



Overview of the PDCA Cycle



Plan

This stage refers to the analysis of needs, which come from a process-specific data review of product specifications or customer complaints. Take care to consider cause-and-effect analysis, like [Root Cause Analysis](#), as well as internal and external data sources.



Do

Implement outputs defined in the planning stage, such as mixing specifications, equipment settings or [employee training](#). You may have to develop a series of steps to repair the gaps identified in the planning phase. You'll also want to define your goals and deliver any necessary instructions to individuals in the process.



Act

In this phase, manufacturers react to whether goals are met. Take any necessary action to improve performance, as the central concept of any GFSI standard is continuous improvement. You may even use the results of this process as inputs for another PDCA cycle or the Management Review processes required by their chosen food safety audit scheme.



Check

In this phase, you check that the actions put in place in the "Do" phase actually work. Monitoring can be formal, meaning that we define and document the frequency of monitoring activities, or informal, where documenting is lax or nonexistent. [Monitoring](#) also includes a measurement of the process and its resulting product, as well as analysis and evaluation of that data to ensure the expected results. Finally, monitoring requires you to report your findings.