

IFS Logistics Multi-site Guideline

This guideline is a supplementary normative document to the IFS Logistics Standard.



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Types of certification for multi-site companies with central management, for IFS Logistics certified companies

If defined processes and activities are planned and controlled centrally in a company with several sites (e.g. purchasing, personnel management), the certification can be covered by a single-certification or multi-site certification process.

In each case, the headquarter shall also be audited and the outcome of the relevant audited requirements shall be considered in the audit reports of each site. The report shall detail which processes are centrally managed and which are managed at the site.

Depending on the fulfilment of pre-requisites and on company choice, the company can choose between two possibilities of auditing:

- single-certification of each site (without sampling program, see section 1.)
- multi-site certification of all sites (with sampling program, see section 2.)

If not defined otherwise in this document, all requirements from the current respective standard shall apply.

1 Single-certification

This certification process can apply to all companies, irrespective of whether they have more or less than 20 sites per country.

Every site shall be audited separately, be mentioned in the relevant contract and be subject to its own report, corrective action plan and certificate. The certificate validity is twelve (12) months. After this period, a full new audit shall be repeated.

If the central managing site does not have any activities, this site cannot be IFS certified as an independent company. The timeframe for auditing the central managing site shall be described in the company profile of the report.

The audit of the managing site shall always take place before the audit of each site, in order to have a preliminary overview.

Note: Each individual site is subject to the scoring and conditions defined in the IFS Logistics Standard.

2

Multi-site certification

To get the approval for multi-site certification and, as a result, for the sampling program, the company has to fulfil the following pre-requisites:

- All sites shall be located within one country.
- All sites shall operate under the same product and/or food safety management system and under the control of a central organisation, which has a legal or contractual link to the sites.
- Competences and responsibilities, including delegation of management responsibilities, internal auditors, and other members of the organisation shall be clearly laid down.

Note: The related compulsory information shall be provided by the IFS Auditor in the IFS Report under the requirement KO N° 1 for corporate structure.

- The central organisation shall be clearly committed to the authoritative control of the product and/or food safety management system of all sites and shall issue, maintain and retain all relevant documents related to the sites in the sampling program. The central organisation shall be separate and independent from the sites.
- The central organisation shall be subject to management review, in accordance with IFS Requirements and shall itself be subject to an internal audit, in accordance with the respective standard requirements.
- All sites within a multi-site sampling program shall have the same risk profile, depending on e.g.:
 - type of handled products and their requirements (e.g. ambient stable, temperature controlled, refrigerated, frozen or combinations of these)
 - kind of logistical activities
 - size of site
 - shift patterns
 - management structure
 - staff numbers.

Therefore, an organisation could have several multi-site sampling programs based on different risk profile, but these programs shall be clearly defined and documented.

- There must be an internal audit program for all sites, undertaken by the central organisation which is based on conditions of the respective logistics activities as well as the risk profile. Within the internal audit sampling program, all sites shall be audited within a 12- month period. The internal audit program shall have documented procedures and be both practical and feasible in operative terms.
- The central organisation shall have sufficient management and the technical capacity to implement and maintain the internal audit program. This shall acknowledge the competence needed for auditors and technical reviewers to achieve the objectives of the audit and the requirements for impartiality.

The following additional requirements for internal auditors apply:

- The clear requirements expected for internal auditors and technical reviewers shall be defined and documented.
- The requirements for internal auditors are as follows:
 - Internal auditors shall be competent and shall have the full commitment of the senior management.
 - Internal auditors conducting audits for the whole organisation shall meet adequate requirements. A minimum of the following shall be defined:

Education

A food or logistics related education or a food-related or bioscience education course or equivalent and 1 year professional experience in the sector.

Audit experience:

4 internal audits as a trainee lead auditor and 1 witness audit with an experienced internal auditor for the organisation as witness auditor.

Required training:

- HACCP training min. 1 day, (for food industry)
 - Training in audit techniques e.g. training for internal auditors (3 days)
 - Internal auditors shall be regularly evaluated, calibrated and monitored.
- Note:** Compulsory information on the sample checked during the IFS Logistics Audit regarding the auditor competence and the last calibration shall be provided by the IFS Auditor under requirement 5.1.3 of the IFS Report.

- The sampling is possible for renewal audits, starting from 20 sites, for tier 2 (T2) and tier 3 (T3) locations. The minimum sample size is one third (rounded up) of the total amount of locations which are included in the multi-site program. Examples of sample size are shown in following Table N° 1.

Table N° 1: Examples of the number of sites to audit per year when multi-site sampling is used

Number of sites (excluding the central organization)	Minimum sample size (T2 and T3 sites only)
20	7
30	10
50	17
100	34
Over 100	Calculated

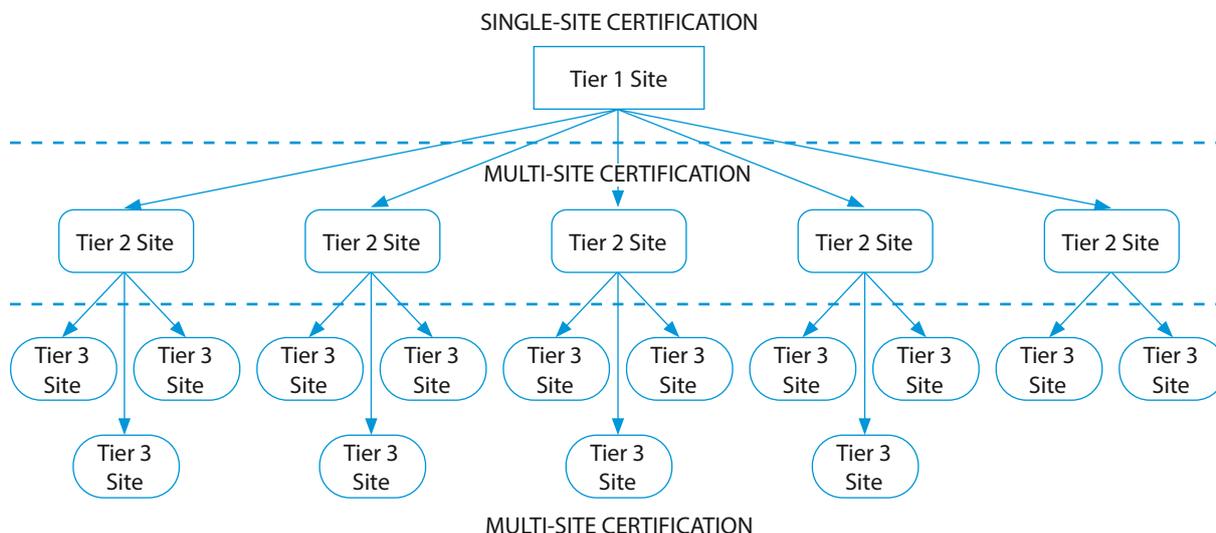
Tier 1 (T1) facility: Main/national/regional sites operating under one product and/or food safety management system. Typical Tier 1 sites are distribution centres (storage and transport, no sales activity) or central warehouses: food, feed and/or product distribution or storage facilities at a single site or location.

T1 facilities can have T2 facilities and/or sites (T3) managed by the organisation seeking the certification. Each site must have a certificate for these facilities, no multi-site sampling option is available.

Tier 2 (T2) or Tier 3 (T3) site: These sites are always linked to a larger T1 facility, or – in the case of a T3 site via a T2 site. T2 sites and T3 sites are always managed and under the direct control of a T1 facility or an organisation with multiple T1 facilities seeking certification.

For these sites, the multi-site sampling option is available. Typical Tier 2 or Tier 3 sites are satellite warehouses or distribution hubs, cross docking sites: food, feed and/or product distribution or storage locations at a single site or location and operating under one product and/or food safety management system.

Table N° 2: Differences between the different tier locations



2.1 Certification body selection

This program is only applicable if the same certification body conducts all audits of the central organisation and the associated sites during a whole cycle (see Table N° 3).

- The organisation shall request multi-site sampling in their application to the certification body.
- The contract shall be defined between the certification body and the central controlling organisation but not with individual sites. The central controlling organisation or central function shall be part of the organisation's certification program.

2.2 Rules for the initial audit

Every organisation's central control or central function in each country, as well as all other sites, shall be audited in the first year. The company and the certification body agree upon all audit dates in advance (announced audits).

2.3 Recertification audit / sampling rule

In general:

- The central organisation shall be audited by the certification body before the certification body undertakes the auditing of sampled sites.
- The central organisation shall be audited every twelve (12) months according to IFS Logistics. If the company is located in several countries with different sites, each central organisation in each country where the company is engaged in business shall be audited every twelve (12) months.
- Every new site, which will be integrated in this process, has to be audited in the first year of multi-site certification. It shall be audited in the first year in every case, and depending on its kind of activity, audited under sampling plan frequency.
- Every site audit within the sampling program shall be performed announced or unannounced by the certification body.
- The certified organisation shall be subject to an unannounced audit at least once every three (3) years. This includes an unannounced audit of the related sites sampled for the relevant year.
- The certification body has the right to expand the number of sites to be audited (within the sampling program) in one year if necessary (e.g. too many deviations of the organisation).

In addition to the above requirements, the sampling shall comply with the following rules:

The sampling shall also be based on a risk analysis.

- 25 % of the sample shall be selected at random (non-selective). This 25% is to be chosen from the sites which were not audited in the same year.
- 75 % of the sample shall partly be selected based on the following factors:
 - Results of internal site audits and management reviews or previous certification audits
 - Records of complaints and other relevant aspects of corrective and preventive actions
 - Significant variation of the size of the sites
 - Variations in shift patterns and work procedures
 - Complexity of the management system and processes conducted at the sites
 - Modifications since the last certification audit
 - Maturity of the management system and knowledge of the organisation.

Note: The above sampling program is compliant with IAF MD1:2023 document, but any requirements from the IAF MD1:2023 document which may go above these requirements shall also be fulfilled, if not defined otherwise in the relevant IFS Normative Documents.

Note: The audit sampling program of the certification body shall be reviewed and undertaken within a 12-month period against defined the sample size.

The following rules are applicable for the multi-site certification.

Table N° 3: Cycle of multi-site certification (example)

Initial process	First cycle	First cycle	First cycle	Second cycle
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Central organisation + all (T1, T2 and T3) associated locations	Central organisation + all associated locations	Central organisation + all associated locations	Central organisation + all associated locations	Central organisation + all associated locations
	Sampling rule (applying for T2 and T3 sites, if the number of sites is above 20) Number of sites like shown in Table N° 1	Sampling rule (applying for T2 and T3 sites, if the number of sites is above 20) Number of sites like shown in Table N° 1	Sampling rule (applying for T2 and T3 sites, if the number of sites is above 20) Number of sites like shown in Table N° 1	Sampling rule (applying for T2 and T3 sites, if the number of sites is above 20) Number of sites like shown in Table N° 1
	<u>Sampling:</u> 75 % sample chosen by 25 % random sample from all assigned sites that are not part of the sample audited in this year. + newly opened sites (if applicable)	<u>Sampling:</u> 75 % sample chosen by 25 % random sample from all assigned sites that are not part of the sample audited in this year. + newly opened sites (if applicable)	<u>Sampling:</u> 75 % sample chosen by 25 % random sample from all assigned sites that are not part of the sample audited in this year. + newly opened sites (if applicable)	<u>Sampling:</u> 75 % sample chosen by 25 % random sample from all assigned sites that are not part of the sample audited in this year. + newly opened sites (if applicable)

The sampling programme shall be defined in such a way that all sites within the multi-site organisation are audited on a risk basis within a certain period, e.g. within 5 years.

2.4

Scoring and conditions for issuing the audit report and IFS Group Certificate for the IFS Multi-site Certification

The multi-site certification is only possible if all the audited sites individually pass the audit.

In case one site fails the audit:

- a) If one site fails the audit because of a KO evaluated with a D, several Major non-conformities or one Major non-conformity and total score $< 75\%$, the multi-site certification shall not be issued. The site which fails the audit shall be audited again completely within six (6) months and shall pass the audit in order to allow multi-site certification. The existing group certificate shall be suspended/withdrawn for all sites.
- b) If one site fails the audit because of one Major and total score $\geq 75\%$, a follow up audit shall be performed within six (6) months, in order to solve the non-conformity and allow multi-site certification.
- c) If one site fails the audit because of a total score $< 75\%$ (but no nonconformities according to IFS):
 - if the certification body considers the identified deviations to only be linked to the site but not linked to the general management system:

A follow up audit shall be scheduled at the site, to check the implementation of corrective actions. If the new audit of the site results in a score of $\geq 75\%$, then the multi-site certification is possible. If the total score is still under 75%, the multi-site certification is not possible.
 - if the certification body considers the identified deviations to be linked to the site as well as to the general management system:

A follow up audit shall be scheduled on the site and at the headquarter, to check the implementation of corrective actions. If the new audit results in a score $\geq 75\%$, then the multi-site certification is possible. If the total score is still under 75%, the multi-site certification is not possible.

Note: If there are no internal audits conducted at all sites, this will be seen as a breach of requirement 5.1.1. Therefore it will be evaluated as a KO.

Note: Non-conformities shall be assessed by the certification body to ascertain if these indicate a system deficiency in overall product safety and therefore may be applicable to all or other sites.

If non-conformities relate to all or other sites, corrective actions shall be undertaken and verified both by the central controlling organisation or central function and by the certification body.

Note: If the central controlling organisation, central function or any site fails to meet the certification scheme requirements, then the whole multi-site organisation will fail to gain certification. Where certification has previously been in place, this shall initiate the certification body's process to suspend or withdraw its certification.

2.5 Awarding the certificate

In case of a multi-site certification, the certification body shall award a group certificate (see Annex 2), with a period of validity of twelve (12) months. In the annex of the certificate, all sites which are in the scope of the certification shall be listed with the last IFS Audit date. This annex shall be updated when the certificate is issued or in case of changes. To determine the level, the certification body has to calculate the average scoring of all sites and write the corresponding level on the certificate.

Note: In case all sites in the scope of the audit were audited unannounced, “unannounced audit” shall be stated on the head of the certificate.

2.6 Limitation of the certificate on selected sites

Not all sites in a company (group) have to be certified. It is the decision of the company to certify only part of all existing sites. Only the certified sites will be listed in the annex of the certificate. The excluded sites are not countable for pre-requisites of multi-site certification.

2.7 Inclusion of new sites

If the company decides to include a new site after the multi-site certificate has been awarded, it must undergo an audit. If the site passes the initial audit, the certification body can issue an updated certificate including the new site.

2.8 Other topics

For other topics that are not defined in this guideline (e.g. change of certification body, database related topics. etc.), specific rules may apply. Please contact IFS for clarification in such cases.

Normative references:

- IAF MD 1:2023 – Mandatory Document for the Certification of Multiple Sites Based on Sampling
- GFSI Guidance Document 2020.1.

ANNEX 1: IFS Certificate

Certificate

Unannounced audit (if applicable)



Herewith the certification body

Name of the certification body

being an ISO/IEC 17065 accredited certification body for IFS Certification and having signed an agreement with IFS Management GmbH, confirms that the processing activities of

Name of the audited company

Address

(GS1 GLN(s) and where applicable, sanitary legal authorisation number) COID,
(head office name and address, if applicable)

for the audit scope:

(Detailed description of logistics service(s), handled products including handling conditions, kind of transport,
if applicable and logistics processing service(s), if applicable)

additional information:

If there are partly outsourced logistics processing service(s), the following sentence shall be added:

"Besides own logistics processing service(s), the company has partly outsourced logistics processing service(s),
description of exclusions, if applicable,

if the company performs additional broker activities, provide the certification status by writing the sentence:
"The company has own broker activities which are / are not IFS Broker/other GFSI recognised standard certified".

Code(s) of logistics service(s)

meet the requirements set out in the

IFS Logistics Version 3, December 2023

at Foundation level / Higher level
and other associated normative documents
with a score of XX %

IFS Star Status due to unannounced audit, if applicable
(+ star symbol to be added close to the IFS Logistics Logo)

Certificate-Register number:

Date of the last unannounced audit (last day of the audit):

If no unannounced IFS Logistics Audit has been conducted for the respective COID yet,
the certificate shall indicate the following:

"Last audit conducted unannounced: N/A"

Audit date (if relevant: plus date of the follow-up audit):

Certificate issue date:

Date of expiration of the certificate (the certificate validity shall remain
the same each year as described in the IFS Logistics Certification Protocol, Part 1):

Next audit to be performed within the time period:

(Recertification audit between XX.XX and XX.XX in case of announced
audit and between XX.XX and XX.XX in case of unannounced audit)

Date and place:

Name and signature of the responsible person
at the certification body:

Address of the certification body:

Logo and/or name of the
accreditation body and its
registration number
Logo and/or name of the
certification body



ANNEX 2: List of sites

Annex according to certification document register number: xxxxx

Location	Location
Sample Company One COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 1 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date	Sample Company Eleven COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 11 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date
Sample Company Two COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 2 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date	Sample Company Twelve COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 12 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date
Sample Company Three COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 3 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date	Sample Company Thirteen COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 13 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date
Sample Company Four COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 4 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date	Sample Company Fourteen COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 14 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date
Sample Company Five COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 5 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date	Sample Company Fivetine COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 15 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date
Sample Company Six COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 6 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date	Sample Company Sixteen COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 16 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date
Sample Company Seven COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 7 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date	Sample Company Seventeen COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 17 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date
Sample Company Eight COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 8 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date	Sample Company Eighteen COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 18 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date
Sample Company Nine COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 9 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date	Sample Company Nineteen COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 19 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date
Sample Company Ten COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 10 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date	Sample Company Twenty COID: xxxxx Samplestreet 20 12345 Sampletown Last IFS Audit date

Contact details of the IFS Offices

GERMANY

IFS Office Berlin
Am Weidendamm 1A
DE- 10117 Berlin
Phone: +49 (0)30726105374
Email: info@ifs-certification.com

ITALY

IFS Office Milan
Federdistribuzione
Via Albricci 8
IT - 20122 Milan
Phone: +39 0289075150
Email: ifs-milano@ifs-certification.com

POLAND | CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

IFS Representative CEE &
CEE Market Development Manager Agnieszka Wryk
IFS Representative CEE Marek Marzec
ul. Serwituty 25
PL - 02-233 Warsaw
Phone: +48 451136888
Email: ifs-poland@ifs-certification.com

CZECH REPUBLIC

IFS Representative Miroslav Šuška
Phone: +420 603893590
Email: msuska@qualifood.cz

BRAZIL

IFS Office Brazil
Rua Antônio João 800
BR - 79200-000 Aquidauana / MS Brazil
Phone: +55 67981514560
Email: cnowak@ifs-certification.com

NORTH AMERICA

IFS Representative Pius Gasser
Phone: +1 4165642865
Email: gasser@ifs-certification.com

FRANCE

IFS Office Paris
14 rue de Bassano
FR - 75016 Paris
Phone: +33 140761723
Email: ifs-paris@ifs-certification.com

SPAIN

IFS Representative Beatriz Torres Carrió
Phone: +34 610306047
Email: torres@ifs-certification.com

HUNGARY

IFS Representative László Gyórfi
Phone: +36 301901342
Email: gyorfi@ifs-certification.com

TÜRKIYE

IFS Representative Ezgi Dedevas Ugur
Phone: +90 5459637458
Email: ifs-turkiye@ifs-certification.com

ROMANIA

IFS Representative Ionut Nache
Phone: +40 722517971
Email: ionut.nache@inaq.ro

LATIN AMERICA

IFS Office Chile
Av. Apoquindo 4700, Piso 12,
CL - Las Condes, Santiago
Phone: +56 954516766
Email: chile@ifs-certification.com

ASIA

IFS Office Asia
IQC (Shanghai) Co., Ltd.
Man Po International Business Center Rm 205,
No. 660, Xinhua Road, Changning District,
CN - 200052 Shanghai
Phone: +86 18019989451
Email: china@ifs-certification.com
asia@ifs-certification.com

In case of any queries regarding the interpretation of IFS Standards and Programmes, please contact standardmanagement@ifs-certification.com

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The owner of the present document is:

IFS Management GmbH
Am Weidendamm 1 A
10117 Berlin
Germany

Managing Director: Stephan Tromp
AG Charlottenburg
HRB 136333 B
VAT-N°: DE278799213

Bank: Berliner Sparkasse
IBAN number: DE96 1005 0000 0190 0297 65
BIC-/Swift-Code: BE LA DE BE

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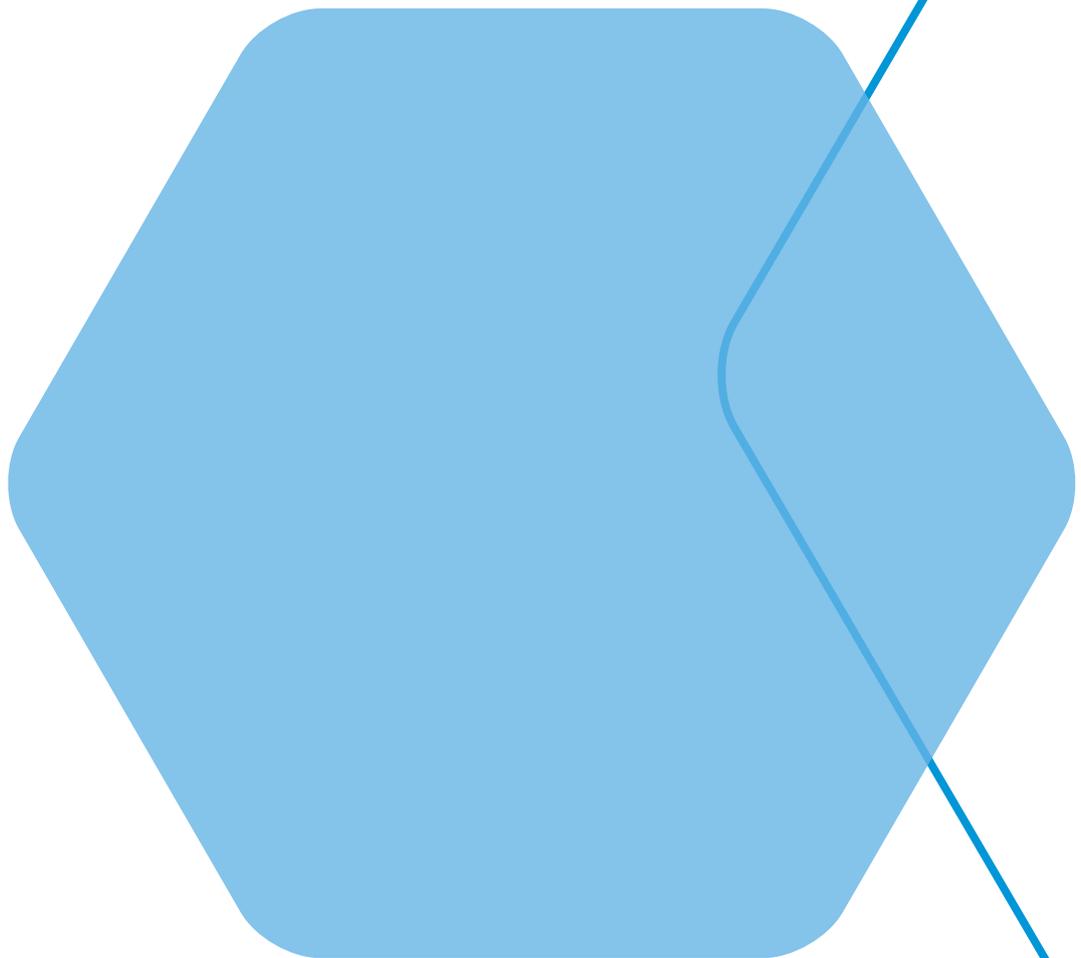
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