



Guidance on the Allocation of the IFS Food Product Scopes and Processing Steps

VERSION 1

ENGLISH

INTRODUCTION

This document aims to support certification bodies in determining which product falls within a technology scope for the auditor qualification and which processing steps are appropriate for the audit time duration.

The guidance is divided into two parts. In the first part, IFS provides an overview of all product scopes and relevant examples. In the second part, IFS provides examples of different processing steps and further explanations.

IFS Food Product Scopes Example Chart

This chart provides examples to showcase the proper allocation of product scopes. It doesn't mean to be exhaustive. Decisions for diverging allocations (reasons e.g., based on specific recipes) shall be available in writing by the certification body.

Product groups/examples may refer to processing steps, however the connected technology scopes must be considered separately e.g., for auditor qualification, before auditing a company.

IFS Processing Steps Guidance

The guidance provides, in addition to the information provided in the IFS Food Standard, examples for the 13 IFS Processing Steps. Please note the processing steps are used only to calculate the IFS Audit Duration. The applicable processing steps determine the applicable IFS Technology Scopes that are used for the IFS Auditors' competencies. For additional information on the IFS Technology Scopes and Processing Steps please consult the current standard version.

In case of any queries regarding the interpretation of IFS Standards and Programmes, please contact standardmanagement@ifs-certification.com

IFS Food Product Example Chart

Select the corresponding product scopes when a product is processed on-site, is intended for human consumption and of the following origin: //

Product scope → Product groups → *Product example*
Changes/new examples are marked in **italic/bold**.

Animal	
1 Red meat, white meat, poultry and meat products	
Red, white and game meat, poultry, rabbit	<i>e.g. cuts, minced</i>
Meat products, sausage & meat aspics	<i>e.g. raw/cooked/fermented/marinated meat products, cordon bleu, cold cuts, breaded schnitzel, natural casings, spreads</i>
Intestines	
Animal fat	<i>e.g. lard, tallow, duck fat</i>
Meat soups and sauces	<i>(meat as main ingredient)</i>
Meat analogues*	
Frogs, snails, insects	
2 Fish and fish products	
Fish and shellfish	<i>e.g. cuts, minced, dried, smoked</i>
Seafood products	<i>e.g. marinated/battered/breaded fish, surimi, spreads</i>
Fish and shellfish oil	
Fish soups and sauces	<i>(fish as main ingredient)</i>
Roe	<i>e.g. caviar, tarama</i>
Fish and shellfish analogues*	
3 Eggs and egg products	
Eggs	<i>e.g. shell eggs, coloured egg</i>
Egg products	<i>e.g. powdered egg yolk, fluid egg white</i>
Egg substitutes*	
Egg packing stations	
4 Dairy and dairy products	
Milk	<i>e.g. cow, goat, sheep, camel, milk powder, flavoured milk drinks</i>
Creamery products	<i>e.g. yoghurt, flavoured yoghurt, butter, ghee, kefir, ice cream (incl. sorbet)</i>
Dairy analogues*	<i>e.g. plant-based drinks, cheese analogues, fermented dairy analogues</i>
Dairy products	<i>(dairy as main ingredient e.g., tzatziki)</i>
Cheese	<i>e.g. white, hard, fermented, ricotta</i>
Infant formula	

Non-animal and combined	
5 Fruits and vegetables	
Fruits and vegetables	<i>e.g. whole, cut, dried, mixed pickles, prepared salad containing only vegetables</i>
Fruit and vegetables products	<i>e.g. fruit preserves, vegetable antipasti (pure, in brine or oil), baby food</i>
Fruit and vegetable soups/sauces	<i>(fruits and vegetables as only ingredients)</i>
Seeds and nuts	<i>e.g. sunflower seeds, pistachios</i>
Microgreens	<i>e.g. bean sprouts, bamboo shoots</i>
Herbs and spices	<i>(fresh or frozen)</i>
Potato products	<i>e.g. dried potato puree</i>
Legumes	<i>e.g. chickpea, peanut, falafel</i>
Legumes products	<i>e.g. hummus, tofu, legume flour, texturized vegetable protein (TVP)</i>
Plant-based drinks	<i>e.g. almond-, soy-, pea drink</i>
Analogues/substitutes*	
Mushrooms	
Seaweed	<i>e.g. agar, nori</i>
Condiments	<i>e.g. ketchup, mustard, soy sauce, wasabi, guacamole, tapenade</i>
6 Cereals and cereal products, confectionary, sweets and snacks	
Cereals	<i>e.g. wheat, rice, corn, quinoa, amaranth</i>
Cereal products	<i>e.g. starch, flour, bread, baking mix, pasta, noodles</i>
Plant-based drinks	<i>e.g. oat-, rice-, spelt drink</i>
Analogues/substitutes*	
Confectionary	<i>e.g. pastry, cake, halva, marzipan, chocolate sauce, sweet stuffed pastry</i>
Seed and nut spreads	<i>e.g. tahini, peanut butter, almond spread</i>
Sweets	<i>e.g. chocolate, hard candy, soft candy, gums</i>
Snacks	<i>e.g. crisps, crackers, pretzels</i>
Bee products	<i>e.g. honey, royal jelly, pollen, propolis</i>

*For analogues/substitutes (products that reassemble products traditionally associated from animal origin)
PS 5 and/or 6 may be selected for companies that produce them exclusively.

IFS Food Product Example Chart

Select the corresponding product scopes when a product is processed on-site, is intended for human consumption and of the following origin: //

Product scope → Product groups → *Product example*
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Non-animal and combined

7 Combined products

//when products combine animal and non-animal derived ingredients (based on recipe), or fall within these groups:

Soups, stews and sauces	(liquid)
Ready meals	e.g. <i>mixed antipasti, quenelle, sandwiches, lasagne</i>
Savoury dough products	e.g. <i>pies, pizza, quiches, stuffed pasta</i>
Deli salads	e.g. <i>tuna salad, cheese salad, egg salad</i>
Sushi	
Mixed skewers and antipasti	
Highly perishable sweet desserts	e.g. <i>chocolate mousse, tiramisu</i>
Condiments	e.g. <i>pesto, mayonnaise, tapenade, Worcestershire sauce</i>

8 Beverages

//when finished products fall within these groups. Please note beverages containing milk fall under product scope 4.

Water and water ice	
Soft drinks	e.g. <i>lemonade, soda, iced tea</i>
Plant extracts	e.g. <i>juice, fruit concentrate, fruit and vegetable smoothies, coconut water</i>
Common syrups	e.g. <i>simple syrup, flavoured syrup</i>
Baby food beverages	
Alcoholic drinks	e.g. <i>beer, cider, wine, spirits</i>
Ready drinks	e.g. canned coffee
Vinegar	
Functional beverages	e.g. <i>performance drinks, diet drinks</i>
Essential oils	(citrus oil, by-product of beverage industry)

9 Oils and fats

//when a company is mainly producing oil or fats and if the recipe is similar to oil production, then PS 9 shall be chosen. If it's only mixing ingredients, then PS 7 shall be chosen.

Vegetable, nut, or seed oil	e.g. <i>olive oil, cooking oils and fats</i>
Spreads	(based on vegetable oil e.g., <i>margarine</i>)
Condiments	(based on oil e.g., <i>mayonnaise, vinaigrette</i>)
Pesto base	(= oil + herbs + salt)
Fat powders	
Essential oils	e.g. <i>lemon oil, orange blossom oil</i>

10 Dry goods, supplements and additives

//when the company exclusively has mixing and/or packing activities of already dried/powdered products OR produces products that fall within these groups:

*Clarification: if a company has drying activities to produce "dried milk powder", the fitting scope is PS 4 and the above mentioned rule does not apply. Note: For audits of packing activities under PS 10 the auditor will not receive a scope extension for any other scope than PS 10.

Sugar	
Culinary syrups	e.g. agave, sugar beet, glucose, maple
Coffee- and cocoa beans	e.g. <i>instant coffee, cocoa powder</i>
Tea- and mate leaves	
Herbs and spices	(dried)
Dehydrated stock	e.g. <i>stock cubes, dried soup</i>
Dietary supplements	e.g. <i>vitamins, omega-3 fatty acids</i>
Fermentation starter	e.g. <i>yeasts</i>
Food additives	e.g. gelatine, sugar substitute
Food-grade gases	
Inorganic compounds	e.g. <i>table salt, zinc oxide</i>
Tobacco	

Select, when a company produces pet food:

11 Pet Food

Dog food, Cat food, Bird food, Fish food, Edible pet toys e.g. *chewing sticks, biscuits*

Guidance on the Allocation of Processing Steps

IFS Technology Scope	IFS Processing Step – including processing / treatment / manipulation / storing	Technology oriented classification which also takes into consideration product risks
A	Sterilisation (in final packaging) with the purpose to destroy pathogens. Sterilised (e.g. autoclaved) products in final packaging.	
	P1 Sterilisation (e.g. cans)	- The sterilisation process of a product in the final packaging also includes the packaging process and the cooling process after the sterilisation. Therefore, for the audit duration calculation, it is not necessary to additionally select P6 for cooling and P12 for the packaging process, as they are already integrated in P1. - The heating of e.g. milk above 130°C (266°F) in combination with aseptically fillings does not belong to P1, but P2, because the product is not sterilised in final packaging. - Depending on the heat treatment target and the type of product (e.g. low acid food), the F-value (together with D- and z-values) shall be used to validate the process. – <i>Examples: canned tuna, canned stew.</i>
B	Any heat treatment (or high pressure) with the purpose to reduce food safety hazards based on company's HACCP plan.	
	P2 Thermal pasteurisation, UHT / aseptic filling, hot filling Other pasteurisation techniques e.g. high-pressure pasteurisation, microwave	- Applies to all processes which are controlled and monitored and are considered as CCP or control measure for safety reasons. - The heat treatment in general includes the cooling process after the heat treatment. Therefore, for the audit time calculation, it is not necessary to additionally select P6 for this cooling process. When there is an open product handling or a risk of recontamination or when the product requires a refrigerated storage after the heat treatment, P6 needs to be applied additionally. - For aseptic filling, it is not necessary to additionally select P11 for packaging. – <i>Examples: dairy products (UHT / aseptic filling), jam (hot filling), microwave pasteurisation of sliced bread, HPP (High Pressure Process) pasteurisation of meat pâté, meat cooking (when the main objective is to reduce the microbiological food safety hazards in the meat, as ingredient in a ready-to-eat product with short shelf life).</i> - The P-step 2 has to be chosen for any heat treatment (or high pressure) with the purpose to reduce a microbiological food safety hazard based on the company's HACCP plan (and not only in case of pasteurisation). The P-step 11 (cooking) shall be applied when the purpose of the process (based on HACCP plan) is a technical reason and not an action for hazard reduction (e.g. to change the consistency of a raw material or product such as cooking rice or potatoes to make them soft, cooking of pizza sauce for deep frozen pizza)

Guidance on the Allocation of Processing Steps

IFS Technology Scope	IFS Processing Step – including processing / treatment / manipulation / storing	Technology oriented classification which also takes into consideration product risks
C	Processed products: treatment with purpose to modify product and / or extend the shelf life and / or reduce food safety hazards by preservation techniques and other processing techniques. Exception: Irradiation is attributed to this category although aimed at the destruction of microorganisms.	
	P3	Irradiation of food
	P4	Preserving: salting, marinating, sugaring, acidifying / pickling, curing, smoking, fermenting, etc. Preserving techniques • Sugaring / salting: sugar / salt may be added for preservation, which can be determined by checking the HACCP plan (all these preserving methods as salting, sugaring, etc. are not meant to add salt / sugar to a meal to improve organoleptic parameters but to modify or extend the shelf life and / or reduce food safety hazards). – <i>Examples: addition of sugar in jam.</i> • Marinating: if marinating leads to an extension of shelf life, P4 needs to be selected. • Smoking: smoking as a process shall always lead to the selection of P4. • Fermentation: – <i>Examples: yoghurt, salami.</i> • Acidification: if the pH value is adjusted for microbial reduction or as part of the hurdle concept, P-step 4 needs to be selected. This P-step is not used in cases where the pH value is adjusted as a flavour or for technological reasons. In order to get clarity, the HACCP plan shall always be reviewed during the audit. • <i>The preservatives are considered as part of the recipe and therefore no P-step need to be selected (e.g., dimethyl dicarbonate).</i>
	P5	Evaporation / dehydration, vacuum filtration, freeze drying, microfiltration (less than 10 µ mesh size) Filtration • It applies to microfiltration when equal or less than 10 µ mesh size. – <i>Examples: wine, e.g. with membrane filtration, cross flow filtration, to remove yeasts.</i> Evaporation / dehydration • Water is removed with the aim to modify product and / or extend the shelf life and / or reduce food safety hazards. In this case, specific process equipment is needed and respective control measures are applied to achieve a defined moisture content (e.g. heat tunnel, drying by induction, warm air tower, drying by microwave, etc.) – <i>Examples: pasta, milk (drum drying).</i> Bactofugation • If the company had defined this step as a method to extend the shelf-life, then bactofugation belongs to P-step 5. – <i>Example: Bactofugation with an influence on the shelf life of extended shelf-life milk.</i>

Guidance on the Allocation of Processing Steps

IFS Technology Scope	IFS Processing Step – including processing / treatment / manipulation / storing	Technology oriented classification which also takes into consideration product risks
D	Systems, treatments to maintain product integrity and / or safety. Treatment with purpose to maintain the quality and / or integrity of the products including treatments to remove contamination and / or prevent contamination.	
	P6 Freezing (at least –18 °C / 0 °F) including storage, quick freezing, cooling, chilling processes and respective cool storing	Freezing, cooling, etc. This P-step shall be selected each time there are cooling processes or cool storage for raw materials, semi-finished and finished products where effective control on cooling is essential to prevent spoilage and / or growth of pathogenic microorganisms, e.g. <i>Clostridium perfringens</i>.
	P7 Antimicrobial dipping / spraying, fumigation	Note: Fumigation / disinfection of the buildings / room / equipment are no p-steps, they are considered GMP Dipping, spraying, fumigation and other antimicrobial measures in direct contact with the product - Examples: grain fumigation (to control insects), spice fumigation, antimicrobial dipping / spraying / waxing of fruits, coating of cheese with antimicrobial substances like natamycin, antimicrobial dipping (disinfection) of foods. UV treatment - UV treatment of fresh eggs for microbial reduction, of fresh mushrooms (to increase vitamin D), of cooked sausage in a sterile skin before the slicer.
E	Systems, treatments to prevent product contamination	
	P8 Packing MAP, packing under vacuum	MAP - This P-step is applicable when any gas addition results in the modification of the composition of the atmosphere in final packaging. - Example: meat in modified atmosphere, chips bag filled with nitrogen, fresh fruit and salads in MAP.
	P9 Processes to prevent product contamination esp. microbiological contamination, by means of high hygiene control and specific infrastructure during handling, treatment and / or processing e.g. clean room technology, "white room", controlled working room temperature for food safety purpose, disinfection after cleaning, positive air pressure systems (e.g. filtration below 10µ)	P-step 9 is applicable in any case when there are at least 2 procedures / methods implemented in a company to guarantee product safety / product hygiene, e.g.: - disinfection of equipment + chilled room temperature (e.g. dissection of meat) - disinfection + special hygiene equipment for employees (e.g. hygiene sluice) - room with over-pressure + special hygiene equipment for employees (e.g. hygiene sluice) - air filtration + room with over-pressure - Note: the following processes shall not trigger the selection of P-step 9: - Aseptic filling (as P-step 2 should be selected) - Positive air pressure system, if applied in the equipment (e.g. filling system) - CIP (cleaning in place) - P-step 9 applies to the work environment in general and not to the product directly.

Guidance on the Allocation of Processing Steps

IFS Technology Scope	IFS Processing Step – including processing / treatment / manipulation / storing		Technology oriented classification which also takes into consideration product risks	
E	P10	Specific separation techniques: e.g. filtration like reverse osmoses, use of active charcoal	Filtration - Applies to mechanical filtration and filtration with activated charcoal or when more than 10 µ mesh size. - Examples: wine filtration (for removal of off-flavours with activated charcoal), oil filtration.	
			Clarification / guidance for water treatment (water used as ingredient or in direct contact with the product) All treatments (if more than one) applied to potable water used as an ingredient or in direct contact with the product shall be classified under P-step 10 for calculation and auditor qualification. - If multiple water treatments occur, they all shall be included in P-step 10. If only one water treatment is performed, the certification body can include it in P-step 10 or in the relevant P-step (e.g. UV treatment to P-step 7). - It shall be avoided that for the whole process of water treatment more than one P-step is applied. - This clarification does not apply to all products classified under Product Scope 8.	Clarification / guidance for air / gas treatment (air / gas used as ingredient or in direct contact with the product) All treatments (if more than one) applied to air / gas used as an ingredient or in direct contact with the product shall be classified under P-step 10 for calculation and auditor qualification. - If multiple air / gas treatments occur, they all shall be included in P-step 10. If only one air / gas treatment is performed, the certification body can include it in P10 or in the relevant P-step (e.g. UV treatment to P-step 7). - It shall be avoided that for the whole process of air / gas treatment more than one P-step is applied. - This clarification does not apply to all products which only contain air / gas.
F	Any other manipulation, treatment, processing not being listed in A, B, C, D, E			
	P11	Cooking, baking, bottling, brewing, fermentation (e.g. wine), drying, frying, roasting, extrusion, churning	Cooking - This P-step shall be selected for cooking when the purpose of the process (based on HACCP plan) is a technical reason and not an action for food safety hazards reduction (e.g. to change the consistency of a raw material or product). - Examples: cooking of rice or potatoes to get it soft, cooking of pizza sauce for deep frozen pizza. Drying - This P-step shall be selected only when drying is done without synthetically generated heat, e.g. by sunlight. - Examples: fruits dried under the sun. Bottling - In addition of typical bottling, P-step 11 shall be selected for all filling activities of liquids and /or viscous products in customer / consumer packaging products. - Examples: piston filler.	

Guidance on the Allocation of Processing Steps

IFS Technology Scope	IFS Processing Step – including processing / treatment / manipulation / storing		Technology oriented classification which also takes into consideration product risks
F	P12	Coating, breading, battering, cutting slicing, dicing, dismembering, mixing / blending, stuffing, slaughtering, sorting, manipulation, packing, storing under controlled conditions (atmosphere) except temperature, labelling	– Examples: colouring of boiled eggs, banana ripening, storing of fruit / vegetables under controlled conditions (temperature and humidity). Stuffing • Stuffing does not mean bottling, but the later filling of baked goods, e.g. donuts. Fruit packing and storing • Note: for a company packing fruit and storing them under controlled conditions, both P-step 6 and P-step 12 shall be selected.
	P13	Distillation, purification, steaming, damping, hydrogenating, milling	– Examples: wetting of grain before milling, polishing of rice, glazing of frozen products, spraying of bakery products to give them a shine, wetting / glazing of meat / fish to prevent water loss during the freezing process. Milling – Examples: milling oil seeds, flour and grains. Purification – Examples: raw juice extracted from sugar beets prior to crystallisation of the sucrose contained in the juice, edible salt (by mechanical washing or vacuum re-crystallisation). Distillation – Examples: distillation of liquors, spirits. Steaming • This P-step shall be selected each time the food product comes into direct contact with steam. – Examples: steaming of vegetables (for peeling process, blanching, etc.) Hydrogenating – Examples: hydrogenation of unsaturated fats to saturated fats in oil production to lead to more stable fats.



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