



The Global Food Safety Initiative
GFSI GUIDANCE DOCUMENT



Sixth Edition
Version 6.1

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This document has been written with input from our stakeholders, including retailers, food manufacturers, food service providers, accreditation bodies, certification bodies and other service providers. GFSI would like to thank all those who have helped with the continuous improvement of this document.

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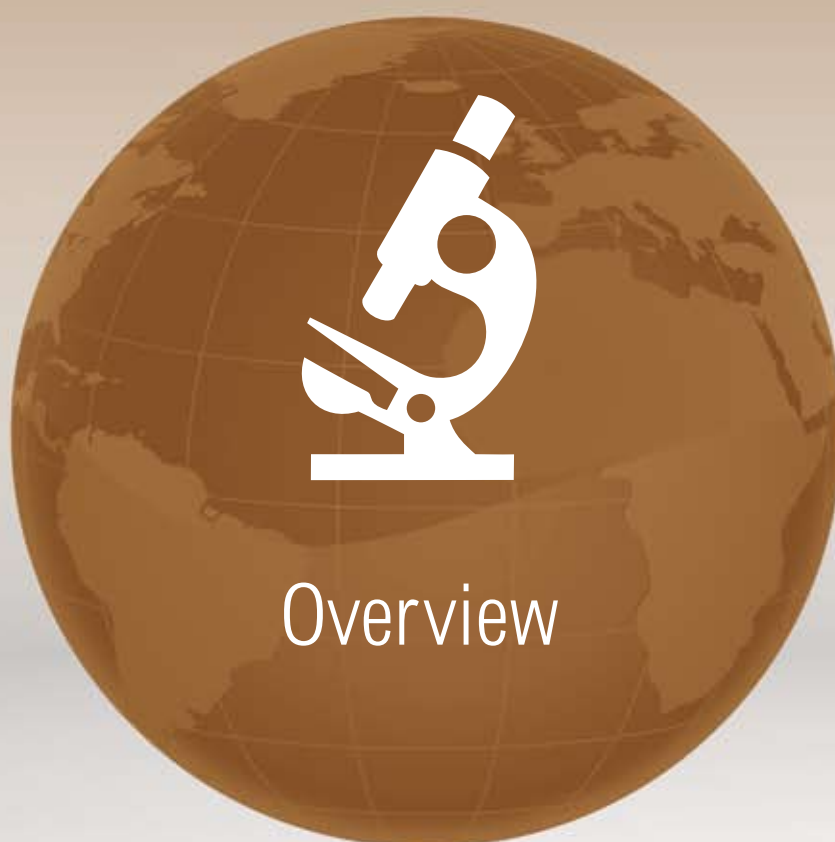
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OVERVIEW

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Foreword

Global Food Safety Initiative

The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) is a non-profit making foundation, created under and governed by Belgian law. The daily management of GFSI is undertaken by The Consumer Goods Forum. The Consumer Goods Forum has endeavoured to ensure that the information in this publication is accurate and The Consumer Goods Forum shall not be held liable for any damages (including, without limitation, damages for loss of business or loss of profits) arising in contract or otherwise from this publication or any information contained in it, or from any action or decision taken as a result of reading this publication or any such information. The fundamental principles underpinning this Guidance Document have resulted from the continuous review of the requirements of food retailers, food suppliers and food service providers. However, this document does not replace the requirement for food businesses to understand and meet the requirements of local and market food safety legislation. This document will be reviewed on a regular basis and revised where considered appropriate.

Introduction - The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI)

The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) is managed by The Consumer Goods Forum and was launched in May 2000. The GFSI Foundation Board of Directors is drawn from major global retailers, manufacturers and food service operators and, together, this group provides the strategic direction for and oversees the daily management of GFSI. Membership of the Board is by invitation only.

The GFSI Vision is “driving continuous improvement in food safety to strengthen consumer confidence worldwide”.

The GFSI Mission is to provide continuous improvement in food safety management systems to ensure confidence in the delivery of safe food to consumers worldwide.

The GFSI Objectives are to:

- ▶ Reduce food safety risks by delivering equivalence and convergence between effective food safety management systems, as outlined in this Guidance Document,
- ▶ Manage cost in the global food system by eliminating redundancy and improving operational efficiency,
- ▶ Develop competencies and capacity building in food safety to create consistent and effective global food systems,
- ▶ Provide a unique international stakeholder platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange and networking.

The GFSI Foundation Board also provides governance to the Technical Working Groups, an international multi-stakeholder group of over 90 food safety experts. The Technical Working Groups are mandated with specific tasks, approved by the GFSI Foundation Board, in order to fulfil the GFSI Mission. The Technical Working Groups are open to all stakeholders by invitation only, subject to approval by the GFSI Board.

The Guidance Document is a tool which fulfils one of the main objectives of GFSI, that of determining equivalency between food safety management systems. GFSI is responsible for the production and maintenance of the Document, which is readily available on the GFSI website (www.mygfsi.com). The Guidance Document has undergone consultation with stakeholders and has been approved by the GFSI Board.

After publication the GFSI Guidance Document remains subject to review and revision by the GFSI Technical Working Groups and there are sections of the document which shall be further developed by specific Technical Working Groups on an ongoing basis. Stakeholders are invited to submit comments and proposals for changes, which will in turn be presented to the Technical Working Groups, who will recommend revisions accordingly. A full review of the GFSI Guidance Document will be undertaken at least every 4 years, although addenda may be added at any time with the approval of the GFSI Board.

Through this process of continuous improvement, GFSI provides a recognition process, which can be used by food industry stakeholders. However, it is at the discretion of individual food businesses as to which GFSI benchmarked scheme(s) they choose to apply; the decision shall be dependent on company policy, customer requirements, general regulatory requirements, due diligence obligations and product liability.

Scope

The GFSI Guidance Document specifies the process by which food safety schemes may gain recognition (*GFSI Guidance Document, Part I – The Benchmarking Process*) and gives guidance to schemes seeking compliance. It also specifies the requirements to be put in place for a food safety scheme seeking recognition by GFSI (*GFSI Guidance Document, Part II – Requirements for the Management of Schemes*) and the key elements for production of safe food or feed, or for service provision in relation to food safety (*GFSI Guidance Document, Part III – Scheme Scope and Key Elements*).

The key elements have been developed by members of the GFSI Technical Working Groups and other experts, who have advised upon sector specific requirements. These key elements can be directly related to the food safety principles laid down by Codex Alimentarius Standards and Guidance, as well as Codes of Practice, where appropriate.

The GFSI Guidance Document, therefore, is not in itself a food safety standard and GFSI is not involved in certification or accreditation activities.

Food safety schemes can apply for recognition against scope(s), which are clearly defined sectors of the food supply chain and are specified in *Part II, Annex 1 – GFSI Scope of Recognition*. The key elements for these sectors are specified in *Part III – Scheme Scope and Key Elements* of the GFSI Guidance Document.

A scheme's standard, auditor competence requirements, certificate audit programme and management system shall be assessed against these requirements by the GFSI Benchmark Committee to verify compliance and, if successful, the scheme shall achieve formal recognition by GFSI.

The requirements within this document shall be reviewed, maintained and updated by GFSI to ensure currency, consistency and integrity.

Section Overview

Part I – The Benchmarking Process

This section has been developed and published by GFSI to specify the requirements for the benchmarking of food safety schemes.

The objectives of Part I are to define:

- ▶ the requirements for the key steps in the GFSI benchmarking process,
- ▶ the requirements for selection of GFSI Benchmark Committee members,
- ▶ the systems and procedures relating to the GFSI benchmarking process.

GFSI shall ensure that the process of benchmarking and associated procedures is transparent and open to stakeholder scrutiny. The systems and procedures associated with the GFSI benchmarking process will be reviewed, maintained and updated to ensure consistency and integrity.

Part II – Requirements for the Management of Schemes

This section has been developed and published by GFSI to specify the requirements for the management and control of food safety schemes.

The objectives of this section are to define:

- ▶ the requirements for eligibility of a food safety scheme to be considered for benchmarking by GFSI,
- ▶ the requirements for food safety scheme ownership and management,
- ▶ the requirements for food safety scheme support systems,
- ▶ the requirements for continuing recognition by GFSI, if recognition status is granted,
- ▶ the requirements for the competence of auditors working for Certification Bodies that have achieved, or are seeking, accreditation for a food safety scheme in relation to one or more GFSI scopes of recognition.

Part III – Scheme Scope and Key Elements

This section has been developed and published by GFSI to specify the scope requirements for the recognition of food safety schemes.

The objectives of this section are to define:

- ▶ the requirements for the food safety system to be present in the scheme's standard for each GFSI scope of recognition,
- ▶ the requirements for the Good Practice requirements to be present in the scheme's standard for each GFSI scope of recognition,
- ▶ the requirements for HACCP or HACCP-based requirements to be present in the scheme's standard for each GFSI scope of recognition.

GFSI has worked closely with food industry experts to clearly define the requirements that shall be put in place to provide food safety assurance in specific sectors of the food industry and food businesses providing products and services to the food industry. These requirements will differ from sector to sector of the food supply chain.

Normative References

The following are referenced documents used in determining the application of the GFSI Guidance Document:

- ▶ **ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996** General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems
- ▶ **ISO/IEC 17021:2006** Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- ▶ **ISO/IEC 17000:2004** Conformity assessment - Vocabulary and general principles
- ▶ **ISO 9001:2008** Quality management systems - Requirements
- ▶ **ISO/IEC 17011:2004** Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
- ▶ **ISO 22000:2005** Food safety management systems - Requirements for any organization in the food chain
- ▶ **ISO /TS 22003:2007** Food safety management systems - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of food safety management systems
- ▶ **ISO 9000:2005** Quality management systems - Fundamentals and vocabulary
- ▶ **Codex Alimentarius Commission** Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene CAC/RCP1-1969, Rev. 4 -2003
- ▶ **National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods** Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Principles and Application Guidelines, August 1997.