



IAF and International Featured Standards Management GmbH Scheme Endorsement Agreement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 International Featured Standards Management GmbH is the scheme owner of the worldwide operated IFS schemes. International Featured Standards Management GmbH (hereafter referred to as IFS) has sought and received endorsement of their schemes listed in Schedule 1 to this Agreement (hereafter referred to as "the Scheme(s)") as a sub-scope of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) in accordance with IAF PL3 and this Agreement.
- 1.2 The Schemes require Certification Bodies (CBs) operating in the Scheme(s) to be accredited by an Accreditation Body (AB) that is a signatory to the IAF MLA with a main scope of product certification and a sub-scope of the scheme(s) included in Schedule 1 to this Agreement (IAF MLA signatories).
- 1.3 IFS sets voluntary standards. The IFS comprise ten different food and non-food standards and programs, covering the processes along the supply chain. All standards are process standards which help users when implementing legal provisions regarding food and/or product safety, and provide uniform guidelines on food, product safety and quality issues. There are over 27,000 certificates across all standards issued each year across 92 countries around the world.
- 1.4 IFS contracts at the time of this Agreement with 80 accredited CBs worldwide under the Schemes, the supervision of which is carried out by 16 ABs that are IAF MLA signatories.
- 1.5 The IFS requirements for the professional competence of personnel auditors are defined in the relevant scheme documents.
- 1.6 IFS requires CBs to be accredited by IAF MLA signatories that have ISO/IEC 17065 in their MLA scope.
- 1.7 The Schemes provide the standard and framework for independent, recognized third-party certification of processes associated with the scope of the Schemes.
- 1.8 The **International Accreditation Forum (IAF)** is the world association of conformity assessment accreditation bodies in the fields of management systems, products, services, process, persons, validation and verification and other similar programs of conformity assessment.

- 1.9 IAF is responsible for the harmonization and continuous improvement of the accreditation practices of its members with the goal to ensure sound technical competence of accredited CBs and V&VBs (Validation and Verification Bodies) and to support its IAF MLA.
- 1.10 The IAF MLA is established and maintained based on the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011 through regular peer evaluations and is the tool by which IAF contributes to the elimination of technical barriers to trade and to promoting the free circulation of certificates issued by accredited CBs and V&VBs.

2. Administration and Cooperation

- 2.1 Both IAF and IFS, by means of this formal Agreement, have decided to develop and maintain a close cooperation between the two organizations to ensure harmonization in the accreditation practices performed by IAF members for the Schemes and to cooperate in the continuous improvement of the Schemes with the final goal of assuring the highest level of competence in the Schemes' accredited CBs.
- 2.2 IAF and IFS shall comply with the respective requirements of IAF PL3 *Policies and Procedures on the IAF MLA Structure and for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA*, operating and administrating in an open, non-discriminatory, and transparent manner, avoiding conflicts of interest or limitation on the acceptance of CBs or ABs other than relevant technical considerations.
- 2.3 The Schemes will be open to all CBs that are accredited by IAF MLA signatories. The ABs will be signatory members of the IAF MLA for product.
- 2.4 IFS will only work with IAF MLA signatories. IFS will stop working with an AB that is no longer a signatory to the IAF MLA.

3. Information Exchange

To achieve such goals both organizations have agreed upon the following:

- 3.1 IFS shall inform the IAF of the following:
 - a) Changes to any of the schemes listed in Schedule 1, that may impact compliance with IAF PL3.
 - b) Any revision/extension of the Scheme(s)' standards/documents.
 - c) Outcomes from any AB workshop held by IFS on one or more of the Schemes.
 - d) Feedback IFS may have regarding the IAF MLA signatory ABs.
 - e) Change in the status as Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) recognized scheme(s).
- 3.2 IAF shall inform IFS of the following:
 - a) When an IAF MLA signatory with a sub-scope of one or more of the Schemes has been suspended or had their IAF MLA signatory status withdrawn.
 - b) Any general or technical questions regarding the interpretation of the Schemes' standards/documents.

- c) Changes in policy, procedure or documentation that may have an impact on the IAF MLA and Scheme sub-scope.

4. Mandatory Interpretation of the Scheme Documents

- 4.1 The Schemes' documents shall be prepared using the IFS procedure for the setting and revision of Schemes' documentation. This shall include a stakeholder consultation phase comprising of comment submissions by interested parties each lasting a specified timeframe with feedback being provided to organizations that made the comment.
- 4.2 The IAF will be included as a stakeholder and invited during any stakeholder consultation period of the Scheme revision process.
- 4.3 The Scheme normative documents shall be available at no cost on the IFS website (www.ifs-certification.com).
- 4.4 IFS will provide new draft Scheme version document(s) with a gap analysis and proposed transition plan for implementation of the new version documents to IAF as soon as a technically sound new version is available in order to make sure that the new scheme version continues to comply with the requirements of IAF PL3. IFS accepts the process to be followed according to IAF PL3 for IAF MLA sub-scope inclusion of new versions of the Schemes.
- 4.5 The need for the development of specific IAF application documents for inclusion of publicly owned standards/normative documents in the IAF MLA shall be proposed by the IAF Technical Committee and the need for additional preparation of peer evaluation by the IAF MLA Committee as specified in IAF PL3.
- 4.6 The Schemes endorsed as IAF MLA sub-scopes are included in the relevant IAF MLA status lists. After the end of the transition period to a new scheme version the old version will not be published as an IAF MLA sub-scope anymore.

5. Implementation

- 5.1 IAF and IFS shall each bear their own costs.
- 5.2 The Schemes will be included as a sub-scope under the main scope of product certification, ISO/IEC 17065. Those ABs currently providing accreditations to one or more of the Schemes will be able to apply for an IAF MLA scope extension for the relevant scheme(s) through provision of a signed self-declaration through their Regional Accreditation Group (RAG) once this Agreement is signed.
- 5.3 The revision of the implementation of this Agreement is in the scope of the MLA Peer evaluation to the IAF product certification MLA signatories working in one or more of the Schemes.

6. Confidentiality

- 6.1 IAF shall hold all Confidential Information in strictest confidence and shall only use it for the purpose for which it was provided and shall not disclose or make available any Confidential Information to any third party without the prior written consent of IFS.

7. Term

- 7.1 This Agreement shall commence from the original Date of Signing and, unless terminated earlier according to clause 8, continues indefinitely.

8. Cancellation

- 8.1 This Agreement between IFS and IAF can be cancelled by either party in writing with a period of notice of three months.

SCHEDULE 1

IFS schemes endorsed for inclusion as sub-scopes to the IAF MLA:

1. IFS Standard – IFS Food Version 7
 - Level 1 – IFS Food Version 7, Part 3, Section 1
 - Level 4 – IFS Food Version 7, Part 1, Part 3 Sections 2 & 3 and Part 4
 - Level 5 – IFS Food Version 7, Part 2
2. IFS Standard – IFS Food Version 8
 - Level 1 – IFS Food Version 8, Part 3, Section 1
 - Level 4 – IFS Food Version 8, Part 1, Part 3 Sections 2 & 3 and Part 4
 - Level 5 – IFS Food Version 8, Part 2
3. IFS Standard – IFS Logistics Version 3
 - Level 1 – IFS Logistics Version 3, Part 3, Section 1
 - Level 4 – IFS Logistics Version 3, Part 1, Part 3, Sections 2 & 3 and Part 4
 - Level 5 – IFS Logistics Version 3, Part 2
4. IFS Standard – IFS Broker Version 3.2
 - Level 1 – IFS Broker Version 3.2, Part 3, Section 1
 - Level 4 – IFS Broker Version 3.2, Part 1, Part 3, Sections 2 & 3 and Part 4
 - Level 5 – IFS Broker Version 3.2, Part 2
5. IFS Standard – IFS PACsecure Version 3
 - Level 1 – IFS PACsecure Version 3, Part 3, Section 1
 - Level 4 – IFS PACsecure Version 3, Part 1, Part 3, Sections 2 & 3 and Part 4
 - Level 5 – IFS PACsecure Version 3, Part 2

End of List

Execution of the agreement

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.	IFS
 Signature of authorised person IAF Chair	 Signature of authorised person IFS Managing Director

Date of Agreement: 29 May 2024

Note: Issue 2 of the Agreement was signed on 22 March 2024.