



GFSI BENCHMARKING REQUIREMENTS
VERSION 2024

PART IV **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

Part IV - Glossary of Terms

Terms and definitions

For the purpose of the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements, the following terms and definitions shall apply:

TERM	DEFINITION	REFERENCE (WHEN APPLICABLE)
Accreditation	Third-party attestation related to a Conformity Assessment Body (body that performs conformity assessment activities and that can be the object of accreditation) conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks. Note: in the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements, "Conformity Assessment Body" is referred to as "Certification Body".	ISO 17011
Accreditation Body	Authoritative body that performs accreditation.	ISO 17011
Agent	An organisation or individual that does not own but that trades any type of food, feed and/or packaging. Such activities exclude production, storage and any physical handling of the product; they can be performed under specific customer requirements or not.	
Allergen cross-contact	The unintentional incorporation of an allergenic food, or ingredient, into another food that is not intended to contain that allergenic food or ingredient.	CAC / RCP 1-1969
Approved supplier	A supplier that has been evaluated to demonstrate conformance to specific requirements. See also "Supplier" definition".	
Audit	Systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining objective evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled.	ISO 19011 ISO 9000
Audit duration	Time spent determining the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled, excluding the review of corrective action plans, and verification of corrective actions, when verification activities are not part of a routine audit. This may include onsite and remote auditing activities.	ISO/IEC 17021-1 (adapted)

Auditor	Qualified person who conducts an audit.	ISO 19011 ISO 9000
Broker	An organisation or individual that facilitates trade of any type of food, feed and/or packaging. Such activities exclude production, storage and any physical handling of the product; they can be performed under specific customer requirements or not.	
Catering	Preparation and provision of food from any source, for consumption outside the home, within a defined premise.	
Central function	An identified central department (but not necessarily the headquarters of the organisation) which has the responsibility to plan, control and manage the organisation's food safety management system. Note: this could also be an organisation which is employed by or is a subsidiary of a larger organisation. Note: This is only applicable to scopes stated within Section 6 Multisite	IAF MD 1
Certification	A process by which accredited Certification Bodies, based on an audit, provide written assurance that food safety requirements and management systems and their implementation conform to requirements.	ISO 17000
Certification body	A provider of certification services accredited to do so by an Accreditation Body.	
Certification Programme	A documented food safety Certification Programme, which has specified requirements (including standards and normative documents), specific rules and procedures. This shall contain all items required in the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements Document, which includes, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a clearly defined scope • an audit protocol (to define conditions of certificate issuance, audit duration, non-conformity grading, etc.) • a list of auditing requirements • requirements for auditor and certification body personnel competences • an Integrity Program • referenced documents which are indispensable for the correct application of the certification programme. 	

Certification Programme Owner	An organisation, which is responsible for the development, management and maintenance of a Certification Programme.	
Competence	Ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results.	ISO 19011 ISO 9000
Competent laboratory	A laboratory that has the capability to produce precise, repeatable accurate test results using validated test methods and best practices (e.g. successful participation in proficiency testing programs, regulatory approved programs or accreditation to international standards).	
Complaint	Expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its product or service, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.	ISO 9000
Consultancy	<p>Participation in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> designing, implementing or maintaining a management system, for instance a) preparing or producing manuals or procedures, and b) giving specific advice, instructions or solutions towards the development and implementation of a management system; designing, manufacturing, installing, maintaining or distributing of a certified product or a product to be certified, or; designing, implementing, operating or maintaining of a certified process or a process to be certified, or; designing, implementing, providing or maintaining of a certified service or a service to be certified. <p>Note: Arranging training and participating as a trainer is not considered as consultancy, provided that, where the course relates to management systems or auditing, it is confined to the provision of generic information that is freely available in the public domain; i.e. the trainer does not provide company-specific solutions. Similarly providing publicly available guidance material is not considered as consultancy.</p>	ISO 17065 ISO 17021-1
Consumer	A person who is a member of the public, takes possession of food, is not functioning in the capacity of an operator of a food establishment or food processing plant, and does not offer the food for resale.	

Correction	Action to eliminate a detected nonconformity.	ISO 22000
Corrective action	Action to eliminate the cause of a nonconformity and to prevent recurrence.	ISO 9000
Customer	Person or organisation that could or does receive a product or a service that is intended for or required by this person or organisation.	ISO 9000
Disinfection	The reduction, by means of chemical agents and/or physical methods, of the number of microorganisms in the environment, to a level that does not compromise food safety or suitability.	CAC / RCP 1-1969
Emergency	Situation in which the company deviates from standard operating procedures under defined conditions.	
Environmental monitoring programme	Evaluation of the effectiveness of controls on preventing contamination from the site environment.	
Equipment	Machines and equipment (including their parts and components necessary to link them together, and their services and utensils necessary for their operation), feed and food transport systems to bring ingredients/packaging to them, together with food storage and display units to allow the processing and retail of food, feed and packaging materials in GFSI scopes of recognitions.	
Feed	Single or multiple products, whether processed, semi-processed or raw, which is intended to be fed to food-producing animals.	ISO 22000
Fixed Site	An established building/facility based at a fixed location where a finished service is carried out for customers/clients (e.g., laundry).	
Food	Substance (ingredient), whether processed, semi-processed or raw, which is intended for consumption, and includes drink, chewing gum and any substance which has been used in the manufacture, preparation or treatment of "food" but does not include cosmetics or tobacco or substances (ingredients) used only as drugs. Umbrella term for any product in the GFSI scope, i.e. packaging, feed, etc.	ISO 22000

Food fraud	A collective term encompassing the deliberate and intentional substitution, addition, tampering or misrepresentation of food, food ingredients, feed, food packaging or labelling, product information or false or misleading statements made about a product for economic gain that could impact consumer health.	
Food fraud vulnerability	Susceptibility or exposure to a food fraud risk, which is regarded as a gap or deficiency that could place consumer health at risk if not addressed.	
Food defence	The process to ensure the security of food, food ingredients, feed or food packaging from all forms of intentional malicious attack including ideologically motivated attack leading to contamination or unsafe product.	
Food safety	Assurance that any product within the GFSI scopes of recognition (e.g. food, packaging, feed, etc.) will not cause an adverse health effect for the consumer when it is prepared and/or consumed and/or used according to its intended use. Umbrella term to define any product which is subject to GFSI scope of recognition.	ISO 22000
Food safety culture	Shared values, beliefs and norms that affect mindset and behaviour toward food safety in, across and throughout an organisation. Elements of food safety culture are those elements of the Food Safety Management System which the senior management of a company may use to drive the food safety culture within the company. These may include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication about food safety policies and responsibilities • Training • Employee feedback on food safety related issues • Performance measurement. 	
Food Safety Management System	Set of interrelated or interacting elements to establish policy and objectives and to achieve those objectives, used to direct and control an organisation with regard to food safety.	ISO 22000

GFSI Benchmark	A process by which a food safety Certification Programme is compared to the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements Document to determine equivalence. When a Certification Programme was previously recognised by the GFSI and is seeking renewed recognition, the term used is re-benchmark.	
GFSI Benchmark Leader	A person, appointed by GFSI, who is assigned to manage the benchmarking process for a specific Certification Programme application. The person shall have overall responsibility for the benchmarking activities for a specific Certification Programme application.	
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point. A system which identifies, evaluates, controls and monitors hazards relating to food safety as specified by Codex Alimentarius.	CAC / RCP 1-1969
HACCP-based system	A system, based on a generic hazard analysis for the industry sector, which identifies, evaluates, controls and monitors hazards relating to food safety, as specified by Codex Alimentarius.	
ICT	Information and communication technology. The use of technology for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analysing and transmitting information. It includes software and hardware such as smartphones, handheld devices, laptop computers, desktop computers, drones, video cameras, wearable technology, artificial intelligence, emails, and others.	IAF MD 4
Incident management	A process of identifying and managing any event where, based on the information available, there are concerns about threats to the food safety of product that could require intervention to protect consumers interests, such as isolation and removal from the supply chain.	
Inspection	Examination of a product (3.2), process (3.3), service (3.4), or installation or their design, and determination of its conformity with specific requirements or, on the basis of professional judgment, with general requirements.	ISO 17020:2012
Management	Coordinated activities to direct and control an organisation.	ISO 22000

Management System	Set of interrelated activities or interacting elements of an organisation to establish policies and objectives and processes to achieve those objectives.	
Mobile Site	A mobile facility where a finished service is carried out for customers (e.g., mobile canning operation).	
Monitoring	Determining the status of a system, a process or an activity.	ISO 22000
Multi-site organisation	<p>An organisation covered by a single management system comprising an identified central function (not necessarily the headquarters of the organisation) at which certain processes/activities are planned and controlled, and a number of sites (permanent, temporary or virtual) at which such processes/activities are fully or partially carried out. A multi-site organisation need not be a unique legal entity, but all sites shall have a legal or contractual link with the central function (See Glossary) of the organization and be subject to a single management system, which is laid down, established and subject to continuous surveillance and internal audits by the central function. This means that the central function has rights to require that the sites implement corrective actions when needed in any site. Where applicable this should be set out in the formal agreement between the central function and the sites.</p> <p>PLEASE NOTE: This definition does not apply to multi-site organisations with multiple management systems deployed across the organisation. In such cases, each site is treated as a single-site organisation and audited accordingly.</p>	IAF MD1
Non-conformity	Non-fulfilment of a requirement.	ISO 19011 ISO 9000
Normative documents	<p>Documents stating the specified requirements (need or expectation that is stated) such as regulations, standards, and technical specifications.</p> <p>Note: normative documents are part of the Certification Programme.</p>	ISO 17000
On site	On-site audit activities are performed at the location of the audited organisation	

Organisation	Person or group of people that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities and relationships to achieve its objectives.	ISO 22000
Outsourcing	A firm, company or individual carrying out a process or activities on behalf of the site audited.	
Perishable food	Food likely to spoil, decay or become unsafe to consume if not kept refrigerated or frozen. Examples of foods that must be kept refrigerated for safety include e.g. meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, and all cooked leftovers.	
Primary production	Those steps in the food chain up to and including, for example, harvesting, slaughter, milking, fishing, production of agricultural plant/tree crops and agricultural animal livestock. The resulting food products are similar to their natural state, but may have been packed, washed, trimmed (not cut into pieces), or otherwise undergone any process not defined under the definition of 'processed food'.	
Procedure	Specified way to carry out an activity or a process.	ISO 9000
Process	Set of interrelated or interacting activities which transforms inputs to outputs.	ISO 22000
Product	Output that is a result of a process.	ISO 22000
Product recall	The removal by a supplier of product from the supply chain that has been deemed to be unsafe and has been sold to the end consumer, or is with retailers or caterers and is available for sale.	
Product withdrawal	The removal of product by a supplier from the supply chain that has been deemed to be unsafe, which has not been placed on the market for purchase by the end consumer.	
Purchasing	Acquiring raw materials, ingredients, inputs or other product needed to produce the site's end product(s), or buying a service such as pest control, laundry, etc.	
Raw material	A component of a food, feed or packaging that has not undergone processing.	

Reportable incidents to GFSI	<p>Any situation which has potential to lead to disrepute – including complaints, recalls, withdrawals, involvement of regulator, product safety issues linked to a certificated site resulting in injuries, illnesses or any death.</p> <p>Issues with the certification process such as poor Certification Body or Auditor performance and fraud shall also be considered.</p>
Remote	From a location other than the physical location of the audited organisation.
Rework	Action on a non-conforming product or service to make it conform to the requirement
Risk	<p>Effect of uncertainty</p> <p>Note 1: An effect is a deviation from the expected – positive or negative.</p> <p>Note 2: Uncertainty is the state, even partial, of deficiency of information related to, understanding or knowledge of, an event, its consequence and likelihood.</p> <p>Note 3: Risk is often characterized by reference to potential events (as defined in ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.5.1.3) and consequences (as defined in ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.6.1.3), or a combination of these.</p> <p>Note 4: Risk is often expressed in terms of a combination of the consequences of an event (including changes in circumstances) and the associated likelihood (as defined in ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.6.1.1) of occurrence.</p>
Scope of recognition	A specific sector of the food or feed industry, or the provision of related food safety services, defined by GFSI, for which a Certification Programme is seeking recognition.
Service	Result of at least one activity necessarily performed at the interface between the supplier and the customer, which is generally intangible.
Service Fraud	Any suspected intentional action by a service provider for the purpose of deceiving the service purchaser and gaining undue direct or indirect economic advantage. This can include deception regarding the service and/or materials and consumables used in the provision of the service.

Service Level Agreement	Commitment between a service provider and a customer. Particular aspects of the service – such as quality, availability, responsibilities – shall be agreed between the service provider and the service user.	
Service Provider	Organization that manages and delivers a service or services to customers.	ISO 20000-1:2018
Single site certification	A full certification audit covering the entire scope (of the audit) shall be conducted at the site. This certification option does not allow for sampling (multi-site) or partial audits.	
Site	A site could include all land on which processes/ activities under the control of an organization at a given location are carried out, including any connected or associated storage of raw materials, by-products, intermediate products, end products and waste material, and any equipment or infrastructure involved in the processes/activities, whether or not fixed. Alternatively, where required by law, definitions laid down in national or local licensing regimes shall apply. Where it is not practicable to define a location (e.g. for services), the coverage of the certification should take into account the organization’s headquarters processes/ activities as well as delivery of its services. Where relevant, the Certification Body may decide that the certification audit will be carried out only where the organization delivers its services. In such cases all the interfaces with its central function shall be identified and audited.	IAF MD 1
Specification	Document stating requirements.	ISO 9000
Standard	Document established by consensus and approved by a recognised body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context	ISO Guide 2
Subversion (of GFSI Benchmarking Requirements)	A revised version of an existing Benchmarking Requirement where minor amendments are made. Applications can still be made by the Certification Programme Owner before a sub-version is published. (For further details see section 5, A- Applications)	

Supplier	An entity from whom the audited site purchases raw materials, ingredients, products, and/or services.	
Transport container	Vessel in which the product or raw materials is being placed or held during storage and distribution.	
Unannounced audit	An audit conducted without prior notification to the facility being audited. See 'Audit'	
Validation	Obtaining evidence that a control measure (or combination of control measures) will be capable of effectively controlling the significant food safety hazard.	ISO 22000
Vehicle	Any device used for the conveyance of raw material, ingredients, food, feed or packaging that is capable of being moved upon roadways, railways, waterways or airways. Vehicles can be motorised or non-motorised.	
Verification	Confirmation, through the provision of objective evidence, that specified requirements have been fulfilled.	ISO 22000
Workplan	Description of activities and arrangement for GFSI Recognition.	