



## STAND OUT WITH **GLUTEN-FREE AUDITS** AGAINST THE AOECs STANDARD

The Association of European Coeliac Societies (AOECs) is a not for profit umbrella organisation of 35 European national coeliac societies. It owns and operates a gluten-free certification scheme that is internationally-recognised by its Crossed Grain symbol.

Food manufacturers and retailers are able to use this symbol if they meet the AOECs Standard for Gluten-free Foods. To simplify this process without compromising safety, Coeliac UK, an AOECs member, and SGS have joined forces to create a complete stand-alone audit against the requirements of the AOECs Standard for Gluten-free Foods.



Promoted by coeliac organisations worldwide, the Crossed Grain symbol reassures consumers everywhere that a product is gluten-free and safe. It is a valuable and trusted symbol for food and drink manufacturers and retailers to use when selling gluten-free products in this rapidly growing market.

## CROSSED GRAIN CERTIFICATION: THE ESSENTIALS

Three different types of license are available depending upon the location of the food company: UK, mainland Europe, and globally. However, all foodstuffs bearing the Crossed Grain symbol have to comply with all requirements of the AO ECS Standard for Gluten-free Foods, including:

- End-products must contain 20 mg/kg (parts per million – or “ppm”) or less of gluten
- Only products with multiple ingredients, or processed products (e.g. fruit bars) can be certified
- Products composed of a single ingredient, or products that are unprocessed (e.g. fresh fruit) cannot be certified
- Facilities that manufacture AO ECS-certified products must be audited annually (this can be done as a stand-alone assessment through the Coeliac UK/SGS audit programme, or in combination with a recognised food safety audit, such as the voluntary bolt-on module (Module 12) developed by British Retail consortium (BRC) in partnership with AO ECS)
- Manufacturers must use accredited laboratories to conduct finished product testing each year

The annual licence fee varies according to the turnover and exports of the gluten-free products certified as part of the licensing agreement. Organisations are allowed to add more products to their licence at any stage in the year, without extra charge.

## SIX STEPS TO CROSSED GRAIN CERTIFICATION

1. Complete the online form free of charge ([www.coeliac.org.uk/crossed-grain-symbol](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/crossed-grain-symbol)) or contact [licensing@coeliac.org.uk](mailto:licensing@coeliac.org.uk). Coeliac UK will calculate your annual licence fee and advise on next steps
2. Prepare your facility for an onsite audit by conducting a self-assessment or gap analysis (or ask SGS to do this for you)
3. Book your audit with SGS and arrange for your products to be tested for gluten content
4. When you pass your audit, SGS will issue a certificate of compliance against the AO ECS standard
5. Send your audit certificate to Coeliac UK by emailing [licensing@coeliac.org.uk](mailto:licensing@coeliac.org.uk) as part of the documentation required to complete your licence application for use of the Crossed Grain symbol
6. Maintain your Crossed Grain symbol certification by planning for your facility’s annual audits and conducting the necessary product testing

## SGS SERVICES

As well as being the certification body for the standalone audit against the AO ECS standard, SGS offers a range of associated services:

- **Self-assessment:** SGS can provide a self-assessment form, developed in partnership with Coeliac UK, that measures your readiness to proceed with an onsite audit

- **Gap analysis:** A qualified SGS auditor will review your company’s existing gluten management system in detail and benchmark it against the AO ECS standard
- **Auditing:** SGS audits and certifies against the AO ECS standard using our checklist against the AO ECS standard. Our experts developed this checklist in collaboration with Coeliac UK
- **Testing:** SGS uses Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) testing methodologies to ensure that even low levels of gluten are found
- **Training:** SGS can train your employees on the requirements of the AO ECS standard, as well as the management of risk – and its effective implementation

## WHY SGS?

SGS is the world’s leading inspection, auditing, certification, testing and verification company. Our experienced auditors are fully accredited and ready to deliver stand-alone AO ECS standard audit certification to you.

## CONTACT US

To discuss your gluten-free audit requirements and other auditing needs – and stand out in a crowded market – contact our global team of experts at [food@sgs.com](mailto:food@sgs.com) or visit [www.foodsafety.sgs.com](http://www.foodsafety.sgs.com)

 SGS Agriculture and Food



**SGS IS THE WORLD’S LEADING INSPECTION, VERIFICATION, TESTING AND CERTIFICATION COMPANY**

**WHEN YOU NEED TO BE SURE**

**SGS**