



GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR THE CERTIFICATION SCHEME “IFS – INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARD”

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Reviewed by:

Stefano Crea

Approved by:

Patrick Adamcik

Valid for:

All in DNV

Author:

S.Cardinali

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1 SCOPE

This document constitutes the "general regulations" that set out the procedures that DNV applies in order to issue, maintain, and withdraw the certificate of conformity against the "IFS – International Food Standard" scheme for companies in the food industry sector. Furthermore, the modality for the integrated IFS/BRC food certification is also specified

1.1 Authorization to perform IFS audits

The IFS standard is the property of BDH (Bundesvereinigung Deutscher Handelsverbände), which appointed HTS (HDE Trade Services GmbH) to manage it.

The certification according to IFS standards is only permitted after approval of the certification organisation by HTS and the appropriate contract with the same.

1.2 Application field

The IFS only concerns food processing or packaging companies. The IFS Standard can only be used when there is hazard of product contamination

It is NOT possible to certify isolated production steps or departments within a company. A certification can only be granted for the entire process (e.g. if there are production steps at this site it is not possible to certify only the packaging area of the site)

The audit scope shall involve the complete activity (= same kind of production on several lines for products under supplier brands and retailer/wholesaler brands) and not only the production line for retailer/wholesaler branded products.

The scope shall be validated at the beginning of the audit after a first risk analysis. Furthermore, the scope can be modified among the risk analysis (for instance if a further activity interferes with the one concerned by the audit scope)

2 POLICY

DNV provides the service of product certification according to the requirements of EN 45011 (ISO Guide 65), adopting non-discriminatory procedures, that is:

- ❖ All the organisations whose activities fall within the standard's field of application can access the certification service provided their commitment to abide by general regulation and the standard itself
- ❖ Undue financial and/or other conditions are not applied
- ❖ Access will not be conditional upon the size of the organisation or membership of any association or group
- ❖ Access will not be conditional upon the number of certificates already issued

The correct application of conditions and procedures is verified by the Certification Committee which includes all the parts interested to the certification activities without any predominance of single interest.

DNV policies, organisation and procedures distinguish between product certification and any other activities in which DNV is engaged. Specifically, DNV does not provide consultancy services for the implementation of food safety systems.

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2.1 General Conditions

To get and maintain the certification, the organization shall:

- a – abide by the local general legislation concerning food safety
- b - abide by requirement of this general regulation
- c – abide by requirement to use certificate and certification mark
- d – regularly pay off the invoices issued according the signed contract

3 DOCUMENTS OF REFERENCE

3.1 IFS Requirements

The requirements necessary to obtain the Certification of Conformity to IFS technical standards are specified in the IFS “International Food Standard” protocol (current version at the time of application for certification). At the date of issue of these regulations revision 4 of January 2004 is in force.

3.2 References to the certification scheme

The following documents have been taken into consideration by DNV regarding the application of the present scheme:

- IFS International Food Standard - Rev. 4 of January 2004
- [IFS Compendium of Doctrine, Version, 2 April 2006](#)

4 GENERAL REGULATIONS

4.1 Prices

DNV will make a specific offer and send it to each company that requests an estimate. This offer will include all the information relative to the technical and economical aspects and will be based on the following points : the number of products that will be involved in the certification, the size of the production units, number and geographical position of the production unit/s.

The documents in the contract will specify the total time dedicated to the audit.

4.2 Conditions for IFS Conformity

The company requiring certification will sign an undertaking to respect the IFS regulations and to satisfy the necessary requirements.

The standard requires :

- Adoption and realization of a HACCP – Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point system;
- A documented and effective Quality Management System
- The control of the standards of the company environment, product, process and personnel.

This scheme provides for two levels of certification (foundation / higher): the assessment of the level of certification will be established by verifying all the requirements and by assigning the following points:

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Result	Assessment	Foundation	Higher	Racc.
A	Total conformity with the requirements	20	10	5
B	Small deviation from the requirements	15	7	0
C	Only a small part of the requirements satisfied	5	3	0
D	Criteria NOT satisfied	0	0	0

Furthermore:

- **4 KO requirements** have been established. This involves the subtraction of points from the total achieved (NB. For the KO requirements, only the points from A,B,D can be used. Points from "C" CANNOT be utilised.) When a KO requirement has a D classification, 50% of the points that are theoretically achievable, are subtracted.
- **Major Non Conformity:** This is only applied at the "foundation level" when there is a substantial failure to meet requirements and when the Non Conformity could lead to serious health hazard or affect product legality or impair the quality management system (for each major non conformity, 15% of the points theoretically achievable are subtracted.)

The final results are established in terms of the minimum percentage achieved compared to the total possible score, which, in turn, depends on the number of requirements that are declared NON APPLICABLE by the auditor (each exclusion must be justified).

4.3 Audit results

The final results of the audit are calculated according to the following chart;

% Score	Result	Successive Action	Issue of Certificate
KO present	NOT Approved	Follow up actions and closing audit NC to be agreed with DNV	NO
> 1 Major NC present or < 75 % foundation	NOT Approved	Follow up action and closing audit to be agreed with DNV	NO
Max 1 Major NC and > 75% foundation	Preliminary approval	Within two weeks the company must present an improvement plan. Within 6 months DNV will carry out a follow up audit.	NO
>75% Foundation	APPROVED foundation level after approval of the improvement plan.	Within 2 weeks the company must present an improvement plan which will be assessed and approved by DNV	Yes Foundation level

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<p>>90% foundation and >70% Higher level + Racc</p>	<p>APPROVED Higher Level after approval of the improvement plan.</p>	<p>Within two weeks the company must present an improvement plan which will be assessed and approved by DNV</p>	<p>YES Higher Level</p>
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ATTENTION: The improvement plan must be sent to DNV within two weeks of the inspection. If it is not sent within six weeks, the whole audit must be repeated (Regulation IFS Part 1 paragraph 10)

4.4 Information regarding the audit.

DNV must transmit all the results of the audit to HTS (HDE Trade Services GmbH) and must record them on an on-line data base.

The certified company may decide whether they wish to make this information available on-line to the retailer concerned. In any case the company must send DNV the special, signed authorisation (included in the contract documents) to disclose the audit information to HTS.

4.5 Certification procedure

On accepting DNV's offer, the company will send a formal request for certification and will establish the date with DNV on which the certification will be performed including the phases described as follows.

4.5.1 Documents review (DR)

This is carried out at the company site and, normally, on the same days as the subsequent applicative audit.

The documents regarding the Quality management System and the HACCP System are examined in order to verify the conformity to the standards required.

4.5.2 Initial Certification Audit (IA)

After the DR, an onsite evaluation is carried out, through inspection of the site, observation of activities, informal interviews with personnel and the study of records that support conformity of the system.

The latter must allow an evaluation of the systematic application of the normative regulations. The requirement is considered satisfied if records include at least the 3 months before the audit; otherwise, the audit team shall ascertain the presence of frequent and effective monitoring activities (e.g. targeted internal audits) that can guarantee correct execution of the activities still in start-up phase, it being understood that every activity provided for (e.g. management review, internal audits, etc...) is carried out correctly at least once.

All the audits, (both initial and periodic) must be carried out during the production period.

4.6 Assessment report

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When the IA is completed, a Preliminary Audit Report is issued to the company. This report must include the global result of the audit, a list of the non-compliances and the details of any eventual KO or major non conformities.

After the approval of the improvement plan presented by the company (within 2 weeks but within no more than 6 weeks), a Final Audit Report will be issued within one month which will include the improvement plan. The proposed CA, for the “foundation level” requirements classified C-D, must be implemented within the time established for the following periodical audit.

The Final report must contain concise but complete information concerning the performance of the organisation regarding the areas covered by the IFS standard, emphasising the strong and weak points in the system and supplying the elements necessary for assessing improvements in the future (by means of the successive reports regarding maintenance).

4.7 Issue of Certificate of Conformity

After having successfully passed the initial audit and the technical review of the audit documents performed by DNV (including the improvement plan), the certified company will be issued with an univocal and permanent registration number and they will receive the Certificate of Conformity.

The IFS logo is a registered trademark; it can be downloaded from the IFS website (after company registration) and the use by the certified companies is allowed according to the IFS regulation: it can never be used directly on the product and/or the product packaging

The Organisation can communicate to the public the obtained certification, but it must take all the precautions needed to avoid any confusion between certified and non certified products

4.8 Certification Renewal PA)

Renewal audits (PA) are carried out at periods established by the level of certification according to the following table:

Level of certificate	All the products	Seasonal products
Basic IFS level	12 months	12 months
Higher IFS level (first)	12 months	12 months
Higher IFS level (confirmed twice)*	18 months	12 months

*the loss of the Higher Level Certificate causes a return to the initial frequency; if a Major NC is raised during a periodical audit, the next audit will be within 12 months even if the final rating (after the follow up audit) is “higher level”.

The time must be calculated starting from the date of the main audit (NOT from the date of the follow up audit, if any).

If the periodical audit is not registered on the IFS on line data base within 2 months from the “next audit due date”, the company is automatically deleted from the IFS data base. If the periodical audit is carried out after the “next audit due date”, the sequence of “higher level” is interrupted and the next audit will be performed within 12 months.

The operative procedure for the PA are the same as those described for the IA, as is the relative audit report.

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4.9 Combined audits ISO 9001:2000

Combined audits are not admitted with standards included in accreditation different from EN 45011 / ISO GUIDE 65. Therefore ISO 9001:2000 and IFS audits can be consecutive, but not together.

4.10 Combined audits BRC food

It is possible to carry out combined audit (IA/IA, PA/IA, PA/PA) for the BRC Food and IFS Certification. The standards can be easily integrated and are naturally complementary even though a separate report is necessary.

5 CHANGES IN PRODUCT AND/OR PROCESSES CHARACTERISTICS

The issued certification is valid only for the products and processes which were evaluated in conformity with the organisation's relevant technical documents.

The organisation shall timely and in writing inform DNV of any change to products and/or processes able to influence the product conformity. DNV will decide if:

- a – the changes implemented do not influence substantially the conditions for certification, and they will be verified at the next periodical audit
- b – the changes implemented affect the conditions for certification, and further evaluation is needed. In this case a specific quotation will be issued by DNV to the company.
- c – the changes implemented need a new certification

6 CHANGES IN THE CERTIFICATION SCHEME

In the case of substantial changes in the regulation and/or in the relevant standard, DNV will:

- ❖ Inform the concerned companies
- ❖ Specify the actual enforcement date for the new rules.

The company can renounce to the certification if it deems to not implement the needed changes. Written communication shall be sent to DNV at least 3 months in advance to any scheduled activity.

7 CUSTOMERS AND CONSUMERS COMPLAINTS

The organisation shall:

- ❖ record all the customers and consumers complaints connected to the certified products, and make them available to DNV when requested
- ❖ take and document appropriate actions with respect such complaints.

8 CONFIDENTIALITY

DNV guarantees full confidentiality about all the information gained during certification activities, with the exception of possible different legal requirements and the clause established at § 4.4. DNV employee and subcontractors undersign and shall commit themselves to not disclose to third parties any information collected during auditing activities, unless authorised in writing by the company itself.

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9 RENUNCIATION, SUSPENSION OR WITHDRAWAL OF THE CERTIFICATION

The certified company can renounce to the certification at any time, informing DNV by means of registered letter at least 30 days in advance. DNV is authorised to invoice all the activities carried out before the renunciation.

DNV can suspend the certificate validity (or withdraw it) according to the IFS rules (see § 4.3) and the following

- ❖ Improper use of the certificate (e.g. equivocal communication to the public)
- ❖ Invoice outstanding
- ❖ Lack of information to DNV concerning substantial product and/or process changes
- ❖ According to specific agreement between DNV and the company due to any reason (e.g. production suspension)

10 MANAGEMENT OF APPEALS, COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES

The organisation can set up written claims or appeals.

The complaints are connected to the organisation's un-satisfaction with the DNV administrative or technical performances. The Appeal is the organisation refuse of acceptance of decisions taken by DNV during verification and certification activities. The disputes come from the organisations refuse of acceptance of the DNV decision taken in case of appeals.

Complaints and Appeals are managed according the procedure C5-ce-3.19. An initial response will be given within ten working days of receipt of the complaints.

Appeals will be finalised within 20 working days of receipt of information.

In the event of an unsuccessful appeal, DNV has the right to charge costs for carrying out the appeal.

In case of dispute, a decision is taken by arbitration: one independent expert is appointed by DNV, one by the organisation, and one together by DNV and the organisation. If there is no agreement, the third expert is appointed by the Court of Justice competent in the area where the involved DNV office is located.

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