

BRCGS

Ethical Trade & Responsible Sourcing Standard

Guide to Certification

For over 30 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.

Reassuring consumers and protecting workers

BRCGS is the global leader in certification, helping the industry protect consumers, strengthen supply chains and demonstrate trusted product integrity.

Now approaching 40,000 certificated sites across more than 130 countries, BRCGS is the preferred choice for GFSI benchmarked certification as it is recognised by brands, retailers and specifiers worldwide.

The modern global marketplace comes with a responsibility to uphold ethical standards and principles in all facets of operations.

An ethical management system serves as the cornerstone for guiding these practices, ensuring that companies operate with integrity, transparency, and accountability.

As a comprehensive social compliance standard, BRCGS Ethical Trade & Responsible Sourcing Standard applies to businesses of all types.

A framework for independent evaluation of a company's management system and its ability to uphold ethical principles and practices.

Why choose BRCGS Ethical Trade & Responsible Sourcing?

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- **The first social compliance certification programme to be recognised by the Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative (SSCI), the benchmark of choice in the consumer goods industry.**
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- **Prepares businesses to meet SDG targets, in particular SDG 8.7 to eradicate forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking, and SDG 1.4 for equal rights.**
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- **Demonstrates commitment to true social compliance to customers, specifiers and regulators.**
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- **Enables compliance with emerging regulation and reporting requirements on modern slavery, supply chain due diligence and sustainability.**
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- **Provides reassurance of a proactive approach to managing supply chain risks to ensure goods and services are produced ethically and raw materials are sourced responsibly.**
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- **Increase operational efficiency and reduce costs with the option of combining audits with any other BRCGS standard.**
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- **Trusted global certification to protect your company's reputation, brand and image.**
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- **Greater visibility of your business through your listing on the BRCGS Directory; the tool that brands and retailers use for supplier selection.**

Combine this with *your* current BRCGS audit for time *and* cost savings.

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

Steps to certification

01

Getting started

Read the standard and Interpretation Guideline publications thoroughly to familiarise yourself with the standard and its requirements. Contact your chosen BRCGS-approved certification body to discuss your application.

02

Learn

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

03

Review

Perform a self-assessment gap analysis with the standard using the Ethical Appraisal Tool on the BRCGS website. Assemble and train a team for implementation. Obtain consultancy if needed.

04

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.

05

Plan audit

Contact your chosen certification body to arrange an audit. Make sure you plan ahead so that staff are available and preparations are made.

06

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.

07

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.

08

Certification

Your certification body will review the non-conformities and finalise the audit report to determine whether certification will 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 certification

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

Sites training course (2 days)

By the end of this course you will:

- Understand the background and key principles of the standard and social compliance audits.
- Have a practical knowledge of how to interpret the standard requirements and how to incorporate this into your management system.
- Be familiar with BRCGS audit methodology.
- Know how to prepare for an audit and what the audit process entails – scope, duration, corrective actions and non-conformities.
- Understand what to do following audit including corrective actions, root cause analysis and the timelines for the submission of evidence.

Find out *more* and book *your place* at [brcgs.com](https://www.brcgs.com)



Learn with the experts at the BRCGS Academy.

Over 65 interactive courses available all delivered by experts worldwide in a range of languages.

Get started with the BRCGS ethical appraisal tool

The BRCGS Ethical Appraisal Tool allows you to complete a self-assessment of your current level of social accountability by assessing aspects of your operations related to labour conditions, ethical practices, human rights, health and safety practices. It is the best place to start your preparations for a social compliance audit.

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- **Discover your current practices - see strengths and the areas of highest risk that require immediate attention.**

 - **Insight to enhance your social accountability related to ethics, sustainability and social compliance.**

 - **Assists compliance with the UN Global Compact and the UN's sustainable development goal number 8.**

All certificated sites feature in the BRCGS Directory, the 'shop window' *for brands and retailers looking for trusted suppliers.*

What is SSCI recognition?

Shaped by over 20 members, including globally recognised brands like Coca-Cola, Nestlé, Tesco, Ahold Delhaize, and Unilever, the SSCI sets the standard for social compliance programmes, offering an equivalent level of credibility to GFSI recognition.

In 2021, the BRCGS Ethical Trade and Responsible Sourcing Standard was the very first to achieve SSCI recognition confirming its place at the forefront of global social compliance standards.

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



Find a
certification
body at
[brcgs.com](https://www.brcgs.com)

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

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.

Benefits

01—Trusted certification

02—Credibility built over decades

03—Brand protection

04—Truly global footprint

Impacting
over
\$800bn
in annual
retail sales

BRCGS

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