



GFSI TECHNICAL EQUIVALENCE REQUIREMENTS
GFSI GUIDANCE DOCUMENT VERSION 7.2

PROCESS MANUAL FOR THE GFSI TECHNICAL EQUIVALENCE V7.2

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Document:

The purpose of this document is to give a comprehensive overview of the steps that applicants must follow in order to be acknowledged according to the GFSI Technical Equivalence Requirements V7.2. This GFSI technical equivalence acknowledgement enables applicants to integrate GFSI criteria into regulation / law and codes of practice. It will contribute to the goal of GFSI which is to ensure continuous improvement and harmonisation of food safety management systems globally and in all sectors of the food supply chain.

The technical equivalence is an acknowledgment of the equivalence of the content of regulation / law and codes of practice to the relevant scopes of Technical Equivalence Requirements Part III. The technical equivalence does not include an assessment against Part II of the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements (management of programme).

Applicants to technical equivalence may be a government or an agency linked to a government.

Assessment Options

The GFSI Technical Equivalence Requirements Version 7.2 are the basis for all GFSI technical equivalence applicants which have:

- not previously undergone technical equivalence by GFSI
- been assessed previously, but have withdrawn the application without completing the technical equivalence process
- been previously acknowledged by GFSI, but are now no longer acknowledged by GFSI
- been assessed against V6 and need to be assessed against a new version of the technical equivalence requirements
- extended or made significant changes to the relevant scopes of acknowledgement

You can find more details on the GFSI Technical Equivalence Requirements Version 7.2 at www.mygfsi.com.

Who is Involved in the GFSI Technical Equivalence Process?

GFSI Technical Manager

The GFSI Technical Manager is responsible for safeguarding the complete technical equivalence process as described in this process manual. The GFSI Technical Manager will appoint and supervise the Technical Equivalence Leader who will perform the technical equivalence assessment.

Technical Equivalence Leader

The Technical Equivalence Leader is the applicant's primary contact and will perform the review of the self-assessment by checking and validating the input against each GFSI requirement. The Technical Equivalence Leader has been selected by the GFSI Board based on a proven track record in food safety and auditing. All technical equivalence leaders will be trained by GFSI and there will be regular harmonisation meetings to align their judgement.

GFSI Board

The GFSI Board will make the final decision regarding the GFSI technical equivalence acknowledgement of the applicant's regulation / law and codes of practice, based on the recommendation of the Technical Equivalence Leader and the GFSI Technical Manager.

How much Time do I Have to Complete the Technical Equivalence Process?

The timeframe for the technical equivalence process is a maximum of 1 year from the moment the application is accepted.

Re-application for technical equivalence of acknowledged regulation / law and codes of practice against a new version of the GFSI technical equivalence requirements must occur within nine months from the publication of the new version. The GFSI Board has the authority to extend this period under special circumstances.

The Technical Equivalence Overview

STEP 0 APPLICATION

STEP 1 APPLICANT SELF-ASSESSMENT

STEP 2 PRELIMINARY DESK REVIEW

STEP 3 CALL TO GO THROUGH FINDINGS

STEP 4 UPDATES AND FINAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

STEP 5 PUBLIC STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

STEP 6 GFSI BOARD FINAL DECISION AND
COMMUNICATION

THE KEY STEPS

The technical equivalence steps explained:

STEP	DESCRIPTION	DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS / FOLLOW-UP
0. Application	The applicant downloads an application form.	http://www.mygfsi.com/certification/technical-equivalence.html
	The applicant completes the application form, signs an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding), and submits these documents to GFSI with a non-refundable payment of 1,000 Euro.	Define the scope of the technical equivalence you are applying for: At least one GFSI Scope of Acknowledgement
	The GFSI Technical Manager reviews the application.	If the application is complete, meets the requirements and is eligible for technical equivalence, GFSI returns the countersigned MoU. At this stage, the GFSI Technical Manager appoints a Technical Equivalence Leader.
1. Self-assessment	The GFSI Technical Manager sends a self-assessment form with the scopes for the technical equivalence along with a work plan.	The GFSI Technical Manager and the Technical Equivalence Leader set up a work plan based on the number of scopes included in the application, the amount of time needed to perform the technical equivalence assessment, and estimate the costs involved. This work plan is sent to the applicant within 3 weeks of receipt of the application.
	Applicant fills in the self-assessment and submits it to the Technical Equivalence Leader within the time frame set in the work plan (see Annex 1).	For each scope, the applicant evaluates their regulation / law and codes of practice against the GFSI Technical Equivalence Requirements (Part III). For each requirement, the following should be included: <ol style="list-style-type: none">Whether the GFSI requirement is covered in the assessed regulation / law and codes of practiceThe name of the regulation / law and codes of practice covering the requirement with reference to the page and the paragraphThe relevant regulation / law and codes of practice as objective evidence

2. Preliminary Desk Review	The Technical Equivalence Leader performs a preliminary desk review of the applicant's self-assessment.	For each GFSI requirement, the Technical Equivalence Leader will check and assess the references and the objective evidence that the applicant has provided to prove that the GFSI requirements are covered in the regulation / law and codes of practice.
	The Technical Equivalence Leader summarises findings.	The Technical Equivalence Leader summarises findings for the applicant in the form of comments. Supporting explanations will be included in the self-assessment form that has been submitted.
3. Call to go through Findings	Call with the Technical Equivalence Leader, the GFSI Technical Manager, and the applicant to go through the findings.	<p>During a conference call, the following points will be discussed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. additional information or adjustment needed 2. agreement on a time frame for the applicant's completion of the self-assessment
4. Updates and Final Self-Assessment	Applicant updates (where applicable) and resends the final self-assessment.	Within the agreed time frame the applicant will send the final version of the self-assessment to the Technical Equivalence Leader, signed by the legal representative of the applying organisation.
5. Public Stakeholder Consultation	The final self-assessment and the Technical Equivalence Leader's report are made available for stakeholder consultation on the GFSI website for a period of four weeks.	The applicant will be given the opportunity to approve the content of the report before it is made available in the public domain.
	The applicant reacts to any comments, observations and objections made by stakeholders about the report and collected by the GFSI Technical Manager.	<p>The Technical Equivalence Leader and the GFSI Technical Manager will evaluate the applicant's responses and will provide advice to the GFSI Board in the form of a final summary report that is also agreed with the applicant.</p> <p>The summary report will include information on the regulation / law and codes of practice being assessed, the scope of acknowledgement and an executive summary of the findings from self-assessment and public consultation, including any complexities.</p>

6. GFSI Board Final Decision and Communication	The GFSI Board will take a decision on the GFSI technical equivalence acknowledgement, based on the recommendation of the Technical Equivalence Leader and the GFSI Technical Manager.	The decision will be communicated in writing to the applicant by the GFSI Technical Manager. The decision will be communicated on the GFSI website.
	Communication in case of acknowledgement.	GFSI and the applicant 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-acknowledgement.	The GFSI Technical Manager will inform the applicant of the reasons for the decision. The applicant has the right to appeal the GFSI Board decision.

For further information and support:
gfsibm@theconsumergoodsforum.com

Annex 1 - Technical Equivalence Work Plan

PROCESS STEP	RESPON-SIBILITY	DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALE FOR ACTIVITY	AGREED COM-PLETION DATE	WORKING DOCU-MENTS
Appli-cation	Applicant	The applicant completes the application form, signs the MoU, and submits these documents to GFSI with a non-refundable payment of 1,000 Euro. The GFSI Technical Manager reviews the application.	Typically, two weeks for total process.		Application form
Self-as-sessment	GFSI Technical Manager	GFSI will send a self- assessment form with the scopes for the technical equivalence along with a work plan.	Within a month after receiving the application form.		Self-as-sessment
Filling out the self-as-sessment	Applicant	The applicant fills out the self-assessment and submits to the Technical Equivalence Leader within the time frame set out in this work plan.	Typically, between three to five months.		Self-as-sessment
Prelimi-nary desk review	Technical Equivalen-ce Leader	The Technical Equivalence Leader will send the findings to the applicant in the form of comments which will be supported by explanations.	Typically, one month.		Self-as-sessment
Call to go through findings	GFSI Technical Manager, Technical Equivalen-ce Leader and applicant	Call with the Technical Equivalence Leader and the GFSI Technical Manager to go through the findings.	Depending on the findings: one to four hours.		Self-as-sessment
Updates and final self- as-sessment	Applicant	The applicant updates (where applicable) and resubmits the final self-assessment	To be agreed with the applicant.		

Public stakeholder consultation	GFSI Technical Manager	The final self- assessment and the Technical Equivalence 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 the Technical Equivalence Leader
Applicant response to any comments	Applicant	The applicant will react to any comments, observations and objections made by stakeholders about the report and those collected by the GFSI Technical Manager	Varies depending on the number of comments	Excel file and document with feedback from the Technical Equivalence Leader
Final Summary Report	Technical Equivalence Leader	A final summary report will be prepared by the Technical Equivalence Leader and the GFSI Technical Manager, and will be sent to the GFSI Board with the applicant's approval.	Two weeks	Summary report
GFSI Board Final Decision	GFSI Technical Manager and GFSI Board	The GFSI Board will take a decision concerning the GFSI technical equivalence acknowledgement based on the recommendation of the Technical Equivalence Leader and the GFSI Technical Manager.	Three weeks	GFSI website
Communication	GFSI Technical Manager and applicant	GFSI and the applicant prepare communication in case of acknowledgement. In case of non-acknowledgement, the GFSI Technical Manager informs the applicant.	Two weeks	GFSI website