



IAF Informative Document



DEVELOPMENT AND MONITORING OF KPIS IN FOOD-RELATED CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

Issue 1

(IAF ID 16:2025)

The International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF) facilitates trade and supports industry and regulators by operating a worldwide mutual recognition arrangement among Accreditation Bodies (ABs) in order that the results issued by Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) accredited by IAF members can be accepted globally.

Accreditation reduces risk for business and its customers by assuring them that accredited CABs are competent to carry out the work they undertake within their scope of accreditation. ABs that are members of IAF and their accredited CABs are required to comply with appropriate international standards and IAF mandatory documents for the consistent application of those standards.

ABs that are signatories to the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) are evaluated regularly by an appointed team of peers to provide confidence in the operation of their accreditation programs. The structure of the IAF MLA is detailed in IAF PL 3 - Policies and Procedures on the IAF MLA Structure and for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA. The scope of the IAF MLA is detailed in the IAF MLA Status document.

The IAF MLA is structured in five levels: Level 1 specifies mandatory criteria that apply to all ABs, ISO/IEC 17011. The combination of a Level 2 activity(ies) and the corresponding Level 3 normative document(s) is called the main scope of the MLA, and the combination of Level 4 (if applicable) and Level 5 relevant normative documents is called a sub-scope of the MLA.

- The main scope of the MLA includes activities e.g. product certification and associated mandated standards e.g. ISO/IEC 17065. The attestations made by CABs at the main scope level are considered to be equally reliable.
- The sub scope of the MLA includes conformity assessment requirements e.g. ISO 9001 and scheme specific requirements, where applicable, e.g. ISO 22003-1. The attestations made by CABs at the sub scope level are considered to be equivalent.

The IAF MLA delivers the confidence needed for market acceptance of conformity assessment outcomes. An attestation issued, within the scope of the IAF MLA, by a body that is accredited by an IAF MLA signatory AB can be recognized worldwide, thereby facilitating international trade.

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Issue 1

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Issue Date: 13 January 2025

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Application Date: 13 January 2025

Introduction to IAF Informative Documents

This IAF Informative Document reflects the consensus of IAF members on this subject and is intended to support the consistent application of requirements. However, being a document for information purposes only, IAF Accreditation Body Members, and the Conformity Assessment Bodies they accredit, are not under any obligation to use or comply with anything in this document.

Development and Monitoring of KPIs in Food-Related Certification Schemes

0. INTRODUCTION

This IAF informative document provides suggestions about how to effectively develop and monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) internally developed or pre-defined through another entity.

The use of KPIs in the food-related accredited certification schemes by the certification bodies (CBs) may be on a voluntary basis, by mutual agreement, or may be initiated by the accreditation body (AB) or a scheme owner (or other interested parties) to investigate specific situations triggered by adverse trends (including the indicators that are identified by the CB) or market feedback.

The objective of the methodology described in this informative document is to make the certification and accreditation process more effective and efficient, by the use of a “Plan-Do-Check-Act” approach. This means that the output of KPI monitoring could be used to provide input into the planning of internal activity (e.g. internal audit), CB audits of certified clients, oversight activities by the AB (including the frequency and duration of office assessments and witness assessments: ISO/IEC 17011:2017 Clause 7.9.2) as well as integrity programs oversight by the scheme owners.

Monitoring by accreditation bodies or other entities is an option for a uniform and collaborative approach in monitoring of the CBs’ operations in food-related certification schemes (programs).

1. SCOPE

This informative document is applicable to the development, methodology, and monitoring of the KPIs applicable to operations of CBs operating in food schemes.

2. DEFINITIONS

Definitions from ISO/IEC 17000:2020 apply.

Indicator as defined in IAF MD 15

- A trend or a fact that indicates the state or a level of certification activities.

Note: Could be used as a tool to determine how well an organization meets the requirements of a given food-related certification scheme.

3. OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the document is to provide guidance on the development and monitoring of KPIs.

The document provides guidance on how to develop methodical and well-defined KPIs that would provide a level of confidence in the AB's accreditation and CB's certification and improve the overall confidence and credibility of the accredited third-party certification process.

The document also provides guidance on best approach for monitoring of KPIs. The process described in this document could be used not only by ABs, but also by any duly authorized interested party including (but not limited to):

- The CBs themselves (e.g. CB's head office responsible for overall oversight over operations)
- Regulators/Scheme recognition entities (e.g. to investigate specific concerns that call into question the validity of accredited certification)
- Customers of certified organizations (e.g. when there are indications that their certified supplier is not fulfilling the requirements of the relevant accredited certification)
- Sector schemes/scheme owners (e.g. to provide additional confidence in the scheme)

Note: Private sector entities use terminology that may not always align with ISO definitions. An example is the use of the term Certification Program Owner (CPO) by the GFSI to designate a scheme owner.

4. DEVELOPMENT AND MONITORING OF KPIs

When developing KPIs and any associated thresholds the following should be considered.

4.1 KPIs may be developed by various entities, including but not limited to:

- Accreditation Bodies
- Certification Bodies
- Customers
- Scheme owners/Certification Program owners
- Industry associations
- Industry stakeholders
- Regulatory authorities

Note: Concepts discussed in this document could be applicable to KPIs regardless of the source of their development.

4.2 Reasons for development of KPIs vary by the organization. Some of the common triggers may include:

- Requirements of a scheme
- The need to better monitor overall operational performance
- Issues raised by media organizations regarding a particular product, organization or accredited CB, with relation to specific technical areas or overall performance
- Problems identified through social media
- Specific feedback from non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- A want or need to safeguard a stable accreditation or accredited certification process
- Feedback from a scheme owner or a benchmarking entity
- Indication of poor performance, as evidenced by, for example, high levels of product recalls

NOTE: In regulated programs ABs may need to establish feedback mechanisms with regulatory authorities to ensure that they are made aware of trends in non-compliances with legislation.

4.3 Availability of quality and accurate data is key for the development of an effective measurement of performance.

4.4 KPIs should be applicable to the overall operations of the certification body and requirements of the food-related certification schemes should be taken into consideration.

4.5 Each KPI should have a specific objective, as well as be attainable and have measurable parameters.

4.6 The applicable KPIs may include:

- i) % of audits conducted by auditors approved in the audit scope
- ii) % of certificates withdrawn within a defined timeframe
- iii) Consistency of the audit reports, including technical aspects
- iv) Timeliness of the certification decision
- v) Audit time duration is appropriately assigned
- vi) Communication of product recalls to the appropriate parties
- vii) Trends in nonconformance with any of the requirements (internal or external such as accreditation)
- viii) Trends in noncompliance with legislation
- ix) Reliability of the suppliers

4.7 Methods used to develop monitoring parameters should have clear explanations. Any sampling should have a clear justification why a specific sampling plan was developed.

4.8 A scale indication of acceptability/non-acceptability should be considered to provide a CB with triggers on when activities are to be monitored or immediate action is needed.

4.9 The thresholds identified should be attainable. The limit, and if applicable, the scale should be agreed on by the majority of the directly involved personnel.

4.10 A balanced representation of personnel involved, internal and external, should have input into the development of KPIs; only through a collaborative approach can value-added KPIs be developed.

4.11 Those impacted should not necessarily agree on the established KPIs. However, information provided on the established KPIs should be transparent and complete, including any applicable clear thresholds as well as consequences. This information should be clearly communicated to everyone involved, including those doing the actual work as well as the overall decision maker to ensure understanding of the reason behind a specific KPI and an overall impact.

4.12 The monitoring timeframe should be defined for each KPI. The timeframe should be appropriate for each KPI to ensure quantity and quality of the data obtained for a reliable result to allow detection and correction of negative trends and reinforcement of positive trends.

5. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

5.1 A monitoring system should be developed specifically for each KPI and performance of the CB against the pre-defined KPIs should be subject to monitoring in accordance with a predefined timeframe.

5.2 Monitoring may be conducted through various methods, including but not limited to:

- Part of a scheduled assessment or external audit such as:
 - AB's assessment
 - Peer assessments/evaluations
 - Internal audits
 - Scheme owner oversight
 - Customer audits
 - Self-assessment
- Through a monitoring activity dedicated to a specific KPI
- Internal analysis (e.g. Management review) and improvement plans where applicable

5.3 It is helpful to have information system tools that provide automatic feedback about the accomplishment of the KPIs with clear dashboards and proactive communication that can be accessed by those involved at any time.

5.4 It is recommended that the CB establishes a clear process for self-assessment reporting, independent verification, reconfiguration, and improvement for accuracy.

End of IAF Informative Document for Development and Monitoring of KPIs in Food-Related Certification Schemes

Further Information:

For further information on this document or other IAF documents, contact any member of IAF or the IAF Secretariat.

For contact details of members of IAF see the IAF website: <http://www.iaf.nu>.

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