

### **Certification programme for product standards**

is in other words a brief description of the management systems certification procedure carried out by the Product Certification Body TÜV NORD Polska Sp. z o.o. (hereinafter referred to as the Product Certification Body) based on the requirements of PN-EN ISO/IEC 17065:2013.

The programme addresses the following standards:

- IFS Food according to International Featured Standard - Food,
- IFS Logistics according to International Featured Standard - Logistics,
- IFS Broker according to International Featured Standard - Broker,
- BRCGS Food according to BRC Global Standard For Food Safety,
- BRCGS Packaging according to BRC Global Standard For Packaging And Packaging Materials.

With reference to the aforementioned standards, the Product Certification Body of TÜV NORD Polska Sp. z o.o. does not formulate any substantive requirements apart from those contained in the standards on which certification is based.

The certification procedure for product standards (PS) is divided into several phases, described below. It is carried out by employees and auditors of TÜV NORD Polska. For each certification process, auditors are selected according to their qualifications and competence.

### **Audit preparation and planning**

The aim of the audit preparation is to investigate the purposefulness and ability to carry out the certification process at the Customer.

On the basis of the "Request for Quotation" completed and sent by the Customer, the Product Certification Body assesses whether it has all the necessary information and whether it is sufficient to formulate an offer for the Customer (any ambiguities are clarified with the Customer). The certification conditions are contained in the offer sent to the Customer. The certification process starts after the Customer places an order accepting the offer.

The Product Certification Body shall conclude a contract with the Customer for the certification of the management system, which defines the rights and obligations of the parties.

An order from the Customer is the basis for initiating the planning phase and conducting the audit.

The Product Certification Body, in good time, informs the customer of the date of each audit (agreed with the customer) and the composition of the audit team. A leader of the audit team is appointed each time.

The customer has the right to make a reasoned objection to the appointment of any particular auditor. If the client chooses an unannounced audit programme, the client is not informed of the audit date. The auditor, immediately upon arrival at the Company, should enter the production area.

The customer is obliged to enable the auditors to perform all the activities necessary for conducting audits, including activities enabling the analysis of documentation and providing access to all processes and areas covered by certification.

Each audit is planned by the audit team leader and the plan communicated to the customer in advance of the audit date. In the case of unannounced audits, the audit plan is agreed on the day of the audit, during the opening meeting.

### **Diagnostic audit**

The objective of the diagnostic audit is to check the company's preparation for certification and to verify the key elements of the management system introduced in the organisation prior to the certification process.

### **Certification audit**

The objective of the certification audit is to verify the effectiveness of the management system introduced in the organisation.

In particular, it is taken as given that the conditions which must be fulfilled before the audit are:

- application in the organisation of the management system presented for certification and evidence of compliance with the requirements covered by the standard,
- internal audit of the whole certified management system,

- management review.

The audit begins with an opening meeting to inform the organisation about the planned course of the audit.

The auditors' task is to assess the implementation of the management system and the fulfilment of the requirements of the reference standard. This is done by interviewing management and employees, reviewing documents and records, and by inspecting system areas and processes..

Following the audit, during the closing meeting, the client shall be informed about the non-conformities found and their classification in accordance with the requirements of the certified standard. The result of the audit is documented in a report. The identified and documented non-conformities require the formulation of a corrective action plan by the Customer in order to eliminate them. The plan requires the approval of the audit team leader. The effectiveness of the actions proposed by the Client is verified during a follow-up audit or on the basis of evidence provided, within a maximum of 28 days, of the actions taken. It is up to the audit team leader to decide how to verify the corrective actions. The actions identified in the action plan, their causes and their effectiveness are assessed during the subsequent audit.

#### **Granting a certificate and surveillance**

A certificate is granted by the Head of the Product Certification Body or an authorised person, at the request of the audit team leader, after the audit has been completed with a positive result. If the contract for certification and the right to use the mark of the Product Certification Body is signed and the payment for the certification service is settled, the certificates and the audit report are forwarded to the Client.

The validity period of the certificate is defined in the guidelines of the certified standard.

#### **Recertification audit**

A re-certification audit must be carried out in the organisation before the expiry of the validity period of the certificate for extending its validity for a further period of time. The re-certification audit including corrective actions for identified non-conformities and release of the process in the Product Certification Body must be completed before the expiry date of the certificate. The re-certification audit must take place no later than the anniversary of the first day of the certification audit in the case of BRCGS and the anniversary of the last day of the initial audit in the case of IFS. Usually the recertification audit is preceded by a new offer.

#### **Unannounced audit**

An unannounced audit is an audit of which the client is not informed. An unannounced audit may be carried out as a result of complaints, claims or as a consequence of prior suspension of the certificate in special cases. The determination of its necessity depends on the assessment of the certification body.

An unannounced audit as an audit option is usually a recertification audit and the customer is not informed of the audit date. The unannounced audit as an audit option is intended to extend the validity of the certificate for a further period of time and replaces the recertification audit in the audit cycle. This audit, together with the correction of identified non-conformities and the release of the process in the certification body, must be completed before the expiry date of the certificate.

An unannounced audit as an audit option is carried out within the time slots specified for each standard. The methodology of the unannounced audit as an audit option is consistent with the methodology of the recertification audit. At the Customer's request, the certification audit can be performed as an unannounced audit.

If a company refuses an unannounced audit, the currently valid certificate will be suspended by the Certification Body. Information regarding the suspension will be presented in the company's history in the IFS or BRCGS database.

#### **Suspension of a certificate**

In special cases, such as: inability to carry out a surveillance audit due to the fault of the Customer, identified cases of misuse of the certificate or the mark of the Product Certification Body, a negative result of a standard owner audit or a verification audit carried out as a result of complaints from customers of the certified organisation, the Body shall suspend the certificate and notify the Customer of this in writing. In such a case, the Customer shall immediately cease to use the certificate/mark for any purpose until the state of suspension has ceased. The duration of the suspension and the conditions for its termination shall be determined by the Product Certification Body. The state of suspension ends with reinstatement of the right to use the certificate after the Customer has fulfilled the specified conditions or with withdrawal of the certificate.

### **Withdrawal of a certificate**

Issues that caused the suspension of a certificate not resolved by the Customer within the time set by the Product Certification Body cause its withdrawal. The Customer shall be notified about that fact in writing. Withdrawal of a certificate is a permanent expiration of the right to use a certificate / mark. If the certificate is revoked, the Customer is obliged to immediately return the certificate to the Product Certification Body, withdraw and destroy its copies and discontinue using the certificate / mark for any purpose.

### **Special audits**

#### **Extension/limitation audit**

At the Customer's request to extend the scope of the granted certification, the Product Certification Body carries out a so-called extension audit. The scope of the documentation assessment and audit is appropriate to the suggested extension of the scope.

The Product Certification Body may limit the scope of certification in order to exclude those parts that do not meet the requirements. The decision on limitation may be made after a surveillance audit or an additional (limitation) audit.

The extension/limitation audit may be combined with a recertification audit. The post-audit procedure follows the same procedure as after a certification audit.

#### **Audits with short notice**

In special, justified cases (e.g. as a result of complaints from clients of a certified organization about its management system; suspension of a certificate as a result of an assessment received from the IFS Integrity Program or BRCGS Compliance; suspension of a certificate; to verify the maintenance of certification requirements if, in the opinion of the Head of Product Certification Body), a follow-up audit may be necessary. The determination of its necessity depends on the assessment of the Product Certification Body. In each case, the Product Certification Body shall notify the Customer of the reason for the audit, the costs related to the audit and its deadline.

#### **IFS Split Audit/ IFS Split Assessment**

In exceptional, justified cases (e.g., as a result of a crisis), when a full on-site audit is not possible, an IFS Split Audit can be carried out. The first part of the audit is conducted on-site at the audited location, and the second part is conducted remotely via ICT. To conduct an IFS Split Audit, the normative document IFS Split Audit Protocol should be used.

#### **Group certification**

Group certification is not possible for product standard certification. A certificate is awarded for each location separately.

#### **Use of logos and marks of standard owners**

There is a possibility to use the logos and marks of the owners of IFS and BRCGS standards, after a positive audit result and upon signing an agreement on the use of the mark with the owner of the respective standard. TUV NORD Polska Sp. z o.o. does not participate in the process of signing agreements with the owners of the standard. A certified company shall contact the standard owner directly.

The owners' marks and logos may not be used on a product or in a location that is intended for consumers and suggests a link to a specific product.

#### **Notification of crisis and other situations:**

In accordance with the requirement of the product standards, in the event that circumstances change within a company that may affect the continuity of certification, the company is obliged to notify the Certification Body within 3 working days via a special email address that has been activated:

[DL-PL-FoodAlert@tuev-nord.de](mailto:DL-PL-FoodAlert@tuev-nord.de)

Such circumstances include:

- legal proceedings concerning the safety or legality of a product
- product recall action

- significant damage to the plant, e.g. a natural disaster such as flooding, or damage by fire
- change of ownership
- significant changes to the business or its scope

The Product Certification Body is obliged to assess the situation as well as any implications for certification, after which it takes any appropriate action.

### **Appeals and complaints**

The Customer shall have a right of appeal against the decision of the Certification Body, which shall be submitted in writing. Appeals shall be settled according to the procedures of the Body. The Customer shall be informed of the course and result of the appeal procedure.

The appeal must be submitted in writing within 7 calendar days from the date of receipt of information on the certification decision. Examination of the case by the Head of the Product Certification Body and his designated team shall take place within 20 working days from the date of filing the appeal, after which a written response to the appeal shall be provided.

The Product Certification Body is obliged to receive and consider complaints about its own activities and those of its certified customers. Complaints shall be received in writing and handled according to the Body's procedures. The Product Certification Body shall inform (if possible) the complainant about the course and outcome of the complaint handling.

### **IFS Integrity Program**

Entering the certification for compliance with the requirements of the IFS standard, the Company accepts the requirements of the "IFS Integrity Program" of the IFS certification system owners and is aware of its existence. The IFS Integrity Programme implies a number of measures to ensure maximum quality and reliability of the IFS certification system.

The IFS Board has the right at any time to carry out so-called on-site integrity inspections or integrity witness audits at the certified plant/company in order to reveal and exclude IFS frauds and violations or based on a risk analysis.

The Product Certification Body receives from the IFS Integrity Programme the result of the assessment within the IFS Integrity Programme. The decision to maintain certification status depends on the outcome of the IFS Integrity on-site Check.

- If a KO or Major non-conformity is identified as a result of the IFS Integrity on-site Check, the Head of the Product Certification Body is obliged to suspend the certificate within three working days of receiving the audit report or the audit result. The Company is then required to submit to the Body (no later than 28 working days after the last day of the IFS Integrity on-site Check) a plan of action taken along with evidence in relation to the non-conformities identified during the audit. A decision on the certification status is made on the basis of actions taken or as a result of the assessment with a short notification period.
- If, as a result of the IFS Integrity on-site Check, a point of attention (grade B) or deviation (grades C and D) is identified, the Company is required to submit to the Body (no later than 28 working days after the last day of the IFS Integrity on-site Check) a plan of action taken along with evidence in relation to the deviations/points of attention identified during the audit.

For more information on the integrity programme, see the current edition of the standard and [www.ifs-certification.com](http://www.ifs-certification.com).

### **IFS Food Safety Check**

The IFS Food Safety Check can only be carried out if the customer has a valid IFS certificate. This means that the customer can only place an order if they have a valid IFS certificate. To ensure that the IFS Food Safety Check is carried out in a smooth and unannounced manner, the certificate must have a validity period of at least six (6) months.

The IFS Food Safety Check may result in a "passed" or "failed" assessment result. In case of a "fail" assessment result, the Company is obliged to implement corrective actions (provide a plan of actions taken and evidence of their implementation). IFS Management shall notify the Certification Body that issued the certificate of the IFS Food Safety Check results.

Failure to pass the IFS Food Safety Check does not automatically lead to the suspension of the current certificate; the decision to maintain or suspend the certificate is made by the Head of the Product Certification Body. If the Body decides to suspend the current certificate, this information will be posted on the IFS portal and will be automatically sent by the IFS database to all users who have access to the IFS database and who have listed the relevant company in their favourites list in the IFS database.

The Product Certification Body shall receive from the IFS Integrity Programme the result of the assessment within the IFS Integrity Programme and within seven working days shall decide whether to suspend or maintain the certificate.

The company is required to submit to the Body an action plan with evidence (no later than 28 working days after the last day of the IFS Food Safety Check assessment) in relation to the non-conformities identified during the audit. A decision on the certification status is made on the basis of the action plan or as a result of the assessment with a short notification period.

For information on Food Safety Checks, please visit the IFS certification website: <https://www.ifs-certification.com/index.php/en/ifs/quality-assurance/ifs-food-safety-checks>

### **BRCGS Compliance**

By entering into BRCGS compliance certification, the Company accepts and is aware of the 'BRCGS Compliance' requirements of the BRCGS certification system owners. BRC Global Standards has an active compliance programme that complements the activities of the accreditation bodies and ensures the maintenance of high standards.

The BRCGS Board has the right to conduct an independent visit to a certified facility at any time to confirm the maintenance of food safety and quality standards in accordance with the certification status and to reveal and exclude BRCGS fraud and violations or based on a risk analysis.

The Product Certification Body shall receive from BRCGS Compliance the result of the assessment under the BRCGS Compliance Programme and shall decide within seven days whether to suspend or maintain a certificate.

The company is required to submit to the Body a plan of actions taken with evidence (no later than 28 working days after the last day of the BRCGS Compliance assessment) in relation to the non-conformities identified during the audit. A decision on the certification status is made on the basis of the action plan taken by the Company or as a result of the assessment with short notification period.

For more information on the compliance programme, see the current edition of the standard