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A803F300

Description of the SA8000:2014 certification procedure

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If you should require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact us. We will be please to help you.

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Description of the SA8000:2014 certification procedure

The following description is based on the requirements of ISO 17021:2015 and SAAS procedure 200. The certification of a management system based on standard SA8000:2014 consists of the offer, contract phase, the audit preparation, performance of the Stage 1 audit with evaluation of the management documentation, performance of the Stage 2 audit, issue of certificate and surveillance/recertification. In addition, the certification consists of Maturity Declaration (MD) of the Social Fingerprint (SF) Self-Assessment of the organisation.

The auditors are selected by the Head of the Certification Body of TÜV NORD CERT GmbH in accordance with their approvals for the particular industry/service sector and their qualification.

1. CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

1.1. Audit Preparation

Following the signing of the contract, the auditor prepares for the audit based on the questionnaire filled in by the organisation and the calculation sheet. The auditor discusses and agrees the further procedure with the organization to be audited. Another part of preparation is a screening of the company and a consultation with non-governmental organizations. In addition, the organisation will receive details regarding the Social Fingerprint Self-Assessment which shall be completed online before the Stage 1 audit.

During preparation for the surveillance or recertification audit, the organizations to be audited have the duty to report fundamental changes in their organisational structure or changes in procedure to the certification body.

1.2. Audit Stage 1

The organisation receives an audit plan at least 2 weeks prior to the announced audit.
In case of semi-announced audits, the audit plan shall be sent to the organisation at the same time as the announcement of the audit.

The Stage 1 audit is conducted in order to

- Review accuracy of the pre-audit questionnaire returned by the client organisation.

- Familiarize TÜV NORD CERT Lead Auditor with the issues pertinent to the client organisation.

- Gain an understanding of the client's Social Accountability system and its state of development.

- Determine client's awareness and recognition of the local norms, regulatory and legal requirements.

- Review the client organisation's method of determining a local Living Wage and the wages paid to workers.

- Review and assess the client's SA8000 management system documentation.

- Agree to the list of documentation that shall be made available by the client organisation for the Stage 2 Audit.

- Evaluate the client's location and site-specific conditions.

- Undertake discussions with the client's personnel to determine the preparedness for the Stage 2 audit.

- Identify all parts of the organisation so TÜV NORD CERT understands the structure of the organisation for proper determination of scope of the certificate.

- Review the proposed allocation of resources for the Stage 2 audit against the draft audit plan and agree with the client on the details of the Stage 2 audit.

- Evaluate if internal audits and management review are being planned and performed and to ascertain the organisation's general conformity with the SA8000 Standard and Performance Indicator Annex.

- Review of the competence of the Organisation's Internal Auditors.

- Review previous labor, ethics, and other similar second- and third-party audit reports that are in the possession of the SA80000 certified or applicant organisation. The client shall make available any such audit reports within the previous three years and all SA8000 audit reports, if ever previously certified.

- To confirm the date when the client declares that their SA8000 management system was fully operational.

- Evidence that ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 Clauses 9.3.1.2.2 e) & f) have been performed and the determination of the need to produce a new Stage 2 Audit Plan by the Audit Team Leader

If findings or areas of concerns are identified in the Stage 1 audit, these shall be corrected by the organisation before the Stage 2 audit.

If it cannot be established positively that the customer is ready for Stage 2 Audit, the Stage 1 Audit shall be repeated after a reasonable time period. The same applies if the Stage 2 audit cannot be performed during the 6 month from the end of Stage 1 audit to the first day of Stage 2 audit.

The lead auditor is responsible for the coordination of the activities of the Stage 1 audit. Based on the outcome of the Stage 1 audit the Lead Auditor performs Maturity Declaration of the customers Social Fingerprint Self- Assessment and updates the MD database accordingly.

1.3.   Audit Stage 2 – Certification Audit

The organisation receives an audit plan before the beginning of the Stage 2 audit. The plan is agreed with the organisaton in advance.

The audit begins with an opening meeting, in which the participants (at least one management and one worker SPT Representative shall be present) are introduced to each other. The procedure to be followed

in the audit is explained. Within the framework of the audit at the organization's premises, the auditors review and assess the effectiveness of the management system which has been installed. The basis for this is the standard SA8000.

The task of the auditors is to compare the practical application of the management system with the documented processes and to assess them in relation to fulfilment of the requirements of the standard. This is achieved by means of interviewing employees, examining the relevant documents, records, personnel files, orders and guidelines and also by visiting relevant areas of the organization and taking photographs and copies of relevant documents.

Based on the outcome of the Stage 2 audit, the Lead Auditor performs a Maturity Declaration of the organisation's Social Fingerprint Self-Assessment and updates the MD database accordingly.

A closing meeting takes place at the end of the on-site audit with all personnel who take part in the audit that have management functions within the organization and are worker representatives. The lead auditor reports on the outcome of the audit and the SF Maturity Declaration with translation in case necessary. The lead auditor shall inform the attendees if any Critical or Major Non-Conformity is raised and if so whether additional audits or documentary evidences will be needed to close them. A Non-Conformity report of the audit will be left at the premises. If Non-Conformities are established, the lead auditor can only recommend the organization for certification after acceptance or verification of the corrective actions by the audit team, see Section 4 "Management of Non-Conformities". Attention must be drawn to this fact in the final meeting. In the closing meeting the Lead Auditor will present a summary of the audit result.

Prior to the closing meeting a pre-closing meeting can be held. In the closing meeting, the SA8000 management representative and the Social Performance Team shall attend, and the Lead Auditor will clearly explain the audit findings and SF Maturity Declaration score. At the end of the meeting the findings may be agreed.

The audit is documented in the audit report (the documentation must be separate for Stage 1 and Stage 2 audits) and is completed by means of further records (e.g. audit questionnaire and hand-written records).

Based on the outcome of the Stage 2 audit the Lead Auditor performs a MD of the organisation's Social Fingerprint Self Assessment and updates the MD database accordingly.

1.4. Issuance of Certificate

The certificate is issued when the certification procedure has been reviewed and released by the head of the certification body or his deputy or nominated representative. The person who reviews and releases the procedure shall not be part of the audit.

The certificate can only be issued when the Non-Conformities closures have been accepted or verified by the audit team.

The certificate is valid for 3 years.

Certificates may be suspended, withdrawn or cancelled if audits are delayed or Non-Conformities are not closed. In case of multi-site certification if a systematic failure is observed, the certificate of all sites may be suspended, withdrawn or cancelled.

2.   SURVEILLANCE AUDIT

Routine surveillance audits shall be conducted on an annual basis and a (remote) follow-up review during the period of validity of the certificate (3 years). The audit shall take place semi-announced, whereas follow-up reviews are usually conducted announced.
The first surveillance audit shall take place latest after 6 months from the certification or recertification decision date. All following surveillance audits shall be performed latest after 12 months of the last day of the previous audit, following a follow-up review in-between.
For semi-announced surveillance audits, the audit time window shall be send to the organization no less than 2 months prior to the audit.
The client receives a report following the surveillance audit.

3.   RECERTIFICATION AUDIT

Recertification audits, including the subsequent recertification follow-up reviews, are usually fully announced and shall be complete before the end of the period of validity of the certificate, including review of the measures for correction of nonconformities as well as (re)confirmation of the certification details.
In the recertification audit a review of the documentation of the management system of the organization takes place and an on-site audit is conducted, whereby the results of the previous surveillance audits over the period of the certification are to be taken into consideration. All requirements of the standard are audited. Activities related to the recertification audit may include a Stage 1 audit if there are significant changes in the management system or in connection with the activities of the organization (e.g. changes to the law).

The audit methods used in the recertification audit correspond to those used in a Stage 2 audit. The client shall again complete the Social Fingerprint Self Assessment before the recertification audit is performed.

4.   TRANSFER OF CERTIFICATION FROM OTHER CERTIFICATION BODIES

In general, only certificates from SAAS accredited certification bodies can be transferred. Organizations with certificates which originate from non-accredited certification bodies are treated like new clients. In addition, the client shall provide the last two SA8000 reports. If this is not the case the audit must be considered as new certification.

An Initial Research must be conducted before a certificate can be transferred. Transfer can only be conducted in case of valid certificate, no open critical or major Non-Conformities, no suspension of the customer and upon confirmation of SAAS. The transferred client shall present a corrective action plan in case minor non-conformities have been previously identified.

The further surveillance audit programme is based on the programme which has been in place up to the time of the takeover of the certificate.

The SF Self-Assessment shall be completed online before the transition audit is conducted. Based on this the SF Independent Evaluation shall be conducted as per the requirements of the recertification.

In case that an organization should request a transfer, and the previous CB is no longer accredited, a special verification audit shall be performed. Depending of the country risk classification, a 1 day on-site special audit may be required (e.g. highest risk countries).

All transfer activities for special verification audits shall be completed within 10 weeks after the organization has cancelled its certificate with the previous CB otherwise a new recertification shall be conducted.

5. CERTIFICATION OF COMPANIES WITH MULTIPLE LOCATIONS (MULTI-SITE)

Certification of organizations with several production sites in one country with similar types of activity and which operate under a single management system might be applicable for multisite certification. If an organization with several sites is SA8000 certified, all sites shall be physically audited at least once during the three years certification cycle. Multi-site clients are audited every 6 months, and all visits are announced.

The locations to be audited will be determined based on random sampling procedure. However, special requirements shall be fulfilled to apply the multi-site auditing approach.

6. MANAGEMENT OF NON-CONFORMITIES

An analysis of the causes shall be performed for each Non-Conformity (N/C) and corresponding corrective actions shall be implemented. The organization has the duty, depending on the severity of the NC, to provide a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) and to - demonstrate effective implementation within a prescribed timeline as following:

	Critical N/C	Major N/C	Minor N/C	TB N/C
CAP* sent to TÜV NORD	1 week	1 month	2 month	* [1]
Corrective action completed	1 month	3 month	6 month	** [2]

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[1] * Varies between 1 week to 1-2 months. Depends on the received TB-NC Level.
[2] * Between 6 - 18 months to promote to the next performance level or to become compliant.
[3] * CAP has to include correction, root cause analysis, corrective action and evidence of corrections.

If the deadlines are not met, the certificate will be suspended for certified clients and no certificate can be issued for applicants. Certificate is withdrawn post completion of suspension period, if appropriate actions aren't undertaken by client.

On-site verification of effectiveness SHALL be required for closure of all Critical and Major NCs. There may be very limited circumstances when a Critical or Major can be closed via documentation review. The CB SHALL maintain records detailing this deviation and under what circumstances it was allowed.

7. CONTACT DATA

As part of the worker/staff interviews, the workers/staffs receive contact data of TÜV NORD CERT and Accreditation Body "Social Accountability Accreditation Services" (SAAS). The employees therefore have the possibility of pass directly the complaints to independent agencies.

Stakeholders can communicate with "Social Accountability Accreditation Services" (SAAS) in the event the result of complaints/appeals isn't satisfactory.

8. ACCESS, CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

- Access shall be granted by the applicant/certified organisation to SAAS/CB for the purposes of witness audits, special audits, duplicate audits, market surveillance visits

- Access shall be granted by the applicant/certified organisation to SAAS/CB to all parts of the organisation during working hours [including night shift] during an announced/semi-announced audit/unannounced audit

- Permission shall be allowed by the applicant/certified organisation to SAAS/CB to take copies of documents, photographs of non-proprietary processes and at locations around the site

- Previous CB SA8000 reports shall be provided by the earlier certified/certified organisation to SAAS/CB upon request