



This Information Bulletin, issued by the Foundation FSSC 22000 – owner of the FSSC 22000 certification scheme – is about the benefits and strengths of FSSC 22000. Also the main differences between FSSC 22000 and other GFSI recognized schemes are taken up in this Bulletin.

The Bulletin specifically clarifies the interconnection of the FSSC 22000 certification scheme with the global independent ISO standards and the possible integration with quality management certification using the requirements of ISO 9001.

One can conclude that within the six years of its existence FSSC 22000 now is a robust, ISO-based, independently managed certification scheme for auditing and certification of food safety in the whole supply chain, fulfilling the needs for reliable food safety certification by a rapidly growing number of manufacturers and retailers all over the world.

What are the benefits and strengths of FSSC 22000?

What is FSSC 22000?

Food Safety System Certification 22000 (FSSC 22000) is the certification scheme for Food Safety Management Systems using the international and independent standards ISO 22000, ISO 22003 and technical specifications for sector PRPs, like ISO 22002-1, which were developed through a wide and open consultation with a large number of related organizations.. Also additional scheme requirements are taken up. These additional requirements can be found in the FSSC scheme documents that can be free downloaded from www.fssc22000.com. Without any of these 3 components it is not FSSC 22000 or GFSI approved.

This certification scheme is developed as a response to the need of the international food sector to have an independent ISO-based food safety scheme for third party auditing and certification for their Food Safety Management System.

The FSSC 22000 certification scheme is supported by the European Food and Drink Association (CIAA) and the American Groceries Manufacturing Association (GMA).

FSSC 22000 is fully recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) and Accreditation Bodies around the world.

What are the differences between FSSC 22000 and other GFSI recognized schemes?

The main differences between FSSC 22000 and schemes like IFS, BRC and SQF are:

- ***Independent, international standards***
FSSC 22000 uses international, independent ISO standards and additional requirements. These standards are not owned by a specific stakeholder organisation like most other GFSI recognized schemes. The standards are developed and maintained by Food Safety experts from around the world working together in an ISO committee. The experts are nominated by the members of ISO, the national standardisation organisations. They come from all stakeholders from the food supply chain like retailers, manufacturers, food authorities etc.



- **Management System Certification**

FSSC 22000 is a management system certification scheme. Schemes like IFS, BRC and SQF are process / product certification schemes. This means a significant difference in the audit approach.

First of all, the audit duration of a FSSC audit is longer and the audits have more depth. FSSC is not an annual audit where a list of requirements is checked but has a three year cycle. It starts with an initial certification that includes a stage 1 and 2 audit. The stage 1 audit is reviewing if the food safety management system covers all requirements and has an in depth review if the HACCP plan is complete and robust. Approximately 6 weeks later the stage 2 audit is conducted. This covers the implementation and effectiveness of the system. It includes a review of the implementation of CCP's, OPRP's and PRP's. After a successful certification audit a certificate is issued with a validity of 3 years. Each year a surveillance audit is conducted reviewing if the system is continuously implemented, effective and up to date. After 3 years a re-certification audit is conducted where the whole system is reviewed again and when being successful the certificate will be extended.

Another significant difference between a management system audit and a process / product audit is that management system audits have a stronger focus on management commitment, effectiveness, and continuous improvement. This supports the organisation in achieving better results and a higher level of conformity.

- **Focused on Food Safety**

As ISO 22000 and the technical specifications for sector PRPs are covering food safety, the whole audit is focused on the management and assurance of food safety. Most organisations that want to integrate quality in their management system follow the requirements of ISO 9001. The fact that ISO 22000 uses the same format as other management system standards makes this integration easy. It is even possible to integrate other aspects like environmental (ISO 14001) or corporate responsibility management (SA8000).

Using management system standards like ISO 22000 enables an organisation to build an integrated management system covering all aspects relevant for an organisation and its clients.

- **Independent scheme management**

FSSC 22000 is managed by the Board of Stakeholders. The Board represents the interests of all involved parties globally and has members from different stakeholder organisations representing manufacturers, food service organisations, retailers etc. All members represent a trade organisation. The Board of Stakeholders is chaired by an independent chairman. A full list of the Board members and the organisations they represent can be found on the FSSC website.

- **Non Profit**

FSSC 22000 is owned by a non for profit foundation named Foundation FSSC 22000, with its legal seat in The Netherlands. The Foundation is governed by strict laws ensuring the continuing independency, non-profit nature and transparency. This ensures that the finances are strictly managed, all costs of the scheme are as low as possible and there is no funding to other organisations or individuals.



- **Transparency**

FSSC 22000 is a fully transparent scheme. All information can be found on the FSSC website and there are no costs to obtain this information. On the website you can find all scheme requirements, decisions taken by the Board, the names of licensed certification bodies, the names of accreditation bodies recognizing FSSC 22000, names of the members of the Board of Stakeholders etc.

- **Supply Chain approach**

At this moment the scope of FSSC22000 is manufacturing of food products, food ingredients, food packaging materials, manufacturing of feed and animal production. But as ISO and supply chain trade organisations are developing technical specifications with requirements for pre-requisite programmes for other parts of the supply chain FSSC is able to extend their present scope.

ISO has decided to have an ISO 22002-x technical specification for PRP's in each sector of the Food Supply Chain. This makes it possible that FSSC 22000 certification can extend its scope and can cover the whole food supply chain.

- **Integrity Program**

The integrity of audits is the most important condition to ensure confidence in certification. To achieve this all licensed certification bodies must meet the FSSC requirements and be accredited against the management system accreditation standard ISO/IEC 17021 by an accreditation body that has signed for accepting and using the FSSC 22000 requirements. Next to this FSSC 22000 has an integrity program in place to review the performance of all contracted certification bodies. The integrity program is risk based and covers:

- Acceptance of the CBs
- The review of audit reports by an independent expert
- CB office and witness audits
- Screening audit data summary including auditor database
- Sanction policy
- Appeal and complaint procedure

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For more information about FSSC 22000 see the website www.fssc22000.com or join us at LinkedIn.