



# BRCGS101: Position Statement to clarify the use of IFS certification for supplier approval during GFSI suspension period

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Document Scope: This document explains the process for companies and auditors when offered an IFS certificate as a GFSI benchmarked option for supplier approval. This normative document is applicable to the following Global Standards and clauses:

- Food Safety (including Intermediate level START! audits) Clause 3.5.1.2
- Packaging Materials Clause 3.7.2
- Storage and Distribution Clause 3.5.2.2
- Agents and Brokers Clause 4.1.2
- Gluten-Free Certification Program

Change log:

Version no.	Date	Description
1	12/12/2022	First version.



## Background

GFSI announced that the IFS GFSI benchmark is suspended for three months between 08 December 2022 and 08 March 2023. Existing IFS Certificates are still valid for the duration date on their certificate and these certificates will be recognised as GFSI benchmarked during the GFSI suspension.

IFS audits conducted during the suspension period will not be recognised as GFSI benchmarked. This could impact the supplier approval procedure for several BRCGS Standards; however, a solution is provided below:

## Current Process

BRCGS requires the certificated company to have a documented procedure to ensure that all suppliers of raw materials effectively manage risks to raw material quality and safety and are operating effective traceability processes. This approval procedure is based on risk and includes either one or a combination of:

1. a valid certification to the applicable BRCGS Standard or GFSI-benchmarked certificate  
or
2. supplier audit with specific criteria as detailed in each Standard  
or
3. supplier questionnaire with specific criteria as detailed in each Standard

## Temporary Process

Until the recent GFSI suspension IFS certification was accepted as a GFSI-benchmarked standard for supplier approval (i.e., would satisfy option 1 above). However, sites that are audited and certificated to the IFS standard during the suspension period will not be accepted as having a GFSI benchmarked certificate and therefore will not satisfy option 1 above. Instead BRCGS shall accept the IFS Certificate as the second option above i.e., "supplier audit with specific criteria as detailed in each Standard". However, during this period BRCGS do not expect sites to complete additional reviews of the IFS audit reports as indicated in the BRCGS Standards.

This means BRCGS will continue to recognise and accept IFS certificated audits conducted during the suspension period as being satisfactory to meet the requirements of the BRCGS supplier approval requirement.

The same approach will be applied for supplier approval for traded products.

For those sites in the Gluten Free Certification Program (GFCP), it is a prerequisite to be certificated to a GFSI benchmarked scheme, BRCGS START! or an equivalent global markets program, to control and manage their food safety management systems including a complete hazard analysis based on Codex HACCP principles.

The GFSI suspension of the IFS standard does not affect the requirements of the IFS standard, and it still covers all the operational programs required as prerequisites to the GFCP. Therefore BRCGS have confidence that it remains a suitable certification option and will continue to

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recognise and accept IFS certificated audits conducted prior to and during the suspension period as being satisfactory to meet these GFSP prerequisite requirements.

**Effective date:**

It may be applied to all relevant audits starting on or after 13 December 2022.

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