

Producing Irish whiskey, Irish cream or Irish poteen

Annex A: Irish whiskey Geographical Indications (GI) – Spirit Drinks Verification Scheme checks

General

| | Requirement | Verification check | | Comments | Pass |
|---|---|---|---|----------|------|
| 1 | The distillery must be licenced in the State. Additionally, all alcoholic products producers must have an APPA (Alcoholic Products Producer Approval) to produce spirits on approved premises issued by HMRC. | Verify that the distillery holds the appropriate licence in the State. Additionally, check HMRC records to ensure the producer has an APPA approving them to produce spirit and hold spirit in duty suspension on their approved premises. Check all details of the approval including the type of alcoholic product and the premises that the approval is held for. Ensure compliance with any conditions on the approval. | | | |
| 2 | The Distillery's systems and procedures must provide assurance of adherence to the Product Specification for Irish whiskey as required under Regulation (EU) 2019/787. | 2.1 | Review the distillery's production systems and procedures to verify that they are designed to ensure adherence to the Product Specification and requirements for Irish whiskey, that they are fully documented in accessible format and operate as intended. | | |
| | | 2.2 | Verify that the distillery's system of records is designed to provide a full, high-quality, timely and transparent account of all inputs, outputs, processes and operations of the distillery, that the system is implemented fully and that the records are held securely and in an accessible format. | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | | Comments | Pass |
|---|---|--|---|----------|------|
| | | 2.3 | Verify that the distillery's systems of management and operating controls are designed to ensure adherence to the product specifications and requirements for the production of Irish whiskey, are fully implemented and ensure the maintenance of high-quality records in that regard. | | |
| 3 | If spirit products other than Irish whiskey are produced or handled in the distillery, all production processes for Irish whiskey must be kept separate and the production of other spirit drinks must not compromise compliance with or verification of the GI standard for Irish whiskey. | Verify that the distillery's systems for production and its records and operational controls are adequate to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full and effective identification at all times of GI and non-GI spirit production processes, materials and outputs • full separation from the production and bottling processes for GI and non-GI products • all necessary controls are in place to manage the risk of contamination at any stage in the production and bottling processes for Irish whiskey. | | | |

Stage 1 Brewing

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|--|---|----------|------|
| 1.1 | Irish whiskey | | | |
| 1.1.1 | The mash must contain malted cereals, with or without whole grains of other cereals. | Verify that the distillery's brewing procedures and the records of each brewing operation show that the mash is made from malted cereals, with or without whole grains of other cereals. | | |
| 1.1.2 | Saccharification of the mash must take place by the enzymes contained in the malt, with or without other natural enzymes. | Verify that the distillery's brewing procedures and the records of each brewing operation show that no synthetic enzymes were used in the production of Irish whiskey. | | |
| 1.1.3 | Brewing must take place at the same site as fermentation and distillation. | Check the distillery's records to verify that all brewing for Irish whiskey takes place in the distillery. | | |
| 1.2 | Pot Still Irish whiskey | | | |
| 1.2.1 | The mash must contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a minimum of 30% natural, raw, non- peated malted barley • a minimum of 30% unmalted barley if required • a maximum of 5% other unmalted cereals such as oats and rye and water | Check that the distillery's procedures and its records of brewing operations and materials for Pot Still Irish whiskey show that: the mash is made solely from natural, raw, non peated malted barley, unmalted barley and other unmalted cereals those materials specified and that the malted barley, unmalted barley and, if used, the other unmalted cereals are mixed in the correct proportions. | | |
| 1.2.2 | Saccharification must take place by way of the malt enzymes contained in the mash, with or without other natural enzymes. | Verify from the distillery's materials and brewing records that no synthetic enzymes were used in the production of Pot Still Irish whiskey. | | |
| 1.2.3 | Brewing must take place at the same site as fermentation and distillation. | Check the distillery's records to verify that all brewing for Pot Still Irish whiskey takes place in the distillery. | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|---|--|----------|------|
| 1.3 | Malt Irish whiskey | | | |
| 1.3.1 | The mash is made from 100% natural, raw, peated or non-peated malted barley and water. | Check that the distillery's brewing procedures and records show that the mash for Malt Irish whiskey is made solely from natural, raw, peated, or non-peated, malted barley and water. | | |
| 1.3.2 | Saccharification must take place by the enzymes contained in malt, with or without other natural enzymes. | Verify that the distillery's records show that no synthetic enzymes were used in the production of Malt Irish whiskey. | | |
| 1.3.3 | Brewing must take place at the same site as fermentation and distillation. | Check the distillery's records to verify that all brewing for Malt Irish whiskey is brewed at the distillery. | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|---|--|----------|------|
| 1.4 | Grain Irish whiskey | | | |
| 1.4.1 | Mash is made from a maximum of 30% natural, raw, malted barley and other whole, unmalted cereals. | Check that the distillery's brewing procedures and records show that the mash for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grain Irish whiskey is made from natural, raw, malted barley and other whole, unmalted cereals only • that the malted barley and unmalted cereals are mixed in the correct proportions | | |
| 1.4.2 | Saccharification must take place by the enzymes contained in malt, with or without other natural enzymes. | Verify the distillery's record shows that no synthetic enzymes were used in the production of Grain Irish whiskey. | | |
| 1.4.3 | Mashing must take place at the same site as fermentation and distillation. | Check the distillery's records to verify that all brewing takes place at the distillery. | | |

Stage 2 Fermentation

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|---|---|----------|------|
| 2.1 | Pot Still Irish whiskey/Malt Irish whiskey/Grain Irish whiskey/Irish whiskey | | | |
| 2.1.1 | Fermentation is by the action of yeast and natural enzymes only. | Check that the distillery's production procedures and the records of material used verify that fermentation is by the action of yeast and natural enzymes only. | | |
| 2.1.2 | Fermentation must take place at the same site as mashing and distillation. | Check the distillery's records to verify that all fermentation takes place in the distillery. | | |

Stage 3 Distillation

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|--|--|----------|------|
| 3.1 | Irish Whiskey | | | |
| 3.1.1 | Must be distilled at an alcoholic strength of less than 94.8% by volume. | Check the distillery's records to verify that, on completion of distillation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the alcoholic strength of each batch of Irish whiskey is measured according to correct procedures and the results are recordedthe records show that all batches are of an alcoholic strength of less than 94.8% by volume | | |
| 3.1.2 | Must be double or triple distilled. | Check that the distillery's records show that the product is double distilled at a minimum. | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|---|---|----------|------|
| 3.2 | Pot Still Irish whiskey | | | |
| 3.2.1 | Must be distilled at an alcoholic strength of less than 94.8% by volume. | <p>Check the distillery's records to verify that, on completion of distillation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the alcoholic strength of each batch of Irish whiskey is measured according to correct procedures and the results are recorded the records show that all batches are of an alcoholic strength of less than 94.8% by volume | | |
| 3.2.2 | Must be distilled in a copper pot still. | Verify that the records show that the Pot Still Irish whiskey was distilled in a copper pot and visually check that copper pot stills are present and in use in the distillery. | | |
| 3.2.3 | May be double or triple distilled. | Check that the distillery's records show that the product is double distilled at a minimum. | | |
| 3.2.4 | Still residues from a pot still may be collected and redistilled in column stills – these resulting feints can be subsequently distilled along with recycled pot still feints in a pot still. | If a column still is in use during Pot Still Irish whiskey production, check that it is only used for the distillation of residues from the pot still and the resulting feints are used only for further distillation in a pot still. | | |
| 3.3 | Malt Irish whiskey | | | |
| 3.3.1 | Must be distilled at an alcoholic strength of less than 94.8% by volume. | <p>Check the distillery's records to verify that, on completion of distillation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the alcoholic strength of each batch of Malt Irish whiskey is measured according to correct procedures and the results are recorded the records show that all batches are of an alcoholic strength of less than 94.8% by volume | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|---|--|----------|------|
| 3.3.2 | Must be distilled in a pot still. | Verify from the distillery records and visually check that pot stills are present and used in distillery for the distillation of Malt Irish whiskey. | | |
| 3.3.3 | Still residues from a pot still may be collected and redistilled in column stills – these resulting feints can be subsequently distilled along with recycled pot still feints in a pot still. | If a column still is in use during the production of Malt Irish Whiskey, check the records to verify that it is used only for collecting and re-distilling residues for further distillation in a pot still. | | |
| 3.3.4 | May be triple or double distilled. | Check that records show the number of times the product is distilled and verify that the product is double distilled at a minimum. | | |
| 3.4 | Grain Irish whiskey | | | |
| 3.4.1 | Must be distilled at an alcoholic strength of less than 94.8% by volume. | Check that processes, procedures and records are in place to ensure alcoholic strength can be measured accurately. Also check records to ensure that the ABV does not exceed 94.8%. | | |
| 3.4.2 | Must be distilled in a column still. | Verify that the distillery's records show that all Grain Irish whiskey is produced in a column still. Carry out a visual check to verify that a column still is present and in use in the distillery. | | |
| 3.4.3 | May be double or triple distilled. | Check that records show the number of times the product is distilled and verify that they show that the product is double distilled at a minimum. | | |

Stage 4 Maturation

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|--|---|----------|------|
| 4.1 | Pot Still Irish whiskey/Malt Irish whiskey/Grain Irish whiskey/Irish whiskey | | | |
| 4.1.1 | New-make Irish spirit intended to be matured into Irish whiskey that has been filled into casks at the distillery or received by tanker for casking must be traceable, identifiable and produced in accordance with the GI requirements. | Verify that the producer's procedures and systems ensure that all spirits received in casks for further maturation can be identified and the records show that this whiskey has been produced in compliance with the GI. | | |
| 4.1.2 | Irish whiskey received in casks for further maturation must be traceable, identifiable and produced in accordance with the GI requirements. | Verify that the producer's procedures and systems ensure that all spirits received in casks for further maturation can be identified and the records show that this whiskey has been produced in compliance with the GI | | |
| 4.1.3 | Maturation must take place in a tax warehouse for a minimum of 3 years and thereafter, may take place at another premises approved by HMRC for GI verification purposes. | Verify from the producer's records that the whiskey has matured in wooden casks in a tax warehouse in Ireland for a minimum period of 3 years. A tax warehouse can include an excise warehouse and a premises for which an APPA is held. If matured for a longer period, verify that the records show the whiskey has completed maturation in a tax warehouse, or in a premises approved by HMRC for GI purposes. | | |
| 4.1.4 | Irish whiskey must be matured in wooden casks not exceeding 700 litres in capacity. | Verify from the producer's systems and records, including purchase records, that the whiskey is matured: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> only in wooden casks of a capacity not exceeding 700 litres all casks used are inspected and measured to ensure compliance with these standards and the results of these checks are recorded and supervised | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|-------|--|---|----------|------|
| 4.1.5 | Maturation must take place on the Island of Ireland. | Verify from the producers systems and records that the new-made spirit is decanted fully into proper casks and is stored at a location in Ireland. | | |
| 4.1.6 | Maturation is for a minimum of 3 years. | Verify that the producer's systems and controls ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurate logging of the whiskey in cask • effective tracking of the age of all spirits in cask • once the spirit is in cask, the ageing process is not disturbed • nothing can be added to the spirit in cask • younger spirit is not used to top up the cask | | |
| 4.1.7 | Irish whiskey may not be exported in wooden casks. | Verify from the producers systems and records that all Irish whiskey intended for export is transferred from cask into inert containers prior to removal from the tax warehouse for export. A tax warehouse can include an excise warehouse and a premises for which an APPA is held. | | |

Stage 5 Blending, bottling and labelling

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|--|---|----------|------|
| 5.1 | Blending | | | |
| 5.1.1 | <p>Blended Irish whiskey must be made from a combination of 2 or more Irish Whiskey types from among the following:</p> <p>(i) Pot Still Irish whiskey</p> <p>(ii) Malt Irish whiskey</p> <p>(iii) Grain Irish whiskey</p> <p>(iv) Irish whiskey</p> | <p>Check that the systems and controls in place for blending provide assurance that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> only GI verified Irish whiskey types are used to produce Blended Irish whiskey at least 2 different types are used <p>Verify that the producer's blending systems, procedures and records ensure that the source, age and type of all whiskey used in each blending operation is recorded and fully traceable as GI verified whiskey.</p> | | |
| 5.1.2 | Nothing may be added during blending other than water and caramel colouring E150A. | Check that procedures and controls are in place to ensure that only water and caramel colouring E150A are added to the whiskey in the blending process. Verify that the producer's systems and records show that no other substances are used during blending. | | |
| 5.1.3 | Irish whiskey has a minimum alcoholic strength by volume of 40%. | <p>Check that the blending systems and controls ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the blended final product for bottling has a minimum alcoholic strength by volume of 40% that regular testing of the product's alcoholic strength by volume is carried out and accurately recorded | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|--|--|----------|------|
| 5.2 | Bottling | | | |
| 5.2.1 | Whiskey received for bottling as Irish whiskey has been produced in accordance with the Product Specification for Irish whiskey. | Check that there are adequate systems and procedures in place to provide assurance that the spirit received for bottling as Irish whiskey is produced under GI verified processes. | | |
| 5.2.2 | Chill filtration prior to bottling may only be used to remove haze floc. It may not be used to remove colour, flavour or aroma. | If chill filtration is employed, check that systems and controls are in place to ensure the process is used solely to remove haze floc. | | |
| 5.2.3 | Caramel Colouring E150A may be added prior to bottling as a colouring. It may not be used to flavour or sweeten. | Check the records to verify that the bottling systems and controls ensure that the addition of the colouring agent complies with the declared production standards and in particular that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> only caramel colouring E150A is used it is added to the whiskey prior to bottling it is not used in amounts that would flavour or sweeten the whiskey | | |
| 5.2.4 | Irish whiskey has a minimum alcoholic strength by volume of 40%. | Check that procedures and systems are in place to ensure accurate testing and recording of the alcoholic strength by volume of each batch before bottling and verify, from a sample of records, that the minimum alcoholic strength of the bottled product is 40% by volume. | | |
| 5.2.5 | Bottling must take place in an authorised tax warehouse or, in the case of duty-paid product, at a premises approved by HMRC for verification purposes under the GI Verification Scheme for Irish whiskey. | Verify that the warehouse/other premises used for bottling is appropriately authorised or approved by HMRC. A tax warehouse can include an excise warehouse and a premises for which an APPA is held. | | |
| 5.2.6 | Where Irish whiskey is removed for bottling from a tax warehouse, it must be shipped in inert bulk containers. It may not be shipped in casks. | Verify that the systems and procedures for whiskey removed for bottling from the tax warehouse ensure that it is decanted from casks into inert containers prior to movement from the warehouse. | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|---|---|----------|------|
| 5.3 | Labelling | | | |
| 5.3.1 | The label on any bottle of GI verified Irish whiskey should accurately describe the contents. | <p>Check that the producer's systems and controls are adequate to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the information displayed on the label corresponds to the contents of the bottle the label content and design complies with the sample label declared in advance by the producer for verification purposes the information on the label and the supporting records enable the accurate identification of the source, type and age of any specific batch of product | | |
| 5.3.2 | The year of distillation may be referenced on the label only if the year of bottling and the maturation period or the age of the whiskey is also stated. | Check a sample of labels and if the year of distillation is referenced, confirm that the year of bottling and/or the age of the whiskey is stated also on the label. | | |
| 5.3.3 | The term 'single' may be applied to Irish whiskey only if it is a Pot Still, a Malt or a Grain Irish whiskey and all the whiskey in the product was distilled totally on the site of a single distillery and comes from one of these 3 varieties. | <p>Verify that records can demonstrate that any bottle of Irish whiskey labelled 'single'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> was mashed, fermented and distilled on the site of a single distillery contains only Pot Still Irish whiskey, or Malt Irish whiskey, or Grain Irish whiskey does not contain Blended Irish whiskey | | |
| 5.3.4 | Irish whiskeys must bear the sales denomination 'Irish Whiskey' or 'Uisce Beatha Eireannach' or 'Irish Whisky'. | Check a sample of bottled whiskey to ensure that a valid sales denomination is used on the label. | | |
| 5.3.5 | The label may also include the additional sales denomination on the label pot still, malt, grain or blended if the production/method specified in the Product Specification are met. | Verify that records can demonstrate that any bottle of Irish whiskey labelled pot still, malt, grain or blended is consistent with the definitions and production methods specified in the Product Specification. | | |

Annex B: Irish cream liqueur – Spirit Drinks Verification Scheme checks

General

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|-------|--|--|----------|------|
| 1 | All alcoholic product producers must have an APPA allowing compounding and rectifying of alcoholic products. | Check HMRC records to ensure the producer has an APPA approving them to produce spirit and hold spirit in duty suspension on their approved premises. Check all details of the approval including the type of alcoholic product and the premises that the approval is held for. Ensure compliance with any conditions on the approval. | | |
| 1.1 | All premises must follow process as set out in the Product Specification. | Check process against the Product Specification. | | |
| 1.1.2 | All Irish cream liqueur producers must be located in Ireland. | Check the address and location of the premises. | | |
| 1.2 | For premises that produce other products/store or bottle other products in addition to Irish cream. It is essential that there are strict controls in place to ensure that there is no crossover between practices acceptable for other products made on the premises but which are not permitted for Irish cream. | Check Standard Operating Procedures and carry out physical inspection to check there is no possibility that Irish Cream can be subject to any other practices or adulteration. Check what controls are in place when producing other products of a similar nature to ensure that products cannot be mixed. | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|-------|--|--|----------|------|
| 1.3 | Irish whiskey and dairy cream of Irish origin (as ingredients) must be stored in a secure fashion to ensure no possible mixing of Irish whiskeys and non-Irish whiskeys or other alcohols. | Check provenance of all whiskeys and if any non-Irish whiskey is present check SOPs and audit controls in place to ensure that there is no possibility of mixing Irish whiskey and other whiskeys of non-Irish origin. | | |
| 1.3.1 | There must be no mixing of Irish Cream and dairy cream of other origin. | <p>If dairy cream of origin other than Ireland is present check Standard Operating Procedures, process flow diagrams and audit controls to ensure that there is no possibility of Irish dairy creams being mixed with non-Irish dairy cream.</p> <p>Physically inspect the production process and ensure there are no connections in the pipe work which would permit mixing with non-Irish ingredients or blending with other non-compliant products.</p> | | |

Production Specification

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|---|--|----------|------|
| 2 | Production Specification | <p>Verify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that recipe has been followed • there is recipe knowledge by staff • staff training records are kept • records are kept of ingredients | | |
| 2.1 | Methods used | | | |
| 2.1 | Note that only one production method can be used. | <p>Check records and processes to verify method used.</p> <p>Check to ensure written procedures are in place.</p> | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|-------|---|---|----------|------|
| 2.1.1 | Method 1 – Single stage | | | |
| | <p>Initial spirit premix – preparation includes the combining of alcohol, carbohydrates, water and other flavourings and colourings.</p> <p>Second premix – sometimes termed a ‘protein premix’, is prepared by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dissolving citric acid (or its salt) and dairy protein and/or other natural proteins, in water. Further emulsifiers may be added to better reinforce the dairy emulsifier. Mixing this thoroughly with Irish dairy cream. <p>The product mixture is finally prepared by mixing the initial spirit premix with the second/protein premix.</p> <p>The complete product mixture is homogenised so that the average particle size of the cream globule is reduced to less than 5 microns, preferably less than 2 microns.</p> | <p>Verify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> records kept of methods used staff training is in place equipment is in good working order | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|--------------|---|--|----------|------|
| 2.1.2 | Method 2 – 2 stage process | | | |
| | <p>i) A protein premix, is prepared by:</p> <p>a) Dissolving citric acid (or its salt) and dairy protein, and/or other natural proteins, in water. Further emulsifiers may be added to better reinforce the dairy emulsifier.</p> <p>b) Mixing this thoroughly with Irish dairy cream.</p> <p>ii) The mixture is homogenised so that the average particle size of the cream globule is reduced to less than 5 microns, preferably less than 2 microns.</p> <p>iii) The spirit premix is prepared and includes the combining of alcohol, carbohydrates, water, and also flavourings and colourings.</p> <p>iv) The spirit premix is subsequently added to the homogenised mixture outlined in point ii) above.</p> | <p>Verify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> records kept of methods used staff training is in place equipment is in good working order | | |
| 2.1.3 | Innovative practices | | | |
| | <p>Only operations consistent with the Product Specification should take place during production of Irish cream liqueur.</p> | <p>In the event of any departures from normal industry practice as set out in the Product Specification or the process does not conform to the Product Specification, ensure that a written report is sent immediately to Trading Standards.</p> <p>No produce from this batch shall be released until a reply has been received from Trading Standards.</p> | | |

Ingredients

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|---|--|----------|------|
| 3.1 | Dairy content | | | |
| | <p>A minimum of 10% milk fat when measured on a weight/volume basis in the final product:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the milk fat content in Irish cream liqueur shall consist of fresh Irish dairy cream produced on the island of Ireland obtained directly and exclusively from Irish milk obtained from the island of Ireland the milk fat content in Irish cream liqueur shall consist of fresh Irish dairy cream produced on the island of Ireland obtained directly and exclusively from Irish milk obtained from the island of Ireland and as defined in Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council it shall be pasteurised but shall not be sterilised, UHT treated or frozen | <p>Check records to see system in place for checking and recording dairy fat.</p> <p>Check results of product tested as necessary.</p> <p>Take official sample to verify the percentage (%) fat (sampling must be done on the occasion of the 1st verification visit thereafter it will be at the discretion of the dairy inspector).</p> <p>Check origin for dairy cream. Verify at establishment of the supplier that it was obtained exclusively from milk produced on the island of Ireland.</p> | | |
| 3.2 | Alcohol content | | | |
| | <p>The minimum alcoholic strength of Irish cream liqueur is 15% v/v which is obtained by the use of ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin or from distillates of agricultural origin. A portion of the final alcohol content will arise by reason of the presence of Irish whiskey and additionally any alcohol of agricultural origin present in the flavours used in the production of Irish cream liqueur.</p> | <p>Check purchase of ethyl alcohol to ensure it's of agriculture origin. Verify by documentary checks and/or at the establishment of the supplier if necessary.</p> <p>Check records to see system in place for checking and recording sampling.</p> <p>Records of Sample test results. Sampling as necessary.</p> | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|--|---|----------|------|
| 3.3 | Irish Whiskey content | | | |
| | Irish cream liqueur shall contain Irish Whiskey, that is 1% of the minimum 15% ethyl alcohol content must be Irish Whiskey. Such whiskey must comply with the requirements specified in the Irish Whiskey Act, 1980 and any subsequent amendments. | Check receipts for Irish whiskey. | | |
| 3.4 | Sweetening/sugar use | | | |
| | Irish cream liqueur has a minimum sugar content, expressed as invert sugar, of 100 grams per litre. This sugar can be in the form of any one or any combination of more than one sweetener as permitted in Annex I of Regulation 787/2019. | Show: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • records demonstrating system in place • records of sampling system in place • records of sample test results – sampling as necessary | | |
| 3.5 | Other ingredients | | | |
| | The flavours, emulsifiers, stabilisers, chelating agents and colours contained in the product shall be those permitted for use in food or alcoholic beverages by Regulation 1334/2008 (as amended) on flavourings and certain food ingredients with flavouring properties for use in and on foods. | Check against Regulation 1334/2008 (as amended). | | |
| 4.1 | Labelling | | | |
| | The label of any bottle of GI verified Irish cream must accurately describe the contents. | Check systems and controls to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information displayed corresponds with bottle contents • the label content and design complies with sample label declared | | |

Annex C: Irish poteen – Spirit Drinks Verification Scheme checks

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|---|---|---|----------|------|
| 1 | The distillery must be licenced in the State. Additionally, all alcoholic products producers must have an APPA (Alcoholic Products Producer Approval) to produce spirits on approved premises issued by HMRC. | Verify that the distillery holds the appropriate licence in the State. Additionally, check HMRC records to ensure the producer has an APPA approving them to produce spirit and hold spirit in duty suspension on their approved premises. Check all details of the approval including the type of alcoholic product and the premises that the approval is held for. Ensure compliance with any conditions on the approval. | | |
| 2 | The production of Irish poteen must take place in 4 stages, brewing, fermentation, distillation and bottling. | Verify that the distillery's systems and procedures and its plant, equipment and production processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are fully documented in a form readily accessible for each stage of production are designed to ensure the end product adheres to the GI standard for Irish poteen provide an accessible and complete record of inputs, outputs, processes and transactions relating to the stages of production of Irish poteen carried out in that distillery | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|---|--|--|----------|------|
| 3 | The distillery's systems and procedures must support adherence to the requirements of the Product Specification for Irish poteen and must provide a complete record of each stage of production. | <p>If spirit products other than Irish poteen are produced or handled in the distillery, verify that there are sufficient controls in place to ensure that the production of other spirit drinks do not compromise compliance with or verification of the GI standard for Irish poteen.</p> <p>Verify that the distillery's systems and procedures are sufficient at all times to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurate identification of GI and non-GI spirit production processes, materials and outputs • complete separation of production and bottling processes for GI and non-GI products • the distillery operates an effective system of control to ensure that non-GI alcohol products produced in the distillery cannot be bottled or marketed as Irish poteen | | |

Stage 1 Brewing

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|-----|---|--|----------|------|
| 1.1 | The mash must contain ingredients that comply with the guidelines on the Product Specification for Irish poteen provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). | Verify that the distillery's brewing procedures and the records of each brewing operation show that the ingredients used in the production of the mash comply with the Product Specification. | | |
| 1.2 | A minimum of 50% of ingredients used in the mash must be sourced in Ireland. | Verify that the distillery's documented brewing procedures show a minimum of 50% of ingredients used in the production of Irish poteen are grown in Ireland. Verify that the distillery's records for each batch show the geographical source of all ingredients for each batch brewed and verify that 50% of the ingredients for each batch are grown in Ireland. | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|-----|---|---|----------|------|
| 1.3 | If the finished poteen product is to be stored in wooden casks for up to 10 weeks, then the mash ingredients must include at least 2 of the ingredients specified in the Product Specification, one of which must be a non-cereal ingredient. | Verify from the distillery's documented procedures and records that the batches of product intended to be stored in wooden casks are separately identifiable and verify in a sample of cases that the ingredients used from the batches comply with the standard. | | |
| 1.4 | <p>The brewing process for mash using cereals, potatoes and sugar beet molasses must include the following processes as appropriate:</p> <p>1.4.1 Cereals: Cereals are milled and mixed with water to form a mash. This mash is put through a brewing programme to extract and convert the cereal starch into fermentable sugars.</p> <p>1.4.2 Potatoes: Unpeeled, whole or chopped potatoes are cooked initially to gelatinise the potato starch. Water is then added to form a mash and cooled to approximately 66°C. Milled, malted barley may be added at this stage and the mash is allowed to liquefy and saccharify where the potato starch is converted into fermentable sugars.</p> <p>1.4.3 Sugar beet molasses: the varying amount of fermentable sugar in sugar beet molasses may be adjusted at the brewing stage by the addition of water.</p> | Verify from documents, procedures and distillery records that where a distillery is using cereals, potatoes and sugar beet molasses as mash ingredients, the appropriate brewing processes are followed as set out in the Product Specification. | | |
| 1.5 | Saccharification of the mash must take place by the action of enzymes contained in malted barley or other natural enzymes. | Verify that the distiller maintains a list of all enzymes used in the production of Irish poteen and declared by the distiller as natural enzymes. Verify from a sample of purchase invoices and from a sample of brewing records that the enzymes from this list are used in the production of Irish poteen. | | |

Stage 2 Fermentation

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|-----|---|---|----------|------|
| 2.1 | Fermentation is by the action of yeast and natural enzymes only to produce a liquid known as 'wash'. | Check that the distillery's production procedures and the records of material used verify that fermentation is by the action of yeast and natural enzymes only. | | |
| 2.2 | Mash, produced from brewing, can be fermented as a clear liquid (wort) after the removal of spent grain solids or as a 'solids-in' liquid. For the clear liquid fermentation, the mash must be filtered in a lauter tun or mash filter to remove the solids. | Check that the distillery's production procedures and records show that where a clear liquid is fermented a lauter tun or mash filter is used to remove spent grain solids. | | |

Stage 3 Distillation

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|-------|---|---|----------|------|
| 3.1 | Distillation | | | |
| 3.1.1 | The fermented wash must be distilled to an alcoholic strength not exceeding 94.7% by volume. Product that has continually been in production since 1997 may be distilled to a strength above 94.7%. | Check the distillery's records to verify that, on completion of distillation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the alcoholic strength and volume of each batch of Irish poteen is measured accurately and the results are recorded, and the records show that all batches are of an alcoholic strength not exceeding 94.7% by volume if alcoholic strength is found to exceed 94.7%, verify that the product has continually been in production since 1997 and has been distilled at that strength since then | | |
| 3.1.2 | Irish poteen must be distilled in a pot still, column still or hybrid still. | Verify that the Irish poteen is distilled in a pot still, column still or hybrid still that complies with Product Specification. | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|---|---|----------|------|
| 3.1.3 | In order to maintain the character of the distillate no subsequent treatments, such as activated charcoal filtration are permitted. | Verify that documented procedures show that no additional treatment/processes take place after distillation other than flavouring. Check a sample of records of distillation processes to verify that actual distillation procedures comply with the documented procedures. | | |
| 3.1.4 | The maximum methanol content per hectolitre of 100% volume alcohol is 30 grams. | Check that the distiller accurately measures and records methanol levels in the distillate. Check a sample of these records to verify that the methanol levels are below the maximum allowance. | | |
| 3.2 | Flavourings | | | |
| 3.2.1 | Macerations/Infusions such as fruits, spices, berries, herbs, and other naturally occurring, indigenous, Irish plant materials can be added. | Check from distillery's documentation the systems and controls that only naturally occurring, indigenous, Irish plant materials are used in maceration/infusion processes. Check a sample of purchase records to verify that the actual materials used for flavouring comply with the documented flavourings. | | |
| 3.3 | Storage and export | | | |
| 3.3.1 | Irish poteen may be stored in wooden casks for a period not exceeding ten weeks if it is produced using at least 2 of the required ingredients at the brewing stage (as set out in the guidelines provided by the Product Specification, at least one of which is a non-cereal. | Check that procedures and records can show that any product stored in casks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can be identified at each stage of production • is produced using the appropriate ingredients, including at least one non-cereal ingredient • has not been stored for more than 10 weeks | | |
| 3.3.2 | Irish poteen may not be exported in wooden casks or wooden containers. | Verify from the producers documented systems and records that all Irish poteen intended for export, including poteen stored in wooden casks, is transferred into inert containers prior to removal from the GI premises. | | |

Stage 4 Bottling and labelling

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|--|--|----------|------|
| 4.1 | Bottling | | | |
| 4.1.1 | Spirits received for bottling as Irish Poteen must be produced in accordance with the Product Specification for Irish poteen. | Check that there are adequate systems and procedures in place to provide assurance that the spirit received for bottling as Irish poteen is produced under GI verified processes. | | |
| 4.1.2 | Bottling must take place in an authorised tax warehouse or, in the case of duty-paid product, at a premises verified for bottling under the GI Scheme. | Ensure that the bottling premises is appropriately authorised by HMRC as an approved facility under the GI verification. A tax warehouse can include an excise warehouse and a premises for which an APPA is held. | | |
| 4.1.3 | Bottled Irish poteen has a minimum alcoholic strength by volume of 40%. | Check that procedures and systems are in place to record the alcoholic strength by volume of each batch before bottling and verify, from a sample of records, that the minimum alcoholic strength of the bottled product is 40% by volume. | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|------------|--|--|----------|------|
| 4.2 | Labelling | | | |
| 4.2.1 | The label on any bottle of GI verified Irish Poteen should accurately describe the contents. | <p>Check that the producer's systems and controls are adequate to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the information displayed on the label corresponds to the contents of the bottle the label content and design complies with the sample label the information on the label and the supporting records enable the accurate identification of the source and type of any specific batch of product | | |
| 4.2.2 | <p>The label must bear the sales denomination 'Irish Poitín' or 'Irish Poteen'.</p> <p>The sales denomination must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be printed on the front of the bottle or packaging used for display purposes during marketing be prominent and in a conspicuous place as to be easily visible and legible to the naked eye and indelible so that it is clear that it is the sales description of the spirit be printed so that every word making up the name of the category is given equal prominence be as prominent as any other description of the spirit on the container or packaging <p>The sales denomination must not be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> overlaid or interrupted by other written or pictorial matter used in conjunction with other words <p>The phonetic spelling 'Potcheen' may be used as long as it is in addition to the sales denomination.</p> | <p>Check a sample of labels to ensure that a valid sales denomination is used on the label.</p> | | |

| | Requirement | Verification check | Comments | Pass |
|-------|---|---|----------|------|
| 4.2.3 | Irish poteen products that have flavourings derived from a maceration or infusion process must bear an additional line stating the ingredients used “Made from an infusion of...” | Verify that the producer’s systems and records are adequate to provide assurance that, where the flavouring is derived from a maceration or infusion process, the relevant appropriate information is stated on the label. Check a sample of labels to verify this. | | |
| 4.2.4 | Flavoured Irish poteen must be labelled as ‘Flavoured Irish Poteen/Poitín’ and may reference the flavouring used “Flavoured with...” | Verify that the producer’s systems and records are adequate to provide assurance that, where a flavouring ingredient is added, the relevant appropriate information stated on the label. Check a sample of labels to verify this. | | |
| 4.2.5 | <p>Irish poteen stored for a period not exceeding 10 weeks after production must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • indicate on the rear label as “Stored/held in wood for...weeks” • the labelling may not make reference to casks, maturation or aging on the label, presentation, marketing or packaging material. <p>Irish Poteen stored in wood must include the list of raw materials on the label</p> | Verify that the producer’s systems and records are adequate to provide assurance that, where the product is stored in casks, the relevant appropriate information is stated on the label. Check a sample of labels to verify this. | | |
| 4.2.6 | Irish poteen which has an abv of over 70% requires additional information on labels to advise consumers of the strength of the product. | Verify that the producer’s systems and records are adequate to provide assurance that, where the product has an abv of over 70%, the alcoholic strength and additional information is stated on the label. Check a sample of labels to verify that the correct strength is stated on the label. | | |