GS1 standards—making it possible for traceability systems to talk

Traceability in the food industry requires interoperability

Key actors in the food sectors increasingly find that they must answer a wide range of questions from business partners upstream and downstream, as well as from consumers.

"When was it delivered?"

"Who was involved?"

"Where does it come from?"

"Was it safely and sustainably produced?"

Behind these questions is the need for businesses to:

Boost logistics efficiency

Meet consumer demand for transparency

Support sustainable practices

Help fight counterfeiting

Protect brand integrity

Manage certifications

Perform recalls and keep consumers safe

Comply with regulatory requirements

Answering these questions and meeting these challenges requires traceability—the ability to quickly and reliably access granular information about a product.

Yet **this information is spread across all the stakeholders involved along its supply chain** and they all have different tools that cannot talk to each other.

In order to have effective end-to-end traceability, systems must be able to understand and share information in a clear and automated way.

There must be interoperability.

GS1 provides the common language for traceability solutions

GS1 standards are the global language of business—a language that more than one million companies in 150 countries already use for identifying, capturing and sharing information automatically and accurately, so that anyone who receives that information can understand it, no matter who or where they are.

The GS1 Global Traceability Standard provides a framework for the design of interoperable traceability systems, making it possible for:

- Different traceability systems to talk to each other by utilizing a common language
- Organisations to access, combine and interpret data from a variety of sources across the end-to-end supply chain
- Each trading partner to choose whichever GS1-enabled traceability solution best meets its specific needs

GS1 standards

GS1 enables the traceability ecosystem

Technology is often not the biggest issue in traceability. All stakeholders must be brought into the ecosystem for it to thrive, and this takes global and local effort.

GS1 Member Organisations facilitate collaboration and provide resources in 112 countries around the world:

- Collaboration that includes all traceability stakeholders— brand owners, food producers, restaurants and caterers, retailers, government authorities, solution providers, industry associations, academics and more
- Global Standards with local implementation support such as guidelines, workshops, trainings, traceability system assessments and data services
- Local industry initiatives and partner programmes with GS1-enabled traceability solutions

A registry platform that is foundational to the ubiquitous and interoperable identity of products, places and actors and to traceability solutions.

Benefits for trading partners and solution providers

Scalability, speed, automation and data quality

Integration across internal processes and legacy systems

Decreased time and cost to develop interfaces with other systems

Access to new markets

Viability of solutions based on emerging technologies

GS1 keeps an eye on the future

Technology and business needs are evolving at unprecedented speeds. Traceability systems that exist today must be able to interact with legacy systems, as well as with whatever new solutions emerge in the future.

The guarantee of change is why it is so critical to have one common language underpinning everything. Technological evolutions become easy to manage because standardised data is portable.

GS1 has a robust, user-driven standards management programme to identify and manage any interoperability challenge across business processes. **As a result, GS1 enables an effective use of technologies.**

Data

Globally unique identity of products, places and actors is the foundation for traceability across supply chains.

GTIN

Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) is the 13-digit global standard to uniquely identify a trade item.

GLN

Global Location Number (GLN) is the 13-digit global standard to uniquely identify a location or stakeholder.

GS1 is governed by you, for you

GS1 is a neutral, not-for-profit, global organisation that develops and maintains the most widely used supply chain standards system in the world.

For more than 40 years, GS1 standards have been improving efficiency, safety and visibility across multiple sectors, including retail, consumer goods, fresh foods, healthcare and transport & logistics. GS1 is funded and governed by its members, so everything we do is in their best interest.

Our standards are created by our users, for our users via the GS1 Global Standards Management Process (GSMP). The GSMP is a community-based forum where businesses facing similar problems work together to develop standards-based solutions. A neutral participant in the GSMP, GS1 facilitates dialogue and ensures our commitment to transparency.

The most well-known brands sit on GS1 global and local boards.

With our work on traceability, we want to enable growth, transparency and allow our users to continue to earn the trust of business partners and consumers.

Connect the dots with GS1 standards

To find out how to enable traceability systems to talk to each other, contact your local GS1 member organisation. GS1 is located in over 100 countries across Europe, Americas, Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa. For more information, visit **www.gs1.org/contact/overview**.