Client Information Note – IFS Food V8

Overview

In this Client Information Note we explain the key stages of the LRQA process for audit against the International Food Standard version 8 or IFS Food version 8.

IFS Food v8 timeline

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.

Before the audit

To prepare for your audit you must read the normative documents (standard and doctrine), which can be downloaded from IFS Homepage (ifs-certification.com), as well as supporting guidelines and documents issued by IFS.

Any production site starting with new operations shall ensure that all requirements of IFS can be audited at the time of the initial audit. A minimum of three (3) months of operations is recommended before the first IFS audit.

The IFS audit is production site specific: one production site is subject to one audit and one certificate.

IFS has defined the following four (4) types of production sites:

1) Single production site
2) Multi-location production sites
3) Multi-legal entity production site
4) Production site with decentralised structure(s)

Please refer to the standard and the glossary to define with LRQA which type of production site you are.

GLN: The Global Location Number

The GLN is required to clearly identify the IFS certified site in the electronic communications in the supply chain. It is mandatory for sites located:

- within the European Economic Area (EEA),
- within the United Kingdom,
- within countries having signed bilateral agreements with the European Union and considered as integrated into the EEA, like Switzerland.

GLNs are requested in the IFS Audit Report, on the IFS Certificate and in the IFS Database for each certified site(s).

Only GS1 GLN are valid. To use a GLN for IFS Certification, it must be registered and active in GEPIR (a global GS1 database in which companies and their locations can be found via its respective GLN. In this way it can be determined whether you are the actual owner of the GLN named in the certificate). Only in this way IFS and your business partners can verify the authenticity of your GLN and certificate.

The company name and address in GEPIR must correspond exactly with the information in the IFS certificate.

COID: IFS identification code number

The IFS COID:

- is site specific as defined in the IFS database
- is part of the QR code on each certificate
- is under Data protection law (GDPR compliance)

A new COID is required when:

- the site is moving to a new location
- there is a change of legal entity

Scope of the IFS Food Audit

IFS Food can only be applied when a product is "processed" or when there is a hazard of product contamination from primary packing.

All products and processes of the relevant production site shall be included in the scope of the IFS Food Audit, including decentralised structures.

IFS provides product and technology scopes to define the audit scope of the production site.

The selection of the product scope(s) depends on the finished products manufactured by the production site. The technology scopes are selected based on the processing steps involved in the manufacture of the finished products.

It is not possible to include brand information or claims in the audit scope. However, it is allowed to mention in the certificate scope the product name, when it falls under a geographical indication schemes (according to Regulation (EU) N° 1151/2012 and its amendments), e.g. PDO (Protected Designation of Origin)/PGI (Protected Geographical Indication)). As geographical indication schemes claims are not certified by the IFS Food Certification, a disclaimer shall be added on the certificate, under the scope "The geographical indication scheme "XXX" is an extrinsic quality of the product(s) but its assessment is not covered in the scope of the IFS Food Certification".

The Audit scope shall be agreed between LRQA and the site before the Audit takes place. For further information regarding determination of the Audit scope refer to IFS Food Standard, see Annex 1 and Annex 3.

Exclusion

The exclusion of the production process(es), including storage and transport, is not allowed.

By definition, all food processes that are managed at the same location shall be included in the scope of an IFS Food Audit (e. g. slaughtering, deboning, meat cutting, meat processing, etc.). All processing steps (P) shall be audited as the exclusion is related to the finished product(s). The key concept is the evaluation of the product risk analysis which may confirm whether an exceptional product exclusion is possible (with no impact on food safety and quality).

Exclusion of product(s) is in general not allowed, but may be accepted under the following specific conditions:

- Products are not client branded products.
- If, under exceptional circumstances, the company and LRQA decide to exclude specific product ranges from the scope of the IFS Food Audit, an exclusion tree questionnaire should be filled in (see Annex 4) and confirm whether an exclusion is possible.
- The filled in questionnaire shall be part of the audit time schedule. The auditor shall check if defined exclusions are relevant and in line with the questionnaire during the audit.
- This shall be justified and documented, in both the audit scope of the report and the certificate.

Partly outsourced processes

A partly outsourced process is defined in IFS Food as a production step or part of a production process (including primary packaging and labelling) that is carried out of-site by a third-party on behalf of the IFS Food certified production site. This also includes processes which are partly outsourced by a sister company within the same company group.

In that case the description on the Certificate shall be "Besides own production, the company has partly outsourced processes."

Fully outsourced products and traded products

A fully outsourced product is a product manufactured, packaged and labelled under the own company brand or client brand by a different company than the audited one.

A traded product is a product manufactured, packaged and labelled by and under a different company name to the IFS certified company.

The IFS Food certification doesn't cover fully outsourced products and traded products as there is no processing step performed at the site being certified.

They still have to be mentioned in the certificate and described in the company profile section of the audit report. This rule applies for example, to broker activities. In that case the description on the Certificate shall be: "The company has own broker activities which are/are not IFS Broker/other GFSI recognised standard certified."

We recommend that these activities are certified to IFS Broker or any equivalent GFSI recognised food safety certification standard based on the ISO / IEC 17065:2012 norm. For example, a combined IFS Food / IFS Broker Audit may be performed, see Annex 1 in the standard.

Audit Time Calculation

IFS Food audit duration is obtained using the calculation tool provided by IFS, which is based in the total number of employees, product and technology scopes of the site.

The minimum audit duration, as provided by the calculation tool, will always be two (2) days (16 hours). One audit day is equivalent to eight (8) hours (without lunch break) and shall never exceed ten (10) hours.

In addition to the calculated audit duration, following time shall be added, at a minimum:

- two (2) hours for audit preparation
- 0,75 days (six (6) hours) for audit report writing.

Type of IFS Food Audits

IFS Audit (full on-site):

An IFS Food Audit shall always be performed on-site and during consecutive working days, for both announced and unannounced audit options.

IFS Split Audit:

This option is only allowed under exceptional circumstances (e.g. due to a widely acknowledged crisis) and when a full on-site audit is hardly possible.

The on-site part of this audit shall be performed first, followed by a remote part (as maximum within 14 days) using ICT (Information and Communication Technologies).

The company should clarify in advance with its clients whether they accept a certificate based on the IFS split audit.

At least two (2) hours of audit time must be added to the calculated audit time to cover the time needed for the split approach.

At least two(2) hours of risk audit time have to be added in order to determine if such option is realistic and possible regarding ICT.

Initial Audit:

- **"First" initial audit**
  Audit of a production site that has no previous IFS Certification history.
- **"New" initial audit**
  Audit that is performed after interruption of cycle or after failed certification audit (KO or >1 Major or <75%), failed follow-up audit or failed extension audit.

Recertification audit

Audit to renew the existing certificate after re-evaluating all requirements.

The period during which a recertification audit shall take place is shown on the certificate and the audit shall be performed during this period in order to maintain the certification cycle.

Follow-up audit

Audit to be conducted when one Major non-conformity was scored during the main audit and the total score is ≥75%.

It is an on-site audit focused on the review of the implementation of actions taken to solve the Major non-conformity.

It shall be performed no earlier than six (6) weeks, and no later than six (6) months, after the main audit. If this deadline is not fulfilled or if the production site decides not to perform a follow-up audit, a new initial audit shall be performed.

If the follow-up is successful, the site can only receive a certificate in Foundation Level (even if the final total score is ≥ 95%).

Extension audit

Additional audit to extend the current certification scope from the initial/recertification audit.

Announced and Unannounced Options

- **Announced:** the announced audit is conducted at a time and date agreed between the production site and LRQA and shall be performed on consecutive days.
- **Unannounced:**
  - **Re-certification audits:** the unannounced audit shall be performed within a time window of [–16 weeks before audit due date; + two (2) weeks after audit due date] and shall take place without prior notification of the date to the production site, to ensure the unannounced character of the audit.
  - **Initial audits:** the company can agree with LRQA the start of the unannounced window and the certificate validity will be calculated from the last day of the Audit date within the chosen time frame.
    An "initial" unannounced registration can also be done to adjust the window with

production periods (e.g. seasonal production), get alignment with the unannounced audit timeframe of other certification standard (e.g. combined audits) or due to a missed unannounced re-certification registration.

All IFS Checklist Requirements shall be implemented before the unannounced audit window starts.

The unannounced audit shall be performed on consecutive days and shall start and end within the unannounced window to be considered unannounced.

A site that has undergone an unannounced audit will obtain the IFS Star Status which will be visible on the IFS Database and IFS Certificate

At least once every third IFS Food Audit is to be performed unannounced, starting 1st January 2021 (regardless of the IFS Food Standard Version).

LRQA decides in which year the first mandatory unannounced audit will be performed and inform the production site at least six (6) months before the audit due date. The selection of the unannounced option is registered in IFS Database.

The site is responsible to send to LRQA the following information at latest four (4) weeks before the start of the unannounced audit time window:

- Name(s) of the on-site person(s) to be contacted at the production site.
- If needed, blackout period of a maximum of ten (10) working days when the production site is not available for audit, as well as non-operating periods. The ten (10) working days can be split into a maximum of three (3) periods.
- If the site produces seasonal products, the expected seasonal production dates shall be notified and the time window [–16 weeks, + two (2) weeks] does not apply. Providing a blackout period is not permitted in this situation and the unannounced audit shall take place at any time during this seasonal production period.

If a production site denies the auditor access (apart from "force majeure"), the currently valid IFS Certificate shall be withdrawn by the responsible certification body within a maximum of two (2) working days of the audit date. All stakeholders with access to the IFS Database and with the respective production site in their favourites' list will receive an e-mail notification from the IFS Database, informing them that the current certificate has been withdrawn. This information will be visible in the production site's history in the IFS Database. The production site will be invoiced by LRQA for the total cost of the audit.

A failed announced audit does not count towards the "at least every third audit unannounced rule".

An unannounced audit counts for this rule no matter if the result is passed or failed.

Apart from this minimum mandatory frequency, unannounced audits may be performed more frequently based on the production site's decision.

Audit Preparation

Before the audit, the auditor has 2 hours for audit preparation and the site will be asked to provide the following information to help the auditor to plan the audit:

- Previous IFS reports, if applicable
- Summary of critical control points (process step, control method, critical limit, control frequency)
- Process flow diagram
- Site plan
- Organizational chart
- List of products
- Site data (e.g. shift patterns, production schedules, etc.)

- Summary of complaints and visits from competent authorities

Our auditor will send an audit plan prior to the audit (unless the audit is unannounced).

50 % of the total IFS audit duration will be allocated to the on-site evaluation in order to allow the LRQA auditor enough time to comprehensively audit and inspect the products and the processes.
Additionally, time for generation of the audit report is typically 0, 75 days.

The IFS Audit and Certification Process

The audit shall be scheduled based on the following steps:

- Opening meeting. The opening meeting and the evaluation of the existing food safety and quality management system shall be kept short, to allow the auditor to start the on-site evaluation as soon as possible (typically 30 minutes after entering the site).
- Evaluation of existing food safety and quality management system, to be achieved by checking documentation (HACCP plans, quality management documentation, etc.).
- On-site evaluation: detailed observation of all on-site production areas, production lines and production processes, which includes interviews with the working personnel and the gathering of information on key process parameters, such as monitoring of control measures defined for CCPs and other control measures to be cross checked with the HACCP plan information.
- Documentation, record review and inspection: evaluation of documents and procedures, cross checking of documents and records based on investigations and findings from the on-site evaluation.
- Final conclusions drawn from the audit.
- Closing meeting: at the end of the audit, the auditor (or lead auditor for an audit team) shall present all findings and discuss all deviations and non-conformities (Major and/or D evaluation of a KO requirement) which have been identified during the audit.

The production site shall assist and cooperate with the auditor during the audit. As part of the audit, personnel from different levels of management and operative levels shall be interviewed. The most senior manager on the date of the audit shall be present at the opening and closing meetings so that any deviations and non-conformities can be discussed.

The realisation of the IFS Food Audit shall always take the following elements into account:

- The audit shall take place at a time when the products included in the audit scope are being processed (in order to audit all the processing steps).
- The production lines shall be operational during the IFS Audit.

If some production lines are not operating during the IFS Audit, and the products and/or technology scopes and/or HACCP plan (especially the CCPs) are different from those in operation, two (2) options are possible:

- The production line(s) can run later during the audit and are included in the scope of the “main” audit.
- The production line(s) cannot run later during the audit and an extension audit shall be performed.

Sampling

Audit work uses sampling techniques, and thus statistically it is possible that issues will remain unidentified during an audit.
Please consider this as you carry out your own internal audits.

IFS Scoring system

In the IFS Food Standard, there are six (6) scoring possibilities and the option of non-applicability.
Points are awarded for each requirement according to the following chart:

Result	Explanation	Points
A	Full compliance.	20 points
B (deviation)	Almost full compliance.	15 points
C (deviation)	Part of the requirement is not implemented.	5 points
D (deviation)	The requirement is not implemented.	– 20 points
Major (non-conformity)	A Major non-conformity can be issued to any regular requirement (which is not defined as a KO requirement). Reasons for Major rating are: •There is a substantial failure to meet the requirements of the standard, which includes but is not limited to food safety and/or the legal requirements of the production and/or destination countries. •A process is out of control which might have an impact on food safety.	Major non-conformity will subtract 15% of the possible total amount; the certificate cannot be issued.
KO requirements scored with a D (non-conformity)	The requirement is not implemented.	KO non-conformity will subtract 50% of the possible total amount; the certificate cannot be issued.
N/A Not applicable	The requirement is not applicable. N/A can apply to any requirement, except for KO requirements numbers 1, 3 and 5 to 10. The auditor shall provide an explanation in the report.	Not included in the calculation of the total score.

Non-conformities

There are two kinds of nonconformities:

- **KO (Knock out)** - there are specific requirements which are designated as KO requirements (KO –Knock Out). If during the audit the auditor establishes that these requirements are not fulfilled by the company, this results in non-certification.
- **Major** –can be given to any regular requirement (which is not defined as KO requirement) when:
    - There is a substantial failure to meet the requirements of the standard, which includes but not limited to food safety and/or the legal requirements of the production and/or destination countries.
    - A process is out of control which might have an impact on food safety.

If one or several Major non-conformities has / have been issued and / or one or several KO requirement(s) is / are scored with D during the Audit, the following rules apply:

- The current IFS Certificate shall be withdrawn in the IFS Database by the certification body as soon as possible, and at latest two (2) working days after the last day of the recertification Audit.
- The report shall be uploaded to the IFS Database.
- In the IFS Database, the certification body shall provide explanations in English about the reasons for withdrawing the current certificate.
- Note: All IFS Database users with the respective company in their favourites list will receive an e-mail notification (with explanations about the identified non-conformities) from the IFS Database, informing

them that the current certificate has been withdrawn.

Action Plan

The auditor and/or certification body shall issue the action plan (with the list of findings) to the company at latest within two (2) weeks from the last audit day.

The company shall forward to the auditor a completed action plan, including evidence of corrections, as latest in four (4) weeks of having received the action plan

The completed action plan shall include:

- Evidence of implementation of corrections and proposed corrective actions for all deviations (B, C, D), KO B and for non-conformities (Major or D evaluation of a KO requirement) listed by the auditor.
- Responsibilities and implementation deadlines for both corrections and corrective actions.

When completing the action plan, consider the difference between "Correction" and "Corrective Action" given in the IFS Glossary:

- **Correction**: Action to eliminate a detected deviation and/or non-conformity. The correction shall be implemented, at latest, before the certificate is issued.
- **Corrective Action**: Action to eliminate the cause of a detected deviation and/or non-conformity. The corrective action shall be implemented, at latest, before the IFS recertification audit.

Examples of acceptable evidence for the implementation of corrections:

- Training records
- Updated procedures with traceable modifications
- Before and after pictures
- Evidence (e.g. e-mail) of communication of documents to the relevant personnel
- Internal audit or inspection report
- Invoices of repairs. Offers of repairs are not accepted, as it is only proof of the intention of correction, not evidence of correction
- New monitoring procedure (e.g. for a damaged infrastructure)
- For an updated document, it may be necessary to get evidence of training and/or communication related to the updated document for the company personnel, in case other personnel/ department has to work with it For an updated form, based on its importance and frequency of use, it may be necessary to send a completed form to the certification body/auditor.

If the evidence of the corrections and/or corrective actions are not valid or inadequate, and/or if the dates of implementation are not relevant, the auditor shall return the action plan to the company for completion in due time. If the action plan is not completed and released in due time, certification may not be issued.

Technical Review

A technical review of the report shall be conducted by a nominated reviewer from LRQA.

Based on the result of the technical review, the nominated reviewer can recommend the issuance of an IFS Food Certificate or not.

The final decision of awarding the IFS certificate is dependent both on final scoring and on relevance of corrective action plan communicated by the company to LRQA. The decision is made by person(s) other than those who have carried out the audit.

Audit Result and Issue of Certificate

Audit result	**Result**	**Issue of Certificate?**
Total score is ⩾ 95%	Passed at IFS	Yes, certificate at higher level,

	Food Higher Level	12-month validity.
Total score is ⩾ 75% and < 95%	Passed at IFS Food Foundation Level	Yes, certificate at foundation level, 12-month validity.
Maximum one Major and total score is ⩾ 75%	Not passed unless further actions taken and validated after follow-up audit	Certificate at foundation level, if the Major nonconformity is effectively solved during the follow-up audit.
> one Major and/or total score is < 75%	Not passed	No, full "initial" audit to be agreed
At least one KO requirement scored with D	Not passed	No, full "initial" audit to be agreed

The time between the date of the audit and the awarding of certificate is between 6 up to 8 weeks.

Each certificate has a QR code and a GLN (Global Location Number).

IFS Database

LRQA must upload each audit report, action plan and certificate to the IFS audit portal. Each certified company will receive access with a dedicated password.

Use of IFS Logos

The copyright of IFS Food and the registered trademark are fully owned by IFS Management GmbH.

The IFS Logos shall be downloaded via the secured section of the IFS Database.

Furthermore, the terms and conditions below apply.

Terms and conditions for using the IFS Logos and communication about the IFS Food Certification/Application

These terms and conditions apply for all IFS Logos.

Form, design and colour of the IFS Logos

Only the latest version of the IFS Logos shall be used. When used, the IFS Logo(s) shall comply with the form and colour of the scale drawing. If used in documents, black and white print is also permitted.

Companies shall only use the logo of the standard(s) they are certified for. The respective logo can be used from the announcement of the achieved IFS Certification until the end of the certification validity.

The general IFS Logo can only be used to express that the certification body or the IFS Consultant supports IFS certified companies, or that the certification body offers certification for more than one IFS Standard. All other forms of use shall be agreed with IFS.

The IFS Food Logo can be used in print, electronic form and in films, as long as the form and format are fulfilled. The same conditions apply to the use of the logo as a stamp.

Restriction of comments and interpretations

When an IFS Food certified production site, an IFS Food supporting company or an IFS Food Certification Body publishes documents bearing the IFS Logo(s), comments and interpretations referring to IFS shall be clearly identifiable as such.

Use of the IFS Food Logo in promotional material

The IFS Food Logo shall not be displayed on the product itself, packaging of the product, or any kind of advertising document likely to reach the end-consumer (e.g. intercompany sales packaging, public exhibitions for end consumers, product specific brochures for end consumers, etc.). The logo can only appear on a website section related to quality management or to quality and safety in general. It shall not be used for any kind of business-to-consumer marketing. It shall be clear that all information concerning certification clearly refers to IFS.

The IFS Logos shall not be used in presentations that have no clear connection to IFS.

An IFS Food certified production site, which accepts IFS Certificates from its suppliers or service providers (brokers, logistics service providers or wholesalers) or

an IFS Certification Body may use the general IFS Logo for promotional reasons and publish information about IFS Certification. If they have no certification of their own, it shall be clearly stated that the company supports or works with IFS certified companies. Any kind of use that gives the impression that the company itself is certified is not accepted.

Further restriction on the use of the IFS Food Logo

The IFS Food Logo shall not be used in any way that may imply that IFS Management GmbH is responsible for the certification decision. In case of suspension or withdrawal of the IFS Food Certificate, the audited production site and company have to immediately stop including the IFS Logos on their documents and/or website. In case of exclusion regarding the audit scope, the IFS Food Logo can be used, but the following claim shall be written at the bottom: "Some products are excluded from the scope of the IFS Food Audit. Exclusion details can be provided upon request." It is also possible to list only those products that fall under the respective IFS Certification.

Communication of the IFS Food Certification

All the above-mentioned rules apply to any communication regarding IFS Food. This also means that the use of the wordmarks "IFS", "International Featured Standards", or "IFS Food" or similar is not allowed to be communicated on finished products which are available to the end consumer.

The auditor shall check compliance with these terms and conditions during the audit. The results of this check shall be described in the company profile of the audit report. If the auditor identifies that the company does not fulfil those terms and conditions, IFS shall be informed accordingly.

Suspension and withdrawal

An IFS Certificate shall be withdrawn by LRQA in the situations such as:

- When any information indicates that the products/processes may no longer comply with the requirements of the certification system, especially in case of non-conformity(ies) identified during the audit (main or follow-up audit) or when access is denied (apart from force majeure).
- In case the production stopped and moved to a new location.
- In case of cancellation of certification contract (between LRQA and the company).

An IFS Certificate shall be suspended by LRQA in the situations such as:

- In case of pending investigations by the certification body, following a food safety incident or other event.
- For the certificates of all companies linked to a head office / central management, when a non-conformity is issued during the audit of the head office / central management.
- In case of non-payment for the current audit by the audited company.

If the suspension is lifted, LRQA shall make all necessary modifications to public information, authorisations for use of brands, etc., in order to ensure transparency and that the products/processes continue to be certified.

If a decision to reduce the scope of certification is made as a condition of reinstatement, LRQA shall make all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information, authorisations for use of brands, etc., in order to ensure the reduced scope of certification is clearly communicated to the client.

Complaints and Appeals

Information on LRQA Complaints and Appeals procedure is available in our website.

Complaints can be sent to LRQA through an online form.

Complaints can be sent to IFS using the Complaint form in IFS Database.

Notification requirements: product recalls/withdrawals, food safety incident and main changes

During the certification cycle, the senior management of the production site shall ensure that LRQA is informed in due time about any changes that may affect the production site's ability to conform to the certification requirements (e.g. recall, alert on products, changes in organisation and management, important modifications on the products and/or the production methods, changes in contact address and production sites, new address of the production site, etc.).

As required in the IFS Food Audit Checklist (Part 2), requirement 1.2.6, **some specific situations require a notification to the certification body within three (3) working days**.

- any product recall
- any product recall and/or withdrawal decided by authorities for food safety and/or food fraud reasons
- any visit from authorities which results in mandatory action connected to food safety, and/or food fraud

Failure to comply with the notification deadline may result in the IFS certificate suspension.

Incidents and recalls/withdrawals must be reported via our website through our recall/incident notification form.

The notification form can be reached from your local LRQA website. From the home page click on 'Contact Us' to find a link to the form or use the search bar at the top right of the home page.

If no local LRQA website exists in your area, please use our global LRQA website at http://www.lrqa.com to notify LRQA of your recall/incident.

After receiving such notifications from the sites, LRQA shall:

- Inform IFS Management GmbH, via a dedicated form in IFS Database, within three (3) working days after receiving the information from the site.
- Communicate to IFS Management GmbH the root cause analysis and progress report of the investigation within ten (10) working days (after submitting the form).

In some cases, a special additional audit may be performed by LRQA to evaluate the information provided by your company i.e., summary of measures is comprehensible, and the quality and safety of the affected product(s) is maintained. The information provided is the base to enable LRQA decision to suspend or to maintain your IFS Certificate(s).

IFS Food Safety Checks

IFS Food Safety Checks are unannounced visits, carried out by independent auditors directly commissioned by IFS Management, which your company can request on a voluntary basis. More information on these checks is available at IFS Homepage (ifs-certification.com)

If your company subscribes to an IFS Food Safety Check (FSC) and if this IFS FSC is classified as "failed" it means a risk to food or product safety has been identified, and/or there were severe hygiene deficiencies, and/or the conformity to fulfil IFS Standard requirements is, in general, not assured. LRQA France will decide the suspension or withdrawal (depending on number and severity of the issues) of the current IFS certificate in a short time frame.

IFS Integrity Program

The IFS Integrity Program includes different measures to ensure the quality of the IFS Standards by reviewing IFS Audit Reports of certified companies and also by using several measures to analyse the performance of certification bodies and auditors. The majority of the IFS Integrity Program activities follow a risk-based approach (risk-based monitoring), with a smaller

portion based on complaints and/or whistle-blowers (complaint management). The IFS Integrity Program strengthens the reliability and confidence of the IFS Standards by monitoring their implementation in practice.

Among the activities of the IFS Integrity Program there are:

IFS Integrity On-site Checks

IFS Integrity On-site Checks are carried out to evaluate IFS certified sites and can be organized risk-based or following complaints. These checks are generally unannounced (announcement by email 30 minutes before start), but in some special cases, they might be performed on an announced basis (generally announced 48 hours before).

These checks are conducted by independent auditors directly commissioned by IFS Management within the IFS Integrity Program activity.

Please be aware there will be an intensification of rules which determine the access for Integrity Program (IP) auditors when performing an integrity on-site check:

- If the auditor has to wait 30 mins (up to 59 mins) before starting the Integrity onsite check a deviation will be raised by the IP auditor.

Note 1: 'Starting' refers to the check itself (entry to the facility), not the factory tour.

Note 2: The deviation shall be raised against IFS Food V7 KO-requirement 1.2.1 (C-deviation), respectively related requirements of other IFS Standards.

- If the Integrity onsite check cannot be started one hour after arrival at the site (no entry to the facility), the integrity onsite check is classified as "non-realizable" which needs to be considered as a breach of certification contract.

Note: A breach of certification contract is likely to result in certificate suspension / withdrawal by the responsible certification body. As per IFS Framework Agreement, every certification body has signed with IFS Management GmbH, certification bodies are obliged to ensure that all activities of the IFS Integrity Program can be conducted.

If KO or Major non-conformity(ies) is/are issued in the Integrity On-site Check, the responsible certification body is obliged to suspend/withdraw (depending on number and severity of the issues) the current IFS certificate within 3 working days after receipt of the result. The certificate can only be re-issued based on an on-site investigation audit carried out at the respective company by an auditor of the certification body and objective evidence has to be provided to IFS that the Major or KO non-conformity issue(s) is/are no longer valid and that sustainable improvement by adequate measures has been reached. IFS Management has the right to finally decide about the acceptability of the proofs.

Confidentiality

We will not disclose any of the information we gather about your organisation, including the contents of reports, to any other party, except as required by the accreditation body and IFS Management GmbH. The IFS Certificate Programme Owner and accreditation body reserve the right to audit any of our IFS clients and contractually you must allow all auditors visiting the site to be witnessed either by our accreditation body, IFS Management and LRQA.

Duties of the Certification Body within the framework of IFS auditing and certification: Information on Data Privacy Protection

LRQA is aware that IFS MANAGEMENT is storing and using data from companies which have been certified by Certification Body ("Relevant Persons").

LRQA is obliged to fulfil its and IFS information duties with regard to data protection by handing over the "Information on Data Protection" as required in annex 1 of Framework Agreement on the auditing and

certification of the International Featured Standards (IFS) as stated below:

“IFS Management GmbH informs you 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 auditing 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.

II. (1) Name and contact details of the responsible company

IFS Management GmbH, Am Weidendamm 1A, 10117 Berlin,

Phone: +49 (0) 30 726 250 74,

Fax +49 (0) 30 726 250 79,

dataprotection@ifs-certification.com

www.ifs-certification.com

III. (2) Contact data of the data protection officer

Nils Gustke,

Gesellschaft für Personaldienstleistungen mbH,

Pestalozzistraße 27, 34119 Kassel,

Telefon +49 (0) 561 7896868,

Telefax +49 (0) 561 7896861,

gustke@gfp24.de,

www.gfp24.de

III. (3) Processing purposes

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

III. (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).

III. (5) Data origin

You have provided the Data to your company or to an auditor in connection with the auditing of your company. IFS Management GmbH receives the audit report from your company, the auditor or the certification body.

III. (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 or as long as the certification body which has certified your company or the auditor who has audited 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 periods are six years according to section 257 German Commercial Code (HGB) and ten years according to section 147 German Tax Code (AO).

III. (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.

III. (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), Friedrichstr. 219, 10969 Berlin.

Disclaimers

We have taken care to ensure that the information in this Client Information Note is accurate at the time of issue. However, the requirements that this document is based on can change. If in doubt, please contact your local office to ensure that you have the latest version.

If any of the links in this document do not work, please copy the address to your browser.

LRQA is a trading name of the LRQA Group of entities. Services are provided by members of the LRQA Group, for details see the LRQA website.