

IFS Logistics version 3 Doctrine



VERSION 2

JUNE 2025

ENGLISH

Foreword

This document provides additional clarification to the IFS Logistics 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 – 0.0 INTRODUCTION

0-0 Introduction

Clarification on which IFS Logistics version shall be applied in some specific situations?

In case the audit starts on or after 1 June 2024, IFS Logistics version 3 Audits are possible.

In case the audit starts on or after 1 December 2024, IFS Logistics version 3 Audits are mandatory.

In case of an unannounced IFS Logistics Audit, if the audit window starts on or after 1 October 2024 the audit shall be performed according to IFS Logistics version 3.

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

Exceptional situations where the IFS Logistics version 2.3 can still apply are the following:

- Audit of multi-location companies with central management where the audit of the central managing site started before 1 December 2024. If it is not possible to perform the central management audit according to version 3, all sites shall be audited according to version 2.3 too, also sites having unannounced audits where one or several site(s) has/have their audit window starting on or after 1 October 2024.
- Follow-up audit and/or extension audit when the “main” audit was performed according to version 2.3.

The general admission of the aforementioned exceptional situations which permit the use of IFS Logistics version 2.3 after 1 December 2024, shall terminate on 30 November 2025.

[ALL CLARIFICATIONS >](#)

CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 1 THE IFS LOGISTICS CERTIFICATION PROCESS

PART 1 – IFS Logistics Certification Protocol

1-1 The IFS Logistics Certification Process

Clarification Overall on-site evaluation

At least 50% of the total IFS Audit duration shall be allocated to the on-site evaluation (within the working areas of the physical site). This allows the auditor to comprehensively audit the services and product scopes and shall be performed as soon as possible. It can be decreased to 1/3 in case of a reduction of audit duration to six (6) hours (see chapter 3.1, Part1).

For companies only organising transport/storage (without own transport vehicles, vessels, etc.) it is the responsibility of the certification body to define the applicable time allocated to the on-site visit and the rule stated in chapter 1, Part1 regarding the 50% on-site audit duration does not apply. The decision for reduction to the on-site evaluation shall be a case-by-case and risk-based decision by the certification body and shall be justified in the IFS Audit Report. The minimum audit duration as defined in chapter 3.1, Part1 applies.

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

1-2 Before the IFS Logistics Audit

1-2.1 Making a contract with a certification body

I) Are there any IFS rules for the use of interpreters during an IFS Logistics Audit?

An IFS Logistics Audit shall be carried out in the working language of the audited site.

The use of an interpreter is not allowed if the 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 audited 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 shall 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 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.

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

1-2.1 Making a contract with a certification body

II) Auditor sharing

There are two possibilities to share auditors between certification bodies:

1) Borrowing of auditors

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

- Day of audit
- Name 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 or more certification bodies to work together by sharing one pool of auditors. The responsibilities for the audits, training of auditor, reviewing etc. are clearly separated. Only audit date and scope can be seen by the partner; company names are invisible.

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

1-2.2 Scope of the IFS Logistics Audit

Guidance on the allocation of the IFS Food Product Scopes and Processing Steps

A guidance on the allocation of the IFS Food Product Scopes and Processing Steps is available on the IFS Website and will be updated each time it is necessary.

For HPC products (Non food scope 1), examples can be found in the IFS HPC Standard version 3, Part 1, 2.2.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 2.3 TYPE OF IFS LOGISTICS AUDITS

1-2.3 Type of IFS Logistics 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.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 2.3 TYPE OF IFS LOGISTICS 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.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 2.4 IFS LOGISTICS UNANNOUNCED AUDIT OPTION

1-2.4 IFS Logistics 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.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 1 – 4 POST IFS LOGISTICS AUDIT ACTIONS

1-4 Post IFS Logistics 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 rule 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 unannounced” rule
- The audit does not count towards the “maximum three (3) consecutive IFS Audits by the same auditor” rule
- 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.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 2 – 4.2 PERFORMANCE OF SUPPLIERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

PART 2 – List of IFS Logistics Audit Requirements

2-4 Realisation of the logistics services

2-4.2 Performance of suppliers and service providers

2-4.2.1 Approval and monitoring (supplier management)

Clarification about approval and monitoring (supplier management)

In exceptional cases, such as emergency situations or seasonal peaks, where it is not possible to finish the full approval procedure of the supplier or service provider needed in due time, the approval and monitoring procedure of incoming purchased products and/or services described in 4.2.1.1 shall adequately address the missing parameter through increased frequency of checking and appropriate monitoring measures.

All exceptional cases shall be justified and documented.

If the concerned parameter is a customer requirement, the exceptional situation shall be notified before commissioning.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 2 – 4.5 PRODUCT FRAUD AND PRODUCT DEFENCE

2-4.5 Product fraud and product defence

Clarification about the (non) applicability of parts of requirement 4.5.4

The part of the requirement on how to manage external inspections and regulatory visits is not applicable if no product defence legislation exists in the country where the audit takes place which requires external product defence inspections and/or regulatory product 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.

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 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.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 3 – CERTIFICATION BODY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IFS AUDITORS, REVIEWERS, IN/HOUSE TRAINERS AND WITNESS AUDITORS

3-2 Requirements for 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 the requirements of IAF MD4 (e.g. IFS Split audit e-learning) and ISO / IEC 17065 with ISO / TS 22003.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 3 – 3 REQUIREMENTS FOR IFS LOGISTICS AUDITORS

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

3-3.1 Requirements for IFS Logistics Auditors

Clarification about specific type of audits which are not accepted for a sign-off audit and witness audit

A multi-location and multi-site audit, 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.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 3 – 3.1.1.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR IFS LOGISTICS AUDITORS WHO ARE ALREADY IFS FOOD AUDITORS

3-3.1.1 Auditor approval process

3-3.1.1.1 Requirements for IFS Logistics Auditors who are already approved IFS Food Auditors

Clarification about IFS Food Auditors extending their scope as an IFS Logistics Auditor

The auditor approval for IFS Logistics is looked upon as a standard extension for IFS Food Auditors. The IFS Food Auditors, in order to perform audits according to the IFS Logistics Standard, need as a minimum to be approved for technology scope D and additionally to fulfil the following requirements:

- The auditor shall participate in the IFS Logistics Auditor Training (one (1) day). The training is provided by IFS.
- After having successfully completed the training course, the auditor shall take part in two (2) full IFS Logistics Audits with active participation as a trainee under the supervision and responsibility of an approved IFS Logistics Auditor.
- The auditor shall be signed off during their first IFS Logistics Audit acting as lead auditor under observation of an IFS Witness Auditor who is approved for IFS Logistics.

The report of the sign-off audit shall be documented in the template provided by IFS.

Once the IFS Witness Audit Report of the successfully performed sign-off audit has been approved by IFS, the auditor will be approved for IFS Logistics in the IFS Database and a personal IFS Auditor Certificate will be issued for the auditor.

Starting from the day of activation, the auditors are allowed to perform IFS Logistics Audits. The certificate validity starts from the date of activation in the IFS Database and relies on the IFS Food Auditor approval.

Note: An audit at a multi site multi location site is accepted for a trainee audit.

A combined IFS Logistics/Broker Audit is also accepted for trainee audits. In case of a combined IFS Logistics/Broker Audit performed as a sign-off audit, the lead auditor needs to be either approved for IFS Broker or to be signed off for both Standards.

Chart 10: Required auditor qualification

Scope		Required auditor qualification
Storage & Transport	Food	IFS Food approval (for any product scopes but, as a minimum, for technology scope D + IFS Logistics Approval OR
	Non-Food	IFS Pure Logistics approval

This clarification applies from the date of publication of this document.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 3 – 3.1.3 MAINTENANCE OF AUDITOR'S APPROVAL

3-3.1 Requirements for IFS Logistics Auditors

3-3.1.3 Maintenance of auditor's approval

I) Clarification about auditor certificate maintenance for IFS Logistics auditors who are already approved IFS Food Auditors

In case the auditor didn't fulfil the requirements for maintenance of IFS Logistics qualification, the auditor needs to be re-approved by a successfully passed sign-off witness audit performed during a full IFS Logistics Audit.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 3 – 3.1.3 MAINTENANCE OF AUDITOR'S APPROVAL

3-3.1 Requirements for IFS Logistics Auditors

3-3.1.3 Maintenance of auditor's approval

II) Clarification about certificate maintenance for IFS Pure Logistics Auditors

IFS manages the auditor re-approval every two (2) years as follows:

- If all requirements are fulfilled, IFS re-issues a new auditor certificate which is valid for two (2) more years.
- **If not all requirements are fulfilled, the auditor's certificate will not be maintained.**

IFS Pure Logistics Auditors shall successfully participate in the initial oral IFS Examination and sign-off audit to be approved as an IFS Logistics Auditor again.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 3 – 3.1.3.2 FOR IFS PURE LOGISTICS AUDITORS

3-3.1 Requirements for IFS Logistics Auditors

3-3.1.3.2 For IFS Pure Logistics Auditors

Clarification on minimum number of IFS Logistics Audits as a lead or co-auditor.

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

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

In the following specific situations:

- In case the IFS Logistics Auditor is also a manager for IFS within the certification body
- In case it is in a specific emerging market

It is acceptable to perform at least one (1) IFS Logistics Audit and four (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 Logistics 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 IFS Auditor Management at latest one month before the expiry 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.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 3 – 3.3.2 MAINTENANCE OF IFS IN-HOUSE TRAINER'S QUALIFICATION

3-3.3 Requirements for IFS In-house Trainers

3-3.3.2 Maintenance of IFS In-house Trainer's qualification

IFS Auditor Conversion Training for IFS Logistics version 3

IFS Logistics Auditors/Reviewers who have their main approval for IFS Food version 8, need a four (4) hours in-house conversion training for IFS Logistics version 3.

Pure IFS Logistics Auditors need an eight (8) hours in-house conversion training for IFS Logistics version 3.

The training is mandatory for all IFS Logistics Auditors, Reviewers and IFS Trainers (Food, HPC or PACsecure, who are responsible for the IFS Logistics part of the in-house training).

- The training material is provided by IFS and can be downloaded from the CB cloud.
- IFS Auditors and Reviewers need to be trained by the CB's inhouse trainer for IFS Logistics either face-to-face or online.
- The auditor/ reviewer has to complete this conversion training before they can perform/ review their first IFS Logistics version 3 Audit.
- After the auditor/reviewer has completed the training, the CB adds the training as conversion training (section in-house trainings) into the corresponding auditor profile in the IFS Database.
- **Note:** the IFS Logistics version 3 Conversion Course is a separate training. It cannot be included in the regular in-house training.
- The IFS Integrity Program will review the profiles in the IFS Database accordingly.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 4 – 1.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IFS AUDIT REPORT: AUDIT OVERVIEW (ANNEX 8)

PART 4 – Reporting, the IFS Software and the IFS Database

4-1 Reporting

4-1.1 Minimum requirements for the IFS Audit Report: audit overview (ANNEX 8)

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.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 4 – 1.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IFS AUDIT REPORT: AUDIT OVERVIEW (ANNEX 8)

4-1.1 Minimum requirements for the IFS Audit Report: audit overview (ANNEX 8)

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 site (physical activities) **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.

If a new audit is organised, 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.

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 product 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.

	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	Contact IFS Customer Support (CS) to link the COIDs. 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 product 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.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 4 – 1.4 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IFS CERTIFICATE (ANNEX 10)

4-1.4 Minimum requirements for the IFS Certificate (Annex 10)

I) Clarification about the headquarter / central management information on the certificate

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

CLARIFICATION ON PART 4 – 1.4 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IFS CERTIFICATE (ANNEX 10)

4-1.4 Minimum requirements for the IFS Certificate (Annex 10)

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.

CLARIFICATION ON PART 4 – 3 THE IFS DATABASE

4-3 The IFS Database

Form for extraordinary information

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

Contact details of the IFS Offices

GERMANY

IFS Office Berlin
Am Weidendamm 1A
DE - 10117 Berlin
Phone: +49 (0)30726105374
Email: info@ifs-certification.com

ITALY

IFS Office Milan
Federdistribuzione
Via Albricci 8
IT - 20122 Milan
Phone: +39 0289075150
Email: ifs-milano@ifs-certification.com

POLAND | CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

IFS Representative CEE &
CEE Market Development Manager Agnieszka Wryk
IFS Representative CEE Marek Marzec
ul. Serwituty 25
PL - 02-233 Warsaw
Phone: +48 451136888
Email: ifs-poland@ifs-certification.com

CZECH REPUBLIC

IFS Representative Miroslav Šuška
Phone: +420 603893590
Email: msuska@qualifood.cz

BRAZIL

IFS Office Brazil
Rua Antônio João 800
BR - 79200-000 Aquidauana / MS Brazil
Phone: +55 67981514560
Email: cnowak@ifs-certification.com

NORTH AMERICA

IFS Representative Pius Gasser
Phone: +1 4165642865
Email: gasser@ifs-certification.com

FRANCE

IFS Office Paris
14 rue de Bassano
FR - 75016 Paris
Phone: +33 140761723
Email: ifs-paris@ifs-certification.com

SPAIN

IFS Representative Beatriz Torres Carrió
Phone: +34 610306047
Email: torres@ifs-certification.com

HUNGARY

IFS Representative László Gyórfi
Phone: +36 301901342
Email: gyorfi@ifs-certification.com

TÜRKIYE

IFS Representative Ezgi Dedebas Ugur
Phone: +90 5459637458
Email: ifs-turkiye@ifs-certification.com

ROMANIA

IFS Representative Ionut Nache
Phone: +40 722517971
Email: ionut.nache@inaq.ro

LATIN AMERICA

IFS Office Chile
Av. Apoquindo 4700, Piso 12,
CL - Las Condes, Santiago
Phone: +56 954516766
Email: chile@ifs-certification.com

ASIA

IFS Office Asia
IQC (Shanghai) Co., Ltd.
Man Po International Business Center Rm 205,
No. 660, Xinhua Road, Changning District,
CN - 200052 Shanghai
Phone: +86 18019989451
Email: china@ifs-certification.com
asia@ifs-certification.com

In case of any queries regarding the interpretation of IFS Standards and Programmes, please contact standardmanagement@ifs-certification.com

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The owner of the present document is:

IFS Management GmbH
Am Weidendamm 1 A
10117 Berlin
Germany

Managing Director: Stephan Tromp
AG Charlottenburg
HRB 136333 B
VAT-Nº: DE278799213

Bank: Berliner Sparkasse
IBAN number: DE96 1005 0000 0190 0297 65
BIC-/Swift-Code: BE LA DE BE

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