

## **Global Food safety Initiative**

The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) is a non-profit foundation, managed by the Consumer Goods Forum, charged with providing continuous improvement in food safety management systems to ensure confidence in the delivery of safe food to consumers worldwide.

GFSI was originally set-up as a result of food safety scares in early 2000. Its primary purpose is to ensure the safety of food reaching all consumers internationally, but it also aims to develop efficiencies, promote transparency, guide cost savings and become a platform for continuous improvement in the area of food safety. It does this by leading the global food industry towards a harmonised approach to food safety management systems.

Before the GFSI was established, retailers and major buyers across the food industry demanded specific food safety requirements for particular products. To prove that these requirements were met food suppliers often had to have a number of different audits of their premises and systems, a process that cost them time and money. From audit to audit there was also considerable duplication.

This issue was dealt with, to some extent, by the industry developed national and regional schemes, such as the BRC or the IFS Food standards. While these did aggregate the needs and demands of some buyers, there remained many instances of suppliers being audited through numerous processes.

As a result of this continued duplication of audits the GFSI set out to develop a uniform structure for food safety standards. It did this by detailing food safety criteria that should be incorporated and putting common procedures in place for accreditation and certification bodies, which verified the implementation of standards.

With this approach the GFSI aims to deliver on its mission to: “Provide continuous improvement in food safety management systems to ensure confidence in the delivery of safe food to consumers worldwide”. In order to do this effectively, it operates with four major objectives in mind:

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

The GFSI is run by the Consumer Goods Forum, which brings together CEOs and senior management from 650 retailers, manufacturers, service providers and other stakeholders across the food industry. Covering all areas in terms of both products and international locations the Forum is considered to be truly representative of the needs of the industry as a whole.

Under the guidance of the Forum, governance of the GFSI is undertaken by a Board, various Technical Working Groups and a Stakeholder Group. While the Board sets the strategic direction and oversees the GFSI on a daily basis the Technical Working Groups provide technical expertise and advice. The Technical Groups combine to form a Technical Committee composed of retailers, manufacturers, food service operators, standard owners, certification bodies, accreditation bodies, industry associations and other technical experts. The GFSI Stakeholder Group brings retailers, manufacturers, certification bodies, accreditation bodies, standards owners, food safety experts and consultants together in a forum to discuss issues related to the GFSI.

All these interested parties have worked together to develop the GFSI Guidance Document. This multi-stakeholder document sets out the requirements for food safety management schemes and provides a framework against which these schemes can be benchmarked. It brings together three key elements of food production:

- Food Safety Management Systems
- Good Practices and HACCP Requirements (GAP, GMP, GDP)
- Requirements for the Delivery of Food Safety Management Systems

➤ For more information please visit the site: [www.mygfsi.com](http://www.mygfsi.com)