Program Description public: GreenSign Gastro 1.0

1. Why does this certification program exist?

The GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program uses a structured catalog of criteria to define the environmental, economic, and social requirements that must be met for the sustainable operation of a food service establishment, as well as the evidence required to demonstrate compliance with these requirements.

Successful certification under the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program demonstrates that, at the time of the audit, a company meets the minimum requirements defined in the certification program and that compliance has been verified by an independent certification body based on evidence.

The certificate thus confirms the company's conformity with the requirements set forth in the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program based on a structured conformity assessment procedure and states:

> "With the grant of this certificate, the certified company has provided evidence that it is managed sustainably in ecological, economic, and social terms in accordance with the requirements of the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 standard."

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2. Who is the certification program intended for?

The GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program is intended for companies in the restaurant and institutional food service sectors that fall under the Classification of Economic Activities (WZ 2008), specifically Section 56 "Restaurants"[1] , as well as the corresponding European classification system pursuant to Regulation (EC) No. 1893/2006 (NACE Rev. 2), Section I, Division 56 "Food service activities"[2] . These include, in particular, restaurants, chain restaurant concepts, catering companies, and institutional food service facilities such as cafeterias, student dining halls, and company restaurants. The scope of the certification program thus encompasses all forms of out-of-home food service in institutional and commercial contexts. The GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program applies to both independently operated companies and centrally managed companies within corporate groups.

The program's geographic scope is global. The only exclusions are countries where regulatory, political, or security-related restrictions exist that make it impossible to conduct a certification process in compliance with the rules.

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[1] Federal Statistical Office (Destatis): Classification of Economic Activities, 2008 Edition (WZ 2008), Section 56 "Food Service Activities"

[2] Regulation (EC) No. 1893/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the statistical classification of economic activities NACE Rev. 2, Section I, Division 56 "Food and Beverage Service Activities"

3. What aspects are assessed in the certification program?

The criteria catalog of the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program comprehensively addresses the three pillars of sustainability: ecology, social responsibility, and economy. The catalog is divided into the following ten core areas.

- Energy
- Water
- Waste
- Biodiversity & Cultural Heritage
- Procurement
- Local Sourcing & Mobility
- Social Responsibility
- Quality Management & Sustainable Development
- Management & Communication
- Economic Responsibility

The list of core areas does not follow any external guidelines or standard structures but was developed based on practical relevance for food service establishments.

The scoring system of the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program assigns each criterion a score between 10 and 60 points. The score is based on the relative impact of the respective criterion on the corresponding sustainability pillar. These point values are determined through a systematic assessment by an internal panel of experts at GreenSign Institut GmbH.

The maximum possible point values for the three pillars of sustainability reflect a distribution of 60% ecology, 20% economy, and 20% social responsibility. From the perspective of the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program, this also reflects the political and societal perception of sustainability, with a significantly stronger focus on ecology.

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4. How are audits conducted against the certification program?

Certification is carried out by an independent certification body that meets the qualifications and competencies required by the certification program, through a structured audit process:

1. Certification requires a contractual basis between the certification body and the company. This contractual basis is established through a certification application submitted by the company, an assessment of the application regarding scope and risk, and the certification body’s acceptance of the application.
2. Upon acceptance of the certification application, the company is required to complete the criteria checklist for the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program and provide the necessary verification documents (self-disclosure).

3. After the self-disclosure is submitted, the certification body verifies the information provided. The verification is conducted by a lead auditor, who schedules an on-site visit, prepares the audit, reviews evidence, and documents findings.
4. On site, the lead auditor verifies the company's information using the verification methodologies defined in the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program, confirms criteria that have been met, rejects criteria that cannot be verified, and documents all findings.
5. After the audit is completed, an independent review is conducted by a second auditor who was not previously involved (the dual-control principle) to verify the completeness, traceability, and accuracy of the verification documentation.
6. After the review is completed, the results are evaluated according to the scoring system defined in the certification program. Based on this valuation, the certification body—through a committee or its management—makes the certification decision.

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5. When does a company receive a certificate?

A company receives the certificate if, as part of the certification process, it provides evidence that the requirements of the **GreenSign Gastro 1.0** certification program have been met.

When verifying a self-disclosure against the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program, the certification body must systematically classify all nonconformities.

If there is a major non-conformity, a certificate cannot be granted. Major non-conformities (disqualifying criteria) include

- scoring less than 50% of the possible total points for the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program

If no major nonconformities (disqualifying criteria) are identified, a certificate is granted. Other nonconformities (non-disqualifying criteria) are recorded in the audit report and do not influence the certification decision. Nonconformities (non-disqualifying criteria) include:

- scoring less than 100% of the possible total score for the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program

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6. When is a company permitted to display the certificate?

A company may use the certification and the corresponding certification symbols, such as the GreenSign Gastro logo, as long as it holds a valid certificate and continues to meet the requirements of the certification program.

During the certification period, the certification body must require the company to immediately report any operational changes that could affect the certification decision.

The certification body must also ensure that reports from third parties regarding potential non-conformities at certified companies can be received, documented, and investigated according to a defined procedure.

Use of the certification is subject to compliance with the relevant terms of use.

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7. When can a certificate be revoked?

A certificate must be revoked during its validity period if

- a scheduled surveillance audit determines that essential requirements of the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program are no longer being met
- an unscheduled monitoring visit is conducted based on a report from a third party, and during this visit it is determined that key requirements of the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program are no longer being met
- an unscheduled surveillance audit is conducted based on a report from the company, and this audit determines that the relevant requirements of the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program are no longer being met.

In addition to the revocation of the certificate—and thus also the revocation of the rights to use the certificate and the corresponding logos—the GreenSign Gastro 1.0 certification program does not provide for the suspension or restriction of a certificate.