GS1 Italy

The Global Language of Business

Selling online

Practical product coding guide for marketplaces and e-commerce





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Introduction

GS1 Italy and the leading companies in the sector are collaborating to promote the adoption and implementation of GS1 standards in the online sales sector, with the aim of improving efficiency, product information management and final consumer safety.

The first step is to identify the products*, through a **unique identifier** and **globally** recognised.

GS1 identification codes are used throughout the world to uniquely distinguish all products, along the supply chain, from producer to consumer.

GS1 identification codes also allow you to **create the digital identity** of physical products and assist product visibility in online searches.

The unique identifier of the product is then represented through a GS1 barcode that allows to acquire electronically the identity of the product, and to transmit the information connected to it.

This practical guide aims to provide:

- All the information needed to request and use GS1 standards to identify products.
- The rules for correct product identification in accordance with GS1 principles.
- The advantages for marketplaces and sellers in adopting the GS1 standards.

*Product: most basic unit that can be purchased, characterised by predefined information, also defined as: consumer unit.

How to request and use GS1 codes to sell online

1. Ask GS1 Italy for the GS1 master company prefix for the GS1 code

To get started, you need a **GS1 company prefix** the 9-digit base number to build all your GS1 barcodes and which will identify your company in the GS1 system worldwide. GS1 Italy is the only body in Italy authorised by GS1 to issue GS1 company prefixes.

Enter the GS1 system by registering with GS1 Italy and receive instructions on how to request online your unique and worldwide-valid numbers: Go to the GS1 Italy website.

2. Assign GS1 codes to your products and packaging

Once your company has entered the GS1 system, GS1 Italy sends you the master, i.e. the number from which your company can create and assign to the products the GS1 identification codes, i.e. the GTINs*.

You must assign a **GTIN code (EAN) to each product in your catalog**, remembering that each product and each variant must have its own code.

- Remember:
- Codes must be uniquely assigned: to one code corresponds only one product
- Each business unit that is different to the others must be assigned a new and unique GTIN.
- The GTIN of the product remains unchanged until the codes must be changed, that is, until the products are modified in such a way that a new business unit is created





*The GTIN (Global Trade Item Number) is the GS1 key used to identify products (consumer units) and packages (packaging units) around the world, to sell them in retailers and online (such as Amazon, eBay, Alibaba, Google Shopping).

When to change the GTIN-13 of the products
Watch the video to find out when you need to assign a new GTIN to products.

The GTIN is assigned by the person who defines the product specifications:

- In the case of branded products, this is usually carried out by the trademark owner. You are responsible for assigning GTINs for products sold under your own brand, but for products of other brands, use the GTIN already assigned by the brand owner (or contact him/her for the GTIN of that product).
- In the case of unbranded products, this is usually carried out by the person who places the product on the market first.

Consult the rules for managing and assigning GTINs

GTIN: between the physical and digital

In the GS1 system, the graphic representation of the GTIN number is the GS1 barcode (EAN), the symbol that makes the information readable by a scanner.

The GTIN will be the unique and global identifier of your product, both online (only the number) and in the physical world (GS1 barcode).



3. Choose and print the barcode

For products, the most common symbol is the **EAN-13 barcode**. This barcode encodes only the GTIN assigned to the product, without reporting other information, and allows its recognition by reading with a scanner.

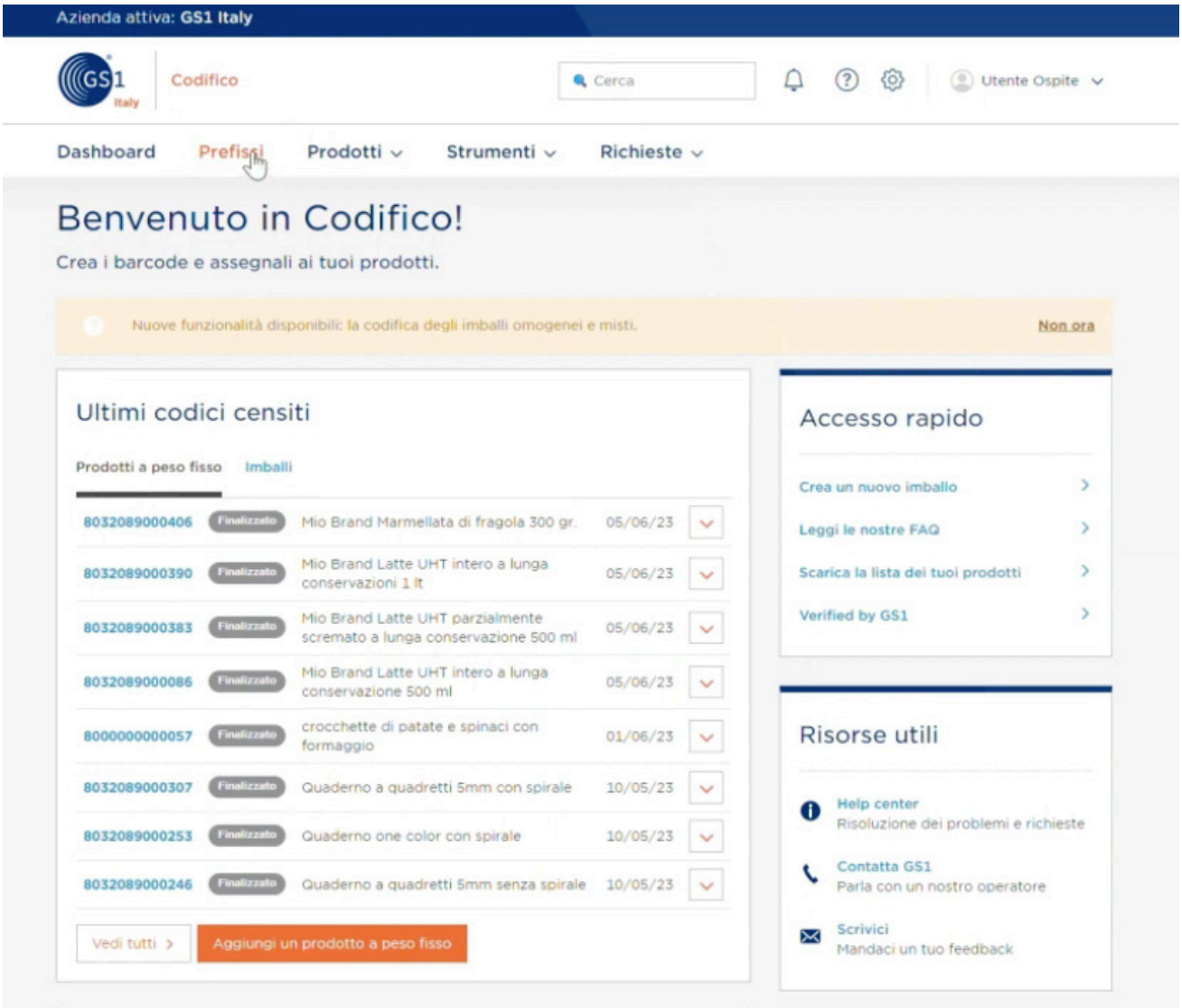


For small products, it is possible to use short codes, called GTIN-8. To request them, follow the instructions on the GS1 Italy website.

Create your GTINs with Codifico

Codifico is the tool to generate the GTINs and barcodes to be printed on the labels of your products. When your company enters the GS1 system by registering with GS1 Italy, it also receives the credentials to access its private online area of Codifico, where it can:

- Generate the GTINs and assign them to the products.
- Keep track of the attributed GTINs.
- Manage the product registry.
- Create and download the barcode image.
- Download the list of GTIN codes created.



When you use Codifico to assign GTINs, you also create the digital identity of the products, which is important for your product to be recognised in all sales channels, including online.

The GTIN and product information saved in Codifico, in fact, are automatically published in the GS1 world registry, the GS1 Registry Platform.

Thanks to the ability to search this global registry, with Verified by GS1 customers and online and offline distributors around the world can consult and **verify the accuracy of the GTIN** assigned to the product **and trace its digital identity card**, protecting your brand.



If you would like to find out more, please visit the Codifico page on GS1 Italy website.

Use GS1 GTINs to sell online: the advantages

Most of the main marketplaces have adopted the use of GTINs in their platforms in order to:

- Manage their product catalogues, reduce the number of duplicates and detect counterfeit products.
- Speed up the item listing process.
- Drive search engine result traffic to the right products.
- Enhance the final shopping experience.



There are also many advantages for sellers, like your company, who have the opportunity to:

- Use a unique and international product identifier that **is valid in all sales channels** and all markets.
- Meet the requirements of the marketplaces.
- Better management and simplification of:
  - The sharing and synchronisation of product data thanks to other GS1 standards such as the EDI to electronically exchange all the documents of the order-payment cycle and the GDSN to align product master data.
  - The handling of orders, returns and product recalls, reducing errors and complexity in shipping and delivery.

Glossary of terms

GS1 master company prefix: a numeric string assigned by the GS1 system to a company, for the assignment of identification keys.

GTIN (Global Trade Item Number): GS1 numeric key used for product identification. It is synonymous with EAN or UPC.

EAN (European Article Number): an abbreviation used to indicate the barcodes used for the identification of products.

Codifico: A GS1 Italy service to generate and manage GTINs for products. The data saved in Codifico are published on the GS1 Global Registry, the GS1 Registry Platform

GS1 Registry Platform: The register of GS1 licences (GS1 company prefix), assigned GS1 keys (GTIN), GLN, and links.

For more information

Available resources

- GS1 Italy website: gs1it.org.
- Practical guide on the use of barcodes.
- The rules for managing and assigning GTINs.
- Enter the GS1 system with GS1 Italy.

For more information, contact Customer service

For information, write to:

- The rules for managing and assigning GTINs: associati@gs1it.org.
- For assistance on Codifico, write to: codifico@gs1it.org .
- Telephone: 02 777212400.

We are the barcode people, for a global language in digital transformation.
Since the revolutionary introduction of the barcode in 1973, the non-profit organisation GS1 has been developing the world's most widely used standards for business-to-business communication. In Italy, GS1 Italy brings together over 40,000 companies operating in consumer goods, healthcare, banking, logistics, foodservice and construction sectors.
Today, more than ever before, companies must give consumers immediate access to complete and reliable information.
Using GS1 Italy's standard systems, shared ECR processes, services and research observatories, companies can create satisfying consumer experiences, increase transparency, reduce costs and make sustainable choices. In short, digital transformation is easier and faster with GS1.

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