

GFSI Benchmarking Process



How do I submit a standard or scheme to GFSI?

Does the scheme meet the following criteria ?

- ✓ Is the scheme publicly available and certifiable, without restriction by membership or other limitation, to certification bodies ?
- ✓ Do the certification bodies operating a certification system have accreditation to the scope of the relevant scheme ?
- ✓ Is the accreditation body providing accreditation to the certification bodies a member of the International Accreditation Forum and is the accreditation body in question also signed up to the Multi Lateral Arrangement of ISO/IEC 65 ?
- ✓ Has the scheme been developed in compliance with ISO Guide 65 ?
- ✓ Have you completed the clause-by-clause comparison of your scheme with the Guidance Document ? (Part 1 Annex 1 of the Guidance Document), detailing the compliance criteria ?
- ✓ If there are any anomalies with the Guidance Document, can you provide argumentation to justify compliance ?
- ✓ Can you provide the written support of at least two retailers to justify the submission ?

Please also refer to Clause 5.7.3 in the GFSI Guidance Document Version 4 for additional requirements. If you can reply positively to ALL of the above questions, and you meet the requirements in Clause 5.7.3, you can then proceed to the submission of your scheme to GFSI.

Document Submission for Benchmarking

The standard owner should provide the following documentation to GFSI :
(FAO Catherine François, CIES - The Food Business Forum, 7 rue de Madrid, 75008 Paris, France)

1. Clause-by-clause comparison of your scheme with the Guidance Document.
2. Complete copy of the scheme to be benchmarked.
3. Written justification of your submission by two retailers.
4. Any other documents or further justification to support the submission

Costs

The applicant may be charged for the Benchmark Procedure covering the administrative procedures of GFSI.



The Benchmark Process in 10 steps

1. GFSI will appoint an independent **Technical Review Committee** to conduct a **preliminary screening** of the application. (Independent Chairman, one retailer, one manufacturer or producer, (all with at least 5 years experience relevant to the food industry) and the GFSI manager).
2. If the application is accepted, it will then be **reviewed in further detail** by the Technical Review Committee and the scheme owner will be invited to participate in the deliberations.
3. Once the Technical Review Committee is satisfied that the application meets the requirements of GFSI, a **written consultation period will ensue with GFSI Stakeholders** (retailers, primary producers, manufacturers, wholesaler distributors, representatives for certification and accreditation bodies operating the submitted scheme).
4. Once the consultation period is over, the responses will be reviewed and one of the **following recommendations will be issued** :
 - a. Compliance is accepted
 - b. Compliance is not accepted until modifications recommended by the Technical Review Committee have been made by the scheme owner
 - Scheme Owner to provide the Technical Review Committee with a written justification on how to implement the modifications in the existing scheme within a mutually accepted timeframe.
 - If the scheme is already in use, the scheme owner to provide information on how modifications will be implemented at already certified suppliers.
 - GFSI Foundation Board will review the documentation and decide whether to accept or reject the application.
 - c. Rejection of the application
 - Applicant has the right to appeal.
 - GFSI Foundation Board will review the documentation and decide whether to accept or reject the application.
5. **Contractual agreement** will be entered into between the Standard Owner and GFSI.
6. A **compliance statement** will be then issued to the Standard Owner and all stakeholders notified of the result.
7. All changes to a conforming scheme shall require re-submission to GFSI.
8. A conforming scheme owner shall update his conforming scheme in line with the updates incorporated into the GFSI Guidance Document within one year of the publication thereof to maintain compliance status.
9. There will be a **three yearly review** of conforming schemes.
10. Conforming standard owners will submit an **annual report** regarding the delivery of their food safety management system.