



GFSI BENCHMARKING REQUIREMENTS
GFSI GUIDANCE DOCUMENT VERSION 7.2

PROCESS MANUAL FOR THE GFSI BENCHMARKING PROCESS v7.2

Part IV - Glossary of Terms

Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions shall apply:

Process manual for the GFSI benchmarking process V7.2

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this document:

The purpose of this document is to give a comprehensive overview of the steps that certification programme owners must take to go through the latest version of the GFSI Benchmarking process. It will contribute to the goal of the GFSI Benchmarking process to ensure continuous improvement and harmonisation of food safety management systems in all sectors of the food supply chain.

The benchmarking requirements and methodology have recently been reviewed and adapted. The main changes to the process as compared to the previous benchmarking process are:

- Self-assessment as the first step
- Office visit during the benchmarking
- GFSI integrity programme

Benchmarking Options

The latest version of the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements are the basis for all GFSI benchmarking of food safety certification programmes which have:

- not previously undergone benchmarking by GFSI.
- been assessed previously, but have withdrawn the application without completing the benchmarking process.
- been previously recognised by GFSI, but have had their recognition withdrawn.
- have successfully undergone benchmarking against a previous version of the benchmarking requirements. All existing GFSI-recognised certification

programmes have to apply for re-benchmarking for all their scopes of recognition against the latest version of the GFSI benchmarking requirements within 9 months of their date of publication. The GFSI Board has the authority to extend this period under special circumstances.

- certification programme owners who have been subject to suspension by GFSI or have temporarily or voluntarily agreed on withdrawal with the GFSI Executive Director for a period of less than 1 year.
- have successfully undergone benchmarking and seeking to apply for a new GFSI scope of recognition or seeking an extension for a new standard (scope of accreditation) within the GFSI scope of recognition, for which they are currently recognised

You can find more details on the latest version of the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements at

Who is involved in the GFSI Benchmarking Process?

GFSI Technical Manager

The GFSI Technical Manager is responsible for safe guarding the complete benchmarking process as described in this process manual. The Technical Manager will appoint and supervise the Benchmark Leader who will perform the benchmarking assessment.

Benchmark Leader

The Benchmark Leader is your primary contact and will perform the review of your self-assessment by

checking and validating your input against each GFSI requirement. The Benchmark Leader has been selected by the GFSI Board on the basis of a proven track record in food safety and auditing. All Benchmark Leaders will undergo the same initial training and annual calibration activities to maintain alignment of the evaluation approaches adopted by the various Benchmark Leaders..

GFSI Board

The GFSI Board will make a final decision on GFSI recognition of your certification programme, based on the recommendation of the Benchmark Leader and the GFSI Technical Manager.

How much time do I have to complete the Benchmark process?

The time to complete the benchmarking process is a maximum of 1 year from the moment the application is accepted. The GFSI Board has the authority to extend this this time.

The Benchmarking Overview

STEP 0 APPLICATION

STEP 1 SELF-ASSESSMENT

STEP 2 PRELIMINARY DESK REVIEW

STEP 3 CALL TO GO THROUGH FINDINGS

STEP 4 UPDATES AND FINAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

STEP 5 OFFICE VISIT

STEP 6 PUBLIC STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

STEP 7 GFSI BOARD FINAL DECISION AND COMMUNICATION

STEP 8 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT BASED ON GFSI INTEGRITY

PROGRAMME

THE KEY STEPS

The Benchmarking steps explained:

STEP	DESCRIPTION	DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS/FOLLOW-UP
0. Application	Certification programme owner downloads an application form	http://www.mygfsi.com/certification/benchmarking/gfsi-guidance-document/
	Certification programme owner completes application form, signs certification programme owner Agreement, and submits these documents to GFSI with a non-refundable payment of 1,000 Euro	Define the scope of the benchmarking you apply for: GFSI Part II (mandatory). At least one GFSI scope of recognition (Part III).
	GFSI Technical Manager reviews application	If the application is complete, meets the requirements and is eligible for benchmarking, GFSI returns the signed certification programme owner Agreement. At this stage, the GFSI Technical Manager appoints a benchmark leader.
1. Self-assessment	GFSI will send a Self-Assessment form for the scopes for the benchmarking along with a work plan	The GFSI technical manager and the Benchmark leader set up a work plan based on the number of scopes included in the application, the amount of time needed to perform the benchmarking assessment, and estimate the cost involved. This work plan is sent to the applicant within 3 weeks of receipt of the application.
	Certification programme owner fills in the Self-Assessment and submits it to the Benchmark Leader within the time-frame set in the work plan (see Annex 1).	For each scope, the certification programme owner evaluates their certification programme against the GFSI benchmarking requirements. For each requirement, the following should be included: 1. Whether the GFSI requirement is covered in the certification programme 2. The name of certification programme's document covering the requirement with reference to the exact page and the clause. 3. The relevant documents as objective evidence

<p>2. Preliminary Desk Review</p>	<p>Benchmark Leader performs Preliminary Desk Review of the certification programme's application</p> <p>Benchmark Leader summarizes findings</p>	<p>For each GFSI criterion, the Benchmark Leader will review the corresponding requirements in the certification programme owner's standard and check the reference given by the certification programme owner on where it is covered evidence provided by the certification programme owner and if it satisfies the benchmarking requirement.</p> <p>Benchmark Leader summarizes findings for certification programme owner in the form of comments. Supporting explanations will be included in the Self-Assessment form that has been submitted.</p>
<p>3. Call to go through Findings</p>	<p>Call with the Benchmark Leader, GFSI Technical Manager, and certification programme owner to share detailed findings</p>	<p>During a call, the following points will be discussed: additional information needed or that needs to be adjusted. agreement on a time frame for your completion of the self-assessment.</p>
<p>4. Updates and Final Self-Assessment</p>	<p>Certification programme owner updates (where applicable) and resends the final Self-Assessment</p>	<p>Within the agreed time frame the certification programme owner will send the final version of the Self-Assessment to the Benchmark Leader, signed by the Director of the certification programme.</p>
<p>5. Office Visit</p>	<p>The Benchmark Leader and the GFSI Technical Manager plan a visit to the nominated offices of the certification programme owner (the date will be mutually agreed)</p>	<p>The Benchmark Leader will complete his/ her report on the Self-Assessment with the findings from the visit. The following points will be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have possible discrepancies or open points that came up during the review of the Self-Assessment been resolved? Is the certification programme owner's integrity programme implemented and in line with GFSI requirements? <p>All resources needed to support the requirements verification process must be available during the visit, including expert staff members, documentation, and records.</p>

6. Public Stakeholder Consultation

The final Self-Assessment and the Benchmark Leader's report is made available for stakeholder consultation on the GFSI website for a period of four weeks

The certification programme owner will be given the opportunity to approve the content of the report before it is made available in the public domain.

The certification programme owner reacts to any comments, observations and objections as made by stakeholders about the report and collected by the GFSI Technical Manager

The Benchmark Leader and GFSI Technical Manager will evaluate certification programme owner's responses and will provide advice to the GFSI Board in the form of a final summary report that is also agreed with the certification programme owner. The summary report will include certification programme information (certification programme name(s), Benchmark Committee Leader), scope of recognition, executive summary (summary of findings from Self-Assessment, an office visit and public consultation, any particular complexities).

7. GFSI Final Board Decision and Communication

The GFSI Board will take a decision on the recognition of the certification programme, based on the recommendation of the Benchmark Leader and the GFSI Technical Manager

The decision will be communicated in writing to the certification programme owner by the GFSI Technical Manager. The decision will be communicated on the GFSI website.

Communication in case of recognition

GFSI and the certification programme owner will both publish a news release. A Conformance Statement will be published on the GFSI website by the GFSI Technical Manager.

Communication in case of non-recognition

The GFSI Technical Manager will inform the certification programme owner of the reasons for the decision. The certification programme owner has the right to appeal the GFSI Board decision.

8. Assessments based on GFSI Integrity Programme The Benchmark Leader performs assessments under supervision of the GFSI Technical Manager

The GFSI Integrity Programme has three elements:

1. Random record review – two times a year
Administrative audit based on sampling exercise, findings of Benchmark Leader will be discussed during office audit (2).
2. Office Audit at certification programme owner – once a year
The focus of the office audit is on the execution and effectiveness of your integrity program towards the Certification Bodies.
Discuss any findings from record review.
3. Complaint investigation- incident driven
In the event of a serious complaint, carried out by desktop investigation or an office visit.

For further information and support: gfsibm@theconsumergoodsforum.com

Annex 1 - Benchmarking Work Plan

PROCESS STEP	RESPON- SIBILITY	DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL TIMESCALE FOR ACTIVITY	ZAGREED COMPLE- TION DATE	WORKING DOCUMENTS
Application	Certification programme owner	Certification programme owner completes application form, signs certification programme owner Agreement, and submits these documents to GFSI with a non-refundable payment of 1,000 Euro. GFSI Technical Manager reviews application.	Typically, two weeks for total process		Application form
Self-assessment	GFSI Technical Manager	GFSI will send a Self- Assessment form with the scopes for the benchmarking along with a work plan.	Within a month after receiving application form		'Self – Assessment'
Filling out the self-assessment	Certification programme owner	Certification programme owner fills out the Self-Assessment and submits to Benchmark Leader within the time frame set in this work plan.	Typically, between three to five months		'Self – Assessment'
Preliminary Desk Review	GFSI Benchmark Leader	Benchmark Leader will send findings to certification programme owner in the form of comments which will be supported by explanations.	Typically, one month		'Self – Assessment'
Call to go through Findings	GFSI Technical Manager, Benchmark Leader and certification programme owner	Call with the Benchmark Leader and the GFSI Technical Manager to go through the findings.	Depending on the finding: one to four hours		'Self – Assessment'

Updates and Final Self-Assessment	Certification programme owner	Certification programme owner updates (where applicable) and resubmits the final Self-Assessment.	To be agreed with the certification programme owner	
Office Visit	GFSI Technical Manager and Benchmark Leader	The Benchmark Leader and the GFSI Technical Manager plan a visit to the nominated offices of the certification programme owner.	One day	
Public Stakeholder Consultation	GFSI Technical Manager	The final Self- Assessment and the Benchmark Leader's report will be made available for stakeholder consultation on the GFSI website for a period of four weeks.	Four weeks	Excel file and document with feedback from Benchmark Leader
Certification programme owner Response to Any Comments	Certification programme owner	The certification programme owner will react to any comments, observations and objections made by stakeholders about the report and collected by the GFSI Technical Manager.	Varies depending on the number of comments	Excel file and document with feedback from Benchmark Leader
GFSI Final Board Decision	GFSI Technical Manager and GFSI Board	The GFSI Board will take a decision on the recognition of the certification programme, based on the recommendation of the Benchmark Leader and the GFSI Technical Manager.	Three weeks	GFSI website
Communication	GFSI Technical Manager and certification programme owner	GFSI and the certification programme owner prepare communication in case of recognition. In case of non-recognition, GFSI informs the certification programme owner.	Two weeks	GFSI website