

IAAR Food Group - Detroit Meeting - June 5-6, 2012

The following outline was provided by GFSI and its Working Group Chairman for Auditor Competence, Bill McBride, and was presented to the IAAR Detroit Meeting on June 5-6, 2012 by Chairman Skip Greenaway of the IAAR Food Group.

GFSI Auditor Competence WG - Conference Call Meeting 5/30/2012

- GFSI Auditor Competence Working Group
- GFSI Board Feedback on Next Steps

Auditor Competence - Objectives

- Improved integrity, consistency and reliability of audit outcomes across all GFSI recognized schemes and supply chains
- Improved cost/benefit in qualifying auditors, by reducing the duplication and wastage in existing training options
- Provide a clearly articulated pathway for the professional development of food safety auditors
- Protection of the GFSI franchise and that of the recognised GFSI schemes.

Auditor Competence - Achievements

- Developed a competency model and list of agreed knowledge and skill components that can be applied across all post farm-gate GFSI benchmarked schemes
- Considered assessment options
- Discussed at length a number of options for the way in which credentialing of competent GFSI auditors can be managed across all GFSI benchmarked schemes
- Developed recommendations for consideration by the GFSI Board, to develop a workable and cost effective system of qualifying food safety auditors of GFSI benchmarked schemes.

Auditing Skills & Knowledge

General competencies common across all management system audits, are based on the following tasks:

- 1.1 Plan and organize work effectively
- 1.2 Conduct the audit within the agreed timeframe
- 1.3 Communicate with auditee personnel at all levels
- 1.4 Collect evidence by conducting interviews
- 1.5 Collect evidence by observation and investigation
- 1.6 Sampling techniques
- 1.7 Collect evidence by review of documentation/records
- 1.8 Analyze, verify and consolidate audit findings
- 1.9 Prepare written audit reports

Technical Skills & Knowledge

Knowledge and skills required to audit the key elements identified in the GFSI Guidance Document Sixth Edition

- 2.1 Food Safety Management (FSM) Requirements – GFSI Scheme Scopes (Tables I, II, III, IV, V)
- 2.2 Good Agricultural/Aquaculture Practice (GAP) Requirements – GFSI Scheme Scopes (Tables VI, VII, VIII, IX)
- 2.3 Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) Requirements – GFSI Scheme Scopes (Tables X, XI)
- 2.4 HACCP Requirements – GFSI Scheme Scopes (Tables XII, XIII, XIV)

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Behavior and Systems Thinking

- 3.1 Auditor Conduct and Behavior
 - Personal behavior
 - Audit leadership
 - Holistic thinking
- 3.2 Systems Thinking
 - Critical thinking
 - Problem solving
 - Root cause analysis
- 3.3 Organizational Behavior
 - Business Ethics

Recommendation 1: Strengthen and Publish Competency Model

- 1.1 To validate the competency framework, the TWG recommends further calibration and validation to evaluate the effectiveness of the GFSI auditor competencies:
 - through survey/public comment,
 - through commissioning third party research,
 - through other agreed process.

GFSI Board Response:

- **Process needs to be carried out as soon as possible.**
- **Board in favour of a peer review process rather than third party research – from academia, government, ISO, GFSI Advisory Council.**

Next Steps:

- Working Group to advise short list of peer reviewers
 - Shortlist of peer reviewers to be shared with the Board to be supplemented by the GFSI Board.
 - GFSI team to launch peer review once shortlist is complete.
- 1.2 The TWG determined that 'higher level' technical skills (i.e. sector skills) could not be accurately identified due to lack of commonality in food sector categories between the GFSI schemes. It recommends that consideration be given to harmonising industry sectors across the schemes to enable more specific higher level competencies to be identified.

GFSI Board Response:

- **Following a meeting with GFSI recognised Scheme Owner representatives and the GFSI Board, the scheme owners have agreed to work together on this work item and make a proposal to the GFSI Board. Recommendations to date include:**
 - **Food sector categories (industry scopes) (R1)**
 - **Common acceptance of auditor qualifications across all GFSI schemes (R5)**
 - **Common witness audit template (R5)**

- 1.3 Once finalized and signed-off by the GFSI Board, the TWG recommends that the GFSI auditor competencies be published in the next update of the GFSI Guidance Document.

GFSI Board Response:

- **The competencies, once validated by the peer review process, will be added into the next version of the GFSI Guidance Document Sixth Edition (potentially version 6.3 which will be released towards the end of the year) as an addendum.**

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Recommendation 2: Formalize the GFSI Auditor Competence TWG

The TWG recommends that GFSI forms a more structured committee to work through the short term and long term development of the auditor competence framework.

- The committee would comprise 3 representatives from each stakeholder group (CBs, retailers, manufacturers, primary producers, others (pre-processing, distribution)).
- Committee mandate: develop a business case to move forward with an independent process of competence assessment and credentialing of GFSI scheme auditors, and to define the scheme rules, policies and procedures for such a system.

GFSI Board Response:

- Yes, the former auditor competence working group needs to be formalised.

The business case would be based on either or both of the following two options:

Option 1

ISO 17024: an international standard designed to provide rigor and confidence in personnel certification. It specifies requirements for a body (or bodies) certifying persons against specific requirements, and entails assessment of competence, and credentialing of personnel (in this case GFSI food safety auditors).

In this option:

- o **the committee would become the 'GFSI Auditor Competence Scheme Committee'**
- o **it would determine the policies, rules, and procedures by which one or more PCBs (acting under the direction of the GFSI Auditor Competence Scheme Committee) would evaluate and certify GFSI competent auditors.**

GFSI Board Response:

- The new committee should form a business case for this option and a work plan.

Option 2

Set up a Joint Venture Foundation to qualify and manage GFSI auditors. *(The TWG agreed that the business case for the Foundation would also be considered by the GFSI Auditor Competence Scheme Committee, independent of the ISO 17024 approach.)*

GFSI Board Response:

- **This approach places too much liability on GFSI and the Board does not wish for the new committee to pursue.**
- **The new committee should also consider if there are any options outside of options 1 and 2. E.g. Could CBs already start working with the competencies in the meantime?**

Recommendation 3: Improve the Existing Accreditation Body Assessment Process

3.1 The TWG agreed that strengthening the accreditation process would benefit all GFSI stakeholders, and made the following recommendations:

- IAF to enforce ISO 17011 through MLA with GFSI.
- Mandate and enforce specific requirements for ABs in GFSI Guidance document through Scheme Owners.
- New requirements for AB assessors
- Same minimum requirements as auditors
- Undertake scheme owner training
- Scheme owners to require CBs to enforce auditor qualification requirements of ISO 22003 and competency assessment in ISO 17021.

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GFSI Board Response:

- **This work item will be further discussed at a later date, as it is not only applicable to food safety and therefore should be part of a broader cross-sector piece of work.**

Recommendation 4: Incorporate Competencies into ISO 22003

- 4.1 The new ISO Joint Working Group (JWG) 36 which is charged with revising ISO TS 22003:2006 (*Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of food safety management systems*) met in Copenhagen on 19/21 March 2012, and has set an aggressive timeframe (early 2013) for publication of a revised version of ISO 22003.

The TWG recommends that GFSI make the work of the TWG available to the ISO JWG, and that GFSI representative(s) attend the ISO JWG to support the GFSI objectives.

GFSI Board Response:

- **GFSI will make its competency framework available to the ISO JWG.**
- **GFSI Board will nominate a representative to attend the ISO JWG and support the GFSI objectives.**
 - **GFSI will provide a brief for that person – roles and responsibilities as liaison.**

- 4.2 As a side note, it was recently noted that the new US FDA initiative to establish food safety auditor competencies and credentialing for foreign and 3rd party auditors has been launched. This initiative is being run by the US National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) with the assistance of professionals involved in credentialing.

Although this has not been discussed by the Auditor Competence TWG, it may also be a Board consideration to work with the NEHA in the interests of collaboration between the FDA and accredited third party certification by naming someone to join the development process of a personnel certification credential for Food Auditors.

GFSI Board Response:

- **GFSI Board will nominate a representative to support this important piece of work.**
 - **GFSI will provide a brief for that person – roles and responsibilities as liaison.**

Recommendation 5: Harmonization across GFSI Schemes

In addition to harmonisation of industry sectors (recommendation 1.2), the TWG recommended that other redundancies be removed from the auditor qualification process:

- 5.1 Consideration be given to further harmonization across the schemes in addition to food sector categories. For example, commonality in auditor qualifications and shared KPIs for auditor performance may assist in reducing duplication in auditor qualification.

GFSI Board Response:

- **The GFSI Board have agreed to approach the scheme owners with this proposal, so that it can be added to their discussion on the harmonisation of food sector categories (see slide 12 for full list of recommendations).**

- 5.2 Development of a common witness assessment toolkit to evaluate auditor competence for use by all AB and CB assessors would also assist in removing redundancies from the process.

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GFSI Board Response:

- The GFSI Board have agreed to approach the scheme owners with this proposal.

Thank you,

Albert "Skip" Greenaway
Chairman IAAR Food Group