



Make “continuous improvement” easier
IFS Scoring System

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All enterprises aim to secure and improve their market position by continuous optimization of products and services. An effective tool to accomplish this, are the IFS Standards and Programs.

One of their main objectives is to drive continuous improvement regarding safe, legal and compliant products and services.

The IFS Standards offer a uniform and relevant evaluation system, which support the audited company in shaping their own systems.

The differentiated scoring system of IFS allows auditors to evaluate audit findings in regard to the level of compliance with the IFS Standards' requirements. The audited company can easily derive actions from clearly stated explanations in the report and correct the noticed non-compliances. Sometimes these audit findings are the crucial argument and the reason for accelerated investments.

Within an IFS audit process the auditor assesses the nature and significance of any deviation or non-conformity. In order to determine whether compliance with the IFS Standards has been met, the auditor has to evaluate every individual IFS Standard requirement.

The IFS Featured Standards offer the opportunity to use different scorings. In general there are deviations and non-conformities.

Scoring a requirement as a deviation

In IFS, a requirement can be scored with:

| Result | Standard explanation | Points | Meaning |
|--------|--|--------|--|
| A | Full compliance with the requirement specified in the Standard | 20 | Perfect implementation |
| B | Almost full compliance with the requirement specified in the Standard, but a small deviation was found | 15 | Very good implementation, but space for small improvements |
| C | Only a small part of the requirement has been implemented | 5 | Basic implementation – it works in daily business many topics to improve |
| D | The requirement is not implemented | -20 | Implementation is not sufficient or not done at all |

The above table demonstrates clearly, that points can also be awarded for “partially compliance”. This allows the auditor to address “space for improvement” without a significant negative impact on the final result of the audit.

In addition to this scoring, the auditor can decide to give the company a “KO” or a “Major” non-conformity that will subtract points from the total amount of points.



Scoring a requirement as a non-conformity



In IFS, there are two kinds of non-conformities which are Major and KO. Both will lead to a subtraction of points from the total amount. If the company gets at least one of these non-conformities, the certificate cannot be awarded.

> KO (Knock out)

In IFS Standards, there are specific requirements which are designated as KO requirements (KO – Knock Out). These requirements are elementary and include essential topics to be ensured by an efficient quality management system to reach compliance with a safety and quality standard.

A certificate can't be awarded, in case the auditor establishes, that these requirements are not fulfilled.

In accordance to the conceptual meaning, a KO requirement can only be scored with an "A", "B" or D (=KO). The latter indicates a non-implementation of the requirement and leads to a subtraction of 50 % of the possible total amount of points. (Generally, a final score of an IFS audit < 75 % results in non-certification).

> Major

A Major non-conformity can be given to any requirement which is not defined as KO requirement. A non-conformity can be given in substantial failure to meet the requirements of legislation/law, food/product safety, internal dysfunctions (e.g. completely not regulated and controlled processes) and customer issues. A Major can also be given when the identified non-conformity can lead to a serious health hazard.

A Major will subtract 15 % of the possible total amount of points.

Awarding a certificate at foundation level, is possible only, if the Major non-conformity is finally solved and controlled during a follow-up audit.

The IFS audit report and action plan

After the on-site audit the auditor shall explain all scorings with B, C and D and Major- or KO-ratings in the audit report and action plan. Moreover, the auditor has to fill in explanations for some fixed IFS pre-defined requirements – even if they were scored with an A – to give the audit report sufficient significance.

From the achieved points a percentage is calculated, which shows the final result expressed as level of compliance.

The action plan shall include all the requirements which are not evaluated with A or N/A = “not applicable”.

The auditor shall explain and justify deviations and non-conformity findings before sending the company the outline action plan and the pre-report of the audit.

| Number of the requirement | IFS requirement | Evaluation | Explanation (by the auditor) | Corrective action (by the company) | Responsibility/ Date/Status of implementation (by the company) | Release by the auditor |
|---------------------------|--|------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| | | | Field A | Field B | Field C | Field D |
| 1.2.1 | An organisation chart ... | B | | | | |
| 1.2.2 | Competences and responsibilities, ... | C | | | | |
| 1.2.3 | Job descriptions with clearly ... | D | | | | |
| 1.2.4 KO | The senior management shall ensure ... | KO/D | | | | |
| 1.2.5 | Employees with influence ... | Major | | | | |

Source: IFS Food Version 6 (April 2014)

An audit finding (explanation) in the report and action plan should:

- > refer to a specific requirement
- > relate to objective facts
- > be precisely described and be verifiable
- > represent facts for others in an understandable manner
- > provide a basis for the evaluation according to the IFS system

By answering the questions “what, where, why and resulting effect” the auditor give sufficient information within a described finding in order to have a clear picture of the situation found. IFS auditors are trained regularly to meet these IFS expectations.



The established audit findings support the development of corrective actions for the audited company. Corrective actions have to be implemented depending on the type and severity of deviation in a set time frame. This time frame has to be agreed between the company and certification body. After one year – in the next IFS audit – the efficiency and improvement will be checked.

The generation of a uniform audit report is supported by the software auditXpress™. The consistent scoring system is easy to understand and a useful tool for all involved parties.

In summary it can be stated that the benefits of the IFS scoring and evaluation system are:

- Scoring shows the degree of implementation of each requirement
 - Audit findings are well defined to establish corrective actions accordingly
 - “B” deviations in the IFS scoring system offer well developed companies opportunities to improve
 - depending on the type of deviation the time for implementation of corrective actions has to be defined
 - supports the auditee in practical continuous improvement
- Audit result is expressed as a level of compliance in percent with the relevant IFS Standard requirements
- Result applies uniformly to several trade partners – according to a given decision tree
- Allows comparability between all audits independent from trading partner
- Easy to understand for all involved parties due to a uniform reporting



Continuous improvement is one of our main corporate policy themes. By working with the IFS Food with its yearly independent look on our processes and the differentiated scoring system we have found a very efficient working tool to reach excellence.

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