



# Non-GMO Project Verification Guide

*Working together to ensure the sustained availability of non-GMO food and products*

Thanks for your interest in Non-GMO Project Product Verification. Taking this step will ensure that your brand aligns with consumer demand for transparency in the products they purchase. To help you get started, this guide will give an overview of the verification process from start to finish.

The Product Verification Program evaluates products for compliance with the Non-GMO Project Standard, North America's preeminent program for GMO avoidance. An independent, third-party technical administrator will guide you through an evaluation. They will review your ingredients and facility and let you know what documentation to provide. Once your product is successfully verified, your technical administrator will issue a certificate of compliance, and the Non-GMO Project will issue the verification mark to use on packaging and help promote your products.



## Why get my products Non-GMO Project Verified?

**Trust and transparency:** The Non-GMO Project Verified seal is the most trusted and meaningful standard for GMO avoidance. When consumers look for non-GMO products, they look for the Butterfly.

**Consumer demand:** Consumers want to know what is in their food—in fact, 92 percent of U.S. consumers and 88% of Canadians think GMOs should be labeled (Consumer Reports, 2014; CBAN, 2015). Non-GMO Project Verified is one of the fastest growing labels in the natural products industry with immense consumer support, including more than 1.2 million engaged and passionate followers on the Project's Facebook page.

**Industry demand:** Our Verification Program is available for every level of the supply chain, from farmer to ingredient supplier to manufacturer. By engaging a critical mass of companies with a consistent standard, we are achieving economies of scale that make long-term sourcing possible.

## Contents

The Verification Process .....	2
Frequently Asked Questions .....	3
Appendix .....	4
Our Commitment .....	4

**Getting started:** We recommend reviewing your ingredients and processing aids to determine if there are any high-risk inputs (listed in the appendix on the last page of this guide).

## Step 1: Fill out an inquiry form

You will be prompted to submit basic information about your company and product on the Non-GMO Project website. We will answer any questions you have and provide all the information you need to get started on an evaluation.

## Step 2: Select a technical administrator

The Non-GMO Project works with four independent technical administrators to provide unbiased product evaluations. We encourage you to research each company to find the one that best meets your needs. Pricing and contact information for each technical administrator can be found on the Non-GMO Project website.

### Technical Administrators

**FoodChain ID**

641-469-6181

[www.foodchainid.com](http://www.foodchainid.com)**NSF International**

858-792-3531

[www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org)**Where Food Comes From**

866-395-5883

[www.imiglobal.com](http://www.imiglobal.com)**SCS Global Services**

800-326-3228

[www.scsglobalservices.com](http://www.scsglobalservices.com)

## Step 3: Sign the Non-GMO Project licensing agreement

This agreement outlines use of the Non-GMO Project's name and verification mark. There are separate trademarks and licensing agreements for the United States and Canada; if you plan to sell verified products in both countries you will need to sign both licensing agreements. There are no fees associated with signing our licensing agreement.

## Step 4: Complete a product evaluation with your technical administrator

Once you sign a contract with your technical administrator, they will request the documents necessary to evaluate your ingredients and the manufacturing facility. If you have high-risk inputs in your product, GMO testing and an onsite inspection may be required – this will be determined by your technical administrator. Upon verification, the technical administrator will issue you a certificate of compliance.

## Step 5: Promote your verification

When you have completed the verification process, the Non-GMO Project will send you the verification mark and your products will be eligible for listing on the Non-GMO Project website and shopping app. We will also connect you with our Marketing and Communications Team, who will work with you to promote your products through social media and other marketing channels.

## Step 6: Annual renewal

Your product verification will need to be renewed each year. Your technical administrator will request updated documentation reflecting any changes since your initial evaluation.

## How much will it cost?

Costs will vary depending on which technical administrator you choose and how many products you want to verify. If there are high-risk ingredients that require testing, lab fees will be additional. There are no licensing fees or additional fees from the Non-GMO Project – rather, \$50 per unique product formulation will be included in the amount charged by your technical administrator.

## How long will it take?

Time to verification depends on which technical administrator you choose, the complexity of your product, and how quickly you can provide all the necessary documentation. On average, the process takes 3-6 months.

## How will my ingredients be evaluated?

The technical administrator will request the documentation they need to evaluate your product. Ingredients are categorized as high or low risk, which determines the level of documentation needed to prove non-GMO status. Ongoing lab testing is generally required for high-risk ingredients. Your technical administrator can help you design a sampling and testing plan that meets our standard. Other documentation may include statements of origin, certificates of analysis, and handling and processing certificates.

## What are high-risk ingredients?

Some inputs are considered high-risk because they are widely produced in genetically modified form (like corn) or because they are commonly derived from those crops (such as soy lecithin). Please see the appendix for a comprehensive list of high-risk ingredients.

## What if my product is made internationally?

Verified products can be produced anywhere in the world, as long as they are for sale in the United States or Canada. Our technical administrators have a global presence and can work with manufacturers in any country.

## What about organic ingredients?

The Non-GMO Project Standard is designed to honor organic certification, with the added measure of testing high-risk ingredients at critical points. Having organic certificates for ingredients can reduce the work required for Non-GMO Project verification because the two standards share some fundamental requirements, such as best practices for traceability and ingredient segregation.

## How does GMO testing work?

Testing is a cornerstone of the Non-GMO Project Standard and is required for most high-risk inputs; low-risk ingredients do not require testing. Before you send samples to a lab, your technical administrator must approve a sampling and testing plan that meets our standard. Testing must be performed on source material (i.e., the soy used to produce soy lecithin), not on finished products or processed inputs, and it must be performed by an approved lab. For a complete list of approved labs and more details about testing guidelines, please visit [www.nongmoproject.org](http://www.nongmoproject.org).

## What is required of my manufacturing facility?

Your technical administrator will evaluate facility documents and advise if an onsite inspection is required. In general, you must show that the facility has standard operating procedures for traceability of ingredients, segregation and separate storage, and proper cleanouts on shared equipment. Many types of facility certifications such as Organic, SQF, and Kosher have similar requirements for proper ingredient handling. The technical administrator will evaluate if your current protocols meet our standard.

## More information

For more information about product verification and testing guidelines, please visit our website [www.nongmoproject.org](http://www.nongmoproject.org)

## High-risk ingredients\*

These include crops, their derivatives, and other inputs such as microbes or enzymes that have a high risk of being genetically modified and that are produced on a large scale. Major ingredients derived from these crops will require testing of source material prior to use in verified products:

Alfalfa	Corn	Soy	Papaya
Canola	Cotton	Sugar beet	Zucchini

Common ingredients derived from high-risk sources : alcohol, amino acids, aspartame, ascorbic acid, sodium ascorbate, citric acid, sodium citrate, ethanol, flavorings (natural and artificial), high-fructose corn syrup, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, lactic acid, maltodextrin, molasses, monosodium glutamate, sucrose, textured vegetable protein (TVP), xanthan gum, vitamins, vinegar, yeast products.

\* List current as of February 2016; see website for updates.

## Animal products

Animal products are considered high-risk due to the possibility of GMOs in their feed. If your product has meat, dairy, eggs, your technical administrator will ask for documentation about the animal feed. If the feed has high-risk ingredients such as corn or soy, testing is required to show they are non-GMO. Animals must eat a non-GMO diet starting from:

**Meat animals (other than poultry):** starting at birth

**Poultry:** starting from second day after hatching

**Dairy animals and laying hens:** 30 days prior to verification and continuously thereafter

**Honey:** If your product contains honey, we require documentation showing that the 4-mile radius surrounding the beehives is free from all high-risk commercial agriculture and that any supplemental feed is compliant with our standard.

## Our commitment

The Non-GMO Project is a nonprofit organization committed to preserving and building the non-GMO food supply, educating consumers, and providing verified non-GMO choices. We believe that everyone deserves an informed choice about whether or not to consume genetically modified organisms. We look forward to working with you.

For questions about verification:

**Client Services Team**

[verification@nongmoproject.org](mailto:verification@nongmoproject.org)

360-255-7704, Option 1

For questions about licensing agreements:

**Standards and Verification Team**

[licensing@nongmoproject.org](mailto:licensing@nongmoproject.org)

360-255-7704, Option 5