CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

International Food Standard
(Issue 6- April 2014)

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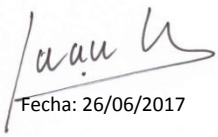
Technical Department  Fecha: 26/06/2017	Quality Manager  Fecha: 26/06/2017	Operations Manager  Fecha: 26/06/2017	11

REASON FOR NEW REVISION:

IFS INTEGRITY PROGRAM FOLLOW UP AUDIT

NEW DOCUMENT WITH IFS DOCTRINE CLARIFICATIONS.

CERTIFICATION GUIDELINE

International Food Standard - IFS V6 April 2014

1. CERTIFICATION PROCESS AGAINST THE INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARD (VER. 6)

1.1. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Once ACERTA is aware of the interest about the certification in accordance with the International Food Standard (Issue 6) by a company, ACERTA Administration Department will contact this company to request some basic information that will let ACERTA make the appropriate budget. In order make the process easier, the applicant may use the document **"*Information Request Form*".**

Next, an appropriate budget is made by using the ACERTA management computer system (SIG), to be then reviewed by the Administration Manager.

The budget includes the costs derived from the certification process and a specification of the items detailed in the said costs: application procedure, file opening, certification inspection, certification decision-making process, issue of the certificate, and, only at the customer's request, a previous inspection of the facilities. The method of payment and the IFS fees, paid by the customer through ACERTA, are also specified in the budget.

The applicant who wishes to begin the certification process shall send this budget appropriately accepted. The Technical Department includes then the accepted budget in the SIG and files the document in hard copy in the appropriate folder.

Once the approved budget is received, the Technical Department sends the applicant the "***Certification Request Form***", to be sent back to ACERTA duly filled in. This form includes all relevant details concerning the scope of the certification, like e.g. **"products", "activity/production processes"**, **"manufacturing facilities", "outsourced processes and/or products"** to be certificated, and it also includes a link to the ***"IFS Certification Guidelines"*** and to the ***"User Guidelines of ACERTA Hallmark"***.

Note: Clarifications about outsourced products and/or processes and trade products.

1. TRADE PRODUCTS: Trade products are products which are manufactured, packed and labeled **by and under a different company name than the company being IFS certified.**

Trade products, as above defined, **are not covered by the scope** of the IFS Food audit. Therefore, the following requirements apply:

- It is **NOT** possible to include trade products in the audit scope of IFS Food audit and no specific mention on the certificate is necessary.
- It shall be specified in the company profile of the audit report whether the company also manages trade products, **but those will not be included in the IFS Food certification.**

If a food processing company would like to also certify these trade products (processed, packed and labeled by and under a different company name), a combined audit with **IFS Broker** shall be performed.

2. OUTSOURCED PROCESSES AND/OR PRODUCTS: The products with outsourced production (partial or total) -> products which are manufactured, packed and labeled by and under a different company name than the company being IFS certified and have:

- **label with retailer/wholesaler brand, or**
- **brand/name of the company that is being certified.**

The outsourced products and/or processes **will not be included in the scope of the IFS Food certificate** of the audited company and an additional sentence will be added in the certificate and in the audit report: "*Beside own production, company has outsourced processes and/or products*".

2.1 Requirements for the site appointed to carry out the outsourced process (part or full process):

- **IFS Food certification** is required, unless the **customer** has accepted other conditions (**written confirmation required**).
- If there is no IFS Food certificate and no written customer confirmation, the food safety and quality management systems for outsourced process(es) **must be documentary assessed during the audit reviewing the related documentation**, as the following:

  - **Contract/agreement** establishing all the relevant details, for example: key quality factors for outsourced processes, HACCP, processes validation, IFS rules,…
  - **Specifications** of the raw materials and the final products complying with what is established in the customers agreements.
  - The **control of outsourced processes** is identified, the risk is assessed and it is documented within the safety and product quality management system.
  - The company **plans and carries out audits to its suppliers** based in the risk assessment using a verification list that covers the IFS Food requirement (including, for example, the system of risk management documented, control plan, traceability system, crisis management, evidence of process validation)
  - The team/employee responsible for carrying out the audits/checkings carried out to suppliers/subcontractors is aware of his/her tasks and is **trained and qualified** for that job.
  - The company carried out **checkings at the reception** of the products received from the outsourced company when is necessary.

2.2 Exclusion of the outsourced products and/or processes:

- Products with retailer brand or outsourcing of an intermediate part of the process: **THE EXCLUSION IS NOT ALLOWED**
- Company brand: **IT IS ALLOWED** if the scope of the outsourced products is **clearly different** of the rest of products processed by the company.

Note: Clarifications about origin certification and other certification under specific regulation.

Products certified under specific certifications like for example "origin certification", "gluten free", DOP, IGP and organic may be mentioned on an IFS Food certificate, as some of these products may be private labels. In this case there shall be a reference (on the certificate, on the company profile, or both), explaining that **the goal of the IFS Food audit is not to assess the full specification or origin certification**, which is subject to a different and separate certification process.

Together with the ***"Certification Request Form"***, the ***"SGC Certification Agreement"*** is sent. This document establishes the conditions that will regulate the commercial relationship between ACERTA and the applicant company. The duration of the agreement will be 1 year. The applicant shall send back ACERTA this ***"SGC Certification Agreement"*** duly dated, signed, and if possible, sealed.

This document will be accepted by ACERTA either received by mail (original document), by e-mail or received by fax (a copy) provided that the applicant is clearly identified.

The Technical Department will then review the **"*Certification Request Form*"** sent by the customer, and once this document is checked, a file will be opened in the SIG, assigning a code automatically. The file code assigned is made up of the acronym "IFS", the code of the customer, the digits of the year in which the certification is made and a correlative number to identify the works undertaken in that site.

E.g. IFS.00085-10/003

Then, a folder is opened for each certification applicant, identified with the appropriate code, so that the hard copies are adequately filed and maintained. The electronic records will be also filed in the appropriate computer folder.

The customer will inform in the ***"Certification Request form"*** the chosen audit option:

- **IFS Food "Announced" Audit:** The audit date will be notified to the company in advance to the audit.
- **IFS Food "Unannounced" Audit:** The audit date will not be notified to the company in advance of the audit.

The "Unannounced" audit option may apply to companies already IFS Food certified (renewal audit) or companies without IFS Food certificate (initial audit).

To get registered for an unannounced audit, the customer shall notify ACERTA sending the ***"Certification request form"*** complete or by written notice always 16 weeks before of the audit due date.

Also, in case of unannounced audit, the customer will inform in the section of the "Certification request form" of:

- **Blackout period**: Maximum 10 operational days, plus not operating periods, when the site is not available for the audit (reason must be provided). The company may only split the 10 operational days into a máximum of 3 periods (e.g. planned customer visit, holidays of Quality manager, etc…)

- **Name of the person to be contacted on-site** to facilitate the auditor entry when entering the site the day of the unannounced audit.

The Manager of the Technical Department (or the Technical Assistant Manager in his absence) will then draw up a plan for the audit work by using the SIG from the review of the ***"Certification Request Form"***. He will assign the auditor or audit team based on the following conditions:

- The auditor or audit team is approved by IFS for the product scopes and technology scopes required by the audit.
- No site can be audited more than 3 consecutive times by the same auditor.
- Language from the production site where performing the audit.

The working days needed for the audit will be also determined, defining the specific time period established for the audit and detailing the auditor or audit team assigned from the use of the ***Work Order***.

The audits against the IFS standard may be conducted by ACERTA own staff or by external auditors with exclusivity with ACERTA or subcontracted external auditors provided that they are previously approved by IFS and ACERTA for the certification of the standard and communicated to IFS according to the Management of the IFS Auditors Outsourcings Procedure of ACERTA.

Then, each auditor is responsible for arranging the specific previous / certification audit date, by following the instructions detailed in the ***Work Order***.

1.2. REGISTRATION ON THE IFS AUDIT PORTAL

Once the Technical Department and ACERTA have reviewed the Certification Request Form, the company is registered on the on-line database of IFS. IFS database assigns an identification specific code for the company (COID) that will be included in the documents generated from certification process.

In case of customer chooses the option **"Unannounced Audit"**, ACERTA must register it on IFS Portal ticking the box <Unannounced Audit>- (From 1st of October 2016). If the customer does not inform ACERTA before of the 16 weeks, the **"Unannounced" option could not be chosen**, being announced audit the only choice.

When the new customer signs the contract with ACERTA, shall agree a hypothetical audit date that will be considered the initial audit due date. This is the basis to start the unannounced time window [– 16 weeks; + 2 weeks]. When scheduling a complete new initial unannounced audit, the tick box for seasonal production **has to be marked at the time of the registration** (even if this is not a seasonal production site!). The audit can only **be uploaded as 'unannounced' if this tick box is marked** otherwise it is automatically uploaded as "announced".

If an already certified company wants to change the audit due date, a complete new initial audit (announced or unannounced) has to be scheduled. In this case, the **tick box for seasonal production** has to be marked at the time of

the registration (even if this is not a seasonal production site!). The audit can only be uploaded as **'unannounced' if this tick box is marked** otherwise it is automatically uploaded as 'announced'.

1.3. INITIAL AUDIT (CERTIFICATION AUDIT)

All first audits conducted in accordance with the issue 6 of the IFS standard will be considered as "initial audits".

Once all relevant aspects of the audit scope have been determined, the auditor will draw up the "***Audit Plan"*** to be sent both to the applicant and to ACERTA Technical Department. If the audit is going to be undertaken by an audit team, the Audit Plan will detail the specific auditor and specific product scope(s) and technology(ies) assigned for that auditor, as well as the chapters to be audited by each auditor.

In the event that the applicant does not agree with any aspect detailed in the "***Audit Plan"***, he/she shall communicate it within 3 days from the reception of the document, and a new "***Audit Plan"*** will be issued.

The audit date will be registered by ACERTA in the **<diary>** function of the IFS audit portal 14 days before perform it (minimum). In case of unannounced audit, ACERTA will register in the **<diary>** function of the IFS audit portal the dates when the audit has been performed, **at latest 2 working days after the first audit day**.

Then, the auditor will conduct the audit by using the document: "***Checklist"*** in accordance with the *INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARD*.

The on-site audit is made up of 5 parts:

1. Opening meeting.
2. Assessment of the quality and food safety systems through the control of the appropriate documents (HACCP, Quality Manual).
3. On-site facility inspection with interviews to the appropriate staff.
4. Final review of findings by the auditor and preparation for the closing meeting.
5. Closing meeting.

1.4. PRELIMINARY AUDIT REPORT AND CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

Once the audit is finished, the auditor will draw up the ***"Preliminary Audit Report"***, by using the audit **"*Checklist"***. This report will be made in computer format and sent (PDF format) to the customer together with the document "***Corrective Action Plan"***, within 2 weeks after the audit.

The auditor shall include all deviations/non-conformities arisen during the audit in the "***Corrective Action Plan"***, and the deadlines for submission of corrective actions by the auditee.

The auditee shall then draw up and submit the "***Corrective Action Plan"*** within two weeks from the reception of the ***"Preliminary Audit Report"*** and "***Corrective Action Plan"*** sent by ACERTA for completion (within **28 calendar days** from the day of the audit).

If the "***Corrective Action Plan"*** is submitted **after 6 weeks from the day of the audit**, a complete new audit shall be undertaken. That is, **6 weeks** from the day of the audit and the uploading of the audit report in the IFS Portal and issue of the certificate (8 weeks at the latest).

1.5. AUDIT REPORT

Once the "***Corrective Action Plan"*** has been assessed by the auditor, an "***Audit Report"*** will be issued (including a positive or negative recommendation by the auditor) and this report will be sent to the person(s) responsible for the certification decision.

For every audit undertaken, the appropriate audit report will be issued, complying with the format defined by the IFS organization. The report will be issued in Spanish and English language and/or, when appropriate, only in English, depending on the needs of the audited company. The option "Unannounced" will be clearly stated in the audit report.

The report includes the following sections:

- ✓ Company profile, with general information of the company.
- ✓ Final result of the Audit, with an accurate description of the audit scope; if under exceptional circumstances the company decides and is able to exclude some specific products (lines of products) from the audit scope, these shall be detailed in the **audit scope (see IFS guidelines for exclusions)**. If outsourced processes and/or products exist, the following sentence must be added in the scope: *"Beside own production, company has outsourced processes and/or products".* The audit scope must be always translated to English.
- ✓ General summary table for all the chapters. The result of the audit will detail the level and percentage score obtained.
- ✓ Time scales for re-audit due dates **(at earliest 8 weeks before and at latest 2 weeks after the audit due date)**, or **"Unannounced"**.
- ✓ Overall summary for all the chapters and comments about the monitoring of the corrective actions implemented from the previous audit.
- ✓ Observations regarding KO's and Majors.
- ✓ Summary of all the deviations and non-conformities found in every chapter (1 to 6).
- ✓ A separate list of all the requirements scored with N/A (not applicable), with appropriate explanations.
- ✓ Detailed audit report with compulsory explanations for some IFS Food requirements, to be filled in by the auditor(s).

The report shall accurately detail the findings obtained by the auditor at the time of the audit.

The final reports (including the corrective actions submitted by the auditee) shall be issued and sent to the customer within 42 calendar days from the day of the audit, unless special circumstances occur. **In total, 6 weeks** from the audit date and the uploading of the audit report in the Portal and the awarding of the certificate (8 weeks at the latest).

ACERTA shall send the customer the "***Audit Report"*** after the certification decision, and a copy of this report will be kept in a safe place for 5 years together with any other document related.

In relation to the translation of the non-conformities and deviations C, D and KO requirements scored with B or D, this translation shall be always detailed below every appropriate clause of the original version, and shall be always included in the appropriate section of the "***Audit Report"*** and "***Corrective Action Plan"***.

ACERTA will upload the audit data in the IFS Portal together with the "***Audit Report"***, "***Corrective Action Plan"*** and "***Certificate of Conformity"***.

The "***Audit Report"*** shall not be reproduced fully or in part by ACERTA without the written permission of the holder (unless the law so requires); express consent may be given as a part of the contract between the company and the user, or between the company and ACERTA.

1.6. CERTIFICATION DECISION

In order to make the certification decision, the appropriate responsible person, according to the structure detailed in the quality procedure PC-03 "Assessment of results, certificate awarding", shall take into account what is described in the chapter 3 of this document.

To begin the certification decision process, the Technical Department is in charge of collecting all documents to be assessed, which shall include, at least, ***"Certification Request Form"***, "***Audit Report"***, "***Corrective Action Plan"*** and objective evidence.

The Technical Department shall be responsible for the file and for the process to be completed, providing the person responsible for the ***"Technical Review and Certification Decision Report"*** with all the documents needed.

1.7. NOTIFICATION OF CERTIFICATION DECISION AND CERTIFICATE OF CONFORMITY

ACERTA shall assess all information included in the file of the applicant, and shall issue the certification decision through the ***"Technical Review and Certification Decision Report"***. Once the "Technical Review and Certification Decision Report" has been issued, the Technical Department shall inform the applicant, within 42 calendar days after the audit, of the certification/no-certification decision. In the case of a justified delay, the awarding of the certificate could be made within the 8th week at the latest (56 calendar days) from the audit date.

The time scales between the audit date and the certificate awarding would be as follows:

- ✓ 2 weeks to draw up the Preliminary Audit Report.
- ✓ 2 weeks to submit the Corrective Action Plan by the audited company.
- ✓ 2 weeks for the verification of the Corrective Action Plan by the auditor, certificate awarding and uploading of the appropriate documents in the IFS Portal.

In total, 6 weeks from the day of the audit and the uploading of the audit report and certificate in the IFS Portal (8 weeks at the latest).

When the certification decision is positive, the "***Certificate of Conformity"***, duly signed by ACERTA representative, will be sent to the holder together with the "***Audit Report"***, once the payment has been confirmed. ACERTA will then upload the appropriate audit data in the IFS Portal (audit details, audit report, corrective action plan and certificate of conformity).

Certificate validity:

- ✓ The validity of the certificate will be determined from the last day of the audit + 8 weeks. The certificate validity date shall remain the same each year.
- ✓ The certificate will be valid from the issue date to: second day of the initial audit + 8 weeks – 1 day + 1 year.
- ✓ For subsequent years, the certificate expiry date and the re-audit due date shall remain the same (+ 12 months).

Minimum requirements for IFS certificate:

- ✓ The name and address of the **certification body**, including its logo.
- ✓ The logo of the **accreditation body** or its name and registration number (requirement mentioned in the ISO/IEC 17065:2012). The logo of accreditation body shall be used in conformity with the accreditation body's rules.
- ✓ The name and address of the **audited company**.
- ✓ The **COID**, as defined in the IFS portal.
- ✓ If the company is a subsidiary, the name of the **company's headquarters**.

- ✓ Where applicable, the **packing code** and the **veterinary agreement number/sanitary registration number**.
- ✓ **Audit scope** (with mandatory detailed description of processes/products). If under exceptional circumstances the company decides (and is allowed) to exclude specific product ranges (product lines) from the scope of the audit, this exclusion shall be noted and included in the **audit scope**. If outsourced processes and/or products exist, the following sentence must be added in the scope: "Beside own production, company has outsourced processes and/or products". The audit scope shall always be translated into English language.
- ✓ Name and number of **product scope(s)**.
- ✓ Code/number of **technology scopes**.
- ✓ **Level achieved.**
- ✓ **Audit score in percentage**, if required by the customer or by the audited company.
- ✓ **Date of audit** (last day of audit).
- ✓ **Date of follow up audit**, if appropriate.
- ✓ **Time scales for re-audit** (last day of the initial audit – 8 weeks/+2 weeks) or "Unannounced".
- ✓ **Certificate issue date** (audit date + 8 weeks at the latest).
- ✓ **Certificate expiry date** (audit due date + 8 weeks – 1 day + 1/2/3 year/s).
- ✓ **Place and date of signature.**
- ✓ Name and signature of the **certification body's person(s)** responsible for certification decision.
- ✓ **IFS Food logo.**
- ✓ **Certificate number.**
- ✓ **Audit program: "Announced" or "Unannounced"**

The audit, the "***Audit Report"*** and the "***Certificate of Conformity"*** will be specific for the "manufacturing site" and its products. In the event that the production process detailed in the certification scope includes more than one manufacturing site, one audit per site will be undertaken, and one certificate per site will be issued accordingly.

ACERTA will advise the holders of the appropriate ***certificates*** to verify the scope detailed in the certificate, so that the information shown meets the company's own requirements. Although the certificate is granted to the company, it will remain property of ACERTA, the one to control its use, ownership and display.

During the validity of the certificate granted, the company shall inform ACERTA of any change or relevant information involving that the products included in the certificate may not comply with the certification requirements (product recalls, alerts, etc.). This information shall be provided within 2 working days at the latest.

The company has the right to appeal the certification decision made by ACERTA, and any appeal should be made, in writing, and sent within 7 calendar days from the reception of the certification decision.

In the event that the interested party does not agree with the decision, ACERTA Technical Department will give him/her the appropriate format established for appeals. The appeals will finish within 20 calendar days after its reception. The appeal procedure as described within ACERTA internal quality procedure: PC-05 "Appeals, complaints and lawsuits" will begin once the appeal record, adequately completed, is received. Once a thorough and exhaustive investigation process on the subject is finished, the definitive answer will be communicated in writing to the company.

In the event of an unsuccessful appeal, ACERTA has the right to charge costs for conducting the appeal.

1.8. MAINTENANCE OF THE CERTIFICATION: RENEWAL

Once the validity of the certificate is over, the certification maintenance process will begin.

For this purpose, about 4 months before the expiry date, ACERTA Technical Department will inform the certificate holder of the new activities to be carried out to maintain the certification. A new ***"Certification Request Form"*** will be sent to identify the current certification scope. The Technical Department will contact the certificate holder to agree the re-audit date.

The renewal audit shall be scheduled from the date of the initial audit (from the last day of the audit). The audit shall be scheduled at earliest within 8 weeks before and at latest 2 weeks after the audit due date. Once the audit date is agreed, the Technical Department will upload the appropriate audit date in the "Agenda" of the IFS Portal, at least 14 calendar days before the audit. If the re-audit date is not undertaken within appropriate time interval, the audit will be considered as a first audit and the certification cycle would begin accordingly.

1.9. CANCELLATION OF THE CERTIFICATION

ACERTA will be able to cancel the certification for justified reasons.

In the event that certification is cancelled by ACERTA, the company shall immediately inform the customers and make them fully aware of the circumstances relating to the cancellation. Likewise, appropriate information about the corrective actions to be taken in order to reinstate certification status will be also provided to customers.

I. Definitions:

CANCELLATION OF THE CERTIFICATION**:** It is the complete cancellation or invalidation of a certificate granted to a company, due to different causes. ACERTA will cancel the certification in the following cases:

Causes of cancellation
C1. In the event that during the renewal audit one or more KO requirements are scored with D, ACERTA shall immediately cancel the certificate in the IFS Portal within 2 working days at the latest from the date of the audit.
C2. In the event that during the renewal audit one or more Major non-conformities are detected, ACERTA shall immediately cancel the certificate in the IFS Portal within 2 working days at the latest from the date of the audit.
C3. The certificate holder does not meet the appropriate economic agreements with ACERTA.

(*) ACERTA reserves the right to establish shorter periods of time for solving the causes of suspension.

1.10. COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND LAWSUITS

For the purposes of this document, the following definitions are established:

COMPLAINT: Act by which a natural or legal person states his/her disagreement with ACERTA's procedures in any issue related to its activity (administrative, economic, technical, etc).

APPEAL: Act by which a natural or legal person states his/her disagreement with a decision made by ACERTA.

LAWSUIT: Act by which a natural or legal person, or even ACERTA, decides to settle the resolution of any discrepancy to the arbitration of a third party.

Complaints: Any natural or legal person will be the right to issue a complaint against ACERTA. The complaints may be communicated oral or in writing. In both cases, ACERTA shall record it in the corresponding Complaint Form. The complaint will be internally assessed by ACERTA.

An initial response will be given within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. A letter confirming receipt of the complaint will be issued within a maximum of 5 working days. A full written response will be given after the completion of a full and thorough investigation into the complaint.

Appeals: Any customer or applicant for certification has the right to give notice of appeal against the decisions adopted by ACERTA. All appeals shall have to be communicated in writing (fax or letter) addressed to ACERTA by using the Appeal Form to detail the reasons why the decisions made by ACERTA are not agreed. ACERTA Senior Management will consider the issue and will inform the applicant in writing of the decisions made within a maximum of 10 working days. Appeals will be finalised within 20 working days of receiving information from the auditee.

The decisions about appeals shall not be re-appealed.

Lawsuits: In order to solve the lawsuits arisen in connection with the certification or any other activity between ACERTA and other party, these will be ruled by arbitration of the Madrid Chamber of Commerce and Industry, by one or more arbitrators to be appointed in accordance with those rules.

Note: the notification of changes of certification requirements is made through ACERTA website: www.acerta-cert.com.