PR3D: AIBI-CS Overview of the IFS Certification Scheme

Any Update to this Document is Posted on the AIB International website.

Introduction

This document provides a guide for clients about how the AIBI Certification Services, Inc. (AIBI-CS) evaluates and certifies food companies against the IFS Food, Logistics and PACsecure Standards. It is important that the client has a copy of the most current version of the applicable IFS Standard and Doctrine as these constitute the protocol and requirements upon which the AIBI-CS Certification process is based.

IFS Food Version 7 effective 1st July 2021.
IFS Food Version 8 Effective 1st January 2024
IFS Logistics Version 2.3 effective 01st October 2021
IFS Logistics Version 3.0 effective 1 December 2024
IFS PACsecure Version 2.0 effective1 3rd May 2022
IFS PACsecure Version 3.0 effective 1 October 2024

The AIBI-CS Quality System is designed to meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065. Many of the documents that are part of this system are provided at various stages of the certification process. Accreditation to the ISO/IEC 17065:2012 norm is carried out by the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB).

When conducting an evaluation AIBI-CS may subcontract to AIB International, use independent contractors or full time AIBI-CS employees.

AIB International Certification Services, Inc.

AIB International Certification Services, Inc. (AIBI-CS), a wholly owned and legally separate subsidiary of AIB International provides certification services to organizations around the world within the food industry and associated services. The Certification Office of AIB International is located in Manhattan, Kansas. The General Manager, Certification Services provides oversight for the AIBI-CS.

AIBI-CS has an Impartiality Governing Board composed of impartial members (who do not work for AIBI-CS) who are stakeholders in the IFS Food Standard. This board meets according to the ISO/IEC 17021 and ISO/IEC 17065 requirements and overviews the whole certification scheme.

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The IFS Food, Logistics, and/or PACSecure Standard

International Featured Standards has developed these standards to provide assurance to retailers and consumers of the safety and quality of the processes and the products they purchase. The

Global Food Safety Initiative has benchmarked these standards. They are available from the IFS Website www.ifs-certification.com.

In-between Standard revisions IFS may publish a Doctrine document providing clarification on aspects of the Standard and / or Protocol. Doctrines are available for download from the IFS website and their implementation is mandatory.

The IFS also controls the usage of the IFS Logo. Certified clients wishing to use the IFS Logo can download it via the secured section of the IFS audit portal. Rules on the IFS Logo usage can be found on the website: www.ifs-certification.com. Rules can also be found in the individual Standard that corresponds to the certificate.

IFS Food v8 at Part1 section 6
IFS Logistics v2.3 at Part1 section10
IFS Logistics v3.0 at Part 1 section 6
IFS PacSecure v2 at Part1 section6
IFS PacSecure v3 at Part 1 section 6

All usage of the IFS logo has to be declared to AIBI-CS and will be verified during the IFS audit.

To progress with the certification program after the initial inquiry stage, the following stages of the certification process will be followed.

First Application Stage

AIBI-CS will forward a copy of the certification application along with other documents that will include:

An Overview of the AIBI-CS Certification Scheme (this document)
The Rules for Certification to be followed by both parties.
Additional information if required.

In order to progress further, the preliminary questionnaire should be filled out and returned to the AIBI-CS office.

AIBI-CS will forward a final application letter and other documents that are needed for contract purposes, such as the AIBI-CS Certification Agreement, to allow the evaluation and certification stages to take place. This work will only be carried out when the relevant documents have been filled out and returned as detailed in the quality system. The details provided in the application form will be used to calculate the audit duration in line with the requirements specified in the IFS audit protocol for

IFS Food v8 at Part1 section3
IFS Logistics v2.3 at Part1 section5
IFS Logistics v3 at Part1 section3
IFS PacSecure v2 at Part1 section3
IFS PacSecure v3 at Part1 section3
and by using the IFS duration calculator audit embedded in AXP Neo Software provided by IFS

It is the responsibility of the applicant site to inform AIBI-CS on any outsourced process or product and keep AIBI-CS updated on the GFSI certification status of the site carrying out the outsourcing, since there might be the case to include or exclude the outsourced processes or products as part of the scheduled IFS audit depending on whether it is partly, fully outsourced or traded products.

Exclusion of product(s) is in general not allowed, but may be accepted under the following specific conditions:
• Products are not customer branded products.
• The certification body shall fill in the questionnaire provided by IFS (see ANNEX 4) and confirm whether an exclusion is possible.

The IFS Audit shall be carried out in the working language of the production site. If there is a need for translation (for limited defined situations), the certification body shall provide an interpreter with technical background (or an approved auditor for another quality or food safety scheme) not affiliated with the company as explained in the IFS Doctrines and duration increase of 20% will be implemented.

For IFS Food v8 audits only, the company has to have a valid GLN, if applicable, when the first audit takes place. The latest possible date to order one is the date of the audit. Otherwise, the certification body cannot issue the IFS Food v8 Certificate.

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

If defined processes are centrally organized in a company with several production sites (e.g. purchasing, personnel management, complaint management), the central managing site – headquarter – shall also be audited and relevant audited requirements outcome shall be considered in the audit reports of each production site. The audit of the managing site shall always take place before the audit of each production site to have a preliminary overview. If it is not possible to perform an audit at the managing site, then it shall be ensured that, during the audit of the production site, all necessary information from the managing site is available (e.g. a representative of the managing site should attend at the audit(s) of the production site(s)).

Every effort will be made by AIBI-CS to carry out the evaluation on the date(s) requested by the client. In the case of a re-certification audit, necessary documentation to confirm scope and duration factors will be sent to make sure that the exact scope or any other changes are known in advance.
An evaluation plan for all types of audits will be forwarded to client in advance of the agreed evaluation/audit date.

Prior to the audit, you will need a copy of the standard and the doctrine and ensure you have implemented its requirements.

Contract Aspects of the Certification Scheme

The signed documents at both the first and final stage of the application procedure form the basis of the contract. The final contract is when the pre-audit or audit dates are agreed and the audit is carried out. Terms and conditions regarding payment are detailed later in this document.

The term “client” is used for both the applicant (pre-audit) and the facility being certified.

Pre-audit Evaluation

An optional pre-audit evaluation can be carried out if the client is not sure about meeting all the aspects of the certification standard. This involves an audit against the agreed scope and a list detailing possible deviations/ non-conformances that are found. At this stage, the process stops, allowing the client to apply for final certification when the corrections to all non-conformances have been completed. The client must understand that a pre-audit audit will identify where the site does not meet the requirements of the standard, but advice on how to correct the issues cannot be given by the auditor. The pre-audit does not involve training or consultancy and has to be conducted by a separate auditor than the one who conducts the certification audit.

If an initial IFS Audit is failed due to a D evaluation of a KO requirement and / or more than one Major non-conformity, the IFS Audit report shall be uploaded in the IFS Database and this Audit cannot be considered as a pre-Audit.

Audit and Certification Stage

Once all the final application stage documentation (including renewal or extension) has been received by AIBI-CS, an auditor will carry out the audit in the agreed time scale and on the agreed date(s). Guidance on the time scale will be provided for each site. There are seven key aspects at this stage of the process:

- Opening meeting
- Evaluation of existing food safety and quality management system, 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 critical control points (CCPs) and control measures to be cross checked with the HACCP plan information. This part will cover 50% of the duration for Food & PacSecure and Logistics v3 audits and 30% for Logistics v2.3 audits.
- Documentation and 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.

It is important that the client understands that the auditor will present the findings at the closing meeting by discussing any deviations and non-conformities that have been found but will not comment on the likely outcome of the evaluation. The Client will be asked to agree and sign the deviations and non-conformities raised and a copy of these will be left with them. Also, the client

will be asked to countersign the IFS Preliminary Report with details on the duration of each audit day.

The audits are carried out by using the Electronic Audit File that is generated by AXP Neo™ software system or other format supplied by IFS.

During the Audit, all IFS Food requirements shall be assessed by the auditor. Particular attention shall be paid to the deviations and non-conformities identified during the previous Audit, as well as to the effectiveness and implementation of corrections and corrective actions laid out in the company's action plan.

Assessed companies shall always inform AIBI-CS if they have already been IFS certified in the past. The auditor shall read the Audit report and verify the action plan of the previous Audit, even if another certification body issued the report or if the previous Audit took place more than one year ago.

If B, C, and / or D scorings of requirement(s) are still present from one Audit to the next, or if the scorings deteriorate, the auditor shall assess the situation in accordance with the requirements of the chapter related to "Corrective Actions". The link between two (2) consecutive Audits ensures a continuous improvement process.

On receipt of the preliminary audit report from the auditor, a Technical Review of the documents will be carried out by an approved Technical Reviewer. This reviewed preliminary report will be provided back to the client within 2 weeks of the last day of the audit.

The client shall send in evidence of all the corrections with evidence, corrective actions/corrective action plans to the AIBI-CS Office within maximum (4) weeks of receiving the audit final Action Plan.. It should be noted that adequate time for the auditor to assess the evidence of corrections and corrective action plans and request clarification is included within the four (4) week deadline.

The evidence of completion received at the AIBI-CS office will be sent to the auditor who will verify that they are satisfactory. If the auditor requires further evidence, he/she will contact the client. If the correction evidence and the corrective action plans are assessed as inadequate or if proper evidence is not presented at the time of the 4 weeks deadline, no certificate will be issued and a full re-audit will be necessary. For this reason, it is recommended that corrective action plans are submitted as early as possible to accommodate any request for further information. Typically, initial submission of CA plan should be within the first two weeks after the receiving the preliminary audit report and outline action plan.

A reminder will be sent to the client before the due date if no evidence of corrective action plans to the deviations and non-conformities raised has been received.

The client shall provide the following in the action plan:

- proposed corrections and corrective actions for all deviations (B, C, D), KO requirements scored with a 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.

The auditor or a representative of AIBI-CS shall validate the relevance of the corrections, the corrective actions and their dates of implementation in the allocated column of the action plan,

before preparing the final Audit report. If the objective evidences of the corrections and / or corrective actions are not valid or inadequate, and / or if the dates of implementation are not relevant, the auditor / AIBI-CS shall return the action plan to the company for completion in due time. If the action plan is not released in due time, certification may not be issued. A maximum of four (4) weeks shall be allocated for the company to provide evidence that corrections have been implemented and respond to the deviations and non-conformities (i.e. draw up the action plan). The objective evidences shall be stored by AIBI-CS for a period of three (3) years.

The appointed Decision Maker will make sure that the whole process and all the documents involved in the evaluation are correct before deciding if a certificate can be granted or, in the case of a recertification audit, re-issued. If after Technical Review, the outcome of the audit score is ≥75% with no Major NC and a corrective plan/ evidences of corrections has been submitted and approved by the auditor, the audit result is deemed positive and certification will be granted within 8 weeks from the last day of the audit.

If an audit has been identified as having a maximum of one (1) major NC and greater than or equal to 75% score, certification is not granted (or is suspended for renewal audits); arrangements will be made for the auditor to perform a follow up audit and confirm that the corrective action(s) are correct and effective. During the follow up audit, the auditor focuses on the implementation of actions taken to correct the Major non-conformity determined at the previous audit. The follow up audit shall be performed within a 6 months period from the date of the previous audit. The same auditor as conducted the original audit must be used for the follow up audit. If the Major is related to production failures, the follow up auditaudit shall be performed at least 6 weeks after the previous auditaudit and no later than 6 months. Certification is granted upon the auditor's approval of the implemented corrective action.

Where a KO scored with a D, more than one major NC and/or less than 75% score, the client will not gain certification.

It is extremely important that the client reads

IFS Food v8 Part 1 Section 3.2.1 IFS Scoring System or
IFS Logistics v2.3 Part1 Section 5.5 Evaluation of requirements or IFS Logistics V3 Part 1 Section 3.2.1or
IFS PacSecure v2 or PacSecure v3 Part1 Section 3.2.1 IFS Scoring system

part of the Standard as it is this protocol that AIBI-CS will follow for all types of deviations and non-conformances, including points of attention.

In the event of a follow up audit to verify a major non-conformance, the client will be charged according to the price list at the end of this document and also for additional expenses for travel. The AIBI-CS office will clearly document this.

A certificate can only be issued after all corrective action plans have been completed and verified according to the quality system.

The AIBI-CS office will notify the client of the outcome of the decision, typically by e-mail, and will issue a copy of the final report and certificate to them as well as upload the report to the IFS Audit Portal.

Certification Status

Granting certification will be based on requirements noted in

IFS Food v7 Part 1 Section 4.2 Issuing IFS certificate
IFS Food v8 Part 1 Section 4.2 Issuing IFS certificate
IFS Logistics v2.3 Part 1 Section 5.8 Scoring and conditions for issuing audit report and certificate
IFS Logistics v3 Part 1 Section 4.2 Issuing the IFS certificate
IFS PacSecure v2 or IFS PacSecure v3 Part 1 Section 4.2 Issuing IFS certificate

An audit that required a follow up audit will be granted certification at the Foundation level if the corrective action plans were acceptable at the follow up audit. An audit with no major or KO Ds and score between 75% and less than 95% will be granted certification at the Foundation level after review of the corrective action plans/ objective evidences. An audit with no major NCs or KO Ds and a score equal to or higher than 95% will be granted certification at the "Higher" level after review of the corrective action plans/ objective evidences. The frequencies of subsequent recertification audits are 12 months, starting from the initial audit date.

IFS Unannounced audits

The option “unannounced” shall be mandatory chosen at least once every third certification audit on a mandatory basis. Based on this rule, in case the certification cycle is interrupted where an unannounced audit was due, the next certification audit (= initial audit) has to be conducted unannounced as well.

This rule applies in case the company (COID) is changing its certification body.This rule is applicable for all certification audits starting January 2021.

IFS unannounced audit (option “Unannounced”) involves a full unannounced audit against the audit checklist of the IFS requirements, which replaces the yearly scheduled audit. The audit date shall not be notified to the company in advance of the audit.

To get registered for an unannounced audit, the company shall notify AIBI-CS at latest 4 weeks before the start of audit time window ([–16 weeks; + 2 weeks] of their audit due date). The audit shall be performed during consecutive days. When the audit has been performed, AIBI-CS shall provide the audit dates in the portal, at latest 2 working days after the first audit day. This will ensure that the portal users are informed that the audit has taken place and that the certification process is on-going.

If the company does not inform AIBI-CS before the start of audit time window, the option “Unannounced” cannot be chosen. If the audit is scheduled outside the defined time window, the audit will not be a valid IFS unannounced audit and will be processed as an announced audit.
If company denies access to the auditor (apart from “force majeure”), the currently valid IFS certificate shall be withdrawn within a maximum of 2 working days after the audit date (notification will be received by customers having placed the company in their favorites’ list in the audit portal) and this information will be visible in the company history in the audit portal.
Following the unannounced audit, the site can choose to remain in the unannounced scheme or revert to announced audits.

The certificate shall also include the date of the last audit conducted unannounced (last day of the audit). If no unannounced IFS Food audit has been conducted for the respective company / COID or any other GFSI recognized Standard, yet, the certificate shall indicate the following: “Last audit conducted unannounced: n / a”. This information shall be added manually by the certification body.
The option “unannounced” shall be mandatory chosen at least once every third certification audit. Based on this rule, in the case the certification cycle is interrupted where an unannounced audit was due, the next certification audit (= initial audit) has to be conducted unannounced as well. This rule applies in the case the company (COID) is changing its certification body or in case the company was formally certified against any other GFSI recognized Standard and in the case of different IFS Standards, it counts separately.

Head Office/ Central Managing Site Audits

A company with a head office / central management and additional processing activities shall be assessed and subjected to an own IFS Certificate and Audit report.
If the head office / central management does not have processing activities but is assessed, it cannot be subjected to an own IFS Certificate and Audit report. In both cases the following rules apply:

- The Audit of the head office / central management shall always take place before the Audit of each production site.
- The centrally managed processes, as well as the outcome of the Audit from the head office / central management, shall be described in the Audit report of each production site.
- Each site shall be assessed separately, within a maximum period of twelve (12) months from the head office / central management Audit. All Audits shall be performed under the responsibility of one certification body. Each site shall get an individual certificate and report.
- All KO requirements shall be assessed at all production sites, even if some of them are (partly) managed at the head office / central management.
- In the Audit overview of the Audit report from each production site, both Audit dates of the respective production site and head office / central management shall be provided.
- All COIDs of the production sites linked to the head office / central management shall be mentioned in each Audit report
- If a non-conformity has been raised during the Audit of the head office / central management, all assessed production sites are also affected and the certificates of these production sites shall be suspended.
- After a positive follow-up Audit of the head office / central management, suspension of certificates of the production sites can be lifted. Depending on the type of non-conformity which has been issued in the head office / central management, a new Audit of the production sites may also be necessary.

If there is objective evidence that the deviation first noticed at the head office / central managing site has completely been solved, it should be possible to rate the respective requirement as an A. This can be accepted under the following conditions:

- The respective central managed process can also be checked completely at the production site and the previously rated deviation at the central managing site can be solved with objective evidence.
- The check of corrective actions which allow the deviation to be solved, shall be carried out during the Audit of all sites.

- The auditor needs time to check the implementation of corrective actions for this previously noticed deviation at the head office / central managing site. More than likely a full reduction of Audit time (0,5 days) would no longer be applicable (as would be possible in a normal situation). This decision is the responsibility of AIBI-CS.

If the head office / central management does not have processing activities and is not assessed, the company shall ensure that all necessary information and responsible personnel are available from the head office / central management (when necessary), to ensure that the auditor can assess centrally managed processes properly during the Audit of each production site (e.g. a representative from the head office / central management attends the Audit of the production sites, head office / central management documents are available on-site at production sites, etc.). This shall be defined by AIBI-CS based on information provided by the company, before the Audit takes place.

Extension audits

If new processes or products different to those included in the scope of the current IFS Audit are implemented between two (2) certification Audits, the client shall immediately inform AIBI-CS, who shall perform a risk audit to decide whether and when an extension Audit should be performed or not. The results of this risk audit, based on hygiene and safety risks, shall be documented.

In case of seasonal processes, the main Audit shall always be performed during the most hazardous processing step. It shall be guaranteed that all processes which have an impact on food safety are assessed, even if the processes are seasonal. If it is not possible for the auditor to assess the different processing steps when not operating at the same time, there are two (2) possibilities:

- No extension Audit is to be performed to assess the manufacturing steps which could not be assessed during the main Audit. The certificate shall only specify the processing step(s) which has/have been assessed.
- An extension Audit is performed to assess the steps which could not be assessed during operation in the main Audit and the certificate shall specify all the assessed steps of the process.

IFS Split Audit Procedure

IFS has introduced the Split audit protocol to support situations, where a complete regular on-site IFS Audit at the physical site is not possible to realize. The split option is a voluntary option, which needs to be agreed in advance by AIB and the company subject to an IFS Audit. The assessed company should clarify in advance with its customers whether they accept a certificate based on the split audit approach.

Use of ICT during parts of the audit process is only possible for recertification audits and can be applied for announced as well as for unannounced audits, whereas the remote part will always be announced.

Split audit can be done only where a complete regular on-site IFS Audit at the physical site is not possible and following an appropriate Risk Audit. Preferably the split audit will be conducted by the same auditor who did the last initial/renewal (recertification) audit.

The audit duration is calculated by using the calculator provided by IFS and least two (2) hours have to be added to cover the time needed for the split audit approach. The total time is normally split 50% on site and 50% remote.

The on-site part has to be performed first, either announced or unannounced. The remote part shall be performed by an IFS Auditor who has been involved in the on-site part of the audit. The auditor conducting the on-site part shall be nominated as the Lead Auditor, unless the auditor of the remote part is different to the one of the on-site part and in that exceptional case the on-site auditor shall be nominated as co-auditor.

Areas to be covered at the on-site part of the physical site audit shall be include in the Audit Plan. Following the physical site audit, a comprehensive remote part using ICT for documentation and record review, including cross-checking of related documents, will be performed within 14days. Before starting the remote part, it needs to be ensured that the ICT platform functions properly and all relevant audit participants have accessed the platform successfully. In case of connection problems, it is possible to repeat the remote part once more on a different day within the 14 day timeframe.

Only records and documents presented to the auditor during the on-site part and the remote part can be considered as audit evidence. The auditor shall delete and remove access to any documented information and records not required as objective evidence from its system after completing the audit.

In cases where the remote part cannot be finalized using ICT, the auditor has to visit the site again within the original 14 day timeframe to finalize the audit. If not, the IFS Audit is deemed as failed and a certificate cannot be granted.

The security and confidentiality of electronic or electronically transmitted information is ensured when using ICT for this check. The auditor will not use any unauthorized means, for instance screenshots or video recordings. The use of ICT shall be mutually agreed between AIB and the auditee in accordance with information security and data protection measures and (local) regulations. This shall be confirmed during the opening meeting of the remote part of the IFS Split Audit. The identification of participants by name needs to be clearly demonstrated with screenshots at the opening and closing meetings of the remote session.

Scoring of the requirements will be made in accordance with the respective IFS Standard. In case of potential non-compliance identified on-site, according to the IFS rules, the additional document evaluation shall also be carried out on-site so that the facts can be conclusively assessed. This may lead to an adjustment of the on-site duration.

In accordance with the existing procedures for suspension, the current IFS Certificate will be suspended in the IFS Database as soon as possible and within a maximum of two (2) working days after the identification of the non-conformity, even if the full audit has not been finalized yet.

The implementation of corrections and corrective actions identified during the on-site and the remote part shall follow the rules of the respective IFS Standard. Corrections and corrective actions implemented and solved during the timeframe between the two parts shall have no influence on the final audit result. Corrections or corrective actions to deviations identified during the on-site part cannot be approved during the remote part of the audit. Only after the remote part is completed, can the auditor approve the implementation of corrections and corrective actions.

In addition to the report of the respective IFS Standard/Program, the requirements partly or fully evaluated using ICT have to be marked with “ICT” in the explanation field.
As compulsory information to ensure transparency, the certificate and the company profile in the report have to be amended with the statement
“Part of the audit has been performed using ICT – Split Audit”.
When preparing the report in the IFS Audit software, the tick indicating that the audit has been performed using the IFS Split Audit Protocol needs to be chosen. The reason behind the choice for the IFS Split Audit option shall be indicated in the report.

The date for the renewal audit shall be calculated from the last day of the original initial audit (or in case of a new certification cycle from the date of completion of the IFS Audit). If the audit is not performed in due time, the business partners will be notified via the IFS Database.

IFS Food Check

The purpose of the unannounced IFS Food Safety Check is to review whether a company complies with the IFS requirements regarding HACCP, hygiene and pest control in daily operations and thus continuously guarantees food safety and quality as well as product safety and quality. The IFS Food Safety Check program is voluntary.

The prerequisite for performing an IFS Food Safety Check is that the company has a valid IFS certificate. The earliest possible time for the registration is given as soon as the documents of the last IFS certification audit have been uploaded into the IFS database. To guarantee the unannounced character of the IFS Food Safety Checks, the IFS certificate of the company must have a validity of at least 6 months. For this reason, interested companies should register for the IFS Food Safety Check as soon as possible after issuing the IFS certificate by their certification body. From 1 March 2019 interested companies can register for an IFS Food Safety Check via their login area on the IFS website.

The IFS Food Safety Check is planned, carried out and evaluated by IFS Management GmbH. It is carried out independently of the certification body responsible for the IFS certification audit. Auditors who carry out the unannounced IFS Food Safety Checks are commissioned directly by IFS Management GmbH and are not used by certification bodies. The IFS Food Safety Check can be passed or not passed. A successfully completed IFS Food Safety Check enables companies to demonstrate continuous compliance with the IFS standard requirements in their daily production routine.

In the case of a failed IFS Food Safety Check please read the procedure located on the IFS website entitled “Fact sheet about failing an IFS Food safety Check”
Failing an IFS Food Safety Check is not automatically leading to the suspension of the current certificate, this decision is under the responsibility of the respective certification body.

IFS Integrity Program

The IFS Integrity Program has been put in place to assure the quality of the IFS certification scheme, with a focus on the review of audit conducted by the IFS certification bodies and their auditors. These reviews are conducted on an ongoing basis for random selected audit and as a result of complaints. Most reviews are conducted at the Certification Body’s office; however IFS reserves the right to conduct follow up audits or witness audits with IFS employed auditors at the client’s certified site without any prior notification or in some cases with a 48 hour notification.

Details of this program are documented in the relevant Standards as detailed below and participation is mandatory for all certified facilities.

IFS Food v8 Part 1, Section 5
IFS Logistics v2.3 Part 1, Section 12 or IFS Logistics v3, Part 1 Section 5
IFS PacSecure v2 and IFS PacSecure v3 Part1, Section 5

AIB International and IFS certified facilities are expected to cooperate with the IFS Quality Assurance Management team in order to resolve any complaints raised by third parties within specified timeframes.

IFS Integrity team can also perform on-site checks to IFS certified facilities with IFS Integrity Auditors, these are typically unannounced and depending on the results, AIB International might need to suspend the site IFS certificate within 3 working days from the end of the Integrity audit and receipt of the results thereof. A special audit to investigate the results of Integrity on-site check and decide on whether the IFS certificate can be restored or not will be required. Evidences of corrections / corrective actions will be required to be submitted to the IFS Integrity team for the resolution of any Non Conformities identified at the on-site checks and IFS reserves the right to finally decide on the acceptability of the submitted proofs.

Suspension and Withdrawal of Certification

If a Knock Out clause is scored with a D, one or more major NCs are found or your score is less than 75% at your re-certification audit, your certification shall be withdrawn and the IFS Audit portal database shall be updated as a maximum of 2 working days to indicate this along with the audit report. We shall inform you of the withdrawal, the date of effect and the reasons for it.

In the case of the Knock Out clause scored as a D, more than one major NC or the score is less than 75%; a complete new audit is required. Re-instatement and re-certification would then be based on the new audit when it is completed.

In the case of suspension based upon a single major NC and score at or above 75%, a follow-up audit will be scheduled between six (6) weeks and six (6) months of the re-certification audit. Upon successful completion of the follow up audit, the certificate will be re-instated and the IFS Audit Portal shall be updated.

Your certification can be suspended or withdrawn for any of the following reasons:
- Information indicating that the product(s) may no longer comply with the requirements of the certification system (ISO/IEC 17065).
- Non-payment of the current audit by the certified company.

We shall inform you when your certification has been suspended/ withdrawn and the reasons for such action and the date of effect. We shall ask you to return your certificate and discontinue use of any materials that have the IFS Logo.

Documentation and Supplementary Action

The evaluation report and associated documents shall be stored safely and securely for a period of five years by the client and AIBI-CS.

Extraordinary information that may impact the site's certification, including recalls (quality or food safety), any product recall and /or withdrawal by official order for food safety and /or food fraud reasons and any visit from health authorities which results in notifications and /or penalties issued by authorities, shall be provided to AIBI-CS within 3 working days. Recall notification must be sent to **certification@aibinternational.com**. Formal written confirmation shall be kept at affected sites.

After receiving the extraordinary information from the sites, AIB will fill out in English the relevant form provided in the IFS Database giving a brief description of the identified cause and the related actions taken, the decision on further actions and submit this information with the form as soon as possible.

Significant changes (not limited to but including changes to the site's ownership, structure, audit scope, product lines, or management personnel) shall be reported to AIBI-CS in a timely manner. This information will be forwarded to the IFS-CM and will be evaluated to determine if an Extension or Follow-Up audit is warranted.

IFS Audit Portal

The IFS maintains a database that is accessible on varying levels to the certification bodies, sites certified to the IFS standards (Food, Logistics, PacSecure) and retailers/other users. This can be accessed by logging into the IFS website www.ifs-certification.com . Retailers can search for certified companies, assign favourite status to certified companies and can get updates on suspensions of the favourite companies.

The report will be uploaded to a secure section of the IFS portal available only to you and those to whom you grant access.

COID (IFS Identification Code Number) Management

The client needs to inform AIBI-CS for the following cases where the COID number is affected:

- If a company has a new address but the same employees, same equipment, same processes: a new COID has to be created and a new Audit shall be organised. The old Audits are visible and clearly connected to the old COID. The access rights to the report, the action plan and the Audits comparison are transferred to the new COID. Both COIDs will be linked in the IFS Database. The first Audit performed at the new site is an initial Audit. Therefore, the rule regarding 3 consecutive Audits by the same auditor does not apply.
- If a company changes its legal entity but has the same address, same employees, same equipment, same processes: a new COID has to be created. The old Audits are not visible but the old COID is provided. The access rights to the report, the action plan and the Audits comparison are not transferred. AIBI-CS decides if the old report and certificate with the new legal entity is uploaded under the new COID (it will be considered as an initial Audit for the new legal entity) or if a new Audit shall be done. The rule regarding 3 consecutive Audits by the same auditor applies. AIBI-CS whether the certificate of the "old" site shall be suspended as soon as production stops. It is recommended that the action plan of the

"old" site is checked by the auditor especially in case of any food safety and quality management system deviation(s) and /or previous non-conformities.

- If the company maintains its legal entity, employees, equipment, processes and changes either the company name or the legal form, then COID will not change.
- If the management of the company changes (new owner) but has the same employees, same equipment and the same processes: no change of COID, the CB shall perform a risk audit and assess whether it is necessary to perform a "control-Audit" to check that the current certificate is still ensured.

Appeals and Complaints

AIBI-CS will formally reply within 10 working days from the day of receipt according to the procedure and

IFS Food v8 Part 3 Section 2.3
IFS Logistics v2.3 Part 1 Section 9
IFS Logistics v3 Part Section, Part 3 Section 2.3
IFS PacSecure v2 Part 3 Section 2.3
IFS PacSecure v3 Part 3 Section 2.3

and our own appeals, complaints and disputes procedure. A letter (email) receipt of the complaint will be issued within five (5) working days of receiving the complaint or appeal.

A person independent from the IFS certification process will handle appeals and the result of the investigation/outcome will be finalised within 20 working days.

In the event of an unsuccessful appeal, the client will be charged for conducting the appeal investigation.

Certification Fees

These will be reviewed annually.

Terms of Business

The certification fees detailed and any revisions are effective from 1 January each year.

Subsistence fees (hotel, meals, transportation, etc.) and travel fees, where applicable, are additional to the cost shown above. AIBI-CS will try to minimize these costs by grouping work whenever possible.

Invoices will be raised in pounds Sterling (£) and should be paid in pounds Sterling (£) for audits conducted in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.
Invoices will be raised in US$ and should be paid in US$ for audits conducted in the US.
Invoices will be raised in CA$ and should be paid in CA$ for audits in Canada.
Invoices will be raised in MXN pesos and should be paid in MXN pesos for audits conducted in Mexico.

Payment should be made within 30 days from the date of invoice. Failure to settle invoices in the specified time will be taken into account for on-going certification, and could result in withdrawal of certification.

Queries

If you require any more information or clarification on any aspect of the certification process please contact:

AIB International
PO Box 3999
1213 Bakers Way
Manhattan, KS, 66502-3999
Tel: 1-785-537-4750
Fax: 1-785-537-0106

Email: certification@aibinternational.com

Confidentiality

AIBI Certification Services (AIBI-CS) shall take all reasonable measures to ensure that AIBI-CS employees and agents keep confidential all information that comes to their knowledge as a result of the certification program. AIBI-CS shall ensure that only a subcontractor / external expert and/ or evaluator who have signed a confidentiality agreement and that you, the client have agreed to will be used. Be advised that AIBI-CS will have to show any documentation of the client's to the ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation body (ANAB) and IFS, if they make a formal request. The client is the owner of information garnered through the audit process; only that information required by the scheme owner or by regulation will be made available.