



IAF and Foundation FSSC Scheme Endorsement Agreement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 **Foundation FSSC** (hereafter referred to as FSSC) is the scheme owner of the worldwide-operated FSSC Schemes which has sought and received endorsement of their schemes listed in Schedule 1 to this Agreement, (hereafter referred to as “the Scheme(s)”) as a sub-scope of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) in accordance with IAF PL3 and this Agreement.
- 1.2 The Schemes require Certification Bodies (CBs) to be accredited by an Accreditation Body (AB) that is a signatory to the IAF MLA with a main scope of management system certification and a sub-scope of the Scheme(s) included in Schedule 1 to this Agreement (IAF MLA signatories).
- 1.3 FSSC is the global non-profit and independent Scheme owner, based in Gorinchem, the Netherlands, that aims to provide trust and deliver impact to the consumer goods industry.
- 1.4 FSSC contracts at the time of this Agreement with over 130 CBs worldwide under the Schemes, the supervision of which is carried out by the ABs that are IAF MLA signatories.
- 1.5 The requirements for the professional competence of auditors are defined in the relevant scheme documents.
- 1.6 FSSC requires CBs to be accredited by IAF MLA signatories that have ISO/IEC 17021-1 in their MLA scope.
- 1.7 The Scheme provides the standard and framework for independent, recognized third-party management system certification.
- 1.8 The **International Accreditation Forum (IAF)** is the world association of conformity assessment accreditation bodies in the fields of management systems, products, services, process, persons, validation and verification and other similar programs of conformity assessment.
- 1.9 IAF is responsible for the harmonization and continuous improvement of the accreditation practices of its members with the ultimate goal to ensure sound technical competence of accredited CBs and Verification and Validation Bodies (V&VBs) and to support its IAF MLA.
- 1.10 The IAF MLA is established and maintained on the basis of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011 through regular peer evaluations and is the tool by which IAF contributes to the elimination of technical barriers to trade and to promoting the free circulation of certificates issued by accredited CBs and V&VBs.

2. Administration and Cooperation

- 2.1 Both IAF and FSSC by means of this formal Agreement, have decided to develop and maintain a close cooperation between the two organizations to ensure harmonization in the accreditation practices performed by IAF members for the Scheme and to cooperate in the continuous improvement of the Scheme with the final goal of assuring the highest level of competence in the Schemes' accredited CBs.
- 2.2 IAF and FSSC shall comply with the respective requirements of *IAF PL3 IAF Policies and Procedures for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA*, operating and administrating in an open, non-discriminatory and transparent manner, avoiding conflicts of interest or limitation on the acceptance of CBs or ABs other than relevant technical considerations.
- 2.3 The Schemes will be open to all CBs that are accredited by IAF MLA signatories. The ABs will be signatory members of the IAF MLA for Management Systems.
- 2.4 FSSC will only work with IAF MLA signatories. The Foundation will stop working with an AB that is no longer a signatory to the IAF MLA.
- 2.5 Both IAF and FSSC shall appoint a liaison person of each organization to act as contact persons.

3. Information Exchange

To achieve such goals both organizations have agreed upon the following:

- 3.1 FSSC shall inform the IAF of the following:
 - a) Changes to any of the Schemes listed in Schedule 1, that may impact compliance with IAF PL3.
 - b) Any revision/extension to the Scheme(s)' standards/documents.
 - c) Outcomes from any AB workshop held by FSSC on one or more of the Schemes.
 - d) Feedback FSSC may have regarding the IAF MLA signatory ABs.
 - e) Change in the status as recognized schemes (GFSI/SSCI).
- 3.2 IAF shall inform FSSC of the following:
 - a) When an IAF MLA signatory with a sub-scope of one or more of the Schemes has been suspended or had their IAF MLA signatory status withdrawn.
 - b) Any general or technical questions regarding the interpretation of the Schemes' standards/documents.
 - c) Changes in policy, procedure or documentation that may have impact on the IAF MLA and Scheme sub-scope.

4. Mandatory Interpretation of the Scheme Documents

- 4.1 The Schemes' documents shall be prepared using the FSSC Scheme Development Procedure for the setting and revision of Schemes' documentation.

This shall include a stakeholder consultation phase comprising of comment submissions by interested parties each lasting a specified timeframe with feedback being provided to organizations that made the comment.

- 4.2 The IAF will be included as a stakeholder and invited during any stakeholder consultation period of the Scheme revision process.
- 4.3 The Scheme documents shall be available at no cost on the FSSC website (www.fssc.com).
- 4.4 FSSC will provide new draft Scheme version document(s) with a gap analysis and proposed transition plan for implementation of the new version documents to IAF as soon as a technically sound new version is available in order to make sure, that the new scheme version continues to comply with the requirements of IAF PL3. The Foundation accepts the process to be followed according to IAF PL3 for IAF MLA sub-scope inclusion of new versions of the Schemes.
- 4.5 The need for the development of specific IAF application documents shall be proposed by the IAF Technical Committee and the need for additional preparation of peer evaluation by the IAF MLA Committee as specified in IAF PL3.
- 4.6 The Schemes endorsed as IAF MLA sub-scopes are included in the relevant IAF MLA status lists. After the end of the transition period to a new scheme version the old version will not be published as IAF MLA sub-scopes anymore.

5. Implementation

- 5.1 IAF and FSSC shall each bear their own costs.
- 5.2 The Schemes will be included as a sub-scope under the main scope of Management System Certification, ISO/IEC 17021-1.

Those ABs currently providing accreditations to one or more of the Schemes will automatically be able to apply for an IAF MLA scope extension for the relevant scheme(s) through provision of a signed self-declaration through their Regional Accreditation Group (RAG) once the Agreement is signed.

- 5.3 The revision of the implementation of this Agreement is in the scope of the MLA Peer evaluation to the IAF Management System MLA signatories working in one or more of the Schemes.

6. Confidentiality

- 6.1 IAF shall hold all Confidential Information in strictest confidence and shall only use it for the purpose for which it was provided and shall not disclose or make available any Confidential Information to any third party without the prior written consent of FSSC.

7. Term

7.1 This Agreement shall commence from the original Date of Signing and, unless terminated earlier according to clause 8, continues indefinitely.

8. Cancellation

8.1 This Agreement between FSSC and IAF can be cancelled by either party in writing with a period of notice of three months.

SCHEDULE 1

FSSC Schemes endorsed for inclusion as sub-scopes to the IAF MLA:

1. FSSC 22000 Scheme for Food Safety Management System Certification

Level 1 - FSSC 22000 Scheme Food Safety Management System Certification
Versions 5.1 & 6.0, Part 5

Level 4 - ISO/TS 22003:2013 (ISO 22003-1:2022)

FSSC 22000 Versions 5.1 & 6.0 Scheme, Parts 3 and 4



Level 5 - FSSC 22000 Versions 5.1 & 6.0 Scheme, Part 2

2. FSSC 24000 Scheme for Social Management System Certification

Level 1 - FSSC 24000 Scheme Social Management System Certification Version
1.0, Part 5

Level 4 - FSSC 24000 Scheme Social Management System Certification Version
1.0, Parts 3 and 4

Level 5 - FSSC 24000 Scheme Social Management System Certification Version
1.0, Part 2

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.	Foundation FSSC
 Emanuele Riva IAF Chair	 Aldin Hilbrands Chief Executive Officer

Date of Agreement: 19 April 2024

Note: Issue 1, Version 2 of the Agreement was signed on 23 December 2021.