



# Food Product Certification

Product certification highlights the specific characteristics of a product, differentiating it from similar products.

The certified product goes beyond guaranteeing safety and quality; it also communicates its own unique value.

To certify a product means to state in writing its conformity to a technical specification, by means of a defined operating method and within an established reliability limit. The certificate and the certification mark to display on the product label are, therefore, optimal communication tools in order to respond to the consumers' demands.

Deciding to undertake the voluntary product certification means to work towards continual improvement. This is necessary to maintain the established qualitative standards throughout the independent periodic surveillance activities. When you perform a Voluntary Product Certification the product characteristics are guaranteed according to EN 45011/ISO Guide 65.

What is Voluntary product certification?

Voluntary product certification may refer to recognised standards by the International Standardization Organization (ISO) or DNV's own TPS (Technical Product Specification) standards.

The Technical Product Specification is a public document that describes the meaningful and relevant characteristics of the products, the sampling plan, and the analytical method used to verify it. The Product Technical Folder is a company's document, and therefore confidential. It describes the production and control processes carried out by the company to meet the expected results.

In all cases, certification involves evaluation of the quality system, surveillance of the production processes, and testing of product samples. The samples are evaluated against parameters based on product characteristics and acceptable risk levels for both the consumer and producer.

### Why is certification good for my business?

In developed countries the consumers' needs are usually not linked to "food quantity" any more. However, they are increasingly interested in food safety and the nutritional, organoleptic, and technological characteristics of the food they buy.

The consumers want to know more about product-specific characteristics which distinguish it from similar products. To certify a product means to highlight a product's explicit and implicit characteristics, and to confirm your company's commitment towards a constant search for higher standards.

Product certification should not be underrated as a marketing tool, and is a useful business card to introduce your product in a new market niche or to retailers.

The first positive effect is the improvement of the product's brand value, which in turn plays a fundamental role in the increase of customers – and therefore in the economic returns.

### How can I prepare for certification?

The marketing function, in cooperation with the technically responsible person, has to identify the characteristics of the product that, once guaranteed, give added value to the product itself.

The next step is to plan the production process, documenting the results with the product technical folder.

The planning process includes:

- Establishing the needed production processes, and providing resources specific to the product.
- Identifying the required verification, validation, monitoring, inspection, and test activities specific to the product and the criteria for product acceptance.
- Defining the records needed to provide evidence that the processes and resulting product meet applicable requirements.