

## **Guidelines for assessment of number of sites to be sampled for multi-site organisations**

### **1 Definition of a multi-site organisation**

1.1 A multi-site organisation is an organisation made up of a number of sites that have a legal or contractual link with the central office of the organisation and are subject to a common management system, that is established and subject to regular surveillance and internal audits by the central office. This means that the central office has rights to require that the sites implement corrective actions at sites as necessary.

1.2 Examples of multi-site organisations that are covered by this guidance:

- A chain of pubs running the same menu using the same processes
- A restaurant chain operating with franchises with consistent menus and processes.

1.3 Examples of multi-site organisations that are NOT covered by this guidance:

- A chain of pubs operating with franchises run independently with differing menus and processes
- A restaurant group operating as separate brands with differing menus and processes. Each brand may be treated as a multi-site organisation.

### **2 Eligibility of an organisation for sampling**

2.1 For a chain to be eligible for audit sampling, the processes at all the sites have to be substantially of the same kind and have to be delivered using standard methods, procedures and menus.

2.2 Sites may still be eligible in cases where there is slight variation in processes as long as all critical processes are taken into account in selecting sites for audit. Where processes in each location are not similar but are clearly linked, the sampling plan shall include at least one example of each process conducted by the organisation (eg. pizza production in one site, delivery service in another).

2.3 It shall be demonstrated that the central office of the organisation has an established management system and that the whole organisation meets the requirements of the standard prior to the start of gluten-free audits.

2.4 The organisation must be able to demonstrate its ability to collect and analyse data (including but not limited to the items listed below) from all sites and also demonstrate a central management system and its authority and ability to initiate organisational change if required:

- System documentation and system changes
- Management review
- Complaints
- Evaluation of corrective actions
- Internal audit planning and evaluation of the results.

### 3 Change in number of sites

3.1 Coeliac UK requests that any multi-site organisation provides information about the closure of any of the sites covered by the certification. The accredited organisation must inform Coeliac UK immediately of any additional sites which would like to be added to an existing certification.

3.2 On the application of a new group of sites to join an already certified multi-site organisation, each new group of sites should be considered as an independent set for the determination of the sample size. After inclusion of the new group in the certificate, the new sites should be cumulated to the previous ones for determining the sample size for future audits.

### 4 Responsibility of the certification body

4.1 Coeliac UK shall provide information to the organisation about the application of this document and the relevant standards before starting the audit process, and should not proceed if any of the provisions are not met. Before starting the audit process, Coeliac UK should inform the organisation that the accreditation will not be issued if during initial audit discussions nonconformities are found.

4.2 Coeliac UK shall check, in each individual case, to what extent sites of an organisation operate substantially the same kind of processes according to the same procedures and methods. Only after confirmation that all the sites proposed for inclusion in the multi-site exercise meet the eligibility provisions may the sampling procedure be applied to the individual sites.

### 5 Sampling

5.1 The sample will be partly selective based on the factors set out below and partly non-selective, resulting in a representative range of different sites being selected, without excluding the random element of sampling.

At least 25% of the sample should be selected at random. The remainder will be selected taking into account the following aspects:

- Results of internal site audits and previous certification audits
- Records of complaints
- Significant variations in the size of the sites
- Variations in opening times and work procedures
- Complexity of the processes conducted at the sites
- Modifications since the last certification audit
- Maturity of the management systems and knowledge of the organisation
- Differences in language and regulatory requirements
- Geographical dispersion.

5.2 The following calculations are based on low to medium risk activity with less than 50 employees at each site.

For organisations with **13 sites and above** the minimum number of sites to be visited per audit round is:

- Initial audit: the size of the sample should be the square root of the number of sites: ( $y=\sqrt{x}$ ), rounded to the upper whole number.
- Re-certification audit: the size of the sample should be the same as for an initial audit. Where the management system has proved to be effective

over a period of three years, the size of the sample can be reduced by a factor 0.8, i.e.: ( $y=0.8 \sqrt{x}$ ), rounded to the upper whole number.

Provided smaller chains operate with a consistent approach across all sites as specified in section 2, the following sampling may be used. For **12 sites or less** the minimum number of sites to be visited per audit round is:

- Initial and re-certification audit:
  - 1-4 sites = 1 audit
  - 5-9 sites = 2 audits
  - 10-12 sites = 3 audits.

5.3 Verification of the organisation shall be carried out prior to certification and recertification audit to assess suitability of company-wide systems, for example HACCP and management system documentation and training materials.

5.4 Coeliac UK can increase the size or frequency of the sample when risk analysis indicates special circumstances in respect of factors such as:

- The size of the sites and number of employees (eg. more than 50 employees on a site)
- The complexity or risk level of the activity and of the management system
- Variations in activities undertaken
- Records of complaints
- Results of internal and external audits and management review.

## 6 Nonconformities

6.1 When nonconformities are found at any individual site, either through the organisation's internal auditing or from auditing against the Gluten-free standard, investigation should take place to determine whether the other sites may be affected.

6.2 Coeliac UK will review the nonconformities to determine whether they indicate an overall system deficiency applicable to other sites or not. If they are found to do so, corrective action shall be performed and verified both at the central office and at the individual affected sites.

6.3 Coeliac UK shall require evidence of these actions and may increase the audit sampling frequency and/or the size of sample until satisfied that control is re-established.

## 7 Award of certification

7.1 GF accreditation will only be awarded once Coeliac UK is confident that processes in place across the organisation are sufficient to achieve compliance with the Gluten-free standard.

7.2 GF accreditation may be withdrawn if failed sites do not pass re-audits, and if all sites do not fulfil corrective actions in the specified time frame.

7.3 Coeliac UK will exercise the right to suspend GF accreditation if audit failure indicates failure to meet the required standards, for example if sites fail re-audit. Coeliac UK is not responsible for the costs and resources associated with the removal of the GF accredited symbol from all menus and marketing materials.