

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

# GFSI

## CERTIFICATIONS

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At Bureau Veritas, we take pride in offering comprehensive certification services to businesses aiming to achieve GFSI benchmarked standards. We are fully equipped to support you in realizing your certification goals. We encourage you to reach out to us without delay and embark on your certification journey today!



## WHAT IS GFSI CERTIFICATION?

**GFSI - Once Certified, Accepted Everywhere.** The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) is an organization with the ambition of ensuring safe food to consumer worldwide through internationally recognized benchmarked audit standards. It is currently the gold standard that many retailers and brands require throughout their supply chains. If your company is considering certification to a GFSI scheme, this guide and the team at Bureau Veritas will help you determine a path forward.

Due to a rising number of food safety crises and lack of confidence in the food industry, GFSI was launched in 2000 and a benchmarking system for food safety criteria was developed.

Prior to GFSI, there was no single audit standard that could be adopted by all stakeholders. This resulted in companies having to undergo multiple audits, which required time and costs.

Companies do not get “GFSI certified” per se, instead food companies are certified to a GFSI benchmarked certification program. GFSI has created benchmark requirements for Certification Program Owners (CPO) to meet in order for the respective program to receive GFSI recognition.

The three most common CPOs in North America are BRGS, FSSC 22000 and SQF, and for this reason, these three options will be the focus of this guide.

In summary, the benefits to becoming certified to a GFSI benchmarked audit standard include:

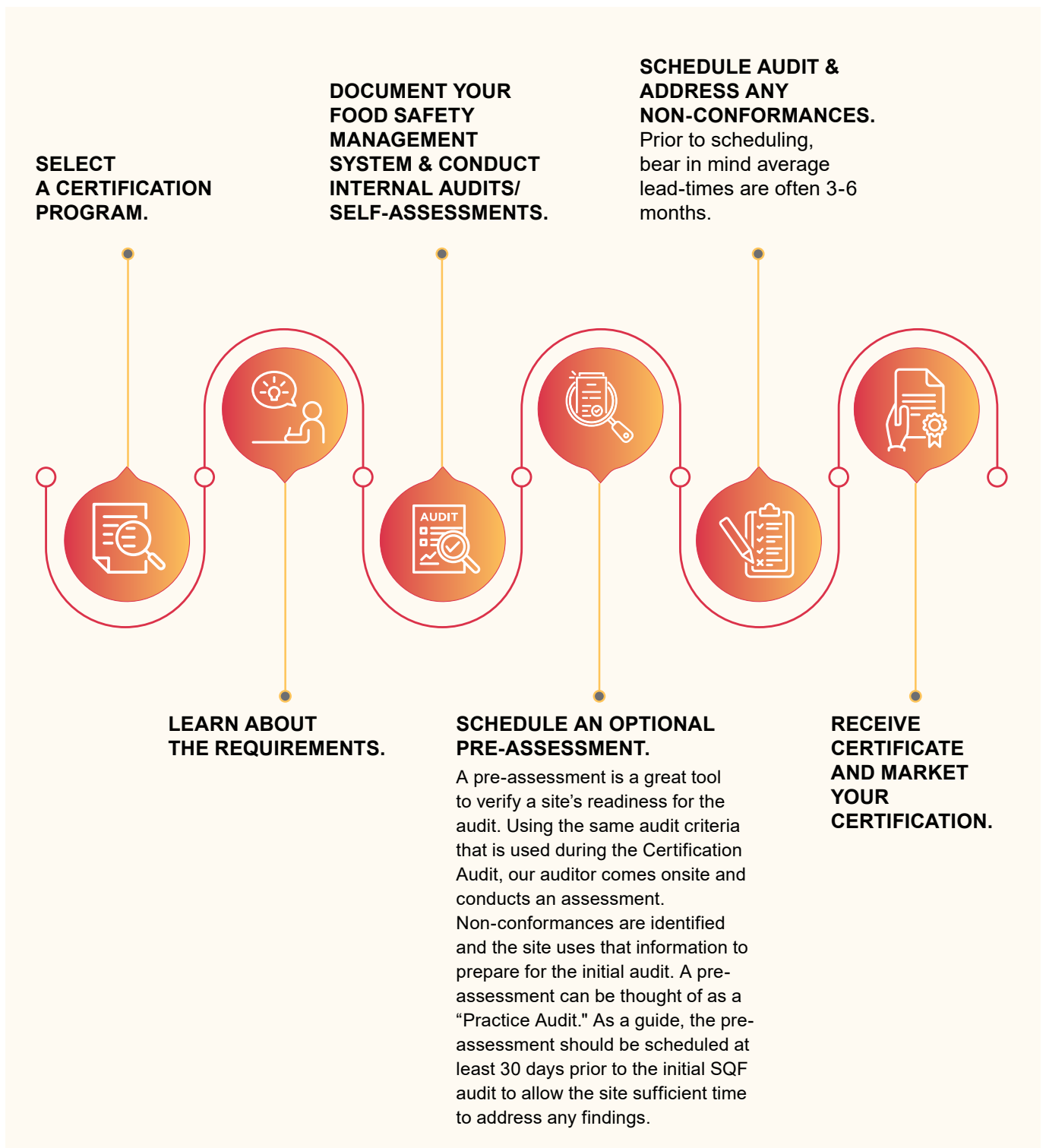
- Continuous improvement of your food safety management systems
- Market Access
- Fewer audits, saving time and costs



# STEPS TO CERTIFICATION

## THE BASICS

Depending on which Certification Program is selected, there are some differences when creating a specific action plan. However, the primary steps are the same.



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# WHICH CERTIFICATION PROGRAM IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Not all certification programs are suitable for every sector within the food industry. To determine which GFSI benchmarked program is the right fit for your site, please visit the GFSI website at [GFSI-Recognised Certification Programme Owners - MyGFSI](#). Here, you can easily choose the scope of your site's activities by selecting the appropriate industry scope. Once you've made your selection, a list of viable Certification Programs will be displayed. The scope selection includes the following options.

- All Scopes
- BII - Farming of Grains and Pulses
- CII - Processing of Perishable Plant Products
- E - Catering
- I - Production-of-Food-Packaging
- JII - Hygienic Design (Food Businesses)
- AI - Farming of Animals for Meat / Milk / Eggs / Honey
- BIII - Pre-process Handling of Plant Products
- CIII - Processing of Perishable Animal and Plant Products (Mixed Products)
- FI - Retail / Wholesale
- K - Production of (Bio) Chemicals and Bio-Cultures Used as Food Ingredients or Processing Aids in Food Production
- All - Farming of Fish and Seafood
- CO - Animal Primary Conversion
- CIV - Processing of Ambient Stable Animal and Plant Products (Mixed Products)
- FII - Food Broker / Agent
- H - Provision of Food Safety Services
- BI - Farming of Plants (Other Than Grains and Pulses)
- CI - Processing of Perishable Animal Products
- D - Production of Feed
- G - Provision of Storage and Distribution Services
- JI - Hygienic Design (Equipment and Building Providers)

To choose the right program, it's essential to look over the audit criteria and program requirements. Though it might take some time, this understanding of the rules and requirements for each program will guide your decision-making.

SQF Code	BRCGS standards	FSSC 22000 - Version 5.1
		FSSC 22000 - Version 6.0

Need help verifying which sections or documents apply to your site?  
Let us help confirm; please reach out to [Kimberly.knoll@bureauveritas.com](mailto:Kimberly.knoll@bureauveritas.com)

Talk to others in your industry – what program did they select and why? The food industry is an amazing group; Food Safety is a shared responsibility and our community is always eager to support one another.

# GFSI CERTIFICATION COMPARISON CHART



<b>Version Information</b>	Edition 9 for Food Safety & Quality Edition 1.1 for Fundamentals Edition 8.1 for Retail and Foodservice	Food Safety Issue 9; Storage & Dist. Issue 4; Packaging Materials Issue 6	Version 5.1 (V. 6 Coming Soon! Audits to v. 6 begin April 1, 2024)
<b>Audit Delivery</b>	<b>Initial Certification</b> (no stages; one activity) <b>Surveillance</b> (+/- 6 mths. (last day of audit) After audit if “Complies” rating) <b>Recertification</b> (+/- 30 days on the anniversary of the initial certification audit (last day of audit))	<b>Initial Certification</b> (no stages; one activity) <b>Recertification</b> (-28 days from the first day of the initial certification audit; AA to B ratings – 12 months; C & D ratings – 6 months)	<b>Stage 1</b> (to be done on-site) <b>Stage 2</b> (within 6 months of the last day of the Stage 1 audit) <b>Annual Surveillance</b> (ideally +/- 30 days from the last day of the anniversary of the certification audit) <b>Recertification</b> (at least 4 months prior to certificate expiration)
<b>Auditor Rotation</b>	3 cycles	3 cycles	6 years
<b>Non-Conformity Definition</b>	minor (1 point), Major (5 points), Critical (50 points)	minor, Major, Critical	Area of Concern (Stage 1), minor, Major, Critical
<b>Non-Conformity Closure</b>	30 days for closure	28 days for closure	28 days for closure
<b>Audit Scoring</b>	<b>96 to 100:</b> Excellent <b>86 to 95:</b> Good <b>70 to 85:</b> Compliant <b>&gt; 70:</b> Fails to Comply	<b>AA, A, B, C, or D</b> depending on NCs; + is added to the rating if the audit was unannounced.	None
<b>Certificate Delivery</b>	Cert Issuance: Due 55 Days from last day of audit	Cert Issuance: Due 49 Days from last day of audit	Cert Issuance: 60 days from last day of audit
<b>Certificate Validity</b>	1 year; + 75 days from the recertification due date.	1 year for AA to B; 6 months for C & D+ 42 days from recert due date	3 years from cert decision date
<b>Special Audits</b>	Surveillance audit is needed if rating is Complies (+/- 30 days on the 6 mth anniversary of the certification audit (last day of audit)) Special audit determined if needed by CB. Could be for Scope Extension	Corrective Action Follow-up if 2 majors for C or D rating; done within 28 days Special audit determined if needed by CB. Could be for Scope Extension	Special audits in the event Major NCs are noted, CB determines
<b>Unannounced Audits</b>	Yes, one in every 3 certification audits is to be unannounced Sites can request all audits be unannounced and marked as “SQFI Select Site” Surveillance audits always an- nounced unless “Select Site”	Yes, one in every 3 certification audits is to be unannounced Sites can request all audits be unannounced and receive a “+” after their rating	One of two surveillance audits, CB determines which one Site can have recertification audits be unannounced as well but must be requested by site

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# REMEMBER, WE ARE HERE TO HELP WITH YOUR GFSI CERTIFICATION NEEDS

## WHY BUREAU VERITAS?

- The MOST responsive service from a knowledgeable, customer-focused team
- Fair, thorough audits
- Auditors in both US and Canada
- Global Capabilities
- Advanced scheduling practices

## Learn More About Our Food Safety Training & Testing Services

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Agriculture Services

North America Food Safety  
Training Courses

LET US KNOW HOW WE CAN SUPPORT  
YOU WITH FOOD SAFETY INITIATIVES.

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# SHAPING A WORLD OF TRUST

**Bureau Veritas** is a Business to Business to Society company, contributing to transforming the world we live in. A world leader in testing, inspection and certification, we help clients across all industries address challenges in quality, health & safety, environmental protection and social responsibility.

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