

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.

Version #6 of the IFS Food Standard was published in April 2014 and this document follows the protocol laid out in that version, including the provisions of the most up to Date Doctrine. Version #6.1 was published in November 2017 and this document has been respectively updated. Version #7 was published in October 2020 and this document has been updated accordingly. Transition period between v6.1 and v7 is from 1st March to 1st July 2021.

Version #2.2 of the IFS Logistics Standard was published in December 2017 and this document follows the protocol laid out in version #2.2, including the provisions of the most up to date Doctrine. Version #2.3 was published in June 2021, this document has been updated respectively and implementation date has been set to 01st October 2021.

Version #1.1 of IFS PacSecure was published December 2017, this document follows the protocol laid out in that version, including the provisions of the most up to date Doctrine. Assessments conducted from 1 September 2018 are conducted against this version. Version#2 of IFS PacSecure was published in July 2021 and transition period between version#1.1 and version#2 has been set from 3rd January 2022 to 3rd May 2022.

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.

AIB International
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The IFS Food, 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 and also for [IFS Food v6.1 at Part1 section 6](#)
[IFS Food v7 at Part1 section 6](#)
[IFS Logistics v2.2 at Part1 section10](#)
[IFS Logistics v2.3 at Part1 section10](#)
[IFS PacSecure v1.1 at Part1 section10](#)
[IFS PacSecure v2 at Part1 section6](#)

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

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 assessment duration in line with the requirements specified in the IFS assessment protocol for IFS Food v6.1 at Part 1 section5.

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IFS Food v7 at Part1 section3
IFS Logistics v2.2 at Part1 section5
IFS Logistics v2.3 at Part1 section5
IFS PacSecure v1.1 at Part1 section5
IFS PacSecure v2 at Part1 section3
and by using the IFS duration calculator in the case of IFS Food assessments.

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 assessment 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 Assessment 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 v7 assessments only, the company has to have a valid GLN when the first assessment takes place. The latest possible date to order one is the date of the assessment. Otherwise, the certification body cannot issue the IFS Food v7 Certificate.

The IFS Assessment is production site specific: one production site is subject to one Assessment 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 assessment reports of each production site. The assessment of the managing site shall always take place before the assessment of each production site to have a preliminary overview. If it is not possible to perform an assessment at the managing site, then it shall be ensured that, during the assessment 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 assessment(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 assessment, 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 assessments will be forwarded to client in advance of the agreed evaluation/assessment date.

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Prior to the assessment, 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-assessment or assessment dates are agreed and the assessment 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-assessment Evaluation

An optional pre-assessment evaluation can be carried out if the client is not sure about meeting all the aspects of the certification standard. This involves an assessment 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-assessment 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-assessment does not involve training or consultancy and has to be conducted by a separate auditor than the one who conducts the certification assessment.

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

Assessment 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 assessment 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 v7 & PacSecure v2 assessments and 30% for Logistics assessments.
- 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 Assessment
- Closing meeting.

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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 assessment day.

The assessments are carried out by using the Electronic Assessment File that is generated by AuditXpressX™ software system or other format supplied by IFS.

During the Assessment, 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 Assessment, 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 Assessment report and verify the action plan of the previous Assessment, even if another certification body issued the report or if the previous Assessment took place more than one year ago.

If C and / or D scorings of requirement(s) are still present from one Assessment 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 Assessments ensures a continuous improvement process.

On receipt of the preliminary assessment 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 assessment.

For IFS Food v6.1, Logistics v2.2 and PacSecure v1.1, the client has (2) weeks of receiving the preliminary assessment report and outline the corrective action plan.

For IFS Food v7, Logistics v2.3 and PacSecure v2, the client should send in details of all the corrective actions or corrective action plans to the AIBI-CS Office within maximum (4) weeks of receiving the preliminary assessment report and outline action plan. It should be noted that adequate time for the auditor to assess the corrective action plans and request clarification is included within the four (4) week deadline.

The evidence/corrective actions 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 corrective action plans are assessed as inadequate at the time of the 4 weeks deadline, no certificate will be issued and a full re-assessment 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 assessment 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.

Especially in the case of IFS Food v7, Logistics v2.3 & PacSecure v2, the client shall provide the following in the action plan:

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- proposed corrections and corrective actions for all deviations (C, D), KO requirements scored with a C 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 Assessment 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 assessment, re-issued. If after Technical Review, the outcome of the assessment score is $\geq 75\%$ with no Major NC and a corrective plan/ evidences of corrections has been submitted and approved by the auditor, the assessment result is deemed positive and certification will be granted within 8 weeks from the last day of the assessment.

If an assessment 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 assessments); arrangements will be made for a CB representative to perform a follow up assessment and confirm that the corrective action(s) are correct and effective. The representative may or may not be the original auditor although the original auditor is preferred. During the follow up assessment, the auditor focuses on the implementation of actions taken to correct the Major non-conformity determined at the previous assessment. The follow up assessment shall be performed within a 6 months period from the date of the previous assessment. If the Major is related to production failures, the follow up assessment shall be performed at least 6 weeks after the previous assessment 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 v6.1 Part 1 Section 5.5 Evaluation of requirements or
IFS Food v7 Part 1 Section 3.2.1 IFS Scoring system or
IFS Logistics v2.2 Part1 Section 5.5 Evaluation of requirements or
IFS Logistics v2.3 Part1 Section 5.5 Evaluation of requirements or
IFS PacSecure v1.1 Part1 Section 5.5 Evaluation of requirements or
IFS PacSecure v2 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 assessment to verify a major non-conformance, the client

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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 v6.1 Part 1 Section 5.8 Scoring and conditions for issuing assessment report and certificate

IFS Food v7 Part 1 Section 4.2 Issuing IFS certificate

IFS Logistics v2.2 & v2.3 Part 1 Section 5.8 Scoring and conditions for issuing assessment report and certificate

IFS PacSecure v1.1 Part 1 Section 5.8 Scoring and conditions for issuing assessment report and certificate

IFS PacSecure v2 Part 1 Section 4.2 Issuing IFS certificate

An assessment that required a follow up assessment will be granted certification at the Foundation level if the corrective action plans were acceptable at the follow up assessment. An assessment 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 assessment 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 assessments are 12 months, starting from the initial assessment date.

IFS Unannounced assessments

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

This rule applies in case the company (COID) is changing its certification body or in case the company was formally certified against any other GFSI recognized Standard.

This rule is applicable for all certification assessments starting January 2021.

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

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

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If the company does not inform AIBI-CS before the start of assessment time window, the option “Unannounced” cannot be chosen. If the assessment is scheduled outside the defined time window, the assessment will not be a valid IFS unannounced assessment and will be processed as an announced assessment.

If company denies access to the auditor (apart from “force majeure”), the currently valid IFS certificate shall be suspended within a maximum of 2 working days after the assessment 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 assessment , the site can choose to remain in the unannounced scheme or revert to announced assessments.

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”. These 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 Assessments

A company with a head office / central management and additional processing activities shall be assessed and subjected to an own IFS Certificate and Assessment 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 Assessment report. In both cases the following rules apply:

- The Assessment of the head office / central management shall always take place before the Assessment of each production site.
- The centrally managed processes, as well as the outcome of the Assessment from the head office / central management, shall be described in the Assessment 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 Assessment. All Assessments 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 Assessment overview of the Assessment report from each production site, both Assessment 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 Assessment report for IFS Food v7 & PacSecure v2.
- If a non-conformity has been raised during the Assessment of the head office / central management, all assessed production sites are also affected and the certificates of these production sites shall be suspended.

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- After a positive follow-up Assessment 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 Assessment 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 Assessment 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 Assessment 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 Assessment of each production site (e.g. a representative from the head office / central management attends the Assessment 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 Assessment takes place.

Extension assessments

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

In case of seasonal processes, the main Assessment 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 Assessment is to be performed to assess the manufacturing steps which could not be assessed during the main Assessment. The certificate shall only specify the processing step(s) which has/have been assessed.
- An extension Assessment is performed to assess the steps which could not be assessed during operation in the main Assessment and the certificate shall specify all the assessed steps of the process.

IFS Split Assessment Procedure

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IFS has introduced the Split assessment protocol to support situations, where a complete regular on-site IFS Assessment 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 Assessment. The assessed company should clarify in advance with its customers whether they accept a certificate based on the split assessment approach.

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

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

The assessment 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 assessment 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 assessment. 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 assessment shall be include in the Audit Plan. Following the physical site assessment, 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 assessment 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 assessment 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 assessment.

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 assessment. If not, the IFS Assessment 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 unauthorised 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 Assessment. 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 assessment has not been finalized yet.

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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 assessment result. Corrections or corrective actions to deviations identified during the on-site part cannot be approved during the remote part of the assessment. 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 assessment has been performed using ICT – Split Assessment".

When preparing the report in the IFS Assessment software, the tick indicating that the assessment has been performed using the IFS Split Assessment Protocol needs to be chosen. The reason behind the choice for the IFS Split Assessment option shall be indicated in the report.

The date for the renewal assessment shall be calculated from the last day of the original initial assessment (or in case of a new certification cycle from the date of completion of the IFS Assessment). If the assessment 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.

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 assessment conducted by the IFS certification bodies and their auditors. These reviews are conducted on an ongoing basis for random selected assessment and as a result of complaints. Most reviews are conducted at the Certification Body's office;

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however IFS reserves the right to conduct follow up assessments or witness assessments 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

- IFS Food v6.1 Part 1, Section 12
- IFS Food v7 Part 1, Section 5
- IFS Logistics v2.2 Part 1, Section 12
- IFS Logistics v2.3 Part 1, Section 12
- IFS PacSecure v1.1 Part 1, Section 12
- IFS PacSecure v2 Part1, Section 5

and participation is mandatory for all certified facilities.

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 assessment, your certification shall be suspended and the IFS Audit portal database shall be updated as a maximum of 2 working days to indicate this along with the assessment report. We shall inform you of the suspension, 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 assessment is required. Re-instatement and re-certification would then be based on the new assessment when it is completed.

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

Your certification can be 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 assessment by the certified company.

We shall inform you when your certification has been 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.

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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, 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 gfsi@aibonline.org. 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, assessment 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 assessment 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 Assessment shall be organised. The old Assessments are visible and clearly connected to the old COID. The access rights to the report, the action plan and the Assessments comparison are transferred to the new COID. Both COIDs will be linked in the IFS Database. The first Assessment performed at the new site is an initial Assessment. Therefore, the rule regarding 3 consecutive Assessments 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 Assessments are not visible but the old COID is provided. The access rights to the report, the action plan and the Assessments 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 Assessment for the new legal entity) or if a new Assessment shall be done.

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The rule regarding 3 consecutive Assessments 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 assessment and assess whether it is necessary to perform a “control-Assessment” 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 v6.1 Part 1 Section 9
IFS Food v7 Part 3 Section 2.3
IFS Logistics v2.2 & v2.3 Part 1 Section 9
IFS PacSecure v1.1 Part 1 Section 9
IFS PacSecure v2 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.

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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: gfsi@aibinternational.com

The office is open from 0800 to 1700 CST Monday to Friday. It will be closed on national / public holidays.

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 assessment process; only that information required by the scheme owner or by regulation will be made available.

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