PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING, APPLICATION REVIEW AND QUOTING

1.0 PURPOSE

Aim of this procedure is to describe methods and responsibilities regarding the application review, preparing offer and signing agreement with the clients within the scope of BRC Global Standards (BRCGS) and International Featured Standards (IFS) where USB Certification is accredited and/or approved.

2.0 SCOPE

The scope of the procedure will include the handling of all requests for certification against BRC Global Standards (BRCGS) and International Featured Standards (IFS) where USB Certification is accredited and/or approved. These are:

- BRCGS for Food Safety, with any associated Additional Voluntary Modules (AVMs)

- BRCGS *START!*

- BRCGS Gluten-Free Certification Program (GFCP)

- BRCGS Plant-Based

- BRCGS Consumer Products

- IFS Food

- IFS Progress (IFS Progress Food)

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Following titles listed in Table 1 are responsible for the implementation of this procedure.

Title	Abbreviation
Food and Agriculture Certification Manager	Certification Manager
Food and Consumer Products Schemes Manager	Schemes Manager
Operations Responsible	-
Operations Assistant	-
Client Relations and Planning Responsible	CRP Responsible
Client Relations and Planning Assistant	CRP Assistant
Application Reviewer	-

Table 1: Responsibilities and their abbreviations used in this document.

4.0 PROCEDURE

4.1 Receiving the Application Request

4.1.1 Type of the application can be either one of the following states.

- Initial Audit Application: It is the first audit at a site or a subsequent audit of a site whose certificate has expired.

- Recertification/Renewal Audit Application: It is the subsequent audit at a site performed prior to the due date.

- Extension to Scope Audit Application: It can be performed when there are differences in products, technologies scope etc. of the site.

- Transfer Audit Application: It is defined as the application for the recognition of an existing and valid certification, granted by one accredited certification body, (the "issuing certification body"), by another

accredited certification body, (the "accepting certification body") for the purpose of issuing its own certification. Details for transfer applications can be found at section 4.4 of this procedure.

4.1.2 The application request is generally received by e-mail, USB Certification website, phone, or USB Pruva system from existing and potential clients.

4.1.3 An *"Application Form"* which includes a detailed questionnaire is sent to the applicant by CRP Assistant or CRP Responsible via e-mail, or the applicant is directed to USB Pruva system to fill out the questionnaire online.

4.1.4 The *"Application Form"* to be filled out is determined according to the audit option selected: announced or unannounced. CRP Assistant or CRP Responsible sends the corresponding application form among the list below.

- *"Application Form - Announced Audit (BRCGS Food)"*
- *"Application Form - Unannounced Audit (BRCGS Food)"*
- *"Application Form - Announced Audit (IFS Food)"*
- *"Application Form - Unannounced Audit (IFS Food)"*
- *"Application Form (BRCGS Consumer Products)"*

4.1.5 The applicant is requested to fill out and send back the application form in word format firstly. Operation Assistant checks the form to ensure that all necessary information has been provided to enable the certification process to continue.

4.1.6 In the application form, there are different audit types (site, remote, hybrid etc.) to be selected by the client and these types might vary per standard. The details about audit types and differences in application requirements are detailed in the relative guidelines particularly (see Annex 1).

4.1.7 In case that remote or hybrid audit types are selected by the applicant, *"Risk Assessment Form"* is sent to the applicant in addition to the application form by CRP Assistant or CRP Responsible. According to this form, Operations Responsible assesses whether performing such audits are possible, or not. If the risk assessment result is suitable, the audit can be carried out as requested. If not, different audit types (e.g., full onsite) can be suggested to the applicant.

4.1.8 For each application, CRP Assistant or CRP Responsible registers the applicant's details (company name, address, contact name, position etc.) to '*Application - Details'* tab of USB Pruva system. If the company is applied for the first time, the initial registration of the company is done via admin panel of USB Pruva system.

4.1.9 After the completion of all information, signed application form is received from the applicant and all documentation relating the application is uploaded to SharePoint as well as to the '*Application > Files'* tab of USB Pruva system.

4.2 Application Period and Timeline

4.2.1 For recertification/renewal audits of existing clients, CRP Assistant or CRP Responsible generates a list of upcoming audits by using the data stored in SharePoint and/or automatically by USB Pruva system to contact with the clients at the latest 3 months before the audit window starts. CRP Responsible ensures that new offers and agreements will be signed before the audit window starts.

4.2.2 For the new applicants that is already certified, CRP Assistant or CRP Responsible ensures that new offers and agreements will be signed before the audit window start.

4.2.3 If the applicant has applied to USB Certification after its unannounced audit window has started, the application is treated as initial certification, so the next audit due date of the site is calculated anew and

shifted forward. In this case, the applicant is informed that there will be a gap between two certification periods that the site will stay as non-certificated.

4.2.4 Alternatively, if the applicant has a proper justification for switching its certification body to USB Certification after the unannounced audit window has started, Operations Responsible will ask for a concession/permission from program owners. In this case, the applicant will be informed that USB Certification does not guarantee that permission will be issued.

4.2.5 There are differences in the application period between announced and unannounced audit options per standard. For detailed information and differences in the requirements, particular guideline shall be addressed (see Annex 1).

4.3   Scope of Application

4.3.1 The scope of certification shall be agreed with the applicant mutually when receiving the application and shall be clearly documented on "*Application Form*" without any ambiguity. The auditor will verify the scope while conducting the audit. The rules for designing the scope of application per standard, related guideline in particular shall be addressed (see Annex 1).

4.4   Transfers from Another Certification Body

4.4.1 Transfer applications are defined in two ways. The first is that the client demands to switch its certification body to USB Certification during the renewal/recertification period (within due date) for the purpose of issuing a new certificate. The second is that the client demands to change the CB during the interim to re-issue its active certificate on behalf of USB Certification by maintaining the current expiration date. Both are defined as "transfer application" in USB Certification.

4.4.2 Where applicants are transferring from another CB during the renewal/recertification period, all points of 4.1 of this procedure shall be completed. If the applicant transfers during the interim, in addition to completing points of 4.1, Operations Responsible shall complete a "*Certificate Transfer Review Form*".

4.4.3 Only accredited certificates shall be eligible for transfer. Organization's holding unaccredited certificates shall be treated as initial certification.

4.4.4 When reviewing a transfer application, the following details must be reviewed, and "*Certificate Transfer Review Form*" completed including the following points.

- Does USB Certification have approval to audit the Scope in question?

- What are the reasons for the Certificate transfer?

- What is the status of any outstanding NCs?

- What is the validity status of the Certificate?

- Do we have a copy of the previous report and certificate?

- Are there any outstanding complaints or legal challenges?

4.4.5 In case of transfer requests, if any of the information cannot be completed satisfactorily, the application must be treated as initial certification.

4.4.6 Normally only valid certificates should be transferred. In cases where certification has been granted by a certification body which has ceased trading or whose validation has expired, been suspended, or withdrawn, USB Certification may consider such a certification for transfer at its discretion.

4.4.7 Certification that is known to have been suspended or under threat of suspension shall not be accepted for transfer. Where USB Certification is not able to verify the status of the certification with the issuing certification body, USB Certification shall provide evidence that the certificate is not suspended or under threat of suspension.

4.5   Application Review

4.5.1 General

4.5.1.1 After the signed application form is submitted to USB Certification and/or USB Pruva system by the applicant, an application review is performed by Application Reviewer based on the questions defined on related *"Application Review Form"*.

- *"Application Review Form (BRCGS Food)"*

- *"Application Review Form (IFS Food)"*

- *"Application Review Form (BRCGS Consumer Products)"*

4.5.1.2 To complete the application review process and prepare an offer, the following questions which are the first part of the application review form shall be answered as "Yes."

- Is the information in application form sufficient to make an offer?

- Is it possible for USB Certification to audit and certify the project?

- Has USB Certification had the service authorization on the scope of the client?

- Has USB Certification had an auditor who has sufficient qualification in the technical area of the client?

4.5.1.3 In case of any "No" answer, Application Reviewer will not approve the application and provide the relevant justification to the applicant. Only the answers "Yes" and "N/A" are acceptable to proceed with the application review.

4.5.1.4 If all questions above are Yes, Operations Assistant proceeds to the second stage of application review where the audit duration is calculated. The rules for calculating the audit duration for each standard shall be seen in the related guideline particularly (see Annex 1).

4.5.1.5 The audit duration calculation criteria are the same for announced and unannounced audits. The calculated minimum audit time includes the on-site audit time but does not include the time for preparing the audit plan, risk assessment or writing the audit report etc.

4.5.1.6 In case of using audit team, translator and technical expert, additional time shall be added to the calculated audit duration according to Table 1.

4.5.1.7 Calculation results are documented on *"Application Review Form"* in detailed.

4.5.1.8 The allocation of auditors is carried out according to auditor competency (see *"Competency Matrix"*), approved/native languages, site location and time availability. Operrations Assistant ensures that no auditor shall perform more than three consecutive audits at the same production site.

4.5.1.9 Where USB Certification does not have a qualified auditor in the scope requirement, the audit may be carried out by the combination of an approved auditor lacking the particular category, and a technical expert. Allocation of technical experts is carried out according to *"Competency Matrix"*.

4.5.1.10 In case that the audit will not be carried out in site's native language, an appropriate translator according to *"Competency Matrix"* can be allocated. However, before deciding the use of a translator, any requirements in the Standards related to audit teams and audit languages must be taken into consideration in terms of whether the standard allows to use a translator, or not. For more detailed information about the translator requirements, please address the related guideline in particular (see Annex 1).

4.5.1.11 After the completion of *"Application Review Form",* CRP Responsible proceeds with the preparation of *"Certification Fee Chart"*. The unit price for person/day and registration fees are announced to the Food Department when necessary and all changes are recorded on *"Certification Fee Chart"*. While preparing the "*Certification Fee Chart*", the registration fees of programs are taken from *"BRCGS081 Delivery Partner Certification Fees"* and/or *"IFS Schedule of Fees"*.

4.5.1.12 Operations Assistant sends the *"Application Form", "Application Review Form"* and *"Certification Fee Chart"* to Operation Manager/CRP Responsible who will formally make the final approval whether it is suitable to give an offer, or not.

4.5.1.13 *"Application Review Form"* shall be signed and dated by both Operations Assistant and Application Reviewer. The outcome of the application review and *"Certification Fee Chart"* shall be recorded on the client's file on SharePoint and Application > Files tab of USB Pruva system.

4.5.1.14 In case that applied audit type includes a remote audit partly or fully, the ability of the site to have a remote assessment by using ICT will be determined according to the rules given in *"Procedure for the Use of ICT for Auditing Purposes."*

4.5.2 Combined Audits

4.5.2.1 If a certification audit is combined with another audit (e.g., BRCGS and IFS at the same time), duration needs to be increased to allow for the efficient control of differences in the Standards.

4.5.2.2 For combined audits, firstly the audit durations are calculated separately for each standard and any reduction is granted where applicable before calculating the combined audit duration. The rules for calculating the audit duration for each standard shall be seen in the related guideline particularly (see Annex 1). The one that has a longer duration will be the basis and some extra time is added on this basis. Amount of this addition is determined based on the risk analysis documented on *"Application Review Form"* but it shall never be less than 4 hours.

4.5.2.3 Table 2 summarizes the criteria for the addition of extra time to calculate the total audit duration.

	Additional Time	
	BRCGS	**IFS**
Auditor Team	Minimum 2 hours	Minimum 2 hours
Technical Expert	Minimum 2 hours	Minimum 2 hours in case of a valid permission/concession in place
Translator	%30 of audit duration	%20 of audit duration
Combined Audit	The required additional time is calculated based on a risk analysis documented on *"Application Review Form".* Please note that it shall never be less than 4 hours.	
Scope Extension Audit	The required additional time is calculated based on a risk analysis documented on *"Scope Extension Risk Analysis".* Note that it shall never be less than 4 hours.	

Table 2: Criteria for the addition of extra time to the calculated audit duration

4.6 Offer and Agreement

4.6.1 Following the approval of application review and "*Certification Fee Chart*", CRP Assistant prepares an "*Audit and Certification Offer Form*" automatically by using Offers tab of USB Pruva system and sends to the client by e-mail.

4.6.2 If the "*Audit and Certification Offer Form*" is approved by the client, it is requested to be sent with each page signed and the last page stamped to the CRP Assistant by either e-mail or uploading to the *Offers > Files* tab of USB Pruva system.

4.6.3 After the submission of approved offer to USB Certification, particular "*Certification Agreement*" (see Table 3) is generated automatically by USB Pruva system and CRP Assistant sends it to the client either by e-mail or automatically by USB Pruva system.

Document Name	Corresponding Programmes
"Certification Agreement (BRCGS Food)"	BRCGS Food Safety standalone audits START! Gluten-Free Plant-Based
"Certification Agreement (IFS Food)"	IFS Food standalone audits IFS Progress Food audits
"Certification Agreement (BRCGS-IFS Food)"	Combined audits of BRCGS and IFS
"Certification Agreement (BRCGS Consumer Products)"	Combined and/or standalone audits of Consumer products

Table 3: Certification Agreements as per Standards

4.6.4 If there is any change raised after the agreement has been made, which may affect the audit duration, Operations Assistant shall prepare a *"Contract Review Form"* and submit for Application Reviewer's approval to ensure whether the offer and agreement must be renewed, or not.

4.6.5 *"Audit and Certification Offer Form"* and "*Certification Agreement*" are generated on the USB Pruva system with the printed signature of USB Certification Founder & CEO. All these documents also are recorded on SharePoint.

4.6.6 Hard copies of original signed offer and agreement are requested from the client to be sent to USB Certification by courier. Operations Responsible make sure that these documents are reach to USB Certification and archived safely.

4.7 Client Change Requests

4.7.1 After the completion of the certification process, the client may request changes in some cases such as scope extension, organization name and address changes, etc.

4.7.2 For all kind of change requests, except scope extensions, "*Change Request Form*" will be sent to the client by CRP Assistant and the changes will be evaluated according to the form which was filled by the client. In case that the client requests a change in the location of the facility, it will be considered that an on-site audit is required at the new site.

4.7.3 In case of a scope extension request, USB Certification will perform a risk analysis (desk-review) considering hygiene and safety risks for new processes or products which are different to those included in the current scope. Firstly, the company is asked by CRP Assistant to fill *"Application Form"* together with the *"Scope Extension Risk Analysis"*. Then, all these information are evaluated and decided whether an onsite extension audit is enough or a full new audit is required. As a result of this risk analysis, the duration of the scope extension audit will also be determined. Results are documented by using the calculation criteria described in *"Contract Review Form"*.

4.7.4 For the requests of amendments on issued certificates and reports, please refer to *"Issue, Suspension, Withdrawal and/or Cancellation of Certificate/s Procedure"*.

5.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS

Document Number	Title or Description
UOF-FOOD-BRC-EN-4000	Application Form – Announced Audit (BRCGS Food)
UOF-FOOD-BRC-EN-4010	Application Form – Unannounced Audit (BRCGS Food)
UOF-FOOD-BRC-EN-4000	Application Form – Announced Audit (IFS Food)

Document Number	Title or Description
UOF-FOOD-BRC-EN-4010	Application Form – Unannounced Audit (IFS Food)
UOF-FOOD-BRCCP-EN-4000	Application Form (BRCGS Consumer Products)
UOF-FOOD-EN-4340	Risk Assessment Form
UOF-FOOD-EN-4020	Certificate Transfer Review Form
UOF-FOOD-BRC-EN-4030	Application Review Form (BRCGS Food)
UOF-FOOD-IFS-EN-4030	Application Review Form (IFS Food)
UOF-FOOD-BRCCP-EN-4030	Application Review Form (BRCGS Consumer Products)
UAU-FOOD-F-EN-7000	Competency Matrix
UOF-FOOD-EN-4300	Certification Fee Chart
BRCGS081	Delivery Partner Price List
-	IFS Schedule of Fees
UOP-FOOD-EN-4100	Procedure for the Use of ICT for Auditing Purposes
UOF-FOOD-EN-4420	Scope Extension Risk Analysis
UOF-FOOD-EN-4040	Audit and Certification Offer Form
UOF-FOOD-BRC-EN-4060	Certification Agreement (Global Standard for Food Safety)
UOF-FOOD-BRC-EN-4060	Certification Agreement (IFS Food)
UOF-FOOD-EN-4060	Certification Agreement (BRCGS - IFS Food)
UOF-FOOD-BRCCP-EN-4060	Certification Agreement (BRCGS Consumer Products)
UOF-FOOD-EN-4360	Contract Review Form
UOF-FOOD-EN-4070	Change Request Form
UOP-FOOD-EN-4040	Issue, Suspension, Withdrawal and/or Cancellation of Certificate/s Procedure
UOP-FOOD-BRC-EN-4110	BRCGS Food Safety Operation Guideline
UOP-FOOD-IFS-EN-4110	IFS Food Operation Guideline
UOP-FOOD -BRC-EN-4111	BRCGS Gluten-Free Operation Guideline
UOP-FOOD-BRC-EN-4112	BRCGS Plant-Based Operation Guideline
UOP-FOOD-BRCCP-EN-4110	BRCGS Consumer Products Operation Guideline

ANNEX 1 – GUIDELINES PER SCHEME

Guideline	Standard Name
UOP-FOOD-BRC-EN-4110 BRCGS Food Safety Operation Guideline	- BRC Global Standard for Food Safety - BRC *START!* Global Standard
UOP-FOOD-IFS-EN-4110 IFS Food Operation Guideline	- IFS Food - IFS Progress Food
UOP-FOOD-BRC-EN-4111 BRCGS Gluten-Free Operation Guideline	- BRC Gluten-Free Global Standard
UOP-FOOD-BRC-EN-4112 BRCGS Plant-Based Operation Guideline	- BRC Plant-Based Global Standard
UOP-FOOD-BRCCP-EN-4110 Consumer Products Operation Guideline	- BRC Global Standard for Consumer Products - General Merchandise - BRC Global Standard for Consumer Products - Personal Care and Household