



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

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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

1. All systems are based on the principles of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, document CAC/RCP 1: General Principles of Food Hygiene (see <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/en/>)

TÜV NORD Integra offers certification for:

- **BRCGS Food**
- **BRCGS Storage and Distribution**
- **BRCGS Agents & Brokers** ²⁾
- **IFS International Food Standard**
- **IFS Global Markets Program**
- **IFS Logistics Standard**
- **IFS Broker**
- **IFS Cash & Carry/Wholesale**
- **FSSC 22000** ^{2) 4)}
- **ISO 22000** ²⁾
- **Costco** ⁵⁾
- **QS** ^{2) 3)}
- **Fami-QS** ²⁾
- **Feed Chain Alliance (FCA) (Ovocom)**
- **NZO module**
- **Healthy Farming Association (HFA)**
- **STNO (OQUALIM)**
- **VLOG**

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

For the schemes under accreditation of **TÜV NORD Cert** you can find information on the TÜV NORD Integra website:

- BRCGS Agents & Brokers:
<https://www.tuv-nord.com/be/en/certification/certification-in-food-industry/brc-standards/agents-brokers/>
- FSSC 22000:
<https://www.tuv-nord.com/be/en/certification/certification-in-food-industry/fssc-22000/>
- ISO 22000:
<https://www.tuv-nord.com/be/en/certification/certification-in-food-industry/iso-22000/>
- QS:
<https://www.tuv-nord.com/be/en/certification/certification-in-food-industry/qualitaet-und-sicherheit/>
- FAMI-QS:
<https://www.tuv-nord.com/be/en/certification/certification-in-animal-feed-industry/fami-qs/>

Details concerning the certification procedure of schemes under accreditation of TÜV NORD Cert can be found in the Service Descriptions:

<https://www.tuev-nord.de/en/company/certification/downloads/>

2. Only under TÜV NORD Cert accreditation

3. Only the Vegetable, Fruit and Potatoes chain – 'Wholesale' stage

4. Only the scopes C (Food Manufacturing), I (Production of Food Packaging and Packaging Materials) and K (Production of Biochemicals) are offered

5. Only in combination with BRCGS Food, IFS Food or as an addendum to a GFSI benchmarked scheme



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)

3. Certification agreement

If you accept our quotation, you can sign and return the quotation to TÜV NORD Integra.

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
- summarize 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	
BRCGS	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 bi-annually (grade C and D)
	Storage & distribution	1 year (Grades AA, A and B) or 6 months (Grade C and D)	IA	RA	RA	Annually (grades AA, A and B) or bi-annually (grade C and D)
IFS	Global Markets	1 year (declaration instead of certificate)				
	Food	1 year	IA	RA	RA	Annually
	Logistics					
	Cash&carry/wholesale					
Broker						
Feed Chain Alliance (production)		3 year	IA RA	SA ^{*)} SA ^{*)}	SA ^{*)} SA ^{*)}	Annually
Feed Chain Alliance (trade)		2 year	IA	SA	RA	Annually
STNO		3 year	IA	SA	SA	Annually
VLOG		Until 31/12 of the year following the year of the audit	IA	RA	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 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.

For BRCGS Food, IFS Food, IFS Broker and IFS Logistics you can choose to have an unannounced initial audit. Keep in mind though that the unannounced audit may not take place for up to 1 year from the date of application.

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 1.

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.

7.3 Recertification audits

For a number of standards (see Table 1) 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.

Recertification audits can be announced or unannounced. From 2021 there's an obligation for BRCGS Food, BRCGS Storage & Distribution, IFS Food and IFS Logistics to undergo at least one unannounced audit every three years.

Companies with seasonal products can also participate in unannounced audits.

BRCGS Food - BRCGS Storage and Distribution

From 2021 there are two options for unannounced recertification audits.

1) mandatory unannounced audit (once every 3 years):

- TÜV NORD Integra decides in which year it is scheduled, as prescribed by BRCGS. After issuing your certificate, and no later than three months after your last audit, we will inform you whether your next audit will be carried out unannounced.
- Audit window starts 4 months before the "due date" mentioned on your certificate.
- Sites with grade C and D will still be expected to have an unannounced audit at least once every three years, but there will be a larger amount of announced audits in the interim.
- Where a site fails to have an unannounced audit within the 3 year period, it may result in the final audit being refused by BRCGS and the site becoming uncertificated until such a time as an unannounced audit is completed.

2) voluntary unannounced audit (annual):

- Within 3 months after your audit you must request TÜV NORD Integra in writing (via e-mail or application form) to schedule your next audit unannounced.
- Audit window starts 9 months before the “due date” mentioned on your certificate, but the audit will usually be planned in the last four months of the certification cycle.

Please deliver following information together with your notification for the unannounced option:

- Dates when the site is not operational.
- Blackout periods during which the site is operational, but not available for the audit (if applicable). This period is limited to a maximum of 15 operational days. For sites with a grade C or D a maximum of 5 blackout days can be requested. These should be communicated to us at least 4 weeks in advance and accompanied with a significant reason. TÜV NORD Integra can challenge the reason.
- Seasonal production dates (if applicable). In this case you cannot choose blackout periods.
- All needed sit entry details for the auditor (contact person, ...)

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

IFS Food, IFS Broker and IFS Logistics

From 2021 there are two options for unannounced recertification audits.

1) mandatory unannounced audit (once every 3 years) – IFS Food, IFS Logistics

- TÜV NORD Integra decides in which year it is scheduled, as prescribed by IFS. We will inform you in due time whether your next audit will be carried out unannounced.
- All certificates of IFS Food and IFS Logistics will mention when the last unannounced audit took place.

2) voluntary unannounced audit (annual) – IFS Food, IFS Logistics, IFS Broker

- You must request TÜV NORD Integra in writing (via e-mail or application form) in due time to schedule your next audit unannounced.

The unannounced audit replaces the yearly scheduled audit and will be performed in a period between 16 weeks before and 2 weeks after the audit due date. There is no difference in audit window between the mandatory triannual unannounced audits and the voluntary annual unannounced audits.

TÜV NORD Integra has to register your choice for an unannounced audit on the IFS portal four weeks before the start of the window.

If the registration of the unannounced audit was not done before the deadline, there are two options:

1. The audit will be done announced. If this takes place before the due date mentioned on your certificate, the audit cycle continues.
2. The audit is registered as an initial unannounced audit on the IFS portal. This changes the audit cycle, with a possible interruption in your certification.

A successful unannounced audit will be clearly stated on the certificate.

Please deliver following information together with your notification for the unannounced option:

- Blackout periods during which the site is not available for the audit (if applicable). This period is limited to a maximum of 10 operational days, plus not operating periods. The 10 operational days may only be split into a maximum of 3 periods. Please mention the reason of these 10 days, it can be challenged during the audit.
- Seasonal production dates (if applicable). In this case you cannot choose blackout periods. The time window [-16 weeks; + 2 weeks] of the audit due date will not apply.
- All needed sit entry details for the auditor (contact person, ...)

In case of multi-location companies with central QMS, the central site will be audited before the production site(s). This can be announced or unannounced, but will happen before the start of the unannounced audit time window of the production site audits. Production sites will be audited unannounced. Audits of central and production sites shall not be performed during consecutive days.



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.

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.

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.

PART II: SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE DIFFERENT STANDARDS

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 (<https://www.tuv-nord.com/be/en/our-company/deontology/>) and is also included in the agreement which you have signed with TÜV NORD Integra.

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 (BRCGS, IFS, FCA, Fami-QS, VLOG and Costco).

The scope of the various commercial FOOD standards

BRCGS Food, IFS Food and IFS Global Markets are intended for companies active in the production of food products.

BRCGS Global Food Standard

A food processing company with a “high risk – high care” zone must meet additional requirements for the BRCGS Food audit, for which additional audit time will be needed. For more information, see Part II, chapter 8 of the BRCGS Food 8 standard. Traded products can be included in the BRCGS Food audit, but this is not mandatory. When the traded products are not included in the audit, they will be mentioned as an “exclusion” in the report and on the certificate. See Part II, chapter 9 of the BRCGS Food 8 standard.

BRCGS has developed some ‘Additional Voluntary Modules’ to be able to answer to specific needs:

- 11. Meat Supply Chain Assurance
- 13. FSMA
- 14. Costco – mandatory for suppliers to Costco North-America, voluntary for suppliers to Costco in the rest of the world
- Culture Excellence: Food Safety Culture Module

More information on

<https://www.brcgs.com/our-standards/food-safety/additional-modules/about-additional-modules/>

IFS Food Standard

If a food processing company additionally carries out trading activities and would like to certify these activities, a combined Assessment IFS Food / IFS Broker shall be performed.

When a processing company conducts own logistics and /or transport activities (storage and distribution), it is included in the IFS Food under the specific sub-chapter about transport or storage. It's not necessary to have an additional IFS Logistics audit for these activities. If a food processing company also performs logistic activities on pre-packed third party products on the certified site, a separate IFS Logistics audit is needed to certify these activities.

In case a food processing company performs logistics activities on a separate location, the company has three possibilities:

- include it under IFS Food scope and clearly mention its decentralised structure in the company profile of the IFS Food Assessment report
- not assess it but clearly state in the company profile that this site is not IFS Logistics certified
- gain an IFS Logistics certification.

For more information on the scope of the different IFS standards, see Annex 1 of the IFS Food 7 standard.

Suppliers to Costco North-America are required to undergo a combined Costco/IFS Food audit. Suppliers to Costco in the rest of the world can choose to undergo a combined Costco/IFS Food audit.

IFS Global Market Standard

IFS Global Markets was founded in 2008 to support smaller/ lesser extensive companies concerning food safety and in the development of their food safety management. This standard contains clauses on a basic and intermediary level which are similar to or derived from the clauses on a high level described in the IFS International Food Standard. From the IFS Global Markets you must further evolve to the IFS International Food-certification and this within a period of maximum 3 years (unless a different individual agreement/requirement with business partners exists).

Costco

Suppliers to Costco North-America are required to undergo a Costco audit. TÜV NORD Integra offers the Costco addendum. This additional checklist is audited together with BRCGS Storage & Distribution, IFS Logistics or IFS Broker.

For BRCGS Food and IFS Food the Costco requirements are included in the standard, there is no additional checklist.

BRCGS Storage & Distribution

TÜV NORD Integra only offers certification for the scopes “food” and “packaging materials for food products”. Consumer products fall within the scope of the standard, but outside the scope of our accreditation.

IFS Logistics

TÜV NORD Integra only offers certification for sites whose main activity is storage and transport of food products. Edible plants and flowers are included in the scope “food products”. If the site has a small amount of Non-Food activities (household and personal care products, packaging materials, electric/electronic devices, housekeeping goods, textiles, media products, furniture, tools and technical equipment, stationary/office materials, toys, plants and flowers, gardening equipment, etc.) these can be included in the IFS Logistics audit for Food products.

IFS Broker

TÜV NORD Integra only offers certification for the scopes “food” and “packaging materials for food products”. Edible plants and flowers are included in the scope “food products”. Non-food products such as household and personal care products fall within the scope of the standard, but outside the scope of our accreditation.

IFS Wholesale

TÜV NORD Integra only offers certification for sites whose main activity is wholesale of food products. Edible plants and flowers are included in the scope “food products”. If the site has a small amount of Non-Food activities (household and personal care products, packaging materials) these can be included in the IFS Wholesale audit for Food products.

Wholesalers who are exclusively trading non-food products such as household and personal care products or packaging materials, fall within scope of the standard, but outside the scope of our CB.

The scope of the various commercial FEED Standards

Feed Chain Alliance, NZO, Fami-QS, HFA, STNO (Oqualim) and VLOG are specifically intended for companies active in the animal feed sector. Combined with FCA, the NZO module enables you to supply Dutch farmers/producers of milk products.

STNO (OQUALIM)

STNO focuses exclusively on the feed sector, in particular the producers of compound animal feeds that are not labeled as GMO in accordance with EU legislation (1829/2003). This standard was established by the French organization OQUALIM.

<https://www.oqualim.com/fr/certifications/rcna>

STNO can only be audited in combination with the FCA standard.

VLOG

Supported by various parties, the VLOG (Verband Lebensmittel ohne Gentechnik) has established a standard to be able to control «GMO-free» production in a uniform manner. This standard was developed together with representatives of the food and animal feed industry, certification bodies, interest groups and public representatives. The standard supports companies active in the food and feed sector in the implementation of the legal requirements with regard to GMO-free products and establishes uniform methods for carrying out checks by certification bodies.

The standard can be freely downloaded at

<https://www.ohnegentechnik.org/en/for-businesses/standards/the-vlog-standard>

Table 2 offers an overview of what types of activities can be certified under what standards.

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

Table 2. The scope of the various certification standards for the food industry which TÜV NORD Integra offers.

Type of activity	BRCGS			IFS				
	Food	Storage & distribution	Agents & Brokers	Food	Logistics	Cash&Carry-wholesale	Broker	Global Markets
Production of food products (incl. their storage and transport)	✓			✓				✓
Production of packaging and packaging materials (incl. storage and transport thereof)								
Primary ⁶⁾ packaging of food products (incl. their storage and transport)	✓			✓				
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)			
Simple ripening processes of fruit		✓			✓ (2)			

Table 2. continuation

Type of activity	ISO 22000	FSSC 22000	QS
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	✓		
Purchase and sales of factored ⁸⁾ food products (incl. their storage and transport)	✓		✓
Purchase and sales of factored ⁸⁾ food products (incl. 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	✓		✓
Cooling/deepfreeze/room temperature /thawing for third parties			
Simple ripening processes of fruit			

1. Except for meat sector.
2. If there is also storage and/or distribution.
3. Or IFS Broker and IFS Logistics.
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 BRCGS Food under section 9 of the standard. This section is voluntary (and the company doesn't need a BRCGS S&D to have these goods certified)
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:

- BRCGS Global Standards (<https://www.brcgs.com/store/>): pdf without functionality
- International Featured standards (IFS series) (www.ifs-certification.com)
- FSSC 22000 (www.fssc22000.com)
- QS (www.q-s.de)
- Feed Chain Alliance (www.ovocom.be)
- Fami-QS (www.fami-qs.org)
- STNO <https://www.oqualim.com/fr/certifications/rcna>
- VLOG <https://www.ohnegentechnik.org/en/for-businesses/standards/the-vlog-standard>

Against payment:

- BRCGS Global Standards (<https://www.brcgs.com/store/>): pdf with functionality, printed version or webbased document with backgrounds.
- ISO 22000 (www.iso.org)
- FSSC 22000: 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>.

BIO is in our DNA.
Certification is our profession.





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