

FAQ's

- **What is GS1?**

GS1 is a neutral and not-for-profit global organisation, with offices in 112 countries. We were formed by industry, coming together to create a system and common standard for the unique identification of products. Various sectors, from retail, marketplaces and healthcare and search engines too, have requested that their trading partners use GS1 standards, as they see the clear benefit of a single global system of unique product identification.

- **What's the difference between a barcode from GS1 and others I see online?**

If you've researched barcode numbers online, you may have come across websites offering you barcodes at a cheap one-off rate. These operators are not part of the GS1 network and are not authorised to sell GS1 numbers. Their uniqueness cannot be guaranteed.

- **What is a GTIN?**

A Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) is a number that uniquely identifies a product. You see them beneath the barcodes on almost every product in the world. Which is why they're often called 'barcode numbers'. In the Malta and Europe, they're usually 13 digits long, in the US 12. You might see shorter 8-digit numbers, used on smaller products. There are even 14-digit versions, to identify cases of products. The same numbers are used to identify products sold online too. The important thing to know is that they are all licensed from GS1 organisations around the world – to guarantee their uniqueness. When you join GS1 Malta you can create all the GTINs you need.

- **What is an EAN?**

A European Article Number (EAN) is the name given to the standard barcode image you see on most products sold around the world. It represents the number – or GTIN – you see beneath it. Retailers and marketplaces often ask for 'EANs' when you list your products with them. What they are really asking for is the GTIN, or barcode number, which you can create when you join GS1 Malta.

- **What is a GLN and how can I get one?**

A GLN, or Global Location Number, is used to identify your business as a legal entity, often via the use of EDI (Electronic Data Interchange). It can also be used to identify different offices, warehouses or even specific shelves within a warehouse. If you're selling to major retailers, they'll often ask for your GLN.

- **What is a UPC?**

A Universal Product Code (UPC) is the name given to the standard barcode used on products sold in North America. It represents the number – or GTIN – you see beneath the barcode. These days it's completely compatible with the EAN barcodes used everywhere else in the world. So if you get asked for a UPC by a retailer or marketplace, they're really asking for the GTIN, or barcode number, for your product, which you can create when you join GS1 Malta.

- **How do I get just one number?**

GS1 Malta offers the option of obtaining just 1 barcode for just one product.

If you are interested in obtaining this membership and wish to have further information, kindly send us a request via email or by filling the submission form in our contacts tab.

- **Am I just paying for random numbers?**

GTINs are not "random numbers" – they are made up of four elements:

- The GS1 country that issued the number
- A unique identifier for the company that licences the number
- A unique product identifier
- A check digit to ensure integrity

Also, your membership fee covers many things, including managing the integrity of the global GS1 System, engagement with strategic companies to drive greater usage and value from GS1 standards, and supporting all our members and industry to improve efficiency and reduce costs within their businesses. We do far more than just issue "random numbers!"

- **Why should I pay for GTINs, surely the manufacturer should do this?**

We always advise that the brand owner should issue a GTIN against each product they have to ensure it can be traced back to the correct source. If you have outsourced your manufacturing then you are still the ultimate brand owner, so you should allocate the GTINs to your products.

- **Can I re-use numbers allocated to me?**

GTIN allocated to a trade item SHALL NOT be reallocated to another trade item.

This applies to ALL trade items, regardless of sector. For further clarification, we suggest you review GTIN Management Standard found in our membership area

- **Can a product have more than one GTIN?**

A product should only ever have one GTIN allocated to it, although a different GTIN may need to be allocated when the product or branding changes.

- **Why should I license a GTIN if other retailers can then use it?**

If you hold the GTINs for all your products, then you are the registered brand and company for all your products. So, when other retailers list your products, they can always be traced back to you, as the rightful owner.