

# IFS FAQs regarding GFSI suspension



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IFS has prepared a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for all potentially impacted IFS certified companies, certification bodies, auditors and stakeholders. If you cannot find answers to your specific questions in our FAQ section, please contact [customersupport@ifs-certification.com](mailto:customersupport@ifs-certification.com).

We would like to state that our robust fundament is the accreditation against ISO 17065. Therefore, the IFS Certificates issued are not affected by the GFSI suspension. Major retailer and wholesaler have announced to accept the IFS Certificate also in the time of GFSI suspension.

## 1 General impact on IFS Certificates

### 1.1 I am currently certified against one or several of the IFS Certification Standard(s) IFS Food, Logistics, Broker, PACsecure. What do I need to do?

You do not need to take any action. The IFS Certificates are still valid and accepted by the IFS Network. Major retailer and wholesaler have announced to accept the IFS Certificate also in the time of GFSI suspension.

### 1.2 I am in the process of being certified or I am in the process of renewing my certification against one or several of the IFS Certification Standard(s) IFS Food, Logistics, Broker, PACsecure. What do I need to do?

You do not need to take any action. The IFS Audit can take place as planned and the certificates will be accepted by the IFS Network. Major retailer and wholesaler have announced to accept the IFS Certificate also in the time of GFSI suspension. We recommend that you clarify this bilaterally with your customer.

### 1.3 I have not yet begun my certification process. What should I do?

See Answer no. 2.

### 1.4 Are there any changes in IFS Rules or IFS Requirements related to the GFSI suspension?

No, all IFS Rules and Requirements remain unchanged.

### 1.5 Does the suspension of the GFSI benchmark have any impact on food safety legislation?

The suspension of the GFSI benchmark has nothing to do with official food law and in particular EU Regulation 178/2002 as well as the legal obligation to self-control. Each market participant decides for itself how to comply with this obligation and which standard or audit approach it chooses for it.

The GFSI benchmark was created to make the different food safety standards from different parts of the world comparable at a minimum level. The GFSI benchmark does not say whether a producer meets its legal requirements.

## **1.6 Is the accreditation according to ISO 17065 effected?**

The accreditation of IFS Certification Bodies is also not affected. All accreditations according to ISO 17065 on IFS remain fully valid.

## **2 CB requests**

### **2.1 Does the lack of GFSI recognition affects audits performed from 8th December or does it affect also audits for which we have taken certification decision from 8th December?**

GFSI recognition is still valid for all certificates linked to audits carried out prior to the date of the suspension decision 8th December 2022. Audits carried out between 8th December 2022 and lift of suspension will be without official GFSI recognition. The certificates will be accepted by the IFS Network. Major retailer and wholesaler have announced to accept the IFS Certificate also in the time of GFSI suspension.

### **2.2 What about the customers who had their initial certification just now and are still in the certification process?**

Certificates linked to audits performed before the 8th December 2022, will still be GFSI recognised.

### **2.3 Do you have a position on the impact to unannounced audits? [Will be there any concession to allow some unannounced audits to be planned slightly later so they fall outside of the suspension dates? Will the GFSI 1 in 3 unannounced audit rule still be operating?]**

The rules for unannounced audits are not affected and apply as laid down in the IFS Standards.

### **2.4 Will IFS continue with their programs to qualify IFS Auditors, accepting applications from new certification bodies and not change the requirements for auditor approval/maintenance?**

The suspension by GFSI has no impact on the qualification process for IFS Auditors nor on the process for new CBs who are in the accreditation process.

### **2.5 Are you going to keep the upcoming standard and program publications and reviews?**

The suspension by GFSI has no impact on the review and publication timelines which are kept unchanged and accreditation steps are ongoing.

### **2.6 What does it mean for IFS Global Markets assessments (Food, Logistics, PACsecure)?**

IFS Global Markets assessments are not affected as they are not under GFSI benchmark.