International Featured Standards - IFS

At a glance

This document provides an overview of the International Featured Standards (IFS) system.

The International Featured Standards is one of the several standard systems that are referenced in Standards Map, the interactive web-based tool on private standards developed by the T4SD program of ITC.

What is the International Featured Standards (IFS)

The IFS is a non-profit organization, which finances itself with the selling of the different IFS standards and the fees to the certification bodies for the uploading of audit reports.

IFS-standards are developed for all type of retailers (all sizes of companies and shops, independent or not) and for wholesalers with similar activities (e.g. cash and carry). They all have to ensure the safety of their "own branded" products they sell. IFS helps to comply with all legal safety requirements and gives common and transparent standards to the all concerned suppliers as well as a concrete and strong answer to the high safety expectations of customers.

What products are covered by the standard system

IFS-standards cover both food and non-food products (like cosmetics, household products or daily use goods).

What are the key features of the standard system

- The IFS is a food safety and quality standard in one. The IFS has been developed to inspect the competence of food producers in food safety and in quality with one set of standards. IFS standards system is using a risk-based approach: during the audit, the IFS auditor only checks to see that the solution implemented by the applicant works and guarantees to produce safe quality products.
- The "IFS Food" is a Standard for auditing retailer and wholesaler branded food product suppliers and only concerns food processing companies or companies that pack loose food products. The IFS Food can only be used when a product is "processed" or when there is a hazard for product contamination during the primary packing.
- The "IFS Logistics" is a standard for auditing all logistics activities for food and non-food products, such as transport, storage, distribution, loading/ unloading, etc. It applies to all types of activities: delivery by road, rail or ship; frozen/refrigerated products or without cooling. Pre-financing: Access for producers to credit in advance of sale.

- The "IFS Household and Personal Care" is a standard for auditing quality and safety of retailer and wholesaler branded household and personal care products. It covers cosmetics, household chemical products, housekeeping properties in contact with food (plastic and carton plates, forks, sponges, basin...) and products for personal hygiene (brushes, shavers, toothpaste...).
- The "IFS Broker" is a standard for checking whether brokers importers have implemented appropriate measures in their processes to ensure that their suppliers operate in accordance with food safety and quality requirements and to monitor compliance in order for the products supplied to meet legal requirements and contractual specifications.

IFS: facts and figures
- IFS is represented in 90 countries
- 9 out of 10 of the largest European food retailers use IFS standards
- 190 dealers support IFS-standards
- 12,000 suppliers use IFS-standards

Support

The IFS Academy was launched in 2008 in order to optimize the support for all IFS users. It has developed into a strong tool of the unique support system of the International Featured Standards. Every month the IFS Academy offers a variety of training events and seminars for different target groups e.g. for quality managers from the food industry, auditors, certification bodies and consultants.

The overall aim of the IFS Academy is to provide all IFS users with valuable, first hand information about the IFS standards in order to facilitate their implementation. Small seminar groups allow intensive group and case study work so that the participants directly benefit

Contact Details

International Featured Standards – IFS
Am Weidendamm 1a
Berlin 10117
Germany
+49 30 726 250 74
www.ifs-certification.com
info@ifs-certification.com

IFS is represented in 90 countries worldwide.

Detailed maps highlighting countries where certification/ verification is possible and countries where certified products / services are sold can be generated on ITC's Standards Map website.

ASIA China **Europe** France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom **NORTH AMERICA** Canada, United States of America
SOUTH AMERICA Brazil, Chile

How to join IFS

Step 1:   Identify the IFS standard of your choice and purchase the standard document on IFS website (http://www.ifs-certification.com/index.php?SID=b7f655fa04f6ea862559d157bc766d9d&page=home&content=public_content&desc=ifs_standards)

Step 2:   Identify a certification body in your country that certifies the IFS standard of your choice (http://www.ifs-certification.com/index.php?SID=b7f655fa04f6ea862559d157bc766d9d&page=home&content=pruefinstitute&desc=institutes)

Step 3:   IFS is risk-based: this means that you can develop your own suitable solution. During the audit, the IFS auditor only checks to see that your solution works and guarantees to produce safe products (IFS does not ask for specific procedures or machines if it is not necessary to establish a safe process for your production). The IFS scoring system shows differences in implementation. An auditor has the possibility to rate implementation with the deviation in scoring visible. With the IFS audit report you get a real picture of your company and that provides a good base from which to start the improvement process.

Step 4:   IFS gives you 12-months time to improve all deviations that are determined in the IFS audit. This gives your company the time to develop a tailor-made solution which fits your process. Only non-conformities which are related to food-safety or legal requirements have to be solved immediately.

Step 5:   IFS charges 39 euros (approx $55 US) for the hardcopy of the standard and 150 euros (approx $210 US) for the access to its database. The costs for the audit have to be negotiated with the certification body of your choice.

What areas does the IFS standard system cover

The following table provides an overview of IFS principles and requirements and related compliance policies covering social, environmental and economic areas applied in production, processing and trade.

Explanation of Standards Maps interpretation of compliance policies in the IFS standard system:

Immediate Requirements: The Standard Map database presents the IFS Food requirements that relate to food-safety or legal requirements as "Immediate"/ "Pass/fail" based on the following policy applied - "Only non-conformities which are related to food-safety or legal requirements have to be solved immediately."

Short-term requirements: The Standard Map database presents the IFS Food requirements (excluding those related to food-safety or legal requirements) as "Short-term" based on the following policy applied - "IFS gives you 12-months time to improve all deviations that are determined in the IFS audit. This gives your company the time to develop a tailor-made solution which fits your process."

	Environment	Social	Economic
Immediate requirements	**Animals** Animal welfare		
Short-term requirements	**Chemicals / Natural Organic Inputs** Organic natural inputs Fertilizers Pesticides/herbicides Storage/disposal/waste of chemicals Management of chemicals Weed control **Biodiversity** Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) use Prohibition Management system **Waste** Waste packaging of products in value chain Disposal of waste Fire use to eliminate waste Chemicals use to eliminate waste		**Organizational Development** Administration and management Timely payment criteria from buyer Corporate Social Responsibility policy Compliance with local social and environmental laws and regulations **Quality** Chilling, packaging, storage and sanitary facilities