TQF Certification Program Management

Version 2023

Total Quality Food Association

Initial publication date (version 1.0): 2015/5/15

Publication date (version 2023): 2022/10/30

Compliance date (version 2023): 2023/4/1

TQF Certification Program Management
Version 2023

1. TQF Certification Program Overview

1.1 Objective

Supplying safe food for consumers is the legal and moral responsibility of all food manufacturing factories (herein referred to as “food factories”) and the TQF Certification Program (herein referred to as the "TQF Program") provides the framework for food factories to implement and maintain a food safety management system that conforms to local food safety regulations and international food safety standards and meets stakeholder expectations.

The TQF Program is a safety and quality food product certification program which provides the norms and requirements governing food sanitation, food safety, and quality, certified by an accredited and licensed third party certification body to ensure the completeness, safety, and quality of the food supplied by the food factory The TQF Program is co-established by private and public partners in Taiwan’s food industry to facilitate the robust development of Taiwan’s food industry and ensure consumers’ interests and rights.

1.2 Establishment of the TQF Program

The TQF Program is owned, designed and managed by the Total Quality Food Association (herein referred to as "TQFA") in association with academia and industry experts. The evolution of TQFA has grown from a government-lead organization in 1989 to the present day independent not-for-profit organization over three distinct periods.

1.2.1 Government Promotion of GMP (1989 – 2000)

In 1989, the Industrial Development Bureau (IDB) under the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA), Taiwan (R.O.C), introduced the US Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) system into Taiwan by actively promoting the Taiwan Food GMP Certification Program (Food-GMP) and encouraging food enterprises to voluntarily adopt the Food-GMP standard.

In 1994, GMP certified food enterprises established the Taiwan Food GMP Association to promote the voluntary implementation of Food-GMP by the Taiwan food industry.

1.2.2 Public / Private Partnership (2000 – 2015)

From 2000, the Taiwan Food GMP Association entered a period of public / private partnership in which the government and the food industry private sector cooperated to actively promote Food-GMP and enhance acceptance and public trust in food manufacturing. The Taiwan Food GMP Association functioned as a bridge between the government, industry and consumers, promoting the voluntary implementation of food safety management system by the food industry.

In 2014, the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration (TFDA) implemented Good Hygiene Practices (GHPs) and the Regulations on Food Safety Control Systems which prompted the expansion of the GMP program to include food safety management requirements and the establishment of the TQF Program

1.2.3 Independent Private Sector Organization (2015 – present)

In 2015, the IDB officially transferred Food-GMP including its management system and the GMP certification mark, to the Taiwan Quality Food Association (TQFA) as an independent private-sector, to strengthen the self-responsibility of food business operators and promote the internationalization of Taiwan’s food safety standard. TQFA entrusts Taiwan Accreditation Foundation (TAF) as an accreditation body (AB) to verify the certification bodies (CBs), and to make Taiwan’s food safety and quality certification system more open, transparent, and independent.

The TQF Program was first published in 2015. It continues to be reviewed, revised and updated regularly in line with global and local regulatory and industry requirements and scientific principles. The latest version of the TQF Program (TQF2023) incorporates the GHP and HACCP updates in the 2020 edition of the Codex Alimentarius Commission’s General Principles of Hygiene, including the contemporary requirements on allergen management, food defense, food fraud, traceability, and food safety culture.

1.3 Structure of the TQF Program

1.3.1 Ownership

The TQF Program is owned and operated by the Total Quality Food Association (TQFA) which is a non-profit organization and legally registered as an Incorporated Association.

The duties and mission of TQFA are to:

- Promote the TQF Program, an accredited third-party product food safety and quality certification program.
- Improve the international harmonization of the TQF Program.
- Promote the sound development of the food industry.
- Conduct food-related education and training, professional services, research and development, promotion and publicity.
- Gather and consolidate members' opinions on food law and regulations for feedback to the competent authorities.
- Provide members with information, references and consulting services on international and domestic food law, regulations and industry standards.
- Establish a member exchange platform.
- Other matters that related to TQFA's purpose.

1.3.2 Authority to Operate the TQF Certification Program

The Board of Directors (TQFA-BOD) and Board of Supervisors (TQFA-BOS) maintain the financial viability of TQFA, ensures that the organization is adequately resourced and oversees the activities of TQFA. The responsibilities of the BOD and BOS are listed in *Annex 1: The Organizational Structure of TQFA.* The Board members are publicly listed on the TQFA website (www.tqf.org.tw).

The membership requirements and qualifications of the TQFA-BOD and TQFA-BOS are set in the articles of association, and the current membership of each is stipulated in the official corporate documents *Registration of an Incorporated Association* and *Registration of Juristic Persons* which are issued by the Taiwanese government to demonstrate that TQFA is a legal entity.

The *Registration of an Incorporated Association* shows that the association was established on 30th May 1994 with the name *Taiwan Food GMP Association*. The *Registration of Juristic Persons* is the register of TQFA Directors and Supervisors that has been lodged with the Taipei District Court. This legal document is renewed when the Board members, the Chairperson or location of the TQFA office changes.

The Secretary General (TQFA-SG), appointed by the chairman, is the Chief Executive Officer of TQFA and is responsible for management of all resources and functions.

The Certification Services Division (TQFA-CSD) serves as the TQF Program management team and is responsible for administration and operation of the TQF Program, and for reviewing and revising the standard and the certification program management through the TQF Technical Working Committee (TQFA-TWC), then propose to the TQFA-BOD and TQFA-BOS for approval.

TQFA establishes and documents requirements for Certification Bodies that are accredited to ISO/IEC 17065 (refer *5.TQF Program Certification Body Management)* and contracted by TQFA to provide conformity assessment and certification activities. TQFA does not itself provide consultancy services related to the TQF Program and does not perform conformity assessment and certification activities of the TQF Program.

Certification Bodies are not involved in the ownership of TQFA or management of the TQF Program.

1.3.3 The TQF Program

The TQF Program takes a scientifically based approach to identifying and controlling hazards that threaten food safety and quality. In doing so, it differentiates between the identification and control of food safety hazards and the management of product quality.

The TQF Program is designed and implemented by the TQFA with technical and operational input from a Technical Working Committee (TQFA-TWC) comprising local industry experts. It is developed by the Taiwan food industry to meet the needs of the Taiwan food industry, but it's application and use is entirely voluntary. Food factories are required to meet local food safety regulations but are not coerced or persuaded in any way to implement the TQF Program.

The TQF Program provides two levels of certification:

- TQF Certification Program Level 1 (herein referred to as "TQF L1") requires food factories to document and implement a food safety management system, including Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) and Food Safety Management (FSM) as outlined in the TQF L1 requirements which includes post-market product sampling and testing etc. (refer *TQF Certification Standard, version 2023*) and to be successfully assessed and certified by a TQF contracted and accredited certification body.
- TQF Certification Program Level 2 (herein referred to as "TQF L2") requires food factories that are already certified to TQF L1 to document and implement an Quality Management Plan (QMP) and to be successfully assessed and certified by a TQF contracted and accredited certification body. TQF L2 includes both on-site and post-market product sampling and testing. Full details of the TQF L2 requirements are in the *TQF Certification Standard, version 2023.*

The normative documents of the TQF Program are:

- TQF Certification Program Management, version 2023 (this document);
- *TQF Certification Standard, version 2023* (the GMP, food safety management, HACCP, and post-market product sampling requirements of TQF L1, and the QMP and on-site sampling requirements of TQF L2;
- Support procedures referenced in *TQF Certification Program Management* and/or the *TQF Certification Standard*

1.3.4 The Scope of TQF Certification

The TQF Program covers food safety management (at TQF L1) and quality (at TQF L2) requirements in the manufacturing of four (4) types of processed food:

- the processing of perishable animal products;
- the processing of perishable plant products;
- the processing of perishable animal and plant products (mixed products), and
- the processing of products stable at room temperature.

Outsourcing the production of TQF certified products is only allowed if the outsourced food manufacturers have achieved the same or higher level of TQF certification. Depending on the situation, production outsourcing can be fully or partly. TQF-TWC has the final decision if there is any uncertainty.

• Fully production outsourcing: The entrusted factory obtains the same or higher level of TQF certification.

•Partly production outsourcing: The smallest selling unit of certified products (complete packaging) should be produced by certified factory. The entrusted factory must be assessed by certified factory as its supplier management. CB is required to confirm the supplier management during surveillance audit.

The TQF Program applies only to processed and packaged food products and TQFA has identified twenty-eight (28) food sector categories. Specific provisions and explanations for each category are in the *TQF Certification*

Standard, version 2023. The categories are listed below in table 1.3.4.

Table 1.3.4 TQF Certification Program Food Sector Categories

GFSI Scope	TQF Audit Categories	TQF Program Food Sector Categories
CI. Processing of perishable animal products	A. Dairy products	04. Dairy products
	B. Others	14. Processed seafood, 15. Frozen foods, 18. Processed meat products,19. Chilled prepared foods, 26. Functional foods, 99. Foods in general
CII. Processing of perishable vegetable products	A. Beverages	01. Beverages
	B. Grains and grain processed products	02. Baked foods, 08. Noodles
	C. Others	12. Preserved fruits and vegetables, 13. Processed soybean products, 15. Frozen foods, 19. Chilled prepared foods, 26. Functional foods, 99. Foods in general
CIII. Processing of perishable animal and vegetable products (mixed products)	A. Beverages, fermentation and brewing products	01. Beverages, 17. Spices & condiments
	B. Grains and grain processed products	02. Baked foods, 08. Noodles
	C. Dairy products	04. Dairy products, 07. Ice & novelties
	D. Others	10. Ready to eat meals, 15. Frozen foods, 18. Processed meat products, 19. Chilled prepared foods, 26. Functional foods, 99. Foods in general
CIV. Processing of ambient stable products	A. Beverages, fermentation and brewing products	01. Beverages, 06. Soy sauce, 11. MSG, 17. Spices & condiments, 25. Alcohol & liquor
	B. Grains and grain processed products	02. Baked foods, 08. Noodles, 09. Confectionary, 22. Flour, 23. Refined sugar, 24. Starch sugar
	C. Oils and fats	03. Edible oils
	D. Dairy products	04. Dairy products, 05. Powdered infant formula
	E. Canning and thermal-processed products	12. Preserved fruits and vegetables, 16. Canned foods
	F. Dried products and others	13. Processed soybean products, 14. Processed seafood, 18. Processed meat products, 20. Dehydrated foods, 21. Tea leaf, 26. Functional food, 27. Food additives, 99. Foods in general

1.3.5 TQF Certification Mark

TQFA is the owner of the TQF Certification Mark (TQF CM) and specifies the conditions under which TQF CM can be used. The instructions regarding the style, format, application and conditions for use of TQF CM are contained in *Annex 4: Guidance for the Use of the TQF Certification Mark.*

The TQF Certification Mark cannot be used on products certified under TQF L1, or in association with any food factory certified to TQF L1. TQF L1 certified food factories may promote their TQF L1 certification publicly but are

not permitted to describe their certification in any way that indicates or implies proof of product safety. Certification to TQF L1 is an assurance that the food factory has implemented an effective food safety management system in accordance with the TQF Program but is not a guarantee of the safety of the factory's products, or that the factory consistently meets food safety regulations at all times.

The TQF CM can only be used on packaged products included in the scope of certification produced in food factories that have successfully met the requirements of TQF L2 certification, or off-line in reference to TQF L2 certified food factories. Suppose the TQF L2 certified food factory produces products that don't indicate the manufacturer information on the packaging. In that case, the TQF L2 certified cannot claim the product achieved TQF certification or label the TQF certification mark. The factories must first agree to the TQFA terms and conditions of use of the TQF CM and follow the requirements. The assigned certification body is responsible for confirming compliance to Annex 4 by the TQF L2 certified food factory.

All types of production lines are included in the certification scope. Food factory may apply for the use of certification mark to the CB, after the confirmation by the CB, the case will pass to TQFA for the approval. After the approval, the TQF certification mark without 9 digits can be widely used on the advertisement of certified products including on signboards, posters, televisions, print media, internet advertisements, pamphlets, manuals and product catalogues etc.

1.4 Normative References

The following normative references are used in the development, implementation, update, maintenance, and management of the TQF Program. In all cases, the current version of the reference applies:

1.4.1 TQF Certification Standard, version 2023:

- Codex Alimentarius Commission, General Principles of Food Hygiene, CXC 1-1969, Adopted in 1969. Revised in 1997, 2003, 2020; General Principles, Good Hygiene Practices, and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point System and Guidelines for its application (herein referred to as "Codex HACCP");
- ISO/IEC 17025: General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories (herein referred to as "ISO 17025")
- GFSI Benchmarking Requirements; version 2020; part lll, Cl, Cll, Clll, and ClV (herein referred to as "GFSI Benchmarking");
- Applicable food safety regulations and industry codes of practice in the country where the food manufacturing business is located and the countries in which the manufactured products are sold.

1.4.2 TQF Certification Program Management, version 2023:

- ISO/IEC 17011:2017, Conformity assessment — Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies (herein referred to as "ISO 17011");
- ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services (herein referred to as "ISO 17065");
- IAF MD4:2022 IAF mandatory document for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) for auditing/assessment purposes (herein referred to as "IAF MD4").
- ISO/IEC 17025: General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories (herein referred to as "ISO 17025")
- ISO 22003-2:2022 Food safety — Part 2: Requirements for bodies providing evaluation and certification of products, processes and services, including an audit of the food safety system (herein referred to as "ISO 22003-2")
- GFSI Benchmarking Requirements, version 2020.1; part ll. (herein referred to as "GFSI Benchmarking")

2. TQF Program Development and Maintenance

2.1 TQFA as Certification Program Owner (CPO)

The TQF Program is operated and managed by TQFA as the Certification Program Owner (CPO). TQFA has the authority to initiate and revise the TQF Certification Standard and the TQF Program Management requirements, and may do so based on:

- Changes in the international normative references (refer 1.4);
- Changes to food regulations;
- New or emerging identified food safety hazards;
- Advances in food safety science and technology, and
- Feedback from TQF stakeholders (food factories, accreditation bodies, certification bodies)

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities in Development of the TQF Program

The TQFA-BOD and TQFA-BOS have overall legal and fiscal responsibility for resourcing and managing TQFA, including development and management of the TQF Program. The TQFA-BOD approves amendments following consideration by the TQFA-TWC.

The TQFA-CSD manages the TQF Program on behalf of TQFA, and supervised by TQFA-SG and TQFA-SD. The TQFA-CSD review the performance of the TQF Program and draft technical amendments where applicable for consideration by the TQFA-TWC.

The TQFA-TWC is composed of technically competent industry experts representing the TQF Program food sector categories (refer 1.3.4). Its function is to consider and recommend changes to the TQF Program and to review amendments drafted by TQFA-CSD. The TQFA-TWC makes technical recommendations, and the TQFA-BOD and TQFA-BOS make administrative decisions regarding the operation of the TQF Program.

2.3 The TQFA Technical Working Committee (TQFA-TWC)

2.3.1 Composition of the TQFA-TWC

There are eleven (11) technically competent external members of the TQFA-TWC, plus one TQFA-BOD member who is nominated by the Chairperson of TQFA and approved by the TQFA-BOD and TQFA-BOS as Convener.

TQFA-CSD staff are responsible for assisting the Convenor and preparing documents for consideration by TQFA-TWC members.

All TQFA-TWC members are required to have a minimum of five (5) years working experience in the production, quality assurance, research and development, food safety management, or purchasing of manufactured food products, or food safety related academic research, teaching, or consulting associated with manufactured food products (i.e., Cl – ClV, refer table1.3.4).

Membership of the TQFA-TWC is by nomination to TQFA. The Convener of the TQFA-TWC makes the final decision on TQFA-TWC membership.

External membership of the TQFA-TWC is:

- Three (3) senior manufacturing or technical representatives of food manufacturers that are involved in the processing of manufactured food products
- Two (2) technical representatives of food retailers or food service providers that purchase or use manufactured food products;
- Four (4) food science/technology academics who have industry or research experience involving the safety of manufactured food products;

- Two (2) food safety consultants and/or trainers and/or regulators who are not employed by or associated with TQFA in a business relationship, and have experience with the safety of manufactured food products.

There is only one representative per company/organization, although members who are unable to attend a meeting may nominate a proxy for one meeting only. All TQFA-TWC members sign a non-disclosure agreement.

2.3.2 TQFA-TWC Terms of Service

TQFA-TWC members serve a three (3) year term of service.

2.3.3 TQFA-TWC Meetings

TQFA-TWC meetings are held once per year or more frequently as required by TQFA. Minutes are taken at all meetings, approved and signed off by the Convenor, marked as 'confidential' and distributed to TQFA-TWC members within ten (10) business days.

TQFA-TWC meetings are held at the TQFA offices unless otherwise notified (refer also 2.3.4) and run for no more than four (4) hours. The meetings are conducted in Chinese. The Convener of the TQFA-TWC chairs the meetings.

All information provided to members during TQFA-TWC meetings that is not already in the public domain is regarded as confidential.

For the purposes of voting on decisions, a quorum is more than half of the members. Members must be in attendance (or by teleconference) to vote. Decisions are reached by a simple majority vote.

At the discretion of TQFA, technical experts and/or observers may be invited to attend part or all of a TQFA-TWC meeting. Technical experts and observers may not contribute to the meeting unless called upon by the Convenor to do so and have no decision making or voting rights within the TQFA-TWC.

2.3.4 TQFA-TWC Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances (e.g., pandemic lockdown), TQFA-TWC meetings may be held remotely. In such circumstances, all other provisions of 2.3.3 apply.

For remote meetings, TQFA-TWC members are reminded of their responsibility to maintain the confidentiality and security of TQFA information and to ensure that no other persons are sharing the call.

2.4 Review and Amendment of the TQF Program

TQFA is committed to the continual review and amendment (refer also 2.1) of the TQF Program to ensure its viability, impartiality and sustainability.

2.4.1 TQF Program Internal Review

TQFA-CSD holds an internal TQF Program review once per quarter, or more frequently if required. Participants are the TQFA-SG, the TQFA-SD and permanent TQFA staff. TQFA may invite industry or other technical experts as necessary.

The internal review meeting considers any technical or operational issues that may have occurred, complaints and disputes in relation to the certification process; inconsistencies with regulatory requirements; and feedback and suggestions raised by all stakeholders.

The results of the meeting are recorded, and any recommendations for amendments arising from the meeting are drafted by TQFA-CSD for consideration by the TQFA-TWC according to the *Principles of Document Writing* listed in TQF-DDM *Document and Data Management Regulations.* Drafted recommendations are reported to the TQFA-TWC Convener, who convenes a TQFA-TWC meeting for discussion and review.

Recommendations for amendments may include :

- Adjustments to accreditation and certification procedures as a result of changes in the international standards (refer 1.4 *Normative References*);
- Adjustment to related certification program requirements as a result of new and emerging food safety hazard discovered, and

- Changes to the *TQF Certification Standard* as a result of food regulatory changes or advances in food safety science and technology, and
- Improvements in *TQF Certification Program Management* as a result of feedback from TQF stakeholders.

2.4.2 Exceptional Cases

In exceptional certification-related cases and appeals (refer 7.2.6), the TQFA-SG forms a task force composed of the TQFA-SG as the convener, TQFA-SD as vice convener, TQFA-CSD director as secretary and other division directors as members. The results of the meeting are recorded, and any recommendations for amendments arising from the meeting are drafted by TQFA-CSD for consideration by the TQFA-TWC.

2.4.3 TQFA-TWC Review of Proposed Amendments

All potential technical amendments are reviewed by the TQFA-TWC and a decision taken on acceptance, further revision, or rejection of the proposed change (refer also note on TQFA-TWC decision process in 2.3.3).

If the recommendation is accepted by the TQFA-TWC, then the amendment moves to the 'public consultation' phase (refer 2.4.5).

If the recommendation is rejected by the TQFA-TWC, the reason for rejection is recorded in the minutes, and the TQFA-SG decides to revise or reject the proposed amendment.

If the TQFA-TWC requires further information to support the amendment, it is referred to TQFA for further consideration. A revised draft is then presented to the TQFA-TWC at the next meeting.

2.4.4 Minor Amendments

Minor amendments are changes to TQFA Program documentation that do not alter the general intent, technical content, or certification processes. Minor amendments comprise grammar and typographical changes, or clarification of established technical content.

Minor amendments are reviewed by the TQFA-TWC but are not subject to public consultation .

2.4.5 Public Consultation

The proposed TQF Program amendments are posted on the TQFA web site (www.tqf.org.tw) for a period of twenty (20) business days. All TQFA Program stakeholders (food factories, accreditation bodies, certification bodies) are notified of the public consultation period and encouraged to submit comments and opinions in writing to TQFA-CSD.

All public comments and opinions are considered by TQFA-CSD and further revisions to the amendments made where applicable. Further revisions are returned to the TQFA-TWC for consideration along with all comments received during the public consultation period.

2.4.6 Authorization of Amendments

All amendments (including minor amendments) of the TQF Program reviewed by TQFA-TWC and approved by TQFA-BOD and TQFA-BOS are finalized by the TQFA-CSD. The final publication is published in accordance to "Total Quality Food Certification Program Document and Data Management Regulations"

2.4.7 Publication of Amendments

All published TQF Program documents, including minor amendments, adhere to TQF-DDM *Document and Data Management Regulations*, and include version number, revision date and approval.

Amended documents that impact TQFA stakeholders are posted on www.tqf.org.tw along with the agreed implementation date (i.e., the date when the change becomes applicable). Implementation dates may vary from one (1) to six (6) months depending on the period required to upgrade factory systems, or train factory staff and auditors.

TQFA-CSD informs all TQFA Program stakeholders by email, the TQFA web site or directly through stakeholder meetings about the amendments without delay and ensures that certification bodies (and accreditation bodies

where appropriate) apply the amendments from the specified implementation date. It is the responsibility of accredited certification bodies to advise certified food factories of the changes and applicable dates.

3. TQFA Quality Management System (TQFA-QMS)

3.1 TQFA-QMS Roles and Responsibilities

A quality management system (TQFA-QMS) has been developed to control and maintain the operational integrity of all TQFA functions, including the TQF Program. The TQFA-QMS is continually reviewed and updated.

The TQFA-SG has responsibility for the TQFA-QMS and has designated TQFA-CSD to manage the development and maintenance of the TQFA-QMS sections related to the TQF Program.

TQFA-CSD draft amendments under TQFA-SG's supervision and propose TQF Program changes to TQFA-TWC. (refer also 2.2). TQFA-CSD registers and manages assigned certification bodies, and communicates as needed with the accreditation body, certification bodies and auditors.

3.2 Document Control

3.2.1 Responsibility for Control of TQFA-QMS Documents and Records

The establishment, publication, amendment and abolition (archiving) of documents and related data used in the TQF Program is accomplished in a timely manner to ensure that current documentation is available for use by TQF Program stakeholders, and effectively explains the TQF certification process.

All TQF Program documents (*TQF Certification Program Management* and the *TQF Certification Standard*), specifications, policies, procedures and forms included in the TQFA-QMS. It includes publicly available TQF Program documents, internal TQF-QMS procedures, and all TQF-QMS Forms.

TQFA-CSD is responsible for the management, currency, and review of all TQFA-QMS documents related to the TQF Program, including the publication of approved new and amended documents and the recall, archiving and/or destruction (where applicable) of superseded documents. All documents and amendments to documents are reviewed by the TQFA-SD and approved by the TQFA-SG prior to publication.

Records are reviewed to demonstrate the effective operation of the TQF Program and for future improvement and traceability. Records are retained for a minimum of five years, and in the case of audit reports of certified sites, for a minimum of five years or as long as they remain certified.

3.2.2 TQFA-QMS Document Translation

All normative TQFA-QMS documents are in Traditional Chinese. If there is a need to translate the original Traditional Chinese documents into English or any other language, TQFA-CSD is responsible for the translation.

Translators appointed by TQFA-CSD are required to have an international recognized certificate for that language, and an undergraduate or above degree from that language speaking country.

Where there is a divergence between the translated version and the original Traditional Chinese version, the Traditional Chinese version prevails.

3.2.3 Storage of TQFA-QMS Documents and Records

Approved and current TQFA-QMS documents and records are stored electronically and securely with controlled access. All publicly available current TQF Program documents are on www.tqf.org.tw and replaced TQF Program documents are removed from www.tqf.org.tw and archived on TQFA's intranet.

3.3 Communication and Contact Management

3.3.1 Stakeholder Communication Processes

The TQFA-QMS includes a communication process to ensure that contact with all TQF Program stakeholders is open and transparent. This includes:

- Advice on amendments to the TQF Program (refer 2.4.7);
- Stakeholder enquiries and feedback;
- Complaints and appeals, and
- TQF Program satisfaction survey

3.3.2 Stakeholder enquiries and feedback

Enquiries, suggestions and comments received from TQF Program stakeholders and interested parties are assigned by TQFA-CSD director to a case officer from within the TQFA-CSD. The responsibility of the case officer is to record the enquiry in the *TQF Program Customer Service Record* including the date and time of the enquiry and the contact details of the enquirer.

The case officer answers the enquiry directly or refers the enquiry to the responsible TQFA person for resolution. Whether or not the enquiry can be resolved immediately, the case officer responds to the client within five (5) business days and the response recorded in the *TQF Program Customer Service Record* .

All enquiries are summarized and included in the TQFA-CSD quarterly review of the TQF Program (refer 2.4.1). Suggestions that are considered as potential amendments to the TQF Program are referred to the TQFA-TWC (refer 2.4.3, 2.4.4).

3.3.3 Complaints and Appeals

A complaint is a statement of dissatisfaction from any interested party about the conduct of a TQFA registered auditor, other certification body personnel, TQFA staff, a TQF certified food factory, or an aspect of the TQF Program.

An appeal occurs when a food factory disputes a decision made by a TQF registered auditor or certification body during a TQF Program assessment. An appeal is first referred to the relevant certification body and is only referred to TQFA if the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the certification body.

Complaints and appeals received by TQFA are assigned to a case officer within the TQFA staff. (refer 5.4.2 specifies requirements for certification body complaints and appeals procedure). It is the responsibility of the case officer to record the complaint or appeal in the *TQF Program Customer Service Record* including the date and time of the complaint or appeal and the contact details of the client.

The case officer first determines if it can be quickly resolved. In such instances, the case officer diplomatically responds to the client within five (5) business days and records the resolution for consideration at the TQFA-CSD quarterly review of the TQF Program (refer 2.4.1).

Where the case officer is not immediately able to resolve the complaint or appeal it is referred to TQFA-CSD for discussion and resolution. The client is notified that it is under consideration and the results of further investigation are reported to the client within twenty (20) business days of the initial complaint or appeal.

All complaints and appeals are reviewed in the TQFA-CSD quarterly review of the TQF Program (refer 2.4.1).

3.3.4 TQF Program Satisfaction Survey

Once per year, TQFA-CSD sends a TQF Program satisfaction survey to all TQF certified food factories to determine their level of satisfaction with TQF certification and gather information for improvement to the TQF Program. Client views are recorded in the *TQF Program Certified Member Satisfaction Questionnaire* and returned to TQFA-CSD within twenty (20) business days.

Survey results are summarized and reviewed by TQFA-CSD. Survey responses that are considered as potential amendments to the TQF Program are referred to the TQFA-TWC (refer 2.4.3, 2.4.4).

3.4 Data Management

3.4.1 TQFA Internet Communications Platform (TQF-ICT)

TQFA maintains an internet communications platform (TQF-ICT) for TQF certified food factories and other

interested parties to upload data and search for information.

The responsibility for TQF Program data contained in TQF-ICT, including the management, accuracy, currency and translation (if required) is as per *3.2 Document Control.*

TQF-ICT contains the following information:

- Notification of amendments to the TQF Program including improvements in the TQF-ICT platform;
- List of certified sites (refer 3.4.2);
- List of currently registered TQF auditors (refer 3.4.3);
- List of temporary terminations (suspensions), and
- List of permanent terminations (withdrawals).

Food factories can access on-site audit checklists (on-site assessment forms) from the TQF-ICT after ten (10) business days from the end date of the site audit.

3.4.2 Certified Food Factories

The certified food factory information listed is the food sector category and production system number, the company and factory name and contact details, and the verification period and certification level.

3.4.3 Registered Auditors on TQF-ICT

The registered auditor information listed on TQF-ICT is the auditors name and registration number, their certification body, a summary of their food industry expertise, their TQF food sector categories, and certificate expiry date.

3.5 TQF Program Internal Audit

3.5.1 Purpose of the Internal Audit

TQFA has an internal audit process to ensure that all operations associated with the implementations of the TQF Program are in accordance with the TQFA-QMS and to take corrective actions when non-conformities are identified in TQF-QMS documentation or the certification process.

A complete documentation and implementation audit of the TQFA-QMS occurs annually, including the TQF Program requirements. Unscheduled audits of parts of the TQFA-QMS may additionally be conducted at the discretion of the TQFA-SG in response to particular areas of concern.

3.5.2 Responsibility for Internal Audits

To maintain the independence of the internal audit process, a personnel from the Administration Division of TQFA (TQFA-AD) appointed by TQFA-SG is responsible for planning, conduct and reporting of the internal audits.

Auditors who are assigned to conduct internal audits are required to fully understand the TQF Program and have training in ISO internal audit, ISO 17065 and HACCP. If TQFA has no suitable candidates, qualified external experts may be engaged subject to signing a TQFA confidentiality agreement.

3.5.3 TQFA Internal Audit Notice

Following approval from the TQFA-SG to conduct the audit, the TQFA-AD issues a *TQFA Internal Audit Notice* to TQFA-CSD at least five (5) business days prior to the commencement of the audit. The notice specifies the date/time and duration of the audit, the designated internal auditor, staff and or stakeholders to be interviewed during the internal audit, and specific documents and records required during the audit.

3.5.4 Conduct of the Internal Audit

The auditor and TQFA-CSD staff hold a short, initial meeting to ensure transparency of the audit schedule and requirements, and that reporting responsibilities and timelines are understood.

The auditor inspects the TQF Program documents and records on-site, and interviews staff who are responsible

for the operation of TQF Program to confirm all the operations are implemented and in accordance with documented TQF Program requirements in TQFA-QMS.

The auditor collects objective evidence by review of documents, examination of records, and staff interviews. The auditor records areas of change or improvement as well as identified non-conformities in the *TQFA Internal Audit Report* , including the relevant procedure or requirement that is not being observed, the person responsible, and the reason for the nonconformance.

The audit findings are discussed at the audit close-out meeting and consensus reached on any non-conformities raised. The TQFA-CSD Director confirms and signs off the contents of the *TQFA Internal Audit Report* .

3.5.5 Authenticity of the TQF Program Certificate

Certification Bodies are required to confirm the correct and appropriate use of the TQF Program certificate during the on-site assessment at the food factory and include it in the site audit report.

As an additional verification, a sample of certificates is inspected by the auditor at the internal audit to confirm that the certificate conforms with the scope, categories and subcategories of products specified for the food factory.

3.5.6 Report and Close-out of the Internal Audit

The Auditor completes the *TQFA Internal Audit Report* within five (5) business days from the date of audit and submits the TQF Program internal audit section to TQFA-CSD for corrective action response.

TQFA-CSD implements corrective actions for all identified non-conformities and reports back to the auditor within twenty (20) business days from the date of audit. The auditor confirms the effectiveness of corrective actions and reports the outcome in *TQFA Internal Audit Report* .

In circumstances where the nonconformance is not closed out within the twenty (20) days, or to the satisfaction of the auditor, the auditor notes it in *TQFA Internal Audit Report* and continues to follow up until the non-conformity is satisfactorily corrected.

The final audit report, *TQFA Internal Audit Report* , along with supporting evidence is submitted to the TQFA-SG for approval. The approved report is kept on record (refer 3.2)

3.5.7 Other forms of Internal Review of TQF-QMS

In addition to scheduled TQF-QMS audits TQFA-CSD conducts an internal review meeting of the TQF Program once per quarter to consider and resolve technical or operational issues that may have occurred (refer 2.4.1). Outstanding issues from the quarterly review are referred to the TQFA-TWC for consideration.

4. TQF Program Accreditation

4.1 TQF Accreditation / Certification

4.1.1 Accreditation and Certification

“Accreditation” is conformity assessment of certification bodies by an approved national accreditation body to ensure that the designated certification bodies are able to meet the applicable international standards and audit the TQF Program (refer also *Annex **2**: TQF Program Glossary).*

The term “certification” refers to the process by which approved certification bodies, based on an audit of food factories, provide written assurance that the food safety requirements and management systems have been successfully documented and implemented and conform to requirements of the TQF Program (refer also *Annex **2**: TQF Program Glossary*)

4.1.2 Accreditation Bodies

“Accreditation” is performed by Accreditation Bodies (ABs) which are required to meet the requirements of the international standard ISO/IEC 17011 and be members of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), and a signatory to the IAF Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MLA) with the scope of product certification (MLA level

3; scope: product certification; ISO 17065).

4.1.3 Certification Bodies

ABs accredit Certification Bodies (CBs) to ensure they are capable of meeting and maintaining the requirements of ISO / IEC 17065 and the TQF Program (refer *5.3 Certification Body Accreditation*)

4.1.4 TQFA Accreditation MOU

TQFA has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in place with one or more AB that meet the requirements of 4.1.2. The approved ABs are listed on www.tqf.org.tw under the "TQF scope" tab.

Accreditation Bodies are required within that agreement to:

- Appoint a liaison person to maintain open contact and communication with TQFA. TQFA are given the contact details of the AB liaison person. If there is a change in the designated contact person, TQFA-CSD is informed in writing within ten (10) business days.
- Assess CBs against the requirements of ISO 17065 and the TQF Program requirements to ensure the CBs have the ability and competence to effectively audit the TQF Program, scopes Cl - ClV.
- Advise TQFA within ten (10) business days if the AB has been suspended or had its IAF MLA signatory status withdrawn, or has a change in any policy, procedure, or documentation that may have an impact on the IAF MLA.
- Immediately advise TQFA if any accredited TQFA approved CB has its accreditation suspended or withdrawn, and the circumstances causing the withdrawal or suspension. This may include issues raised by the AB regarding the behavior or performance of CB auditors, or any other non-compliance with the requirements of ISO 17065 or the TQF Program.

4.1.5 Information Sharing with ABs

TQFA and the contracted ABs co-operate to ensure harmonization in the accreditation practices performed by AB assessors and in the continuous improvement of the TQF Program to maintain the highest level of competence in the TQF Program's accredited CBs.

The Director of TQFA-CSD is the primary liaison officer with contracted ABs and informs the TQFA-SG and TQFA-SD of any major developments or concerns expressed by, or concerning, ABs.

TQFA provides all contracted Abs with open access to TQF Program normative documents and advises them of amendments to TQF Program documents and public consultation (refer 2.4.5) regarding such changes.

The ABs advise TQFA of any changes in the ISO or IAF normative documents that may impact the operation of the TQF Program.

TQFA meets with each AB following an assessment of a contracted CB to review the outcome and outstanding issues and meets with ABs individually and collectively as needed to review any technical questions regarding interpretation of the TQF Program documents and/or the AB assessment process.

4.1.6 Accreditation Body Assessors

The AB employs assessors responsible for head office assessments and auditor witness assessments of the contracted CBs according to ISO l7065 and TQF Program requirements. All AB assessors performing accreditation assessments are required to:

- Hold training qualifications in ISO 17065;
- Understand the requirements of ISO 22003-2;
- Meet the IAF MD 20 *Generic Competence for AB Assessors: Application to ISO/IEC 17011*, and
- Have up-to-date knowledge of the TQF Program and participate in annual TQF Program training.

4.1.7 Initial Accreditation Process

On initial application by a CB, the AB assesses the scope of certification for which the CB applies, including a head office assessment and one witness assessment for each applied scope (Cl – ClV). The assessment includes the conformity assessment of the CB's administration system; quality system; and the qualifications, training, competence, and assessment of CB auditors.

The AB assessment includes the operation of the audit team and the personal traits, knowledge, and skills of auditors employed by the CB.

CBs applying for initial accreditation to ISO 17065 and the TQF Program are required to achieve accreditation within twelve (12) months from the date of application or have their agreement with TQFA terminated. The AB reviews the reasons for the delay or failure to accredit and reports the findings to TQFA-CSD, who then discuss the findings with the applicant CB and request a plan to achieve accreditation (refer 5.3.1)

The TQFA-SG makes the final decision on the acceptance or rejection of the applicant CB accreditation plan. If accepted, the TQFA-CSD monitors the progress of the plan with the AB.

4.1.8 Ongoing Accreditation Assessments

Once the CB is approved, the AB conducts at least one (1) head office assessment against requirements of ISO 17065 and the TQF Program, and one (1) witness assessment for each applied scope (Cl, Cll, Clll, and ClV) during each accreditation cycle.

The AB maintains a consistent, objective approach for all CB assessments and ensures that, if the range of certification services offered by the CB is wider than ISO 17065 and the TQF Program, that the TQF Program requirements are clearly differentiated and identified, and there is no conflict with other certification services.

5. TQF Program Certification Body Management

5.1 Certification Bodies

5.1.1 TQFA Certification Process

Compliance to the TQF Program requires food factories to be certified by a CB that is contracted by TQFA to conduct TQF Program audits and issue the TQF Program certificate. TQF Program CBs must be accredited to the current version of the international standard ISO 17065 (refer 1.4) and be subject to annual assessments of their certification activities by a TQFA appointed AB (refer 4.1.4).

5.1.2 TQFA Certification Bodies

TQFA has a legally enforceable agreement in place with one or more CBs that meet the requirements of 5.1.1, and strictly adhere to the TQFA operational requirements detailed in the *TQF Certification Program Management* (this document) and the TQF *Certification Standard.*

5.1.3 Certification Body Resources

CBs are legal corporate entities with a business purpose to provide auditing and certification activities, and with the competence to implement the services and technology required for the TQF Program.

TQFA contracted CBs are required to demonstrate to the AB (refer 4.1.3) that there are sufficient financial, physical and personnel resources available for all TQF Program audit activities to ensure that they are carried out in a competent and reliable manner (refer also 6.1.1). This includes the technology necessary for remote audit activities, where applicable (refer 5.4.4).

CBs are required to have effective management systems in place for financial control and accounting, human resources, document and record control, internal audits and data confidentiality. The documented organizational structure including the name, qualifications, experience, duties, responsibilities and authorities of management and certification personnel and committees is kept current and made available to TQFA-CSD on request.

5.1.4 Inspection and Testing Services

CBs are equipped with, or have a contract with, a laboratory accredited to ISO 17025 by an appropriately authorized AB to conduct product testing as per TQF Program requirements. CBs have documented policies, procedures and records for the qualification, and monitoring of external laboratories, and audited food factories are informed of the contracted service.

Contracts with external laboratories include provisions for confidentiality and conflict of interest.

5.2 Certification Body Application Process

5.2.1 Initial Application

CBs must first enter into a license agreement with TQFA before providing auditing services for the TQF Program. A CB applying for a TQFA license completes and submits the *TQF Program Certification Body Application Form* and supporting documentation to TQFA-CSD.

TQFA-CSD conducts an initial appraisal of the submitted application form and responds to the applicant within ten (10) business days of receipt. If the application is incomplete or fails to meet the TQF Program requirements, the applicant is given a further twenty (20) business days to provide additional or corrected information. Failure to provide the requested information within twenty (20) business days results in rejection of the application.

Documentation submitted for rejected applications is not returned to the applicant.

5.2.2 Application Review

Following a successful initial appraisal of the application form by TQFA-CSD, the CB application is assessed by a TQFA selection panel convened specifically for this purpose. One or more external experts may be included to assist in the review.

The selection panel reviews the application in detail to determine the competency of the CB to fulfil the certification requirements of the TQF Program. The review may include an on-site visit and interviews if required. The selection panel completes the review and responds to the CB through the TQFA-CSD within twenty (20) business days.

If the selection panel considers that additional information or proof of competence is required, the CB is given a further of three (3) months to submit additional evidence. Failure to provide the requested evidence within that time frame results in rejection of the application.

Documentation submitted for rejected applications is not returned to the applicant.

TQFA maintains records of all CB applications and selection panel outcomes (refer 3.2.3)

5.2.3 Applicant Approval

TQFA grants a one-year license to CBs that successfully complete the selection panel review. If necessary, TQFA also conducts on-site interviews of provisional CBs during the first one-year period.

On successful completion of the provisional license, including accreditation (refer 5.3.1), the applicant CB is granted a three-year renewable contract.

5.3 Certification Body Accreditation

5.3.1 Accreditation Timeframe for Applicant CBs

The successful applicant CB is required to be accredited by a TQFA contracted AB within one (1) year following acquisition of the provisional license (refer also 4.1.7). The completed accreditation certificate is provided to TQFA by the CB and is announced on www.tqf.org.tw. If there is any delay in accreditation, the CB informs TQFA-CSD of the reason for the delay.

The current list of TQFA contracted and accredited CBs is publicly available on the TQFA website and includes the TQF Program version number, the CBs accredited scope of activities, AB and accreditation number, and the accreditation period. The accredited scopes are listed as *TQF Program Food Sector Categories* (refer 1.3.4), with

a comparison table (refer table 1.3.4) included on the TQFA website to link the TQFA scopes with the internationally recognized GFSI industry sectors.

TQF contracted CBs may provide services, including certification services, other than TQF certification. The CB ensures that their services are transparent, clearly differentiated and there is no actual or perceived conflict between the TQF Program and their other services. Publicly available information and communication by the CB clearly indicates the scope of certification of the TQF Program offered by them and differentiates TQF certification from other services offered.

5.3.2 Change or Extension of CB scope

If a TQF contracted CB wishes to change or extend their scope of accreditation, the CB first discusses the intended change with TQFA-CSD to establish consensus on the need, the process, and the timeframe. The agreed outcomes are documented and retained by the CB and TQFA. Once agreed, the CB contacts their AB and works through the AB scope extension process, periodically advising TQFA-CSD in writing of progress.

If the AB suspends or withdraws a CBs accreditation, or one or more scopes, due to an assessment finding (refer 4.1.8) or an unresolved complaint regarding the performance or behavior of the CB or it's personnel, the CB immediately informs TQFA-CSD in writing of the suspension or withdrawal, the cause, and the expected corrective action.

While any change in accreditation is in progress by the AB (extension, suspension, withdrawal) the CB cannot offer services impacted by the change without the written permission of TQFA. Once the change is satisfactorily resolved by the AB and a revised certificate issued, the CB information is updated on www.tqf.org.tw.

5.4 Certification Body Management

5.4.1 Criteria for TQF Certification Bodies

TQFA specifies the operational requirements for contracted CBs that are at all times expected to be equipped with the resources and competence to conduct TQF Program certification activities in accordance with the TQF Program documents and the CB agreement. TQFA requires that contracted CBs implement all parts of the TQF Program for their designated industry scopes impartially and objectively and for the duration of the contract.

TQFA contracted CBs are required to assign a staff person who is competent in TQF Program requirements and is responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining the TQF Program requirements within the CB. The designated person is responsible for regular, open and transparent communication with TQFA-CSD.

TQFA-CSD is informed within ten (10) business days if there is a change in the designated person.

The CB informs TQFA-CSD within ten (10) business days of actual or pending changes of ownership, management structure, or key staff members, including approved auditors, which may impact the operational performance of the TQF Program or the ability of the CB to perform the requirements of their agreement.

If a certified food factory decides to change from a GFSI recognized certification program to the TQF Program, the CB evaluates its audit history, the results of the last unannounced audit and relevant documents. The next TQF Program audit is an initial audit (refer 7.2.3).

Any action by the CB or its staff that may negatively impact the integrity or reputation of TQFA or the TQF Program is reviewed collectively by TQFA-CSD and the CB and a resolution or mitigation sought as soon as practical. The final approval of agreed actions is with the TQFA-SG.

5.4.2 CB Complaints, Appeals and Disputes

The CB documents its procedure for handling and resolving complaints, appeals and disputes about its activities and the results. The procedure is publicly available to CB clients and potential clients.

The CB resolves the complaint, appeal or dispute within timeframe. Records of complaints, appeals and disputes are made available to TQFA-CSD on request (refer 3.3.3 for complaints and appeals received directly by TQFA).

Appeals regarding decisions on the suspension and/or withdrawal of TQF certification by a CB do not delay the decision to suspend or withdraw certification.

5.4.3 Review of CB Performance

TQFA-CSD reviews the management of the TQF Program by contracted CBs annually, or more frequently if required, to ensure compliance with TQF Program documents, the CB agreement (refer also 5.5.1, 5.5.2, and 5.5.3).

TQFA requires that contracted CBs conduct internal audits and management reviews at least once a year and report the findings to TQFA-CSD during the office assessment .

In addition, CBs are expected to make the following information regarding the TQF Program available to TQFA-CSD on request:

- CB management documents regarding the performance of the TQF Program;
- Audit procedures, schedules and audit reports;
- Schedules of approved auditors with qualifications;
- Complaint, appeals, and dispute procedures;
- Detailed list of TQF certified food factories;
- List of suspended and/or withdrawn food factories, with cause.

5.4.4 Remote Audit Activities

In exceptional occasions when access to a food factory is restricted for health, political, or geopolitical reasons, remote audits are permitted for part of the audit (refer 7.3.2) using information and communication technology (ICT) (refer Annex 2: *TQF Program Glossary*).

TQFA contracted CBs are required to have a documented remote audit procedure ready for use in such circumstances which uses IAF MD4 as a normative reference of the CB.

Remote activities can only be conducted by agreement between the CB and the food factory, and where both the food factory and the designated CB auditor have the ICT capability and competence and information security requirements.

5.4.5 Amendments to the TQF Program

TQFA is committed to the continual review and amendment of the TQF Program to maintain its currency and authenticity. The process for amendment of the TQF Program is detailed in 2.4.

Once an amendment is approved, TQFA-CSD distributes revised documents to the CBs and informs them of the change, the agreed transition period and any expectations from CBs resulting from the change, including retraining of auditors.

Transition dates may vary from one (1) to six (6) months depending on the period required to upgrade factory systems, or train factory staff or auditors (refer 2.4.7). It is the responsibility of each CB to inform their certified food factories of the change and the required implementation date within twenty (20) business days of the publication of the change.

TQF Program CBs are responsible for ensuring that the amendments are fully implemented by their food factories and audited by trained auditors from the specified implementation date.

5.5 Certification Body Integrity Program

5.5.1 Key Performance Indicators

TQFA has established key performance indicators (KPIs) for contracted CBs. TQFA-CSD regularly monitors KPIs and reviews them with each CB annually, or more frequently if required (refer 5.4.3).

The KPIs are

- Desktop assessment results for certified sites, including grading and number of non-conformances (refer 5.5.2)
- Individual auditor performance (refer 5.5.4)

- Complaints, appeals, disputes
- Change in number of certified sites

5.5.2 Desktop assessments

TQFA-CSD reviews completed audit reports received from CBs to assess conformity with the requirements of the TQF Program (refer 7.2.7).

The desktop assessment includes a review of:

- Audit duration
- Qaulifications and responsibilities of the audit team
- Coverage of TQF Program requirements for the scope of certification
- Evidence recorded for non-conformities

A summary of audit report reviews including any identified auditor non-conformities are reported to CBs quarterly, or more frequently if they are considered serious or recurring.

5.5.3 Office Assessment

TQFA-CSD conducts an office assessment at a minimum of once a year. The office means the address (location) where the CB is registered and from where TQF Program certification activities are conducted.

The office assessment focusses on the KPIs (refer 5.5.1) and the CB's compliance with TQF Program documents and the CB agreement, and identified areas for correction, improvement or growth.

TQFA-CSD may increase the frequency of office assessment and/or witness assessment based on the following:

- Poor outcome from the annual office assessment or witness assessment results;
- Received complaints or appeals from certified sites, accreditation bodies or other stakeholders;
- Repeated problems arising in audit reports , and / or
- Food safety incidents occurred in one or more certified food factories, or certified products were recalled for any reason.

At least five (5) days prior to the office assessment, TQFA-CSD sends a *TQF Program CB Assessment Plan* (herein referred to as the "Plan") to the CB, which describes the areas to be covered, e.g., aspects of the CB License agreement, the KPIs, and any outstanding complaints or other issues. The Plan also includes the documents and records that the assessors require to review during the office assessment, e.g., application processes, on-site audit reports, auditor assessment reports, technical reviews, certification decisions, complaint or appeal corrective action reports.

The Plan is agreed and signed by the CB prior to the scheduled assessment date. (Failure to agree to the Plan may result in an unannounced office assessment).

The office assessment is conducted by TQFA-CSD on the appointed date according to the Plan, and evidence is recorded in the Plan. Any non-conformities identified by the assessor are discussed with the CB and corrective action agreed. A corrective action schedule for all identified non-conformities is provided to TQFA-CSD within twenty (20) business days.

Failure to submit corrective action plan or take corrective action to the satisfaction of TQFA-CSD may result in a further unannounced office assessment.

5.5.4 Witness Assessments

TQFA-CSD conducts an on-site witness audit on a minimum of one TQF Program auditor per CB each year. The frequency of witness assessment audits is increased if desktop assessments (refer 5.5.1), complaints or appeals identify recurring individual auditor performance or behavior issues that may adversely impact audit outcomes and/or the integrity of the TQF Program.

The CB is advised of the intended witness assessment but does not interfere with its conduct. The TQFA-CSD assessor does not interfere with the conduct of the site audit, but objectively reviews the performance and

behavior of the auditor against the requirements of the TQF Program.

5.5.5 CB Records

The CB maintains sufficiently detailed records of all audits of the food factories, the withdrawal of certificates, corrective actions and complaint records (refer 5.4.2), and records of employee qualifications and training (refer 6.4.1). Records are kept for a minimum of five (5) years.

In addition to the information listed in 5.4.3, the CB makes the following available to TQFA-CSD on request:

- Authority under which the CB operates;
- Rules and procedures for granting, maintaining, extending, terminating and withdrawing certification of food factories;
- Evaluation and certification procedures for the TQF Program, and
- The rights and requirements of applicants and food factories such as the use of The TQF Certification Mark (refer 1.3.5).

6. TQF Program Certification Personnel

6.1 CB Resources for the TQF Program

6.1.1 Required CB Resources

TQF contracted CBs have sufficient staff resources to manage and administer the TQF Program and competent auditors available to certify food factories to the TQF Program, scopes CI – ClV (refer table 1.3.4). Required CB resources include management, administration and professional staff (auditors, technical reviewers, and certification decision makers), and external services as applicable (e.g., inspection and testing services, refer 5.1.4).

The CB has procedures in place to ensure and monitor the fairness, objectivity and integrity of its certification services and confirm that management and professional staff are free from any commercial, financial or other pressure that might influence the results of certification. Impartiality and independence are embedded in the policies, strategies and operations of each CB from senior management down.

TQF certification activities are separated from other CB activities to avoid conflict of interest and maintain impartiality. The CB has an independent committee in place to review the integrity of the certification decision process and the establishment and operation of the TQF Program.

The impartiality procedures include periodic impartiality risk assessments, and corrective actions for any potential or identified risks to objectivity.

6.1.2 CB Confidentiality

The CB is responsible for the management and confidentiality of all information obtained or created during the performance of certification activities. Except for information that the food factory makes publicly available, or when agreed between the CB and the food factory (e.g., for the purpose of responding to complaints), all other information is considered proprietary information and regarded as confidential.

Audit reports are confidential and are the property of the food factory (refer to 7.2.7).

If the audit report or any associated information is subpoenaed, or otherwise required by law or contractual agreement (e.g., by a retail customer), it is only supplied with the express agreement and knowledge of the food factory and the knowledge of the CB and TQFA.

When the CB is required by law or authorized by contractual arrangements to release confidential information. The food factory or person concerned shall, unless prohibited by law, be notified.

6.1.3 Contract with CB Staff

Although contracted CBs can use the services of external (i.e., contract) resources as well as employed staff, the

person within the CB who is responsible for managing TQF Program certification (refer also 5.4.1) is employed full-time with at least three (3) years' experience in food industry related work.

CBs require all employed and contracted staff involved in the certification process to sign an agreement by which they commit to comply with client confidentiality, abide by the regulations set down by the TQF Program and the CB, and declare any conflicts of interest.

Certification staff understand and follow the CBs impartiality procedures. They do not audit, review or certify food factories where they, or a close family member or friend, have been employed, or consulted, trained or advised within the past two (2) years.

The policies and procedures under which the CB operates, and the administration of them, are non-discriminatory. The CB makes its services available to all applicants for which it is accredited and has the resources and expertise. Food factories applying for certification are not rejected if they meet the eligibility criteria in 7.1.1.

6.1.4 Qualifications of CB Staff

The CB is required to ensure that all personnel responsible for executing TQF Program certification services employ and retain qualifications, skills and experience necessary to perform their duties.

The CB makes the following requirements known to all personnel involved in the TQF Program including auditors and technical reviewers, certification decision makers and administrative staff:

- The applicable requirements of ISO 17065 concerning qualifications, performance and behavior;
- The applicable requirements of ISO 22003-2;
- IAF MD4 for all staff involved directly or indirectly in remote audit activities;
- The TQF Program - *TQF Certification Standard* and *TQF Certification Program Management;*
- The CBs interpretive certification processes.

The CB conducts initial staff induction training and regular refresher training on all TQF Program normative documents (refer 1.3.3) and normative references (refer 1.4) on a minimum annual basis and has a process in place to assess competence of all applicable CB personnel.

6.1.5 CB Staff Records

The CB maintains accurate and up-to-date records of the qualifications, education, training and experience of all staff involved in the TQF Program certification process. The records include results of staff competence assessment and appraisals, including witness audits. The CB records contain:

- Name and contact details;
- Position and whether employed or contract;
- Educational and professional status;
- HACCP training and examination;
- TQF Program training and examination;
- Industry and auditing experience (professional staff, refer 6.2.1)
- Performance appraisals, including witness audits (professional staff, refer 6.2.1)
- CB approvals and authorizations

When requested, the CB makes the list of TQF Program CB staff available to TQFA-CSD. The CB advises TQFA-CSD in writing if there are any changes in TQF Program professional staff (auditors, technical reviewers, and certification decision makers).

6.2 Professional Staff

6.2.1 Auditors, Technical Reviewers, and Certification Decision Makers

TQFA has specific qualifications and registration requirements for professional CB staff involved in audits and certification of the TQF Program. This applies to auditors, technical reviewers and certification decision makers.

A TQF auditor (herein referred to as “auditor”) is a person registered by TQFA and employed or contracted to a TQF contracted CB to audit the TQF Program at a food factory.

A technical reviewer is a person registered by TQFA and employed or contracted to a TQF contracted CB and whose duties include the technical review of TQF Program audit reports.

A certification decision maker is the person employed by the CB with the competence and authority to authorize certification of audited food factories following a completed TQF Program audit and technical review.

The technical reviewer and the certification decision maker may be the same person. However, neither the technical reviewer nor the certification decision maker can have been involved in the document review (refer 7.2.1) or on-site audit (refer 7.2.3).

6.2.2 Responsibilities of Professional Staff

All auditors, technical reviewers and certification decision makers involved in the TQF Program are required to comply with TQF Program normative documents and meet the requirements outlined in the *TQF Criteria for TQF Professionals* (herein referred to as the “Professionals Criteria”). All TQF professionals are required to register with TQFA prior to assuming responsibility for the TQF Program.

6.3 Auditors

6.3.1 Qualifications of TQF Auditors

All TQF Program auditors must meet the education, work experience, audit field experience and training requirements outlined in section 3.1 of the *Professionals Criteria.*

Auditors can apply for registration against one or more GFSI scope (Cl – ClV) and TQF Program Food Sector Category if they can demonstrate that they meet the qualification requirements for each category applied for (refer table 1.3.4).

6.3.2 Initial Application and Review

Auditors who meet the TQF Program qualification requirements apply for registration by submitting the evidence specified in 3.2.1.1 of the *Professionals Criteria* via the *TQF-ICT*.

The documents include at least one letter of reference from a colleague in the food industry (not a family member or other associate) and a signed auditor code of conduct (refer *the Professionals Criteria, Annex 2*).

TQFA-CSD reviews the application against the requirements of section 3.1 of the *Professionals Criteria* and the relevant TQF Program audit field and notifies the applicant of the outcome of the review within ten (10) business days of receipt. TQFA-CSD may request applicants to submit additional evidence if necessary. Otherwise, incomplete applications are rejected.

TQFA issues a TQF Program auditor certificate to every successful auditor. The certificate is valid for twelve (12) months, and auditors can only audit the TQF Program during the currency of the TQF certificate.

6.3.3 Initial CB Auditor Assessment

The CB evaluates the competence of a new auditor before he/she is permitted to audit the TQF Program for the CB as a lead or solo TQF Program auditor.

The evaluation comprises at least three (3) supervised TQF Program audits with one (1) of them a witness assessment.

Supervised audits are on-site audits where the new auditor participates under the guidance and direction of a TQF registered auditor.

The witness assessment is conducted by a registered TQF auditor or registered TQF certification decision maker and follows the standard audit plan agreed with the food factory. If the witness audit involves remote activities the use of ICT and application of IAF MD4 is included in the witness assessment (refer 5.4.4 and 7.3.2). The witness auditor is on-site for all parts of the audit conducted on-site.

The number of supervised and/or witness audits may be increased if, in the opinion of the CB, the new auditor does not have the requisite skills and knowledge to audit the TQF Program.

6.3.4 Auditor Scope Extension

Auditors wishing to extend their scope of registration must meet the requirements of section 3.3.1 of the *Professionals Criteria* and apply on-line via the *TQF-ICT.* TQFA-CSD review and respond to the extension application within ten (10) business days.

Once approved, the CB evaluates the competence of the auditor against the new scope(s) in at least three (3) supervised TQF Program audits with one (1) of them a witness assessment (refer 6.3.3).

6.3.5 Auditor Behavior

Auditors are expected to read, agree, and sign the code of conduct and submit it to TQFA with their initial application (refer 6.3.2), and again with each subsequent application for re-registration (refer 6.3.3). *The Professionals Criteria, Annex 2 "*TQF auditor *code of conduct"* listed the values, attitudes and behavior required by TQF auditors in their dealings with external stakeholders, and in particular TQF certified food factories.

Compliance to the code of conduct is assessed by the CB as part of the initial witness assessment (refer 6.3.3) and reviewed as part of the CB skills assessment (refer 6.3.7)

6.3.6 Auditor Re-registration

TQF Program auditors apply for renewal of their auditor registration by meeting the training, auditing requirements specified in section 3.4.2 of the *Professionals Criteria* and submitting the evidence to TQFA via the *TQF-ICT* prior to their scheduled registration expiry date.

TQFA-CSD reviews the re-registration application and notifies the applicant of the outcome of the review within ten (10) business days of receipt. TQFA-CSD may request applicants to submit additional evidence if necessary.

TQFA issues a new TQF Program Auditor certificate and updates the auditor's information on the *TQF-ICT.*

Applicants whose renewal application is rejected for failing to submit all required evidence by the certificate expiry date must re-apply to TQFA as a new auditor.

6.3.7 Maintenance of Competence

Once an auditor is registered (refer 6.3.2) and inducted by the CB (refer 6.3.3) auditor training and performance is reviewed by the CB at a minimum annually. The CB establishes a skills evaluation program for auditors based on the competencies outlined in *Annex C: Required knowledge and skills to determine competence* in ISO 22003-2 to ensure their competence to execute the requirements of the TQF Program.

The skills evaluation includes:

- A minimum of eight (8) hours TQF Program refresher training per year (refer 3.4.2.1 in the *Professionals Criteria);*
- A minimum of five (5) completed on-site TQF Program audits per year at different food factories (refer 3.4.2.2 in the *Professionals Criteria).* (Note: completed audits may include some remote activities but must be at least 50% on-site);
- In situations where the auditor is not able to complete five (5) TQF Program audits per year, at least five (5) on-site audits against GFSI approved certification programs can be accepted as long as at least one (1) is an on-site audit against the TQF Program;
- A minimum one (1) on-site audit against the food sector category of TQF Program audit or GFSI recognized certification program audits within five (5) years can be accepted;
- Evaluation of performance and behavior in handling ICT and meeting the requirements of IAF MD4;
- A minimum of eight (8) hours of professional development in relation to food safety and/or quality training annually (refer 3.4.2.1 in the *Professionals Criteria*), and
- Further training needs based on feedback on technical reviews of TQF Program audits, and audit feedback.

Auditor training and assessment is reported in the CB staff records (refer 6.1.5).

The CB ensures that auditors do not audit outside their registered TQF audit category (refer table 1.3.4).

6.4 Technical Reviewers and Certification Decision Makers

6.4.1 Training and Assessment of Technical Reviewers and Certification Decision Makers

Technical reviewers and certification decision makers employed by CBs for the TQF Program are required to meet the education, work experience, and training requirements outlined in section 4.1 of the *Professionals Criteria*. This includes sixteen (16) hours of TQF Program training.

There are no registration requirements for technical reviewers and certification decision makers.

The CB records their training and assessment in the CB staff records (refer 6.1.5) and make this information available to TQFA-CSD on request.

7. TQF Program Certification Process

7.1 Preparation for Certification

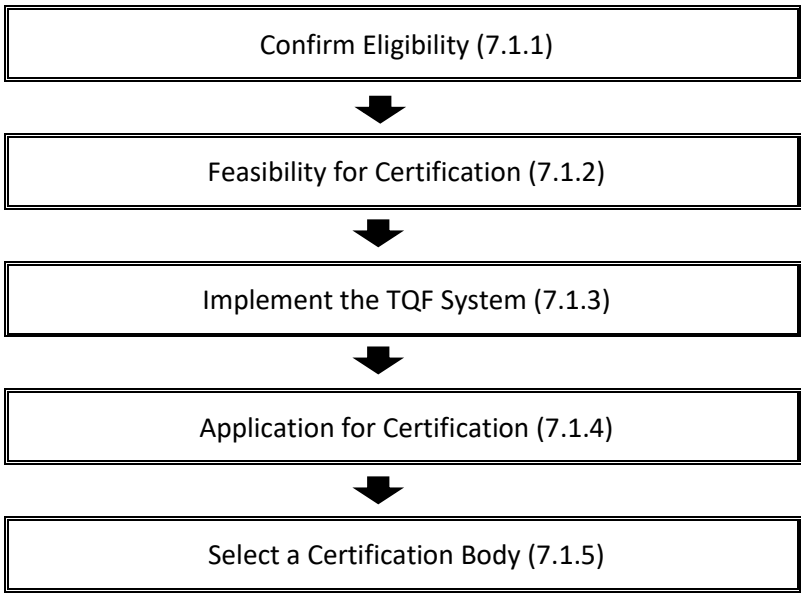


Figure 7.1 – Preparation for Certification

7.1.1 Confirm Eligibility

To be eligible for certification to the TQF Program, a food factory must satisfy the following criteria:

- The factory has a company license or trade name or has evidence of registration of the establishment or related legal certified documents.
- The legal documents of the factory comply with local regulation and include a description of the products applying for certification.
- The products comply with relevant food safety sanitation regulations, national standards or international standards such as CODEX, HACCP.
- The products and food production management systems are in accordance with TQF Program requirements.
- Products with re-packaged or changed packaging may apply for TQF Program certification if the original package product is certified at the same or higher level of TQF Program certification.
- The products are sold publicly.
- The products are packaged products.

7.1.2 Feasibility for Certification

The food factory can assess its feasibility for TQF Program certification by participating in a TQF Program training course to understand the requirements of the *TQF Certification Standard, version 2023*, or simply by downloading

and applying the requirements of the *TQF Certification Standard, version 2023* and the *TQF Certification Program Management, version 2023* (this document), both available for download from www.tqf.org.tw.

7.1.3 Implement the TQF System

The food factory has sufficient technical resources available to implement the TQF Program, including at least one TQF technical specialist who is a certified food technologist (or equivalent tertiary degree) that has successfully completed training courses in Good Hygiene Practice (GHP) and HACCP organized by training agencies approved by a central competent authority.

The food factory determines the product scope to be certified (refer table 1.3.4) and ensures that the relevant TQF documentation is available and understood, and relevant personnel training is conducted for the TQF Program.

For TQF L1 certification (refer 1.3.3), the food factory is responsible for planning, implementing and managing the TQF system including the Good Manufactory Practices, food safety procedures, and HACCP plans for the product scope.

If the food factory seeks TQF L2 certification (refer 1.3.3), it is also responsible for planning, reviewing, supervising and assessing the quality management system for the product scope.

The food factory ensures the development of all relevant documentation for the TQF system and its effective implementation, and also ensures sufficient manpower and resources to achieve the goal of food safety management (and quality management, if applicable) and the effective operation, maintenance and improvement of the TQF system.

7.1.4 Application for Certification

Once the food factory is prepared and ready for certification, the factory registers with TQFA by completing the *Group Member Company Account Application Form* on the TQF-ICT platform.The food factory prepares and uploads the relevant documents for the application and registers all products within the scope of application for certification on the TQF-ICT platform.

Products within the same food sector category are listed on the *Same Categorized Products List of the TQF Program*. The food factory is able to regularly update the products in the scope of certification on the TQF-ICT platform. Product information is not displayed publicly on the TQF-ICT platform.

7.1.5 Selection of a Certification Body

The food factory selects a CB that is contracted by TQFA to conduct TQF Program audits (refer 5.1.1, 5.1.2). Currently contracted CBs are listed on www.tqf.org.tw under the *Certification Body* tab.

The CB signs the *Statement of TQF Program* with the food factory before proceeding with the document review.

7.1.6 CB Preparation

Prior to the document review, the selected CB examines the qualifications, certification scope for food safety for TQF L1, and quality for TQF L2 (if applicable), and ability of the food factory to ensure that it is eligible to proceed with certification.

7.2 Initial Certification

7.2.1 Document Review

A document review is an examination by an auditor assigned by the CB, of the specifications, policies, procedures and HACCP plans developed by the food factory to support their TQF L1 and / or L2 certification. The document review can occur on-site or off-site by mutual agreement between the CB and the food factory.

The CB reviews the submitted documentation including, but not limited to, the management system, sanitation management, quality management, process management, and ingredient management standard operating procedures, and the food safety control plan (HACCP plan) for TQF L1 and L2; and the integrated quality management plan for TQF L2 (if applicable). Submitted documentation includes the educational attainments and certificates of completion of related training of relevant professionals and technologists from the food factory.

If the CB requests additional documents, the food factory is required to submit them within timeframe. If the food factory fails to submit all requested documentation within the agreed timeframe, or the documentation is

incomplete, the application discontinued.

The CB maintains communication with the food factory throughout the document review and notifies the applicant of the results and outcomes.

The Food factory obtains the certificate within one year from the date of application. The food factory may apply to the CB in writing for an extension with a justifiable reason if it is unable to obtain the certificate.

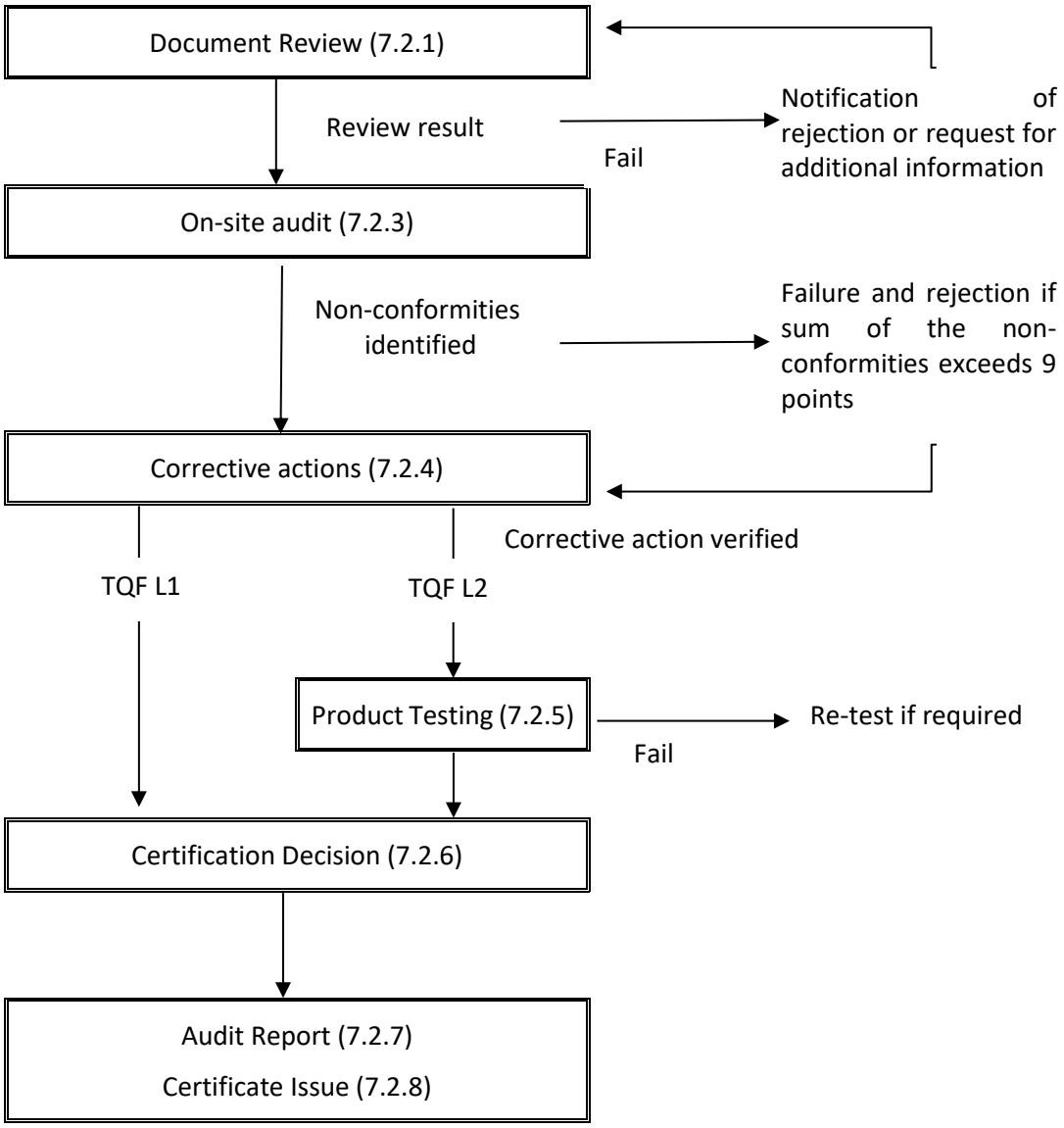


Figure 7.2 – Initial Certification Process

7.2.2 On-site Audit Duration (audit man-day)

Following successful completion of the document review, the CB schedules and conducts the initial on-site audit within three (3) months of the document review. The auditor / audit team selected by the CB to conduct the on-site audit are registered auditors (refer 6.3.1) with TQFA with the same audit category (refer 1.3.4) as the auditee factory.

The food factory may apply to the CB in writing for an extension of up to six (6) months with a justifiable reason if it is unable to immediately arrange an on-site audit. If the request for an extension is not accepted by the CB, the food factory must re-apply for another document review. Only one request for extension can be accepted by the CB.

The audit duration is calculated by the CB based on the size and scale of the food factory and the product types. Tables 3.1 in *Annex 3: On-site Audit Duration Guide* are used for guidance, but the final decision on audit duration is made by competent professional staff within the CB.

Where a food business applies for certification in two or more food factories, the audit man-days for each factory is calculated separately and each factory is independently audited. There may be some similarities in corporate

management systems and procedures applied to each factory which enables a reduction in audit man-days for each factory. The final decision on audit duration for each factory is determined by the CB.

The initial certification audit is always an announced audit. The audit team leader advises the food factory of the audit date, time and duration, and members of the audit team and obtains the consent of the factory to conduct the audit. The audit team leader prepares a schedule for the audit which allocates responsibilities to individual team members and ensures adequate coverage of the factory's implemented TQF system within the allotted audit duration.

The minimum duration for any on-site factory audit is two and a half man-days (2.5 days – refer Annex 3).

7.2.3 On-site Audit Process

The on-site audit is designed to ensure that the food factory's documentation complies with the *TQF Certification Standard, version 2023*, and that the HACCP food safety plans, Good Manufacturing Practices and food safety management requirements within the factory are conducted according to the documented policies, procedures and specifications.

Remote audits do not apply to initial certification audits (refer 5.4.4 and 7.3.2). The auditor / audit team must have full on-site access to the food factory.

The CB selects appropriately qualified and competent auditors to conduct the audit and allows them sufficient time to undertake all audit activities as per the audit duration guide (refer 7.2.2 and Annex 3). TQF auditors utilize the TQF Program *on-site audit checklist* to conduct the audit, and do not add additional standards, criteria, or interpretations.

The on-site audit starts with an opening meeting at the appointed start-time to introduce the auditor / audit team to the auditee management, explain and clarify the schedule, arrange staff interviews, and request required documents and records.

During the site inspection parts of the audit, auditor(s) are accompanied by a guide from factory management to ensure the safety of the auditor(s), arrange interviews as applicable, and answer any audit questions.

The audit focusses on the processes within the scope of certification. However other processes and parts of the factory may also be inspected to consider potential cross-contamination with scoped products / processes.

Throughout the audit, the auditor / audit team assess the number and level of non-conformities (i.e., non-fulfillment of the requirements of the *TQF Certification Standard, version 2023).* Non-conformities are raised only where there is objective evidence of non-compliance, and are graded as:

- A minor non-conformity refers to a partly implemented requirement that is less likely to cause an immediate risk to food safety (or food quality at TQF L2). Each minor non-conformity is allocated one (1) point (refer 7.2.4).
- A major non-conformity refers to a requirement of the *TQF Certification Standard, version 2023* that has not been implemented and is likely to cause an immediate food safety (or quality at TQF L2) hazard. Each major non-conformity is allocated three (3) points (refer 7.2.4).
- A critical non-conformity is a failure of the system, or on-site event, likely to result in a recall, product withdrawal or regulatory infringement notice, e.g., a food poisoning event, adulterated or counterfeited product; supply of false documents or records (documented information), or food safety regulatory offence.

Every identified non-conformity is recorded in the *TQF Program on-site audit checklist*, including the grade of non-conformity, the requirement of the *TQF Certification Standard* that is not being complied with, and the objective evidence for the non-conformity. The grade of the non-conformity is agreed by consensus within the audit team. Where consensus cannot be achieved the grade is decided by simple majority vote.

The on-site audit ends with a closing meeting at which the audit team leader explains in detail the non-conformities raised and the timeframe for corrective action.

The CB submits the audit report to TQF-ICT platform within ten (10) business days after the on-site audit.

7.2.4 Corrective Action

Corrective action is action taken by the food factory to eliminate the cause of a non-conformity identified at an audit and to prevent its recurrence. Every non-conformity identified by the audit team must be corrected by the site and the corrective action verified by the CB. Verification may include evaluation of submitted evidence, completed corrective action reports, or on-site assessment, and is carried out by the auditor / audit team that conducted the audit or a similarly qualified auditor.

If the sum of the non-conformities is less than nine (9) points the food factory submits evidence of completed corrective actions to the CB within twenty (20) business days following the on-site audit. The certification decision can only be made after the CB verifies the completion of corrective actions.

If the sum of non-conformities is nine (9) points or more, or a critical non-conformity is detected by the auditor / audit team, the food factory is considered to have failed the audit. The food factory can submit evidence of completed corrective actions to the CB within six (6) months and apply for a re-evaluation after the CB verifies the completion of corrective actions. The application of re-evaluation can only be accepted for once and the audit team leader during re-evaluation is different from the initial audit team. If the food factory fails the re-evaluation, new application can be done after three (3) months from the date of rejection.

If the food factory is applying for TQF L1 certification, the CB makes the certification decision after verifying the completion of corrective action for all non-conformities identified at the on-site audit.

7.2.5 Product Testing (Applicable for TQF L2)

If the food factory is applying for TQF L2 certification and requires the TQF CM (refer 1.3.5) for product labelling, the products are sampled on-site for testing. The food factory classifies the *same categorized products* within the scope of certification (refer 7.1.4) by packaging type, manufacturing method, and risk for a CB to implement on-site product sampling. Risk is assessed according to the following sampling ratios:

- Group 1: Product with high water activity (Aw>0.85) and low acidity (pH>4.6) has a sampling ratio of $\geqq$ 10%
- Group 2: Product with high water activity (Aw>0.85) and high acidity (pH ≤4.6) has a sampling ratio of $\geqq$ 6%
- Group 3: Product with low water activity (Aw≤0.85) has a sampling ratio of $\geqq$ 3%

A detailed description of product sampling and testing is in *Annex 5: Product Sampling and Testing Criteria.*

If the product testing is unsuccessful (i.e., test results do not meet the specified criteria) the CB notifies the food factory in writing of the outcome within ten (10) business days. The food factory implements improvements and submits evidence of corrective action to the CB within twenty (20) business days following receipt of the written notice. Once the CB verifies the corrective actions the food factory can then apply for a re-testing within six (6) months. Re-testing can only be applied for once.

7.2.6 Certification Decision

The certification decision for the on-site audit of first-time applicants for TQF L1 certification is based on on-site audit results and the corrective action plan. For TQF L2 it also includes product test reports.

The certification decision maker (refer 6.2.1) appointed by the CB is responsible for making the certification decision following technical review. The certification decision is made no more than ten (10) business days from the verification of corrective action for TQF L1, or the completion of product testing for TQF L2.

If the certification decision is positive, the food factory is advised and signs the *TQF Certification Agreement* with the CB to issue the TQF certificate.

Within twenty (20) business days after the certification decision the CB issues a production line number for the food factory, notifies the food factory and TQFA and publishes it on the TQF-ICT platform.

If the food factory is adjudged to have failed due to the on-site audit and / or product testing, it is advised in writing by the CB and can apply for a new certification within three (3) months of the rejection decision.

The food factory may appeal to TQFA about a decision by the CB regarding any non-conformity or certification

rejection. If the appeal involves non-conformities with the technical or management specifications, the CB is required to submit relevant information, including the on-site audit reports and product test reports as applicable, to TQFA.

The TQFA-SG (refer 2.4.2) forms a task force to assess the appeal. TQFA may also engage external technical experts to assist with the appeal if necessary. The results of the assessment are approved by the TQFA-SG and communicated in writing to the CB and the food factory.

7.2.7 Audit Reports

Each completed audit report is reviewed by the CB technical reviewer (refer 6.2.1, 6.4.1) and issued to the food factory and TQFA within ten (10) business days.

The audit report includes the name and address of the food factory, the name(s) of the auditor / audit team, and the start and end dates and duration of the audit.

The audit report details the audit team leader's executive summary of the improvements, non-conformities and overall outcome from the audit, and a short summary of each section, irrespective of non-conformities raised. The audit report demonstrates that all applicable elements of the TQF Program have been audited, and records clear and concise evidence for every non-conformity raised.

Audit reports are confidential and are the property of the food factory. Their distribution is restricted to the food factory, the CB and TQFA, or to other parties only with the written approval of the food factory.

The CB's technical review process confirms that all aspects of the TQF Program for the scope of certification have been assessed, non-conformities have been correctly identified, corrective actions have been implemented, reported, and verified, and that written evidence is clear, objective and unambiguous.

The CB has a documented procedure in place to translate audit reports and / or related documents and ensure the quality of the translation if they need to be translated into a language other than Traditional Chinese.

7.2.8 Certificate Issue

Within ten (10) business days of the certification decision, the CB provides the food factory with an electronic and / or hard copy TQF Program certificate to verify successful implementation of the TQF Program requirements.

TQFA provides the CBs with a template for the TQF Program certificate, and the CB completes the information and issues the certificate which includes:

- The heading *Certificate of TQF Certification Program*
- The name and address of the food factory
- The production line number
- The level of certification (i.e., TQF L1 or L2)
- The Certification Scope
- The name and address of the CB
- The certification decision date
- The date of issue
- The certification expiry date
- The TQFA logo
- The AB accreditation mark and the CB's accreditation number.

The certificate is authorized and signed by the certification decision maker and is valid for twelve (12) months.

7.3 Continuing Certification

7.3.1 Annual Surveillance Audit

To retain TQF Program certification, the food factory accepts a series of annual surveillance audits, including post-market sampling and testing for TQF L1, and on-site and post-market sampling and testing for TQF L2.

The annual surveillance audit is two part-audits per year (two part-audits represents one complete audit). The duration of each part audit is half the number of man-days of the of the initial on-site audit (refer 7.2.2) and all applicable TQF Program requirements are audited at least once within the twelve-month certification period. The first surveillance audit is conducted within six (6) months from the initial certification decision, and the interval between the first and second surveillance audit is not less than four (4) months (except for remote audits – refer 7.3.2)

Surveillance audits are unannounced. The CB selects a date when all relevant processes are operating. The CB considers previous audit and test result, and previous critical non-conformities (i.e., events likely to have resulted in a recall, product withdrawal or regulatory infringement notice), and may increase the number of annual surveillance audits if there is a known food safety incident. The audit is considered as half the number ofman-days of the initial on-site audit.

If the CB discovers non-compliances in food factory, may increase the number of annual surveillance audits or narrow the scope of certification.

If the food factory intends to shut down for more than six (6) months due to seasonal production or maintenance, TQFA and the CB are notified in advance and advised of the expected resumption date. The CB conducts an on-site inspection to confirm the interruption in operations, the inspection is considered as half the number of man-days of the annual surveillance audit.

Before resuming production, the food factory submits a resumption plan and applies for an inspection by the CB. The inspection is considered as half the number of man-days of the annual surveillance audit and the food factory must pass the inspection before resuming production.

The audit process for surveillance audits is the same as described for initial on-site audits (refer 7.2.3), including the opening meeting, site and process inspections, document review, and identification of non-conformities. The focus in particular is on changes to documentation, raw materials, personnel or equipment that could impact process integrity.

The surveillance audit verifies that the food factory conforms to the scope of their TQF certification.

For TQF L2 audits, the auditor / audit team confirm that the use of the TQF CM conforms to the requirements of *Annex 4: Guidance for the Use of the TQF Certification Mark* (refer 1.3.5).

During surveillance audits, critical, major and minor non-conformities are raised and graded by the auditor / audit team.

When the sum of the non-conformities is less than nine (9) points, the food factory submits evidence of corrective actions to the CB within twenty (20) business days following the on-site audit. The certification decision can only be made after the CB verifies the completion of corrective actions of non-noncondformities were found.

When the sum of non-conformities is nine (9) points or more, the CB may suspend the certifications and the use of the TQF CM on manufactured products immediately ceases. The CB notifies the food factory in writing and attached the audit report within three (3) business day. The food factory submits evidence of corrective action to the CB within ten (10) business days and the corrective action verified by the CB within twenty (20) business days following the on-site audit (the inspection is considered as half number of man-days of the annual surveillance audit). After the verification by CB, the food factory recovers the certification and enabled the use TQF CM. If the correct actions is incompleted, the certification will terminate. The actual termination of certification scope will inform the food factory and TQFA in writing.

When a critical non-conformity is discovered, the CB suspends the certifications and the CB notifies the food factory in writing within three (3) business days. Appeals for the decision can be made by food factory to TQFA within forty-eight (48) hours. The food factory submits evidence of completed corrective actions within ten (10) business days following the on-site audit. The CB conduct the re-assessment within twenty (20) business days following the on-site audit, and whenthe sum of the non-conformities is less than nine (9) points during the re-assessment , the food factory submits evidence of completed corrective actions within ten (10) business days. The CB verifies the correct action then the certification decision can be made . If the sum of the non-conformities is nine (9) points or more, the certification terminates by the CB. The actual termination of certification scope will inform the food factory and TQFA in writing.

7.3.2 Remote Audits

If the annual surveillance audit cannot be conducted due to an extraordinary event (refer *Annex 2: TQF Program Glossary*), the CB can carry out part of the annual surveillance audit remotely using information and communications technology (ICT - refer 5.4.4). However, at least one part of the annual surveillance audit must be unannounced and on-site during the certification period.

The following audit processes can be a part of a remote audit:

- Review of documents including policies, procedures, work instructions and food safety plans
- Interviews with employees
- Production records and daily work reports
- Records of internal audits and complaintsTraceability records and mock recall records, and
- Food defense and food fraud plan.

Remote audits can only be conducted by agreement between the CB and the food factory and when both parties have capability and access to ICT. Auditors performing remote audits must be trained and competent in ICT (refer 6.3.7).

The use of ICT during remote audits may include one (1) or more of:

- Meetings; by means of teleconference facilities, including audio, video and data sharing;
- Remote review of documents and records;
- Recording of information and evidence by means of stills, video or audio recordings, and
- Providing visual/audio access to remote or potentially hazardous locations

The CB conducts a risk assessment to determine the technological feasibility of a remote audit and provides the food factory with a remote audit plan to explain the documents, records and interviews required for the remote audit.

The on-site audit is conducted within twenty (20) business days after the remote audit and ensures the observed nonconformities in the remote audit are corrected. The on-site audit is 50% of the man-days of the total annual surveillance audit or more. The man-days for a remote and on-site annual surveillance audit do not exceed the total man-days calculated for fully on-site surveillance audits.

If the on-site audit cannot be conducted within twenty (20) business days after the remote audit due to continuation of the extraordinary event, the CB conducts a risk assessment of the feasibility of a further extension on the integrity of the food safety system. If a further extension is granted, the gap between the remote and on-site audits cannot exceed ninety (90) days and the man-days are increased to further review aspects covered in the remote audit.

The auditor / audit team that conducts the on-site audit is the same as the remote audit. The on-site audit confirms the Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), site environment, food safety management system including HACCP, quality control plan etc. and non-conformities raised at the remote audit.

The combined results of the remote and on-site audits are recorded in one audit report which includes the following additional information:

- Where the remote audit was conducted from, and the ICT methods used.
- The records and evidence raised from the remote activities and the on-site audit.
- The dates and time for both the remote and on-site audit.

7.3.3 Product Testing for Surveillance Audits

A detailed description of product sampling and testing for on-site and post-market products is in *Annex 5: Product Sampling and Testing Criteria.*

For annual surveillance audit, the certified products in the addendum to the *TQF Certification Agreement* are the sampling base, and the registered items on the TQF-ICT platform are the sampling base for *same categorized*

products.

Products in the food sector category may be sampled as representative if they share the same formula, however it can only apply when the food factory provides a statement of same formula products.

The same outcomes of product testing apply to surveillance audits as for the initial audit (refer 7.2.5).

If tests are unsuccessful and is less likely to cause an immediate food safety hazard, the CB notifies the food factory in writing within ten (10) business day and the food factory implements improvements and submits evidence of corrective action to the CB within twenty (20) business days following receipt of the written notice. The CB then arranges re-testing of new on-site and post-market samples.

If tests are unsuccessful and may cause an immediate food safety hazard, the CB notifies food factory within three (3) business days, the food factory implements improvements within ten (10) business days and apply for re-testing, the re-testing is limited to once. If re-testing is unsuccessful, the food factory implements improvements within ten (10) business days. The CB then arranges re-assessment. If the re-assessment is unsuccessful, the certification suspended by the CB.

If tests are unsuccessful and contain critical non-conformity, the certification suspended by the CB.

7.3.4 Certification Decision

The CB informs the food factory and TQFA in writing of the result of the annual surveillance audit and publishes the results on the TQF-ICT platform within ten (10) business days after the certification data (including on-site audit reports, corrective action reports, and product test reports) are collected, reviewed by the technical reviewer, and the certification decision made.

The published surveillance audit report indicates the audit dates and clearly states that the surveillance audit is unannounced.

7.3.5 Certificate Renewal

Within ten (10) business days of the decision to re-certify the food factory, the CB provides the food factory with a new electronic and / or hard copy TQF Program certificate to verify ongoing application of the TQF Program requirements. The content included on the new certificate is as per the initial certificate (refer 7.2.8).

The certificate is authorized by the decision maker and signed by the representative of the CBand is valid for a further twelve (12) months.

7.4 Management of Certification

7.4.1 Adding Products to the Scope of Certification

A food factory seeking to add new products to its certification submits the relevant information to the TQF-ICT platform and the CB conducts a review of the submitted documents on-line within ten (10) business days of the application.

The product submission includes the name and product number, process flowchart or QC flowchart, package design, finished product specification, nutritional claim labelling information, and other regulatory compliance information for the additional product. It also includes the factory's self-inspection report (sanitation and safety standard should be tested by accredited laboratories) demonstrating compliance with the specification for a TQF food sector category (refer 1.3.4) and test reports covering at least two (2) items of *sanitation standards* and one (1) item of *quality specifications.*

If the auditor / audit team discovers a change in the scope of certification that the food factory has failed to notify during a surveillance audit, the CB requires the food factory to apply for an addition or deletion of the scope of certification.

The food factory maintains the currency of the product list under the certification scope on the TQF-ICT platform (included certified products and same categorized products).

7.4.2 Changes to the Food Factory

If the food factory implements a change in the processing conditions or plant layout, installs new equipment, or introduces new food safety procedures, it informs TQFA and the CB within ten (10) business days.

The CB reviews the changes and may conduct an on-site visit to verify the change and ensure that food safety is not compromised. Alternately, depending on the extent of the change, the CB may determine to review the change during the next on-site surveillance audit.

If there is a change of ownership or significant change in the management of the food factory, the CB and TQFA are informed within ten (10) business days and review the food safety impact of the change.

7.4.3 Product Deletions or Changes

Certified food factories are responsible for the accuracy and currency of product information on the TQF-ICT platform. A food factory seeking to delete a product, or change the product name, is required to update the TQF-ICT platform and advise the CB, the CB reviews within ten (10) business days.

7.4.4 Changes in Certification Level

Food factories seeking to change certification levels must apply for the change on the TQF-ICT platform. The change can be TQF L1 to L2, or L2 to L1.

For TQF L2 to L1:

- The food factory deletes all certified products and updates the same categorized products on TQF-ICT;
- The CB reviews the application within twenty (20) business days;
- The CB signs a new agreement and issues a new TQF L1 certificate;
- The annual surveillance audit follows the certification period on the new certificate, and
- The TQF CM is no longer used.

For TQF L1 to L2:

- The food factory uploads new certified product information and Product Quality Management Plan to TQF-ICT;
- The CB completes the document review within twenty (20) business days;
- The CB may request supplementary documents where necessary. The food factory submits the additional documents within three (3) months;
- The CB conducts an on-site audit and product sampling within two (2) months following the document review. The audit man-days are calculated as half of the minimum number of man-days of the initial on-site audit for TQF L2 certification;
- All products intended to be certified are sampled and tested. The sample quantity for *same categorized products* is based on the quantity of item registered in TQF-ICT platform and the TQF L2 risk classification of sampling testing shown in 7.2.5;
- The certification decision is made based on the review of result of on-site audit, corrective action report and product testing report;
- If accepted, the CB signs a new agreement and issues a new TQF L2 certificate;
- The annual surveillance audit follows the certification period on the new certificate, and
- After changing to TQF L2, the food factory provides the CB and TQFA with a transition plan to enable use of the TQF CM.

7.4.5 Suspension, Withdrawal or Termination of Certification

TQF contracted CBs are required to document and implement a management process for suspension, withdrawal, or termination of certification of TQF certified food factories. The management process is available to TQFA on request.

The certification becomes temporarily invalid during a suspension and the use of the TQF CM on manufactured products immediately ceases. The CB changes the site's certification status to suspension on the TQF-ICT platform with the reason and the effective date. The suspension period is no longer than six (6) months.

Certification is suspended if:

- A critical non-conformity is discovered at audit or product testing which re-assessment is required, the CB suspends the operation within the scope of certification until the food factory completes corrective actions to the satisfaction of the CB.
- If there is a failure of the food safety system identified during a remote audit, the existing certificate for the food factory is immediately suspended, and an on-site audit is arranged to confirm compliance.
- A surveillance audit results in non-conformities amounting to nine (9) points or more, the CB suspends the operation within the scope of certification until the food factory completes corrective actions to the satisfaction of the CB.

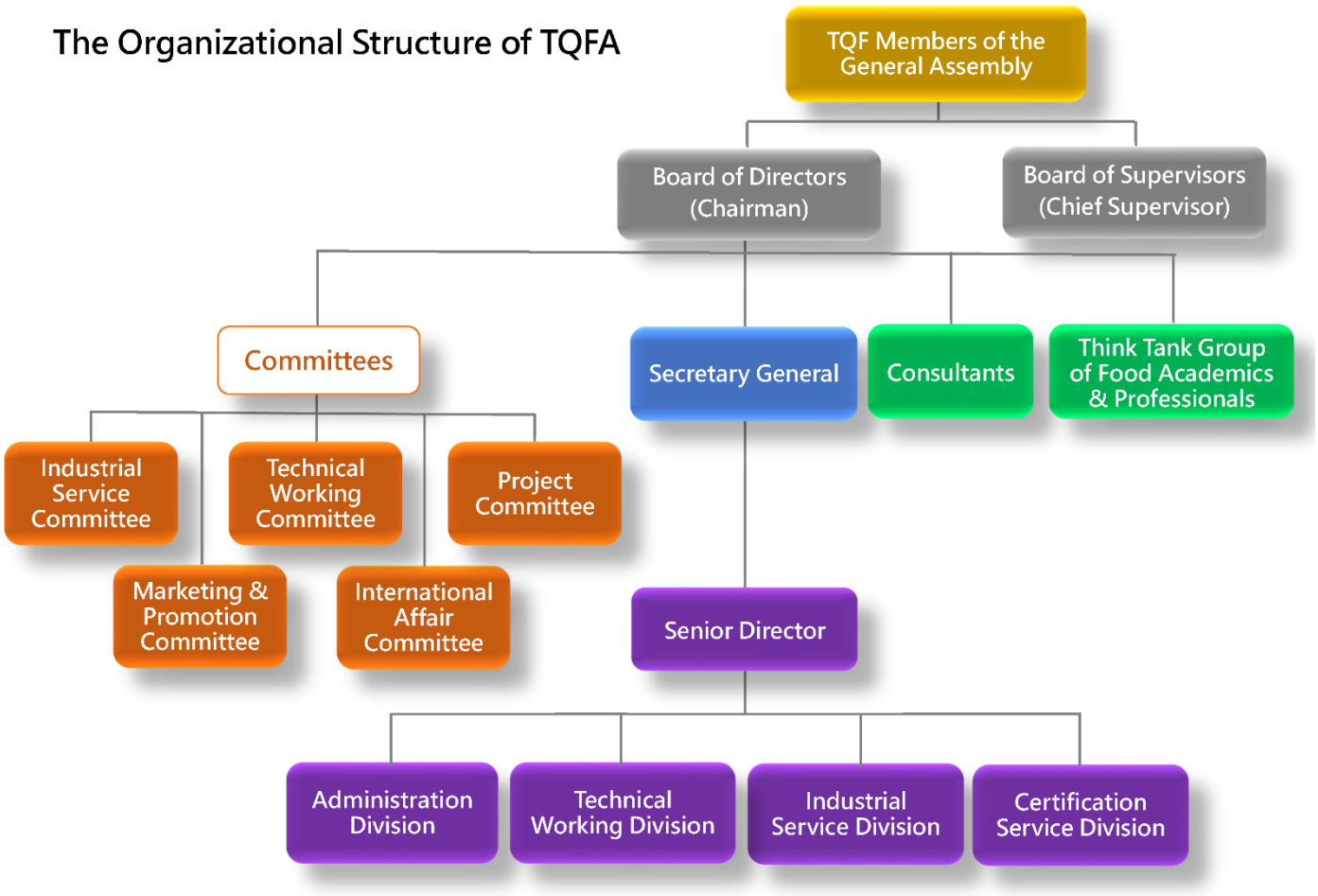
The CB terminates a food factory's certification, immediately advises TQFA, and changes the site's certification status to *termination* on the TQF-ICT platform with the evidence and the effective date if:

- The certification has been suspended by the CB, and the food factory fails to take corrective action within the required timeframe.
- The food factory continually violates relevant food safety regulations, engages in intentional malicious conduct, or other serious food safety event. The CB advises TQFA within forty-eight (48) hours of any known willful frauds or food safety events.
- The food factory falsifies corrective action information for non-conformities.
- The annual surveillance audit fails for any reason, the certification of the food factory isterminated by the CB. The food factory cannot re-apply for certification for one (1) year. The re-apply follows the initial application process.
- The food factory stops production and is unreachable for more than six (6) months.
- The food factory shuts down all or part of its operation or resumes operation and fails to apply for extension within twenty (20) business days.
- The food factory avoids, obstructs, or refuses the annual surveillance audit by the CB or fails to provide corrective actions in writing, and fails to provide an explanation within five (5) business days after receiving notification.

The terminated food factory returns its certificate to the CB from the effective date of termination and immediately ceases use of the TQF CM on its products.

If a food factory withdraws certification voluntarily, the food factory returns its certificate to the CB from the effective date of withdrawal and immediately ceases use of the TQF CM on its products. The CB modified the certification status to withdrawal on TQF-ICT platform.

Annex 1: The Organizational Structure of TQFA



1: The responsibilities of the BOD

1. Providing recommendations and decisions regarding business development.
2. Determination of the membership.
3. Election or removal of executive directors and chairperson.
4. Resolution on the resignation of the board of directors, executive directors or chairperson.
5. Resolution to terminate personnel.
6. Drawing up annual work plans, reports, budgets and annual accounts.
7. Nomination and suggestion of the next turn of the BOD and the BOS candidates list.
8. Other matters.

2: The Responsibilities of the BOS

1. Execution of the Board of Supervisors' duties (Responsible for supervising the association's daily business activities and correcting violations of laws and regulations made by the Board of Directors and the Chairperson)
2. Financial status review.
3. Election or removal of Chief Supervisor.
4. Resolution on the resignation of the BOS and Chief Supervisor.
5. Other matters.

3: The Responsibilities of the TQFA Divisions

(Revised by the 2nd Joint Meeting of the 10th Directors and Supervisors on August 12, 2022)

Certification Service Division

1. Revising and operating the TQF Certification program.
2. Improving international harmonization of the TQF Certification program.
3. Promoting the mutual recognition of the TQF Certification program.
4. Promoting the TQF Certification program and Certification mark.
5. Handling matters related to the association and exchange platform between members and the upstream, midstream and downstream of food industry.
6. Handling other Certification program-related matters.

Technical Working Division

1. Organizing food industry-related technology exchange activities.
2. Assisting the food industry in solving technical problems.
3. Promoting the TQF Certification program and Certification mark.
4. Establishing a database of technical experts in the food industry.
5. Counseling the food industry with transformation matters.
6. Collect food-related laws and regulations and provide members with references and consulting services.
7. Other food industry-related technical matters.

Industrial Service Division

1. Establishing and revising regulations of the association, such as the articles of association and service rules of the association.
2. Handling the membership meetings and the board of directors and supervisors meetings.
3. Handling the business of food industry-related education and training.
4. Building a talent pool for food industry-related education and training.
5. Handling joint inspection/testing service business.
6. Handling competency training for personnel.
7. Handling other food industry related services.

Administration Division

1. Handling the association's financial, accounting, teller/cashier, general affairs, documentation, and information management matters.
2. Handling the human resource management and performance appraisal matters.
3. Handling the membership management matters of the Association
4. Managing toll of TQF Certification fee.
5. Handling the research and assessment matters.
6. Handling other administrative management related matters.

Annex 2: TQF Program Glossary

The Glossary defines terms that are commonly used throughout all document in the TQF Certification Program-Program Management, version 2023 and TQF Certification Program-Certification Standards, version 2023:

Accreditation	Assessment by an Accreditation Body that is a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and a signatory to the Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MLA) confirming that the management system of a contracted certification body complies with ISO/IEC 17065:2012 (or subsequent version) and the requirements of the TQF Program
Audit Man-days	A unit of measurement for auditors conducting an audit. Eight (8) hours of audit as one (1) audit man-day.
Certification	A process by which an accredited and contracted certification body confirms compliance of a food factory's implemented TQF Program, as appropriate, following a certification audit or re-certification audit.
Certification Body	A third-party conformity assessment organization approved and contracted by TQFA to assess the TQF Program
Certification Program	As defined by the Global Food Safety Initiative, a systematic plan which has been developed, implemented, and maintained for the scope of food safety. It consists of a standard and food safety system in relation to specified processes or a food safety service to which the same plan applies. The food safety program should contain at least a standard, a clearly defined scope, and a food safety system. In this case, the TQF Program is the certification program
Certification Program Owner (CPO)	As defined by the Global Food Safety Initiative, an organization which is responsible for the development, management, and maintenance of a Certification Program. In this case, TQFA is the CPO for the TQF Program.
Certified Product	Registered by the food factory on TQF-ICT and complies with the certification requirements of the TQF Program at TQF L2. The product is allowed to use the TQF certification mark.
Certified Production Number	The number which is produced after the product pass the TQF L2 certification , also called *certified number.*
Certification Scope	A specific product category scope for certification application.
Codex Alimentarius Commission	Codex Alimentarius Commission was established by Food and Agriculture Organization and World Health Organization, is a collection of internationally recognized standards, codes of practice, guidelines, and other recommendations relating to foods, food production, and food safety.
Competence	Ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results (ISO / IEC 19011).
Concerned Items	The certification body conducts the test items when concerned that food factories might cause food safety issues or violate regulations.
Controlled Operation Areas	Refers to the areas where a higher degree of cleanliness is required, including clean operation area and semi-clean operation area.
Corrective Action	Action to eliminate the cause of a nonconformity and to prevent recurrence (ISO / IEC 19000).
Critical Control Point (CCP)	It refers to a point, step, or procedure which control can be applied and prevent, eliminate or reduce a food safety hazard to an acceptable level.
Critical Limit (CL)	A maximum/ minimum value to which a physical, biological or chemical parameter must be controlled at a CCP to prevent, eliminate or reduce to an acceptable level the occurrence of a food safety hazard.
Emergency Procurement	A procurement from an unapproved supplier in the events of emergency.
Extraordinary event	An exceptional event when auditor access to a food factory for an on-site audit is restricted for health, political, or geopolitical reasons.
Equipment	A hardware device that provides specific function.
Facility	A hardware for specific work needs or establishment of systematic equipment, complete set of equipment or device attached to buildings.

Finished product	A product which has undergone all levels of manufacturing with packaging and labelling.
Food contact surface	The food direct or indirect contact surfaces, including utensils and equipment contact surface with the food.
Food defense	As defined by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), food defense is the protection against intentional contamination of food by biological, physical, chemical or radiation hazards that is unlikely to be reasonably occur in the food supply.
Food fraud	Food fraud is the deliberate and intentional substitution, addition, tampering or misrepresentation of food, food ingredients or food packaging, labeling, product information or false or misleading statements made about a product for economic gain that could impact consumer health.
Food factory	The manufacturing site of a food manufacturing business. In the context of the TQF Program, the food factory is the facility that has applied for certification or is undergoing certification to the TQF Program
General Operation Area	Refers to the storage of raw materials, storage of ingredients and outer packaging room among others where the required degree of cleanliness are below the controlled operation areas.
Hazards Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)	A system which identifies, evaluates, controls, and monitors hazards relating to food safety and specified by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex Alimentarius Commission, General Principles of Food Hygiene, CXC 1-1969, Adopted in 1969. Revised in 1997, 2003, 2020)
Good Hygienic Practices (GHP)	Based on the Ministry of Health and Welfare regarding the Food Safety and Health Management Law, referring to the norms that should be followed by food industry practitioners, workplaces, facilities, health management and quality assurance system. It also refers to the Codex Alimentarius Commission, General Principles of Food Hygiene, CXC 1-1969, Adopted in 1969. Revised in 1997, 2003, 2020.
Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)	In 1989, the Industrial Development Bureau of the Ministry of Economic Affairs published an autonomous management system for the quality, hygiene and safety of food in the manufacturing process.
Information Communication Technology (ICT)	ICT is the use of technology for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analyzing and transmitting information. It includes software and hardware such as smartphones, handheld devices, laptop computers, desktop computers, drones, video cameras, wearable technology, artificial intelligence, and others. The use of ICT may be appropriate for auditing/assessment both locally and remotely (IAF MD4: 2022).
Internal Audit	The internal assessment of the operation of the TQF Program to determine whether all aspects are effectively implemented and the results are in accordance with the program objectives.
International Mutual Recognition Agreement	International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) promote accreditation and conformity assessment to encourage mutual recognition agreement among certification bodies contracted by IAF MLA.
Isolation	The partition of sites and facilities by physical means.
Decree	The laws, commands, administrative rules, interpretation orders and letters issued by government agencies.
Material	Refer to raw materials and packaging materials, including raw materials, food additives, inner packaging material and outer packaging material.

Mitigation Strategy	An action plan to reduce or eliminate risk.
Monitoring	As defined in U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), means to conduct a planned sequence of observations or measurements to assess whether control measures are operating as intended.
Non-conformity	Non-fulfilment of a requirement (ISO / IEC 19011).
On-site	Audit activities that are performed at the location of the audited organization (GFSI 2020.1; part 4, glossary)
Pathogen	Microorganisms that cause diseases.
Pest	Small animal or insects which direct or indirectly contaminate the food or disseminate diseases, such as rata, cockroaches, flies and vermin etc.
Product recall	The removal by a supplier of product from the supply chain that has been deemed to be unsafe and has been sold to the end consumer, or is with retailers or caterers and is available for sale. (GFSI 2020.1; part 4, glossary)
Product withdraw	The removal of product by a supplier from the supply chain that has been deemed to be unsafe, which has not been placed on the market for purchase by the end consumer. (GFSI 2020.1; part 4, glossary)
Production Line Number	Five digit number for the production line on which the certified product is manufactured, also called the *certified production system number*.
Re-assessment	An activity a certified food factory must accept when a critical non-conformity is discovered in product testing or production system in a certified food factory, including on-site audit and product testing.
Re-evaluation	An additional on-site evaluation for food factory who fails the initial on-site audit.
Remote Audit	Audits, or part of audits conducted from a location other than the physical location of the food factory
Re-testing	An additional product testing for failing to meet the product specification requirements.
Reworked Product	Refer to product after rework.
Rework	The steps for taking appropriate measures on the material, semi-finished product or the finished product which leaves the normal production line and letting it be sold or suitable for re-use during the processing process.
Same categorized product	A product manufactured in a food factory that meets the production system requirements under the same certification scope for the TQF Program at TQF L1 and / or L2, but does not apply for the TQF certification mark.
Separation	Separation has a border meaning than isolation, including, physical and non-physical means of partition. Separation of operation areas may be accomplished by one or more of the following ways, such as separation in terms of space, time, and control of air flow, use of closed system or other effective methods.
Special Procurement	To procure products out of the specification from approved supplier in the events of emergency.
Annual Surveillance Audit	An audit is conducted by certification bodies for the compliance of production systems and products, which includes annual on-site audits, annual on-site sampling (applicable to L2 only), and post-market sampling.
Validation	Element of confirmation focused on collecting and evaluating scientific and technical information to determine if the HACCP plan, when properly implemented, will effectively control the hazards.

Verification	Activities other than monitoring, that determine the validity of the HACCP plan and that the system is operating according to the plan, to confirm its effectiveness.
Quality Management Plan	A product quality management system establish by food factory to maintain and conform the quality of product.
Semi-Finished Product	The partly processed product which must undergo further processing before it becomes a finished product.
Vulnerability Assessment	Identify, quantify and ranking the vulnerability in preventing intention damage of a food safety management system.
Withdrawal of Certification	A food factory voluntarily withdraws its certification qualification shall return its contract and certified certificate to a certification body. The certification mark is no longer allowed to be used from the effective date. The certification body shall change the certification status to withdrawal on the TQF-ICT platform.

Annex 3: On-site Audit Duration Guide

Annex Table 3.1: Auditor On-site Duration (man-days)(minimum audit man-days is 2.5)

Basic time for on-site audit	Product Items		Number of employees on the process line per product scope	Complexity of the process[3]	Every extra Food Sector Category [2]
	Same product category[1]	Number of certified products			
1.0	1.0	1-50=1.0 51-150=1.5 151-250=2.0 251-350=2.5 351-450=3.0 451-550=3.5 551-650=4.0 651-750=4.5 >751=5.0	1-19=0.5 20-49=1.0 50-79=1.5 80-199=2.0 200-499=2.5 500-899=3.0 900-1299=3.5 1300-1699=4.0 1700-2999=4.5 >3000=5.0	N/A=0 Same Food Sector Category; differs in production =1.0 Same Food Sector Category; differs in production and Storage Temperatures =1.5	1.0

1. If the column of same categorized product is not applicable for L2, it can be calculated as 0.
2. Every extra Food Sector Category under the same certification scope increase one (1) extra man-day.
3. The complexity of process (man-days) is determined by certification body.

Annex 4: Guidance for the Use of the TQF Certification Mark

4.1 This guidance is referred to the TQF Certification Mark (herein refer to as “TQF CM”). The certification mark is a registered pattern owned by TQFA.

4.2 The Meaning of TQF CM

The smiley face is designed to represent “satisfaction” with the product quality and the “OK” gesture represented “secure” with the product safety and hygiene. The image is combined with influential “TQF” letters to impress the public. The “TQF” letters are designed with gentle and thick strokes for a visually stable and comfortable feeling, convey trust and security to public.

4.3: The Prove of TQF CM

TQF CM is used on TQF L2 certified products provided by food factory and company after approved by certification owner. This is to prove that certied food factories provided products meet the requirements of quality, safety and sanitation for consumers and customers.

4.4 The Qualification for using TQF CM

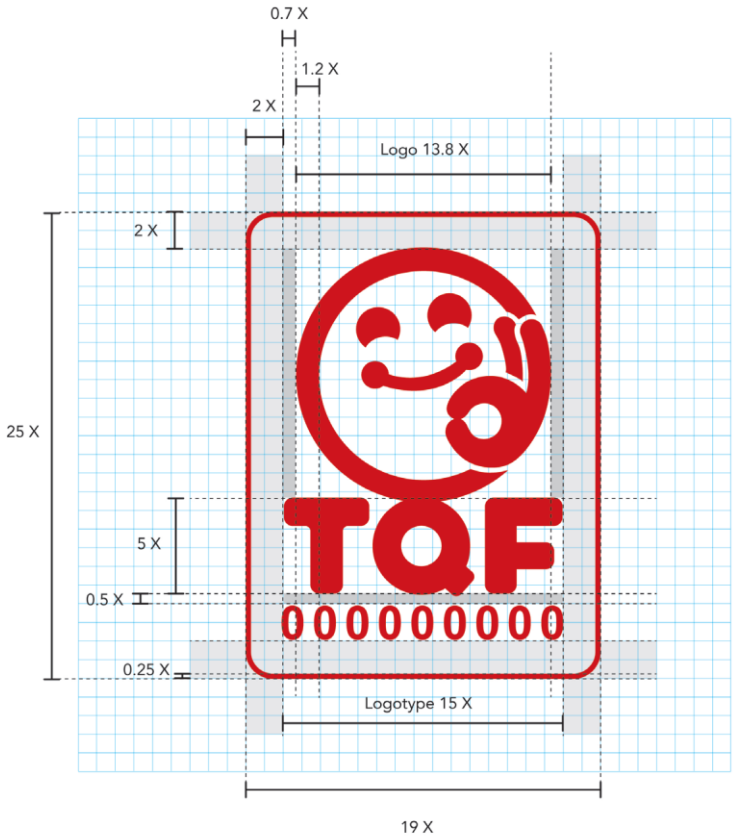
Products with the application of TQF CM must meet the TQF L2 requirements.

4.5 Applying for the Use of TQF CM

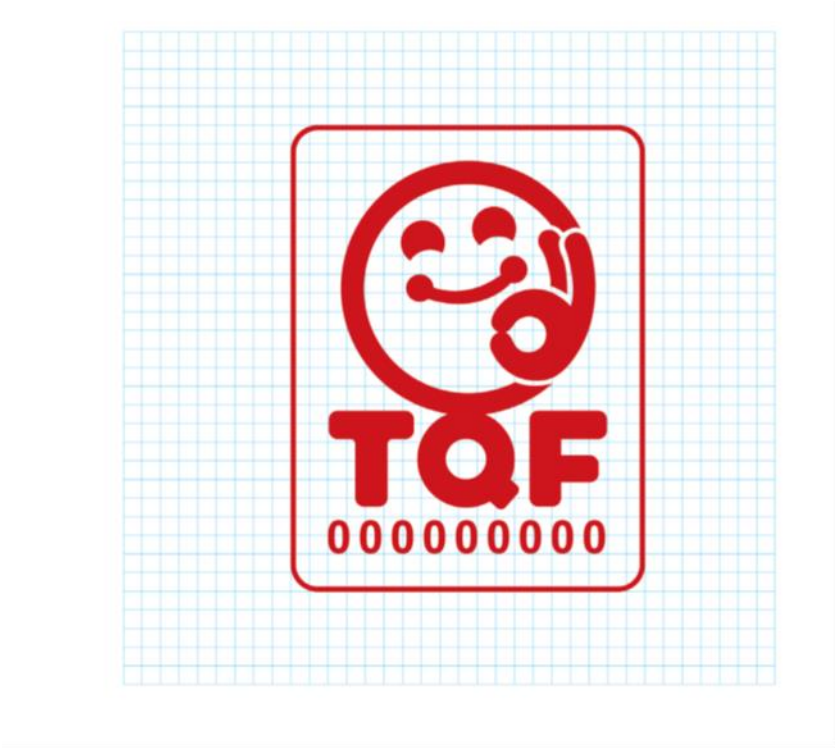
A Food factory or company with TQF L2 certification has to sign “the Agreement on the Use of Total Quality Food Certification Mark” before the initial use and submit it to TQFA with an original copy for application.

4.6 The Standard Drafting of TQF CM

1. Proportional Method:



2.Grid method:



4.7 The Printing of TQF CM

1. Color:

The colors are red, yellow and white. Red represents good quality, passion and enthusiasm; yellow represents positivity, bright and active; white represents purity, secure and trust. The standard colors refer to PANTONE color chips and color chart.

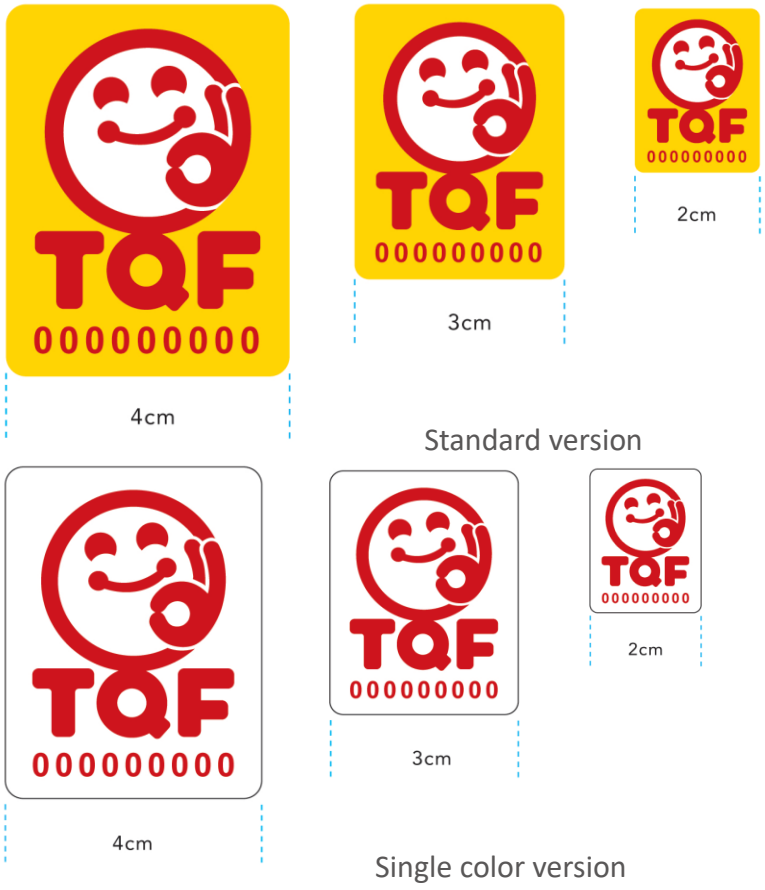
Primary color Auxiliary color

2.Font of TQF CM:

The font used in “Arial Bold”, do not change the letterspacing.

3.Proportional of TQF CM:

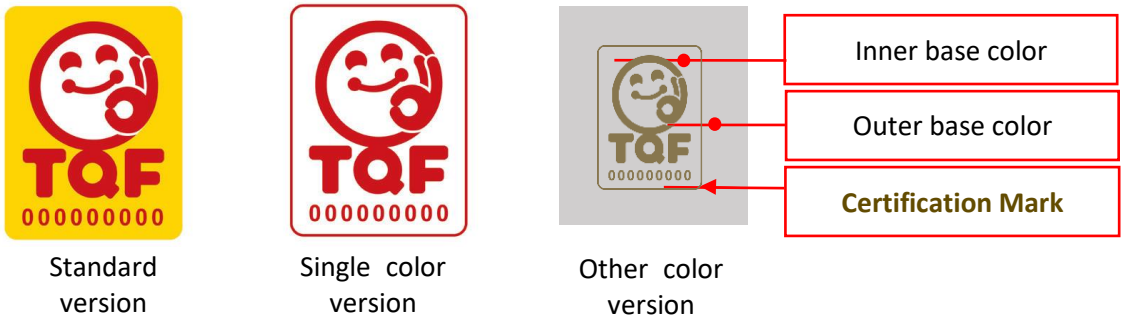
During the use of smaller size TQF CM, the resolution needed be ensure. Different sizes of TQF CM is allowed



provided that the proportional is maintained as suggested and the letter and digits showed must be legible.

4.The color application of TQF CM

TQF CM has standard version, single color version and other color version indicated as below. Standard version used red, yellow and white color; single version used red and white color. The different versions of TQF CM can be used as demanded.



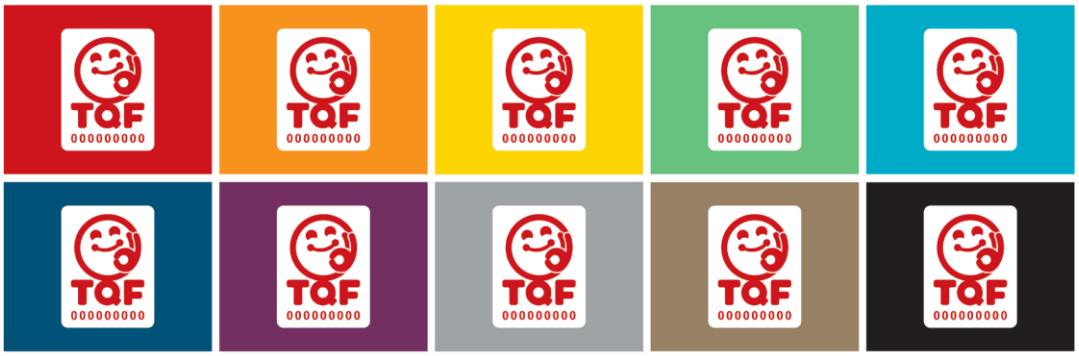
Standard version

Single color version

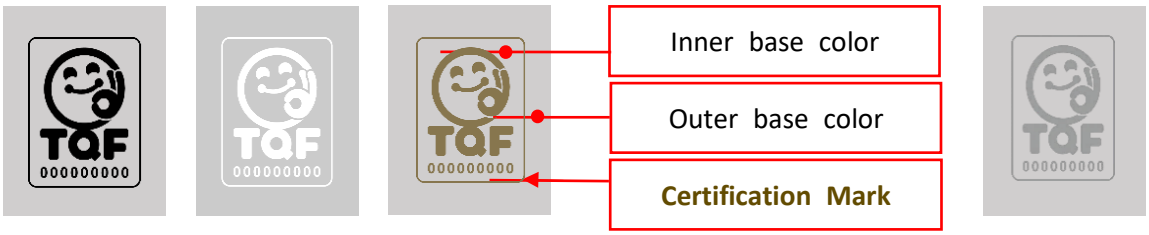
Other color version

a. The example of standard version:

b. The example of single color version:



c. The example of other color version: Use with black, white, gold, silver or with other color as required.



Remarks: The grey background is used as example; the inner and outer base colors are the same. The color used can be changed in accordance with the food packaging design, but the CM and serial number must be legible.

4.8 Management and Monitoring TQF CM

1. Refer to "TQF Certification Program Management". CB has the right to terminate the certification if food factory or company violates the TQF CM regulations and not corrected after notifying.
2. In order to maintain the use of the certification mark, TQFA shall avoid misuse, abuse, fraudulent use to maintain the validity and trustworthiness of the TQF CM, the TQFA will regularly and irregularly conduct a marketed certification mark monitoring and increase the consumers' recognition of TQF CM at various marketing opportunities.

4.9 Dispute handling for using TQF CM

1. When a TQF certified food factory violates the provisions of the TQF Program, TQFA will notify the food factory to take corrective action and notify the certification body to take such measures as suspending, terminating the certification or publishing the violation. If TQFA thus suffered damage, the food factory shall be liable for damages; if necessary, TQFA will take legal actions.
2. When a TQF certified food factory violates the contract of the TQF Program and causes TQFA, accreditation body or certification body suffered damage of rights and interests, the food factory shall be fully liable for damages.

3. It is prohibited to use or counterfeit certification certificates and TQF CM or violate the right of TQFA with TQF CM. TQFA will announce the list and request civil liability and pursue relevant laws in accordance with the law liability.
4. A certification body shall take appropriate measures to address the incorrect use or misleading application of the certificate and the certification of the mark in a document or other publicity, or any other form in which the product has been validated.

Annex 5: Product Sampling and Testing Criteria[2]

Annex Table 5.1: The quantity of product sampling for TQF L1 and TQF L2 products.

Product Sampling	TQF L1	TQF L2	
Initial on-site product sampling	Not applicable	Certified Product[1]	All items that are registered as certified product are sampled.
		Same categorized product[1]	Refers to the registration information of the same categorized category product items on the TQF-ICT platform. Products are sampled in accordance with the risk classification of sampling indicated in 7.2.5.
Annual on-site product sampling (twice per year)	Not applicable	Certified product[1]	Product sampling is 1/5 of the certified products listed on the addendum of certification contract.
		Same categorized product[1]	Refers to the registration information of the same categorized category product items on the TQF-ICT platform.1/5 products are sampled in accordance with the risk classification of sampling indicated in 7.2.5.
Post market sampling (twice per year)	1/100 of the product items registered on the TQF-ICT platform	Certified product[1]	1/10 of the registered certified product.
		Same categorized product[1]	Not applicable

[1] The definitions for certified product and same categorized product are in Annex 2: TQF Program Glossary

[2] Refer to 7.2.5: Product Testing (Applicable for TQF L2) and 7.3.3: Product Testing and Surveillance Audit

Annex 5.1 Sampling

1.1 On-site product sampling and testing applies only to TQF L2 certified products.

1.2 Auditors are responsible for selecting both on-site and post-market samples as applicable. The auditor records the name, specification, lot number, manufacturing/expiry date, certified product mark number, sample size, and sampling location.

1.3 The purchase receipts for the post-market product sampling is retained. The sampling and testing fees are paid by the food factory.

1.4 Sample size is determined based on the net weight of products in their complete packages – 6 samples for products under 200 grams or milliliter; 4 samples for products between 201 grams and 500 grams or milliliter; and 3 samples for products of 501 grams or milliliter and above.

1.5 If products sampled on-site are in industrial packaging, the CB may re-package such products, provided that the process of re-packing and the sampling methods do not affect the testing results.

1.6 If products are not available for sampling for any reason when the auditor /audit team is conducting the annual unannounced on-site audit twice per year, the food factory informs the CB when products are available for sampling. Any additional costs are charged to the food factory.

1.7 Failure to permit on-site sampling by the food factory may result in the suspension of the certification of the food factory.

1.8 Post market sampling is required as part of the annual surveillance audits for all TQF L1 and L2 certified food factories. For TQF L1, same categorized products are sampled. For TQF L2, certified products are sampled, including certified products that are not TQF CM labelled.

1.9 Post market sampling is not applicable:

- For TQF L1 certification, if the same categorized products cannot be sampled from the post market, the

food factory specifies the reason and the product information in the list of same categorized products on TQF-ICT platform.

- For TQF L2 certification, the *Declaration of Certified Products Not Available for Testing Requirements for TQF Program*is signed by a food factory when the certified product is only for export, commerce between two businesses, OEM products for unknown target, and special channel products which are not available for the general public (including online shopping and e-commerce). The buyer's information is specified in the declaration.

Annex 5.2 Testing

2.1 External laboratories used for product testing are required to conform to the applicable requirements of ISO 17025 (refer 1.4) or pass the accreditation of food testing facilities by the Taiwan Accreditation Foundation or Taiwan Food and Drug Administration. However, not every inspection item has corresponding accredited laboratories. If this happens, the CB provides information to prove and confirm the laboratory personnel capacity , equipment calibration, record keeping and traceability during performing conformity assessment. TQFA is allowed to witness with CB if necessary.

2.2 The CB has a legally binding agreement with external laboratories that is available for review by TQFA on request. The CB informs the food factories in advance of the contacted external laboratories used for product testing.

2.3 Products are tested according to the *TQF Specifications and Standards for Product Test Items*. The quality requirements of customers or retailers may also be tested if applicable.

2.4 Three (3) intended TQF L2 products are sampled and tested, including at least two (2) samples for *sanitation standards* and one (1) sample for *quality specifications*. The CB may also test for *concerned items* if noted from the on-site audit.

2.5 When the auditor can only sample TQF L2 certified products with the same batch number during on-site or post-market sampling, the testing can be one (1) "sanitation standards" and one (1) "quality specifications", with the third as " concerned items" or "quality specifications", in which case " concerned items" is the priority.