



Assurance Code Public System Outline Report

21st September 2017

Assurance System Structure

The Certification System

The Standards that are assessed through the assurance system are as follows;

- IFFO Responsible Supply standard (IFFO RS)
- IFFO RS Chain of Custody (IFFO RS CoC)
- IFFO RS Improvers Programme (IFFO RS IP)

There are currently two (2) versions of the IFFO RS Standard, IFFO RS standard V1.6 ([click here](#)) and IFFO RS Version 2.0 ([click here](#)) running. This is due to the revision of V1.6 of the IFFO RS standard that was then launched in July of 2017 and allowing a transition period from the old version to the new.

As the IFFO RS Standard is managed according to the BS EN ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Standard it requires the appointment of independent Certification Bodies to undertake the task of auditing and awarding IFFO RS Certificates. Currently IFFO RS has 3 approved Certification Bodies;

- SAI Global (Ireland) - (Accredited ISO 17065 via INAB www.inab.ie)
- SGS Peru (Peru) - (Accreditation ISO 17065 via INACAL www.indecopi.gob.pe) – scope extension under process
- NSF International (USA) - (Accreditation ISO 17065 via ANSI <https://www.ansi.org/>) – scope extension under process

This list can also be found on the IFFO RS website via the following link. <https://www.iffors.com/certification-bodies-approved-auditors>

There are opportunities for stakeholders to engage throughout the assurance process, for example via the IFFO RS website <https://www.iffors.com/iffo-rs-contact> or through the formal complaints procedure. All complaints must be reported to the allocated member of staff and recorded as outlined in appendix A6 of the IFFO RS Control Manual.

The IFFO RS Secretariat requires that the CB permits stakeholder input during the Fishery assessment process, this is done by an external and consultative Fisheries Peer Review Committee <https://www.iffors.com/fisheries-peer-review-committee>

All complaints shall be acknowledged within 5 working days and responsibility of investigation and action is allocated and the progress of the complaint shall be monitored by a senior manager. The complainant shall be updated on the progress of the complaint at least every 14 calendar days. The outcome of the complaint shall be signed off by a Chief Executive Manager and the complainant shall be informed in writing.



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The IFFO RS programme, including the Standard, Assurance System and Certification process, is subject to an annual review process. An external consultant conducts the review and records any non-compliances with documented procedures, recommend corrective actions, and where appropriate make recommendations for systems improvements. Follow-up reviews are conducted where necessary to verify corrective actions

On-going review of CB assessment performance are conducted by the IFFO RS Secretariat and is achieved by a combination of monitoring of assessment reports, continuous contact with assessment staff, and witness of assessments conducted by individual assessors and assessments of head office to ensure compliance with assessment procedures and consistency of interpretation of Programme requirements to meet an agreed set of Key Performance Indicators.

IFFO RS firmly believes in continues improvement and development, and is committed to providing and facilitating a cost effective and practical assessment and certification process through which all sizes of marine ingredient producers can demonstrate their commitment to responsible sourcing practices, and will implement a Quality Management System (QMS - <https://www.iffors.com/iffo-rs-quality-management-system>) in order to achieve the following objectives:

- To work in partnership with CBs and applicants to provide for their needs and enhance their expectations to enable them to meet the requirements of the IFFO RS programme;
- To maintain a participatory work ethic, to properly apply the innate excellence of staff, and to provide a culture in which they excel;
- To maintain a commitment for continuous improvement and apply this commitment improve assessment and certification processes and training-related services;
- To facilitate and maintain ISO 17065 accreditation for the IFFO RS Programme;
- To provide open, effective communication with customers, interested parties and committees;
- To provide open , effective communication with all stakeholders directly and indirectly involved in the IFFO RS programme on any changes/revisions to the standard and certification process in an effective manner
- To provide systematic validation and control of quality processes.

The IFFO RS programme is not a mandatory scheme and there is no requirement for marine ingredient producers to be certified in order to access any markets.



Personnel Competence

IFFO RS Secretariat on behalf of the IFFO RS Governance Board has defined the qualifications and competence criteria required by auditors and audit teams employed by Certification Bodies. IFFO RS makes this information available on request. Only IFFO RS approved Fishery Assessors and Factory Auditors selected, appointed and controlled by approved Certification Bodies may carry out fishery assessments and auditing activities.

All fishery assessors are required to follow the fishery assessment process described in the IFFO RS Standard, IFFO RS Fishery Assessment Guidance, IFFO RS Fishery Assessment template and/or IFFO RS By-product Assessment template, and all other IFFO RS documentation, including the QMS Control Manual.

All marine ingredient plant auditors are required to follow the plant auditing process described in the IFFO RS Standard, IFFO RS Factory Audit template, and all other IFFO RS documentation, including the QMS Control Manual.

The service provided by each CB employed is subject to an agreement, which sets out the arrangements for the provision of the service and it includes requirements for the information and data arising from the provision of the service to be retained in confidence. The IFFO RS Secretariat maintains a copy of the agreement with each CB in updated form and these are available for examination, on request, by authorised persons.

The IFFO RS Secretariat requires that Certification Bodies include the following in their competence assessment of assessors and auditors:

- An assessment of knowledge and skills relating to either fisheries management or fishmeal and fish oil processing, as appropriate;
- An assessment of the personal attributes of the assessor/auditor, to ensure they conduct themselves in a professional manner;
- A period of supervised training to cover the assessment fishery and/or specific audit techniques and specific category knowledge;
- A documented sign off of the satisfactory completion of the training programme by the appointed competent supervisor.

The IFFO RS Secretariat have in place CB performance management, IFFO RS calibration webinars and training. It also evaluates the performance of the CB via Key Performance Indicators which are reviewed annually. There is also IFFO RS verification of assessment and witness audits performed by the Accreditation bodies in order to review and confirm competency of auditor.

The IFFO RS Secretariat requires that Certification Bodies carry out periodic surveillance and annual monitoring to verify that certified operations of certification continue to comply with the certification programme requirements.

The IFFO RS Secretariat requires that CBs use a consistent procedure during the plant audit process for determining non-compliances, verifying corrective actions arising from non-compliances and allowing for appeals of non-compliances.



Assessment

The IFFO RS assessment and audit process consists of:

- A desktop assessment of the fishery/fisheries from which raw materials and/or by-product materials are assessed against the relevant sections of the IFFO RS Standard. The approval of raw materials against the IFFO RS Standard is a mandatory prerequisite for the conducting of onsite factory audits. Marine Ingredients that do not originate from an approved fishery or by-product cannot be certified to the IFFO RS Standard. Interested parties relevant to the fishery under assessment are consulted with by the CB during the approval process to capture all feedback, and the fishery peer review committee function.
- An onsite audit of the marine ingredient processing facilities which represent the Unit of Certification.
- Interested parties should refer to the full procedure detailed in the Appendices for Fishery assessments and fishmeal plant audits.

The Certification Body will identify any observed non-compliance with the criteria defined in the relevant section of the IFFO RS Standard and record them on the appropriate fishery or by product assessment/ factory audit report template.

On completion of the assessment/audit, the CB will present their findings, discuss any non-compliance and indicate, when relevant, the conditions under which the fishery/by product fishery has been approved, or the nature of factory non-conformities and timescales for submission of a corrective evidence to close them off. The time scale for factories to close off non-compliance to the IFFO RS standard is set at 28 days from the date of issue, it is at the Certification Bodies discretion to how much time they provide the applicant to provide evidence to close non-compliance for fishery assessments outlined in appendix A3, page 3, second paragraph, 5th line.

The CB will complete a report for every fishery/by product assessment and factory audit conducted, using the appropriate report template: IFFO RS Fishery Assessment template, IFFO RS By-product Assessment template, or IFFO RS Factory Audit template. For Fishery Assessments this report will undergo an IFFO RS Peer review prior to the final determination of fishery or by product approval. The peer review process is documented in <https://www.iffors.com/fisheries-peer-review-committee>.

The CB Programme Administrator will submit any final report for consideration by the appropriate CB Certification Committee.

If the application is approved by the CB Certification Committee:

- the Applicant will be informed in writing;
- the Applicant's details and certified products will be entered in the relevant CB Register of Clients and a CB Certificate of Approval will be issued;
- Fishery and By-product assessment reports and certified plant details will be made publically available on the IFFO RS website.

If CB approval is withheld from the raw material and/or by-product material:



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- The Applicant will be informed in writing of the reason(s) for the withholding of approval. As fishery management will generally be outside the control of the Applicant, a corrective action programme is not appropriate. Fisheries which are not approved against the IFFO RS Standard will be eligible for entry into the IFFO RS Improver Programme.

If CB approval is withheld at the factory audit stage:

- the reasons will be communicated to the Applicant in writing, which will identify areas of non-compliance and requesting a corrective action(s) Programme. Corrective action(s) will be verified before the application can be given further consideration;
- the CB assessment report and all the relevant correspondences will be filed for future reference.

Should the Applicant wish to appeal against the withholding of a Certificate of Approval the appeal will be heard in the manner described in Appeals section of the control manual, Appendix A6, found on the IFFO RS website by [clicking here](#)

Oversight

To qualify for approval to conduct IFFO RS assessments, each Certification Body must be accredited to ISO 17065 or be in application for accreditation to ISO 17065 and agree to conform to IFFO RS Rules and Regulations.

Accreditation Bodies

- Accreditation Bodies (ABs) are chosen by the Certification Bodies (CBs) and must be members of the International Accreditation Forum that should be signatory members of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MLA)
- IFFO RS Secretariat on behalf of the IFFO RS GB will endeavour to have contact with AB's that offer accreditation to their Programme. The arrangement requires the ABs to be compliant with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011:2004.
- IFFO RS programme (through the engagement of IAF AB's) ensures that the accreditation process includes an office audit of the certification body.
- IFFO RS programme ensures (through the engagement of IAF AB's) that the accreditation process includes a review of the performance of CBs and auditors in the field.
- IFFO RS programme requires (through the engagement of IAF AB's) that CBs operating in the Programme be accredited to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for the scope of the respective standard of the Programme.



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On-going Scrutiny

Marks of Conformity (IFFO RS LOGO)

Clients and associated organisations listed on a valid IFFO RS Certificate of Approval may be authorised to use a Logo or ‘*Mark of Conformity*’ approved by IFFO RS following the signing of a ‘Certified Logo Agreement’.

The Logo is Certified Mark of Conformity and its use is regulated through Logo licencing management agreement or through certification to the IFFO RS Chain of Custody within the supply chain.

The IFFO RS Logo may be used only in the form approved by IFFO RS Governance Board and only in relation to products, which are subject to the Certificate of Approval issued to the Client and organisations concerned. The Marks must be used only:

- in association with the business names shown on the Certificate of Approval or the brand mark of the business;
- or in association with a purchaser’s name or brand mark always provided that the name of the Client/ associated organisations can be identified from the indications on the product packaging and/or from the purchaser’s records.

Incorrect use of the approved IFFO RS Logo or misleading references to certificates held/found in advertisement, catalogues, etc., shall require immediate withdrawal of the offending material.

The Approved Certification Bodies policy the use of the during the site audits.

Where no such corrective action is implemented IFFO RS Ltd. may initiate appropriate legal action.

<https://www.iffors.com/iffo-rs-logo-rules>