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COULD BRC CERTIFICATION OR A GLOBAL MARKETS PROGRAMME BE RIGHT FOR YOU?

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GETTING STARTED

If you think BRC certification or a Global Markets programme, where applicable, may be for you please follow these initial steps to start you on your journey towards certification.

LEARN

Select the Standard (or BRC Global Markets programme) relevant to the activities you carry out. Table 1 summarises the scope of each Standard.

Standard Food Safety*	Scope of the Standard Manufacture, processing or packing of foods and ingredients.
Packaging and Packaging Materials*	Manufacture of all types of packaging and packaging materials for all uses.
Storage and Distribution	For companies providing storage and/or distribution of pre-packaged products.
Consumer Products	Applicable to manufacturing, assembly and contract packing of all consumer products.
Agents and Brokers	For non-manufacturing traders in the food and packaging industries ie for companies that do not manufacture, process or pack products or ingredients and do not own storage or distribution facilities.
Retail	For those involved in the retail grocery segment, of all categories, and is designed to cover both head office and store level operations.

Table 1. Summary of Standard scopes (*designates a Global Markets programme is available)

Download or purchase a printed copy or PDF of the relevant Standard or Global Markets programme from the BRC Bookshop. PDF copies of the Standard and Global Markets programme are available to download free of charge and meet the requirements set out in each Standard to have a copy available on site.

Consider a subscription to BRC Participate, an innovative and powerful online management system that gives you immediate access to all the documents relevant to a particular Standard such as interpretation guidelines, and topic specific guidelines.

Train with the BRC or one of our global approved training partners (ATPs). Each of our practical training courses have been developed to help you implement the Standard. To find out more, visit the BRC Training Academy.

REVIEW

Read the requirements in the Standard of Global Markets programme applicable to your activities, and the audit protocol you'll be complying with.

You will need to conduct a gap analysis or self-audit. This will give you an understanding of the current situation and will identify which areas need improvement. This may, for example, relate to the structure of buildings, equipment requirements, the design of processes or the documentation and implementation of procedures.

Once you have looked at the gaps between the requirements needed to meet the Standard and your current practices, the management team will need to put a plan in place to address these gaps.

Related links: Download the self-assessment tools from the BRC Global Standards website [each Standard page where self-assessment tool is].

PREPARE

Your BRC audit will be carried out by a highly trained BRC registered auditor working for a BRC approved certification body (CB) who will be experienced in the product sector as defined in the audit scope. BRC Directory (add link). The CB you choose will depend on the services the site requires, the scope of your site's activities and whether the certification body can meet your requirements, for example, whether it operates in your country and in a language that's appropriate to your site. Some CBs are also able to offer optional pre-audit assessments.

PLAN

Once you've selected your certification body you will need to set a date for the audit to take place. For initial audits, where no BRC audits have previously taken place, it's recommended to have 3 months of documents and records in place at the time of the audit to ensure that there is sufficient evidence of effective systems in place for the auditor to examine. Ensure that the relevant personnel are available for the audit. There needs to be representation from the senior management team, the hazard and risk management or HACCP team, and access to other functions such as human resources at times during the audit.

AUDIT AND CERTIFICATION

The exact order of activities during your audit will vary, but your audit will include:

- Opening meeting
- Desktop review of documents
- Traceability challenge
- Inspection of buildings and physical areas having an impact on product safety, quality and legality, including good manufacturing practice (GMP) activities (where production, storage or retailing areas are in the scope of the audit)
- Final review of findings
- Closing meeting

During the course of the audit, your

auditor may identify items that don't reach the requirements of the Standard. These are known as non-conformities and all non-conformities must be "closed out", or fully addressed, before certification can be granted.

MAINTAIN

MAINTAINING THE STANDARD

Your goal isn't to simply achieve certification against the Standard, but to ensure an ongoing culture of quality, product safety and legality is established and maintained within the organisation. This will ensure you continue to meet the requirements of the Standard. Keep up to date with changes in the Standard via the website and BRC newsletter. And remember to communicate the success of your certification to staff, stakeholders, and customers by displaying your BRC logo on all your marketing collateral including your stationery and website.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The BRC schemes include opportunities for sites to incorporate more aspects of their operations, where applicable. Some of the Standards have Additional Modules which can be implemented as the site matures in its use of the Standards. Some Modules expand upon the scope of the audit, whereas some Modules address other elements, such as environmental management systems, or food safety culture.