



**SPECIFIC PROVISIONS FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF
CERTIFICATION BODIES IN THE FIELD OF FOOD SAFETY
MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
(EN ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 + ISO 22003-1:2022)**

The only valid versions of the documents of the BELAC management system are those available from the internet website (www.belac.fgov.be).

Applicable from: 27.06.2024

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Revision and date of approval	Reason for revision	Impact of revision
0 CC 22.01.2015	New document - Formal integration of EA-3/11 Rev 00 in the management system documentation of BELAC	
1 Sec 14.03.2017	A formal reference to IAF MD16 (Application of ISO/IEC 17011 for the accreditation of FSMS Certification bodies) has been introduced, without significant change to the content of the document	No significant change of the content
2 CC 29.06.2020	<p>Deleting of the obsolete reference to EA 3/11 (EA 3/11 has been taken over by IAF MD16; IAF MD16 was already introduced in version 1 of this document)</p> <p>Deleting of the obsolete reference to ISO/IEC 17021:2011</p> <p>Update reference to ISO 22000:2018 and ISO 17011:2017</p>	Editorial, no significant changes of the content
3 CC 27.06.2024	<p>Update reference to ISO 22003-1:2022 and IAF MD 16:2024 (new versions)</p> <p>Integration of the specific requirements of FSSC 22000 version 6.0.</p>	Full document

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1. OBJECTIVES AND REFERENCES TO NORMATIVE DOCUMENTS

This document is intended to document the specific requirements and guidelines that shall apply for the accreditation of certification bodies in the field of food safety management systems (such as ISO 22000 and FSSC 22000).

It includes in particular:

- The specific requirements and guidelines related to the organization and operation of the certification body;
- The specific requirements and guidelines applicable to BELAC.

The specific requirements and guidelines for the direct performance of the conformity assessment activities are not detailed in the present document but a reference to the relevant documents is included.

The specific requirements and guidelines

- are only endorsed when they comply with the general criteria documented in BELAC document 1-03;
- complement the requirements and guidelines that are in force to all BELAC accreditation activities.

2. RECIPIENTS

- Members of the Coordination Commission
- Members of the Accreditation Board
- Accreditation secretariat
- Assessors and experts
- Accredited bodies

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

3.1 Identification of the activity	FSMS
3.2 Type(s) of conformity assessment and accreditation standard	<p>Certification of quality management system according to ISO 22000/FSSC 22000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation according to EN ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 + ISO 22003-1:2022 <p>Note: The document BELAC 2-405 FSMS version 2 remains applicable for the accreditation according to EN ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 + ISO/TS 22003:2013 until the end of the transition period (30.06.2025)</p>
3.3 Classification(s) according to BELAC 6-017	7.3 and 7.4
3.4 Reference document(s) for the activity (<i>hereafter named "the scheme"</i>), including the publication date or a version number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISO 22000:2018 • FSSC 22000 version 6.0 • IAF MD 16:2024
3.5 Body responsible for the development and maintenance of the scheme (<i>hereafter named « the scheme owner »</i>)	ISO and FSSC Foundation

4. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO THE CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT BODY

During the accreditation assessments according to EN ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 + ISO 22003-1:2022 for certification against ISO 22000:2018 and FSSC 22000 version 6.0, a specific evaluation is required to establish the compliance with the requirements that complement / clarify the corresponding requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015. These specific requirements are summarized in the following table (*) and evidence of compliance will be included in the assessment report.

(*) for information only – the full text of ISO 22003-1:2022 remains the only authoritative reference and shall be taken into account.

EN ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015	Specific requirements of ISO 22003-1:2022	
Clause 7.1 - Competence of personnel	7.1.1 + Annex C	Certification functions for which competence shall be identified
	7.1.2 + Annex A	Technical areas for which competence criteria shall be defined
	7.1.2 + Annex C	Competence criteria specifying knowledge and skills
	7.1.3	Evaluation of the individual's knowledge relating to food safety
Clause 8.2 - Certification documents	8.2 + Annex A	Classification of food chain categories
Clause 8.3 - Reference to certification and use of marks Clause 8.4 - Confidentiality	8.3 and 8.4	No mention of FSMS certification mark or statement that the client has a certified FSMS on the product or the product packaging
Clause 9.1 - Pre-certification activities	9.1.1 Application	Information to be provided
	9.1.2 Application review	9.1.2.2 + 9.1.2.3 Definition of the relevant scope for the certification
	9.1.3 Audit programme	9.1.3.2 Process for choosing audit timing and season
	9.1.4 Determining audit time	9.1.4.2 + 9.1.4.3 + Annex B Determining audit time using the methodology described in Annex B + specific aspects to be taken into account.
	9.1.5 Multi-site sampling	9.1.5.2

		<p>Definition of a multi-site organization</p> <p>9.1.5.3 Justify and document the rationale for multi-site sampling: process and records</p> <p>9.1.5.4 Limitations of the use of multi-site sampling</p> <p>9.1.5.5 Requirements applicable to the certified organization (internal audit for each site) where multi-site sampling is permitted</p> <p>9.1.5.6-9.1.5.7 Conditions for defining a sampling programme</p> <p>9.1.5.8 Consequence if any site has a major non-conformity and satisfactory corrective action has not been implemented in the agreed timeframe</p> <p>9.1.5.9 Mention in the certification scope the processes of the FSMS implemented at each sampled site</p>
Clause 9.3 – Initial certification	9.3.2	The objectives and focus points for stage 1 of the audit
	9.3.3	Focus points of stage 1 in case an organization has implemented externally developed elements of a FSMS
	9.3.4	Information regarding the compliance to regulatory aspects
	9.3.5	Stage 1 : to be carried out at the client's premises – conditions for exceptions
	9.3.6	Interval between stage 1 and stage 2 shall not be longer than 6 months
Clause 9.6 – Maintaining certification	9.6.2	Provisions for conducting unannounced audits as part of surveillance activities

5. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO BELAC

5.1. IAF MD 16

The specific requirements of IAF MD16:2024 not explicitly covered by the general BELAC provisions for the accreditation of management systems certification bodies are presented hereafter.

ISO/IEC 17011:2017 – Clause 6.1.2 – Determination of competence criteria

The following table specifies the knowledge and skills that BELAC shall apply for specific accreditation activities in the accreditation of an FSMS Certification Body. X means the BELAC personnel shall have a general level of knowledge and skills. X+ indicates a need for the BELAC personnel to have a deeper level of knowledge and skills gained through practical experience or other approaches.

Accreditation functions Competency (Note 1)	Document review	On-Site Assessment	Witness assessment	Accreditation decisions (Note 3)	Scheme management
Knowledge of and ability to apply assessment principles, practices and techniques		X+	X+	X	X
Knowledge of and ability to apply the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1 and ISO 22003-1	X	X+	X+	X	X
Knowledge of Certification Body's certification processes	X	X+	X	X	X
Knowledge of and ability to apply ISO 22000 or other applied FSMS certification standards	X	X+	X+	X	
Knowledge of and ability to apply the following in relation to food safety management systems: - Hazard analysis and critical control points HACCP principles - Food safety management including prerequisite programs PRPs - legal framework	X	X+	X+	X	
Knowledge of and ability to apply (in the food chain sector being assessed); - current principles of HACCP - relevant PRPs - identification of food safety hazards			X+		

Accreditation functions	Document review	On-Site Assessment	Witness assessment	Accreditation decisions (Note 3)	Scheme management
Competency (Note 1)					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - control measures - products, processes and practices - related legal requirements (Note 2) 					
Knowledge of Certification Body's Client business sector.			X		
Knowledge of cultural and social customs related to the categories and geographic areas to be assessed.		X	X		
<p>Note 1: Where a team is conducting the assessment, the competencies required are to be held within the team as a whole and not by every individual member of the team. However where an individual is undertaking the assessment that person must have all competencies listed.</p> <p>Note 2: Legal requirements identified here is an understanding of those regulations that the organization that is the subject of the witness would be expected to comply with for either the food industry sector or country/state/province within which they operate.</p> <p>Note 3: When a group reviews assessment reports and makes accreditation decisions, the knowledge required is to be held within the group as a whole and not by each individual member of the group.</p>					

ISO/IEC 17011:2017 – Clause 7.4.5 – Witnessing

MD 7.4.5.1 In Table A.1 in Annex A in ISO 22003-1 the food chain categories are grouped into the following clusters ¹:

1. Primary production (A+B)
2. Processing food for human and animals (C+D)
3. Catering/food service (E)
4. Retail, Transport and Storage (F+G)
5. Auxiliary services (H)
6. Packaging material (I)
7. Auxiliary equipment (J)
8. Bio/chemical (K)

¹ These clusters are established only for the accreditation process and are not appropriate to be used by Certification Bodies in their certification processes

MD 7.4.5.2 BELAC shall not grant accreditation for a given food chain category without **at least one witness assessment performed in the cluster.**

MD 7.4.5.3 This criteria is also applicable to **extension of scopes.** For extensions inside a cluster, witnessing is not mandatory. Witnessing is mandatory for extensions to categories in a new cluster.

MD 7.4.5.4 These requirements are **minimum** requirements (except for the cases described in MD 7.4.5.11). BELAC shall assess every individual case and decide if more witnessing is needed in specific situations based on the outcome of the office assessment, existing food safety management schemes accreditations and process risks.

MD 7.4.5.5 BELAC shall witness **at least one audit in cluster 2** (if covered by the accredited scope of the Certification Body) **each year** and **at least one audit in each of the other clusters during the accreditation cycle.**

MD 7.4.5.6 A single witness assessment could encompass different categories if the activities of the witnessed company and of the Certification Body justify it.

MD 7.4.5.7 **A witness of an initial certification audit, including stage 1, should be undertaken as part of the initial accreditation. At least one of the witness audits per accreditation cycle should include an initial certification stage 2 audit or recertification audit.**

MD 7.4.5.8 Wherever feasible, throughout its accreditation cycle, BELAC should ensure that witness assessments are performed in those **sub-categories** (from those covered by the Certification Body scope) **with the higher risks of food safety hazards.**

MD 7.4.5.9 It is preferable that BELAC witnesses an audit team that has not been witnessed previously in that particular food chain category.

MD 7.4.5.10 Witness assessments should avoid the repeated witnessing of the same Certification Body client company. BELAC shall take into account previous results of witnessing to establish its witness strategy.

MD 7.4.5.11 BELAC may take into account accreditations granted to the Certification Body in other food safety standards or schemes (either management system or product certification schemes) for categories in the same cluster when deciding which witness assessments need to be performed. In these cases BELAC may use witnessing performed in one of such schemes to substitute some but not the majority, of the witness assessment activity required in MD 7.4.5.2 to MD 7.4.5.6. This should be based on the certification activity of clients and distribution of the Certification Body's auditors. BELAC shall fully document and justify these cases.

ISO/IEC 17011:2017 – Clause 7.6 - Assessment

MD 7.6.1 Accreditation for one or more food chain categories (ISO 22003-1 Annex A Table A.1) confirms that the Certification Body has demonstrated competence to deliver certification for FSMS (e.g. ISO 22000) in those food chain categories.

MD 7.6.2 However it does not mean that the Certification Body has auditors with the competence needed in all the sub-categories that may be included in such food chain categories. For this reason, before granting accreditation for a specific food chain category, BELAC shall assess that the Certification Body:

- 1) has competent personnel to perform the contract review and select the correct food chain category and sub-category (see Annex C in ISO 22003-1);
- 2) has established technical criteria to describe the competence for personnel in each sub-category defined;
- 3) has competent personnel in at least one sub-category of the food chain category;
- 4) has established a process giving assurance that accredited certification will be offered only in sub-categories where the Certification Body has competent personnel;
- 5) keeps an updated list of the sub-categories in which it has competent personnel; this list shall be available to the Accreditation Body on demand;
- 6) is able to demonstrate that it has at least one active or potential application in the food chain category for which it is seeking accreditation.

5.2. FSSC 22000 version 6.0

5.2.1. Requirements to accept ABs

This part specifies the requirements against which the Foundation FSSC will accept ABs that provide accreditation services to licensed Certification Bodies.

IAF Membership

ABs providing accreditation to CBs for FSSC 22000 certification shall be a current member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and:

- 1) be a signatory to the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) for Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) to cover FSSC 22000 accreditation services; and
- 2) be a signatory to the IAF MLA for FSSC 22000 to cover FSSC 22000 accreditation services.

Communication and responsibilities

- 1) BELAC shall sign the cooperation agreement with the Foundation, committing to information sharing and adherence to the Scheme requirements.
- 2) BELAC shall appoint a primary and secondary contact person for communication with the Foundation.
- 3) BELAC shall notify the Foundation in a timely manner of any changes in contact persons, its ownership, legal status, or any other issues that are relevant for accreditation. Changes in the IAF MLA status of BELAC shall be communicated to the Foundation within 3 working days.
- 4) BELAC shall participate in harmonization and calibration events as defined by The Foundation, including the annual FSSC event.
- 5) Communication on changes to the Scheme requirements and other related information shared with BELAC by the Foundation, shall be shared by BELAC with all its assessors for the Scheme and records of such training shall be retained.
- 6) BELAC shall inform the Foundation without undue delay in case the accreditation status of the CB changes (e.g., granted, extension, reduction, re-instate, suspension or withdrawal).
- 7) Upon request, BELAC shall cooperate with the Foundation in relation to investigations into the performance of its accredited CBs, including but not limited to complaints and integrity issues.
- 8) Upon request, BELAC shall share with the Foundation information on the performance of their CBs.
- 9) BELAC commits to operate in accordance with the FSSC Code of Ethics, which is publicly available on the FSSC website.

5.2.2. Accreditation

License agreement

- 1) BELAC shall verify that the CB has a (provisional) license agreement with the Foundation to provide certification to FSSC 22000, for a predefined ISO 22003-1:2022 food chain sub-category (or category if no subcategory) as set out in Annex 4.

- 2) BELAC shall not issue an accreditation certificate for a category or sub-category where no (provisional) license with the Foundation has been granted, this includes scope extensions to new sub-categories (or category if no subcategory).

Accreditation process – General

- 1) BELAC shall issue a confirmation of application for accreditation to FSSC 22000 Scheme including the detailed scope to the applicant CB.
- 2) BELAC shall issue a confirmation of declining an application for accreditation including the detailed scope to the applicant CB and reason for denying the application.
- 3) The accreditation process shall cover all Scheme requirements applicable to the scope of accreditation.
- 4) Only after approval from the Foundation, the CB is allowed to provide FSSC 22000 audits under its provisional license with a qualified FSSC 22000 auditor. At least one of these audits shall be witnessed by BELAC and at least one complete FSSC 22000 certification file shall be reviewed over the course of the initial accreditation process.
- 5) Office assessment reports of the CB shall be shared with the Foundation within 2 months from the last day of the office assessment.
- 6) Interim changes to Scheme requirements are communicated to BELAC via the FSSC 22000 BoS Decision list (published on the FSSC website).

Accreditation process – Witnessed audits

The witnessed audits shall meet the requirements for witnessing activities for the Accreditation of Management Systems Certification Bodies as set out in section 7.5.6 of IAF MD 16:2015 (*Note BELAC: section 7.4.5 of IAF MD 16:2024*) with the below FSSC 22000 Scheme specific requirements:

- 1) Initial and scope extension assessments shall require at least one (1) FSSC 22000 witnessed audit of each category (as defined in ISO 22003-1:2022) detailed on the provisional or full CB license agreement;
- 2) BELAC shall conduct FSSC 22000 witnessed audits covering all categories included in the CB accreditation scope during the BELAC accreditation cycle.
- 3) Witness audits shall always be for the full duration of the FSSC 22000 audit and covering all applicable Scheme requirements relevant to the audit.
- 4) For the CB to be awarded initial accreditation, the witness audit by BELAC shall be conducted at a full system audit (e.g., initial audit (at least Stage 2) or at a transition audit). Subsequent witness audits may be conducted at a surveillance audit. In all instances, the full duration of the FSSC 22000 audit shall be witnessed by BELAC.
- 5) The initial witnessed audit shall be conducted onsite; subsequent witnessing may be conducted onsite or remotely. Where subsequent witnessed audits are conducted remotely, this shall be based on a feasibility assessment, ensuring the ICT is appropriate to observe the complete audit and that the objectives of the

witness audit can be met. The requirements of IAF MD4 shall be met where BELAC utilizes ICT.

- 6) BELAC assessor/assessment team shall have the appropriate competence and have detailed knowledge of the FSSC 22000 Scheme.
- 7) Witnessed audit reports shall be shared with the Foundation within 2 months from the last day of the witness audit.

5.2.3. Integrity program

- 1) The Foundation provides BELAC access to all relevant CB outcomes of its Integrity Program and complaints management system related to ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015. BELAC shall consider the content of this information during its annual CB assessments.
- 2) BELAC is invited to attend, on a voluntary basis, and subject to the CBs agreement, the Integrity Program office assessments undertaken by the Foundation for its licensed CBs.
- 3) The Foundation shall inform BELAC on suspensions or terminations of its licensed CBs and vice versa.

Communication with the FSSC foundation has to be done via MyFSSC. MyFSSC is the communication platform and helpdesk.

To report something or in case of questions, log in to MyFSSC and create a ticket for the IP or Scheme (technical) department.

[\(Submit a ticket : MyFSSC\)](#)

6. PRESENTATION OF THE ACCREDITATION SCHEDULE

Accreditation assessments shall be against ISO/IEC 17021-1 including the requirements of ISO 22003-1.

The accreditation document scope shall explicitly state that the accreditation is against EN ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 and ISO 22003-1:2022. BELAC shall not grant accreditation to certify FSMS with any other standard.

The Scope of accreditation shall be expressed using the food chain categories detailed in Annex A Table A.1 of ISO 22003-1:2022.

Specific requirements of FSSC 22000 v 6.0

The scope of accreditation shall be clearly defined as below and as summarized in "Annex 4 : AB Accreditation Certificate (FSSC Version 6 – April 2023)".

- a) FSSC 22000 (Food Safety Management System Certification) – Relevant applicable (sub)version.

- b) Normative documents (latest version linked to the Scheme) for providing certification:
 - a. ISO 22000;
 - b. sector specific PRPs;
 - c. additional FSSC 22000 requirements.
 - c) Food chain clusters, categories and sub-categories as indicated in Annex A Table A.1 of ISO 22003-1:2022.
 - d) Key activities and locations (owned and subcontracted) are covered under the accreditation, including critical locations where applicable.
-