the audit time window, even if a calendar entry has been made. In case there was no calendar entry, **the registration is directly deactivated after the last day of the audit window**.

The certification body shall tick the box "Unannounced audit" in the IFS Database.

When the audit has been performed, the certification body shall provide the audit dates in the database, at latest, two (2) working days after the first audit day. This will ensure that the database users are informed that the audit has taken place and that the certification process is ongoing.

Note: In case the process is not followed accordingly, the certification body shall contact IFS Customer Support. It has to be considered that associated costs may apply.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 3.1 AUDIT DURATION

1-3.1 Audit duration

Missing audit time due to missing scope

There are two situations in case missing audit time is identified during technical review:

A) **Missing time is less than or equal to two (2) hours (0.25MD) and the auditor is qualified for the missing technology scope.**

CB shall double check with the auditor whether they audited the respective processes. If yes, no extension audit is required, and:

- CB shall send a notification to the IFS Integrity Program that missing technology scope has been identified during the technical review, before upload to the IFS Database
- Certificate and report shall contain the missing technology scope and the reason for the audit time reduction shall be indicated as "Missing technology scope identified during the technical review"

B) **Missing time is less than or equal to two (2) hours (0.25MD) and the auditor is NOT qualified for the missing technogy scope**

OR

Missing time is more than two (2) hours (0.25MD)

- CB shall schedule an extension audit to cover the missing technology scope
- CB shall issue the certificate after the main audit without the missing technology scope and re-issue after the extension audit
- Report shall contain a remark that missing technology scope is subject to an extension audit

Note: Generally, the CB shall make a remark to consider the missing technology scope for next audit time calculation.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 4 POST IFS FOOD AUDIT ACTIONS

1-4 Post IFS Food Audit actions

1-4.2.1 Scoring and conditions for issuing the IFS Audit Report and IFS Certificate

Situations where an audit is considered cancelled.

An audit shall be considered cancelled if the audit is stopped before the IFS Audit Checklist is completed.

In the case of a cancellation, the following rules shall apply:

- Withdrawal of the current certificate (within two (2) working days)
- No new certificate is issued
- The audit does not count towards the "one (1) in every three (3) audits shall be un-announced" rule
- The audit does not count towards the "maximum three (3) consecutive IFS Audits by the same auditor" rule
- The audit does not count towards the minimum number of five (5) IFS Food Audits per year as a lead or co-auditor
- The audit cannot count as witness audit
- A new initial audit may be performed after a minimum of six (6) weeks

The report shall be completed (until the point the audit was stopped), reviewed and uploaded to the IFS Database. In case of deviation(s) and/or non-conformities scored in the report, it shall be reviewed by the auditor before the next audit, together with the last certification audit report.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 2 – 4.4 PURCHASING

PART 2 – List of IFS Food Audit Requirements

2-4 Operational processes

2-4.4 Purchasing

Requirement 4.4.1* clarification

Specific procedures shall be in place for the procurement of animals, fish and seafood which are subject to control of prohibited substances (e.g. pharmaceuticals, veterinary medicines, heavy metals and pesticides).

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2

CLARIFICATION ON PART 2 – 4.18 TRACEABILITY

2-4.18 Traceability

Requirement 4.18.1* clarification

In the case of animal slaughtering sites, it shall be considered that traceability starts for all edible part of the carcass including blood even before they are deemed fit for human consumption.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 2 – 4.19 ALLERGEN RISK MITIGATION

2-4.19 Allergen risk mitgation

Requirement 4.19.3 clarification

According to this requirement, the company needs to follow the legislation for the declaration of the allergens in the finished products. For the adventitious or technically unavoidable presence, the labelling of legally declared allergens and traces shall be based on risks. When considering the risk of unintentional allergen entries, both risks from the declarable allergens processed in the company and unintentional allergens coming from raw materials shall be taken into account for determining the labelling of finished products.

ALL CLARIFICATIONS ›

CLARIFICATION ON PART 2 – 4.21 FOOD DEFENCE

2-4.21 Food defence

2-4.21.2 Clarification about the (non) applicability of a part of requirement 4.21.2

The part of the requirement on how to manage external inspections and regulatory visits is not applicable if no food defence legislation exists in the country where the audit takes place which requires external food defence inspections and/or regulatory food defence visits, or if the company doesn't export to the US and no FDA food defence inspection is required.

As a result, food safety inspections which are performed by authorities are not involved in this requirement.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 3 – 1.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS (FOR ACCREDITATION BODIES)

PART 3 – Requirements for accreditation bodies, certification bodies and auditors IFS Accreditation and Certification process

3-1 Requirements for the accreditation bodies

3-1.1 General requirements

Clarification in case of a suspension or withdrawal of a certification body's accreditation

Accreditation bodies shall inform IFS if a certification body has its accreditation in relation to an IFS Standard suspended or withdrawn.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 3 – 2.6 CERTIFICATION BODY RESPONSABILITIES FOR IFS AUDITORS, REVIEWERS, IN-HOUSE TRAINERS AND WITNESS AUDITORS

3-2 Requirements for the certification bodies

3-2.6 Certification body responsibilities for IFS Auditors, Reviewers, In-house Trainers and Witness Auditors

Clarification about training requirements for auditors and reviewers

All auditors and reviewers shall be trained on requirements of IAF MD4 (e.g. IFS Split Audit training) and ISO / IEC 17065.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 3 – 3.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR IFS FOOD AUDITORS

3-3 Requirements for IFS Food Auditors, Reviewers, In-house Trainers and Witness Auditors

3-3.1 Requirements for IFS Food Auditors

3-3.1.2 General requirements for auditors when applying for IFS Examinations

Clarification about specific types of audits which are not accepted for a sign-off audit, witness audit and auditor scope extension

A multi-location production site cannot be used for a sign-off audit, because the checklist is not completely audited (central management processes).

Extension audits are not acceptable for witness audits or auditor scope extensions.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 3 – 3.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR IFS FOOD AUDITORS

3-3 Requirements for IFS Food Auditors, Reviewers, In-house Trainers and Witness Auditors

3-3.1 Requirements for IFS Food Auditors

3-3.1.5 Maintenance of auditor's approval

Clarification on the maintenance of auditor approval in certain specific situations

Every year IFS Food Auditors shall perform a minimum of five (5) IFS Food Audits as a lead or co-auditor.

This is applicable from the first full year following approval as an IFS Food Auditor.

In the following specific situations:

- In case the IFS Food Auditor is also a manager for IFS within the certification body
- In case the product scope(s) the auditor has is/are in a specific country where there is a lack of customers
- In case it is in a specific emerging market

It is acceptable to perform at least 1 IFS Food audit and 4 audits as Lead-or Co auditor according to GFSI recognised standards every year, nevertheless certification bodies shall do their utmost to perform as many IFS Food Audits per auditor as possible.

In case the certification body makes use of the above exceptional rule for one or more of their auditors, the certification body is obliged to notify the IFS Auditor Management latest one month before the expire of the current IFS Auditor Certificate. Thus to ensure that the IFS Auditor approval will not be lost at the end of the validity of the current IFS Auditor Certificate.

In case of any other special situations, it is mandatory to contact the IFS Auditor Management for a case by case decision.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 4 – 2.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IFS AUDIT REPORT: AUDIT REPORT OVERVIEW (ANNEX 9)

PART 4 – Reporting, IFS Software and IFS Database

4-2 Reporting

4-2.1 Minimum requirements for the IFS Audit Report: audit overview (ANNEX 9)

I) How is the COID managed for companies in some specific cases?

In the case of a **multi-legal entity site**:

- at one physical location **with the same scope**: one audit, separate COIDs, duplication of certificate and report.
  The COIDs shall be mentioned in the audit overview of each audit report and linked in the IFS Database (visible for CBs only).
- at one physical location **with different scopes**: multiple audits, separate COIDs, separate reports and certificates.
  The COIDs shall be mentioned in the audit overview of each audit report and linked in the IFS Database (visible for CBs only).
  The audit duration shall be calculated separately for each COID.

All audits shall be performed by one certification body.

In the case of **multi-location sites**:

- separate COIDs are created for each site and linked in the IFS Database.

ALL CLARIFICATIONS ›

CLARIFICATION ON PART 4 – 2.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IFS AUDIT REPORT: AUDIT OVERVIEW (ANNEX 9)

4-2.1 Minimum requirements for the IFS Audit Report: audit overview (ANNEX 9)

II) When shall a new COID be created?

A new COID shall be created in two cases: change of the address and under specific circumstances, change of the legal entity.

If a production site **moves to a new address**, a new COID shall be created, and an initial audit shall be organised.

The certification history will be visible but remains connected to the original COID. The access rights to the report, action plan and audit comparison are transferred to the new COID.

The first audit performed at the new site is a first initial audit. The certification body decides whether the current certificate of the old site shall be withdrawn as soon as production stops.

If a company **changes its legal entity** and under the prerequisite that the new legal entity **has no contract** with the prior regulating data protection issues, a new COID shall be created, and the certification body evaluates the certification status. The certification history is invisible, but the old COID is provided. The access rights to the report, action plan and audit comparison are not transferred. It is recommended that the action plan of the prior audit is checked by the auditor. Especially in case of any food safety and quality management system deviation(s) and/or previous non-conformities.

Under the **prerequisite** that the new legal entity is **not in conflict with data protection rights**, the COID shall not be changed. In this case the certification body shall update the information in the IFS Database.

ALL CLARIFICATIONS ›

	New address	New legal entity	
	new COID linked with old	not taking over rights* = new COID not linked	taking over rights* ≠ no new COID
New audit?	An initial audit shall be organised.	Certification body evaluates the situation.	Certification body evaluates the situation.
Certification history	Remains visible via the link to the old COID.	Is invisible, but the old COID is provided in the report.	Remains unchanged.
First audit after change	First initial audit	First initial audit	According to standard
Further information	Certification body decides whether the certificate shall be withdrawn when production at the old site stops. COIDs can only be linked once.	It's recommended that the action plan of the current site is checked by the auditor. Especially in case of any food safety and quality management system deviation(s) and/or previous non-conformities.	The certification body changes the information in the IFS Database, updates the information in the AXP file and on the certificate (to be sent to CS).

**The Regulation on the protection of undisclosed know-how and undisclosed information is valid in the European Union. In other parts of the world different legislation may apply.*

Note: If a CB creates by mistake a new COID for a company with an already existing COID, they shall contact IFS Customer Support.

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 4 – 2.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IFS AUDIT REPORT: AUDIT OVERVIEW (ANNEX 9)

4-2.1 Minimum requirements for the IFS Audit Report: audit overview (ANNEX 9)

III) Which information of the report shall be translated in English?

The following information of the report shall be translated into English:

- Company profile (company data + audit data)
- Audit scope
- Partly outsourced processes
- Exclusions
- Overall summary of compulsory information
- Deviations and non-conformities

ALL CLARIFICATIONS ›

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CLARIFICATION ON PART 4 – 2.4 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IFS CERTIFICATE (ANNEX 11)

4-2 Reporting

4-2.4 Minimum requirements for the IFS Certificate (ANNEX 11)

I) Clarification about head office/central management information on the certificate

The head office/central management name including its address shall be written on the IFS Certificate and indicated as such in case one of the below is applicable:

- The head office/central management is responsible for certain elements of the central management system and is audited for that, being part of the IFS Multi-location/ Multisite approach.
- The head office/central management is not responsible for certain elements of the central management system but according to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 norm is the legal responsible "client" for the audit(s) of the processing site(s) and has a contract with the certification body.

ALL CLARIFICATIONS ›

CLARIFICATION ON PART 4 – 2.4 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IFS CERTIFICATE (ANNEX 11)

4-2 Reporting

4-2.4 Minimum requirements for the IFS Certificate (ANNEX 11)

II) Clarification on the definitions of dates on the certificate

The certificate issue date is the original date on which the certificate was first issued.

The date and place, called "Signature date" is the most recent date the certificate was updated due to a significant change, such as in case of an extension audit or change in the scope.

Corrections, such as typographical errors shall not affect the signature date.

ALL CLARIFICATIONS ›

CLARIFICATION ON PART 4 – 4 THE IFS DATABASE

4-4 The IFS Database

Form for extraordinary information to be filled out by the certification bodies

The following information shall be added in the description of the extraordinary information:

- Company (COID)
- Product (including private labels and/or brands);
- Date of recall/withdrawal;
- Involved batches;
- Reason of the recall/incident

After ten (10) working days from the initial information in the IFS Database:

- Cause of the incident (if relevant with corrections and corrective actions taken by the company)
- The actions taken by the certification body. Especially with reference to the certification status of the company.

ALL CLARIFICATIONS ›

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