




# **BRCGS Global Standard START!**

Guide to certification





**Engage with your  
chosen certification  
body as early in the  
process as you can.**

**For more than 25 years,  
BRCGS has been at the  
forefront of standards**

**With over 2,500  
auditors worldwide,  
BRCGS certification is  
accessible no matter  
where you are located.**

## EMPOWERING SMALL BUSINESSES TO SUCCEED IN FOOD SAFETY

For more than 25 years, BRCGS has been at the forefront of standards, and at the heart of our work is a mission to deliver the most rigorous third-party certification schemes for the best results possible. BRCGS certification provides vital assurance and confidence in the supply chain, and ensures high levels of safety and quality to guarantee consumer protection. As the most established global market leader across both food and non-food categories, BRCGS is the most recognised certification of its type and is accepted globally by brands, retailers and specifiers.

With over 35,000 certificated sites in more than 130 countries, BRCGS certification delivers trusted results and assurance of product integrity, which is why it is often the preferred choice when it comes to certification.

**THE BRCGS START! PROGRAMME IS DESIGNED FOR SMALL BUSINESSES AND THOSE WITH AN IMMATURE AND DEVELOPING FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.**

There are two levels of certification, Basic and Intermediate, providing small and developing businesses with a way to achieve globally recognised certification at a level suitable to their business needs.



**LEARN WITH THE EXPERTS AT THE BRCGS ACADEMY**  
Over 65 interactive courses available all delivered by experts worldwide in a range of languages.



## WHY CHOOSE THE BRCGS START! PROGRAMME?



- A trusted global certification programme that enables small businesses to place their products on the shelves of big retailers.
- Opens market opportunities for your products through recognition and acceptance from leading global brands and retailers.

- Clear pathway to develop your food safety systems and progress to BRCGS Global Standard Food Safety Issue 9 certification if required as your business grows.
- Increased exposure for your business through your public listing on BRCGS Directory, the tool that brands and retailers use for supplier selection.
- Grow your brand reputation by using BRCGS logos to promote your products.

## MORE THAN CERTIFICATION – THE PROVEN ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Independent Research carried out by the University of Birkbeck found that sites certificated to a BRCGS Standard see benefits that go beyond compliance.

### Commercial benefits

**50%**

benefit from domestic growth

**60%**

benefit from export growth

**28%**

benefit from greater profitability

**47%**

benefit from fewer customer audits

**7.5%**

average sales growth

**6%**

average increase in profitability

### Operational efficiencies and improvements in productivity

**70%**

have achieved efficiencies and greater productivity

**30%**

have benefited from product innovation

**63%**

reported production improvements

**40%**

reduction in food recalls

**The standard can be accessed free of charge via the BRCGS Store.**



# STEPS TO CERTIFICATION

**1**

## GETTING STARTED

Read the Standard and Interpretation Guideline publications thoroughly to familiarise yourself with the Standard and its requirements.



**2**

## LEARN

Attend training with the BRCGS Academy to gain a practical understanding of implementing the requirements.



**3**

## REVIEW

Perform a self-assessment gap analysis with the Standard (a range of gap analysis tools available on the BRCGS website). Assemble and train a team for implementation or obtain consultancy if needed.



**4**

## PREPARE

Use the outputs of the self-assessment to develop an action plan to implement the Standard requirements in your operation. Carry out risk assessments where needed and establish necessary control points. Prepare your procedures and undertake internal audits.



**5**

## PLAN AUDIT

BRCGS certification audits are delivered by our network of approved certification bodies. A list is available in the BRCGS Directory. Contact your chosen certification body to arrange an audit. Make sure you plan ahead so that staff are available and preparations are made.



**6**

## ON-SITE AUDIT

The audit will assess the practical implementation of the Standard requirements. Observation of procedures and processes, review of documentation, and staff interviews will all take place.



**7**

## NON-CONFORMITIES AND CORRECTIVE ACTION

If non-conformities are identified, you will need to carry out any corrective action, root cause analysis and plan preventive action. These will be closed out within 28 days following the audit.



**8**

## CERTIFICATION

Your certification body will review the non-conformities and finalise the audit report to determine whether certification be awarded. If certification is achieved, the certification body will issue your certificate within 42 calendar days from the first day of your audit.





## TRAINING FOR SITES PREPARING FOR START! CERTIFICATION

Kick-start your preparation by training with the BRCGS Academy. This will provide you with the essential knowledge and insights required for a successful certification audit.

### START! PROGRAMME E-LEARNING MODULE (4-6 hours)

Learn at your own pace and convenience with the e-learning module for Global Standard START!. This module covers:

- Understanding the scope of the programme.
- How to successfully implement the requirements of the START! Standard at Basic and Intermediate levels of the programme.
- How to prepare for an audit and the resources available to you.
- What to expect from a BRCGS audit and the post-audit process.

Find out more and book your place at [www.brcgs.com/training/overview](http://www.brcgs.com/training/overview)

**CLASSROOM TRAINING FOR  
GLOBAL STANDARD START!  
COMING IN SPRING 2025!**

## APPROACHING BRCGS CERTIFICATION FOR THE FIRST TIME

There are a range of gap analysis tools to support sites that are new to preparing for BRCGS certification. These are all available to download on the BRCGS website free of charge.

### Self-Assessment Checklist

This is designed to help you assess your operation against the requirements of Global Standard START!. The simple checklist format helps you to consider each of the requirements to identify your level of compliance and highlight focus areas. The checklist is available in a range of languages and for both Basic and Intermediate levels.

### SALSA to START! Transition Tool

This tool is aimed at sites that hold SALSA certification and wish to transition to START!. It focuses on the BRCGS requirements that are not covered by the SALSA standard to enable sites to focus their efforts on these areas and identify any potential challenges which may affect their ability to transition to BRCGS START!.

### Food Safety Management System to START! Transition Tool

This tool is aimed at sites that have a generic Food Safety Management System in place and wish to transition to Global Standard START!. Whilst it does not contain all START! Standard requirements, it can be used by sites to consider their level of compliance and identify any potential challenges which may affect their ability to progress to BRCGS START!

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# **BRCGS certification audits are delivered by a global network of approved certification bodies**

**TIP FOR BEST SUCCESS**  
Use the Interpretation Guideline alongside the Standard when implementing the requirements. It will help you to understand each requirement and ways to comply.







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To learn more about BRCGS and certification,  
please visit **[brcgs.com](https://www.brcgs.com)**.

To access or purchase a BRCGS Global Standard or to book training,  
please visit **[brcgs.com/store](https://www.brcgs.com/store)**.

To find a BRCGS-approved certification body,  
please visit **[directory.brcgs.com](https://www.brcgs.com/directory)**.