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Guide to certification of food safety management systems in the FOOD and FEED industry and in the PACKAGING MATERIAL industry

Companies in the processing and distribution sectors are faced with an ever increasing demand for food safety management system certification.
Such certification gives you the opportunity to stress to your customers confidence in your quality system and is for certain clients a requirement to be able to deliver your products.
Today, a number of different systems are available, all based on the same principles [1]:

- the introduction of the basic principles of GHP (Good Hygiene Practices) and GMP (Good Management / Good Manufacturing Practices) (in ISO 22000 the term PRP (Prerequisites Programme) is used): the basic conditions programme
- the introduction and implementation of the HACCP principles
- the introduction and implementation of the principles of a quality management system
- guidelines for the production environment, processes, products and personnel
- traceability and a possibility for recall

TÜV NORD INTEGRA offers certification for:

- **BRC Global Standard Food**
- **BRC Storage and Distribution**
- **BRC Agents & Brokers**
- **BRC/IoP Packaging and Packaging Materials [2]**
- **IFS International Food Standard**
- **IFS Logistic Standard**
- **IFS Broker**
- **IFS Cash & Carry/Wholesale**
- **FSSC 22000**
- **ISO 22000**
- **QS [2][3]**
- **Feed Chain Alliance (FCA) (Ovocom)**
- **KAT**
- **Fami-QS [2]**
- **HACCP [2]**

More information about this is available from our staff members.

This guide is designed for companies that are considering certification of one or more food safety management systems and clearly outlines the different steps in TÜV NORD INTEGRA's certification procedure. This document consists of 2 parts:

- PART I: General
- PART II: Specific information about the different systems

TÜV NORD INTEGRA bvba
Certificatie in landbouw en voeding
Certification agro-alimentaire
Certification in agriculture and food

1) All systems are based on the principles of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, document CAC/RCP 1: General Principles of Food Hygiene (see www.codexalimentarius.net)
2) Only under TÜV NORD Cert accreditation
3) Only the Vegetable, Fruit and Potatoes chain – 'Wholesale' stage

PART I: GENERAL

1. Request for quotation

A company considering certification under a food safety management system can request a quotation request form. This document, which has to be filled out as detailed as possible, will provide us with all necessary information for a correct quotation.

2. Quotation

TÜV NORD INTEGRA will send you a quotation mentioning prices for an initial audit, surveillance and/or recertification audits and – if desired – a preaudit. Frequency of audits is clearly displayed.
Together with prices for audit days, the quotation also mentions the following costs:

- Travel expenses
- Contribution to owners of certification scheme
- Amount per certification decision (not for FCA)
- Any translation costs (if requested)

TÜV NORD INTEGRA will also enclose 2 copies of the agreement for the food safety management system(s) of your choice.

3. Certification agreement

If you accept our quotation, you can sign and return the quotation to TÜV NORD INTEGRA, together with two copies of the certification agreement signed by a company representative.
One copy of the agreement is signed by TÜV NORD INTEGRA and is returned to you.
The signed quotation and agreement remain valid for 3 years.

4. Audit preparation

In order for the audit to take place efficiently, it is necessary that the auditor can prepare himself. To this end, in the weeks prior to the audit he will request the following documents:

- Quality manual
- Flow diagram
- HACCP study

5. Preaudit

If you wish you can first book a preaudit, allowing the auditor to verify to what extent the standards are already being applied at your company and if you are ready for the initial audit. A request for a preaudit is also submitted via the quotation application form. At the end of the preaudit you receive a list with the nonconformities. If required, this report can be extended to include a full company assessment.

6. Audit procedure

All criteria of the relevant standards will be audited.

The audit on site always includes the following steps:

- opening meeting
- short company visit to get acquainted with products and processes
- documentation audit
- inspection and audit of the company: infrastructures, operating procedures, etc. are assessed by means of visual inspections, document evaluation and inspection and interviews
- processing of audit data by the auditor
- closing meeting during which any nonconformities are presented and the corrective measures to be taken by you are discussed

The various standards' requirements are assessed and marked during the audit. The scoring system differs for each certification standard.

At the end of the audit, you will receive a provisional audit report containing the nonconformities and the terms for corrective action.

7. Audit programme

The audit programme shows the subsequent audits in a certification cycle starting from the initial audit until the first recertification audit or starting from the recertification audit until the next recertification audit.
For most standards, the audit programme is a sequence of (yearly) recertification audits (see table 1), the audit time of the initial and recertification audit is similar.
For some standards, surveillance audits are organised in between recertification audits.

Table 1. Validity of certificates, audit programme and audit frequency. (IA= initial audit, RA= recertification audit, SA = surveillance audit)

Standard		**Certificate validity**	**Audit programme**			**Audit frequency**
			Year 1	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	
BRC	Food	1 year (Grades AA, A and B) or 6 months (Grade C and D)	IA	RA	RA	Annually (grades AA, A and B) or 6-monthly (grade C and D)
	Storage & distribution	1 year	IA	RA	RA	Annually
	Agents & Broker	1 year	IA	RA	RA	Annually
BRC / IoP	Packaging and Packaging materials	1 year (Grades A and B) or 6 months (Grade C)	IA	HA	HA	Annually (grades A and B) or 6-monthly (grade C)
IFS	Food	1 year	IA	RA	RA	Annually
	Logistic					
	Cash&carry/wholesale					
	Broker					
ISO22000		3 year	IA	SA	SA	Annually
FSSC22000			HA	SA	SA	
HACCP						
QS		6 months, 1 or 2 years, depending of the result	IA	RA	RA	6/12/24- monthly, depending of the result
Fami-QS		3 year	IA	SA	SA	Annually
Feed Chain Alliance (production)		3 year	IA RA	SA *) SA	SA *) SA	Annually
Feed Chain Alliance (trade)		2 year	IA	SA	RA	Annually

*) an unannounced surveillance audit will be scheduled in each cycle of 3 years for FCA production.

7.1 Initial audit

After having received a signed offer and contract, the next step is the initial audit; the auditor will set a date in consultation with you.
In case you object to the choice of auditor you may direct your concerns to TÜV NORD INTEGRA in writing.

For ISO 22000, FSSC 22000, HACCP and FCA, the initial audit will be divided into two parts to be conducted on-site at your company:

- the first phase will evaluate the degree to which the system is certifiable, whether correct PRP and CCP are indicated, relevant activities, ...
- the second phase will review whether the described system has actually been implemented

If results from the first phase are positive, the second phase can be carried out directly after the first one. If this is not the case, the second phase will be conducted at a later time. Duration between both phases will be negotiated between the parties but may not last longer than six months.

7.2 Surveillance audits

In accordance with the frequency specified in the different standards and the quotation, surveillance audits will be performed on a regular basis. The purpose of this audit is to determine to what degree the company's existing and possibly adapted system still remains conform to and satisfies the requirements. Special attention will be paid to the correct follow-up of the nonconformities established during the previous audit.

An overview of the frequency of surveillance audits with specific standards is presented in Table 2.

For the performance of these audits, you will have to consider the date of the previous audits, not the certificate expiry date. For this you will receive a reminder from TÜV NORD INTEGRA. If you have an objection against the choice of auditor, you can send a letter stating your motivation to TÜV NORD INTEGRA.

Depending on the outcome of this audit, the existing certificate will simply remain in effect as it is or the certification may be suspended or cancelled. In this instance also, a follow-up audit may be required to arrive at a certification decision.

Specifically for the standards ISO 22000, FSSC 22000 and HACCP, the audit time of the surveillance audits is significantly shorter than the audit time for the initial and recertification audits. The items which will certainly be audited in these surveillance audits of ISO 22000 and HACCP are the following:

- Internal audits and management review
- Corrective actions concerning the non-conformities of the previous audit
- Complaint management
- Efficacy of the management system in relation to the achievement of the company objectives
- Progression concerning the continual improvement projects
- Process control
- The use of logos

As for ISO 22000 and HACCP, the criteria which were not audited in the first surveillance audit will be audited in the second surveillance audit. For FSSC 22000, all criteria will be audited at each audit.

As for the other standards with surveillance audits, all criteria are audited at each surveillance audit.

7.3 Recertification audits

For a number of standards (see Table 2) there are no surveillance audits, and when a certification lapses then a recertification audit is needed to obtain a new certificate.
As with surveillance audits, for these audits you receive a reminder from TÜV NORD INTEGRA. Should you object to the choice of auditor then you can send a letter stating your reasons to TÜV NORD INTEGRA.

Specifically for BRC, you can chose to have these audits conducted unannounced. Opting for the system of unannounced audits is entirely without obligation, these sorts of audits are only conducted when you specifically request it and if the request to participate in the unannounced audit program is announced to TÜV NORD INTEGRA within 3 months after the last announced audit. This request must be confirmed each year.

Also companies with seasonal products can participate (TÜV NORD INTEGRA has to be informed about the exact dates of the seasonal production).

The unannounced audit replaces the planned announced recertification audit and can be carried out at any moment in the period of 3 to 12 months after the last announced audit.

It is permitted to indicate 15 days on which the unannounced audit not can take place (not possible in case of seasonal production).

A successful unannounced audit will be marked on the certificate with a '+', e.g. Grade A +.

There are two possibilities when you opt for unannounced audits:
Option 1: completely unannounced audit
Option 2: audit of the production area and good manufacturing practices occur unannounced, while the audit of the documentation system and registrations is scheduled.

Additional requirements for ASDA: all of ASDA's suppliers must have a specific unannounced audit carried out in addition to the unannounced BRC audit. These specific requirements are currently incorporated in the ASDA AA module, which as from February 2015 will be audited together with the unannounced BRC audit, option 1. You must inform TÜV NORD INTEGRA in writing (by email or application form) if you wish to have this module audited.

Specifically for IFS Food, you can choose for an additional and unannounced 'IFS Food Check', besides the normal recertification audits. This Food Check takes a maximum of 1 audit day and is based on a checklist of 90 criteria, selected from the IFS Food Standard. The focus is on the implementation of HACCP, hygiene and pest control. The documentary part is rather limited.
The IFS Food Check is planned, carried out and evaluated by the IFS Management, hence, independently from TÜV NORD INTEGRA.
The IFS Food Check can have following result: passed or failed (no A, B, C, D scores).

Conditions:
- Already obtained a IFS Food certificate, or
- Simultaneously requesting for IFS Food certification + unannounced IFS Food Check

You must personally write to IFS to apply for an IFS Food Check, using the application form from the IFS website (see 'order form' in the right-hand toolbar of the site below).

For more details, see:
http://www.ifs-certification.com/index.php/en/certification-bodies-en/ifs-food-checks-en

8. Correction of nonconformities

For all standards you should present your corrective measures after the audit, based on analysis of possible causes of the observed nonconformities. The deadline for submitting the action plan and/or proof of corrective measures is variable according to the standard (see Table 2).

The information you forward is assessed by the auditor. Where necessary, the auditor will ask you to provide additional information. If the auditor approves the corrective measures you have forwarded, the report is completed and delivered to the responsible coordinator of TÜV NORD INTEGRA.

The information provided by you, will be examined by the auditor. When needed, he will contact you for further details. If the auditor agrees with the corrective measures proposed by you, the report is completed and forwarded to the person in charge at TÜV NORD INTEGRA.

Table 2.

	Period	Deliverables
BRC (all standards)	21 days	Proof of corrective measure
IFS (all standards)	15 days	Action plan
FSSC 22000	21 days	Action plan + proof of corrective measure for serious nonconformities
ISO 22000	21 days	Action plan + proof of corrective measure for serious nonconformities
HACCP	21 days	Action plan + proof of corrective measure for serious nonconformities
QS	14 days	Action plan + eventual proof of corrective measure for serious nonconformities
Fami-QS	21 days 14 days	Action plan Proof of corrective measure for serious nonconformities
FCA	21 days	Action plan + proof of corrective measure for serious nonconformities

9. Follow-up audit

Depending on the audit results, it may be necessary to evaluate the corrective measures on site during a follow-up audit. The extent of this audit will depend on the standard and the audit score, and can go from verifying the major (or more serious) nonconformities to performing an entirely new audit.

10. Audit report and certification

In addition to the preliminary audit report that you receive at the end of the audit, a final audit report is sent when the audit is completed. This report shows your corrective actions on nonconformities.
Based on the audit report, TÜV NORD INTEGRA will decide on the issuance or refusal of the certificate. The rules for certification are defined in the standard itself, as well as the term for the certification decision.

11. Invoicing

After every completed audit the number of performed man-days and additional costs will be billed in agreement with the quotation.

12. Certificate

If all above mentioned requirements are met, a certificate is issued together with the final audit report.
The validity of the certificates is not the same for all standards (see overview in Table 1).

13. Appeal and complaints

If you do not agree with the decision of TÜV NORD INTEGRA, you may appeal this decision in writing explaining your concerns and submitting the appeal by registered letter. The procedure which has to be followed can be found at our website (go to: www.tuv-nord.com/be, click on → company → deontology) and is also included in the agreement which you have signed with TÜV NORD NITEGRA.

14. Communication to the certification scheme owners

TÜV NORD INTEGRA will upload the requested audit documents on the web portal of the scheme owners in question.

PART II: SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE DIFFERENT STANDARDS

The scope of the various certification standards

Feed Chain Alliance, KAT and Fami-QS are specifically intended for companies active in the animal feed sector. KAT is a German quality system for eggs. TÜV NORD INTEGRA audits KAT only in relationship to feed (KAT has also requirements besides the feed sector). More info: http://www.bemefa.be/BEMEFA_Kwaliteit_Internationaal.aspx

BRC Food, IFS Food, and FSSC 22000 are meant for food producing companies. The standards ISO 22000 and HACCP have a broader scope: they apply to all companies active across the entire agro-food sector: from agriculture to food production, catering and services rendered to the food sector, e.g., storage, transport, distribution,…

BRC Packaging and Packaging Materials is meant for companies producing packaging materials.

Table 3 offers an overview of what types of activities can be certified under what standards.

How to choose the right standard ?

In function of your business operations and the scope of the various standards as described supra, it will immediately become evident if and when a number of standards are not of application to your company.

The principles of the BRC, IFS and QS standards are set out in detail, whereas the ISO 22000 standard is, just like the other ISO standards, more vague and leaves room for personal interpretation of the systems. Therefore, that is also why ISO 22000 offers slightly less clear requirements. The HACCP certification adheres to the same philosophy as ISO 22000.
FSSC 22000 is a combination of the ISO 22000 standards but imposes more elaborated demands with respect to the basic conditions.

BRC Global Standard Food, IFS Food, IFS Logistics and FSSC 22000 are standards accredited by Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) (see www.mygfsi.com).

Where HACCP, BRC, and IFS do concentrate more on your company specifically, ISO 22000 is geared more towards a chain approach to the entire food industry.
QS also pursues a chain approach but achieves this through the creation of separate specifications for the various links in the chain.

Another important factor for choosing the appropriate standard, is the existing or future demand of your clients for specific certificates.
An example of that is the BRC standard, which was developed by British supermarkets for their private label suppliers and IFS was set up by German and later also French and Italian supermarkets as a reaction to the British initiative.

TÜV NORD INTEGRA employees are always at your service to provide further assistance in your choice.

Table 3. The scope of the various certification standards for the food industry.

Type of activity	BRC				IFS				ISO 22000	FSSC 22000	HACCP	QS
	Food	Storage & distribution	Packaging & Packaging materials	Agents & Brokers	Food	Logistic	Cash&Carry-wholesale	Broker				
Production of food products (incl. their storage and transport)	✓				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓ (1)
Production of packaging and packaging materials (incl. storage and transport thereof)			✓									
Primary [6] packaging of food products (incl. their storage and transport)	✓				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓ (1)
Secondary [7] packaging of food products or re-packaging of food products without changes to the primary packaging		✓ (2)							✓		✓	
Purchase and sales of factored [8] food products (incl. their storage and transport)	(4)	✓			✓ (5)		✓ (3)		✓		✓	✓
Purchase and sales of factored [8] food products (excl. their storage and transport)				✓				✓				
Transport of food products and packaging material for food for third parties		✓				✓			✓		✓	
Storage of food products and packaging material for food for third parties		✓				✓			✓		✓	
Wholesale in food products		✓					✓ (3)		✓		✓	✓
Cooling/deepfreeze/room temperature /thawing for third parties		✓ (2)				✓ (2)						

1) Except for meat sector.
2) If there is also storage and/or distribution.
3) Or IFS Broker and IFS Logistic.
4) In case the company purchases finished food products which do not undergo any processing on the site, these food products be included in the scope of BRC Food under 'voluntary module: traded goods'
5) If the company also wishes to be certified for these trade products, then the company must also have IFS Broker audited in combination with IFS Food.
6) Primary packaging means that there is contact possible with the 'naked' product.

7) Secondary packaging refers to the second packaging around an already packed product.
8) Factored food products: finished food products which are produced by another company and do not undergo any processing on the site of the company requesting certification.

Where can I find the requirements?

The first step towards certification is to obtain the standards.

Free to consult on the internet:

- FSSC 22000 (www.fssc22000.com)
- QS (www.q-s.de)
- Feed Chain Alliance (www.ovocom.be)
- Fami-QS (www.fami-qs.org)
- International Featured standards (IFS series) (www.ifs-certification.com)
- BRC Global Standards (www.brcglobalstandards.com): pdf without functionality

Against payment:

- Global Standards (www.brcglobalstandards.com): pdf with functionality, printed version or webbased document with backgrounds.
- ISO 22000 (www.iso.org)
- FSSC 22000 (www.fssc22000.com): it is required to obtain the ISO 22000 and ISO TS 22000 standards; the additional FSSC requirements may be downloaded for free at (http://www.fssc22000.com).