

Author: L. Bernstein	<b>Social Accountability Accreditation Services</b>	Issue: 4
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**SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY  
ACCREDITATION SERVICES**

**ACCREDITATION OF CERTIFICATION BODIES OF  
SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS**

**SAAS ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This manual describes the procedures for granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending and withdrawing the Accreditation of a Certification Body by SAAS. This description should be read in conjunction with the SAAS documents “Requirements for Gaining and Maintaining Accreditation” (200), “Complaints and Appeals” (202), “Application Form” (435), and “Fee Schedule” (406).

This manual, updated to address the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011:2004 “General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies,” is intended for use by SAAS, and sets out the rights and responsibilities of both SAAS and accredited Certification Bodies (CBs). The SAAS activities required for assessing and accrediting CBs are also defined in this procedure. Another document “Requirements for Gaining and Maintaining Accreditation” (Procedure 200) exists for general external circulation and is included in the Accreditation Application packages.

Other activities and responsibilities of SAAS and CBs may be described in other guidelines and administrative documents.

## 2.0 REFERENCES

The following referenced documents are essential for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

- ISO/IEC 17021:2006 Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- ISO/IEC 62:1996 General requirements for bodies operating assessment and certification / registration of quality systems
- ISO 9000:2005 Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary
- ISO 9001:2000 Quality management systems – Requirements
- ISO/IEC 17000:2004 Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles
- ISO/IEC 17011:2004 General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
- ISO 19011:2002 Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing
- SA8000:2001 Social Standard
- Guidance Document for Social Accountability 8000: 2004

Procedures listed below reference SAAS documents:

- Procedure 200 Gaining And Maintaining Accreditation (this document replaces Procedure 150: Criteria for Accreditation of Social Accountability System Certification Bodies – see footnote 2 below for further information on this matter)

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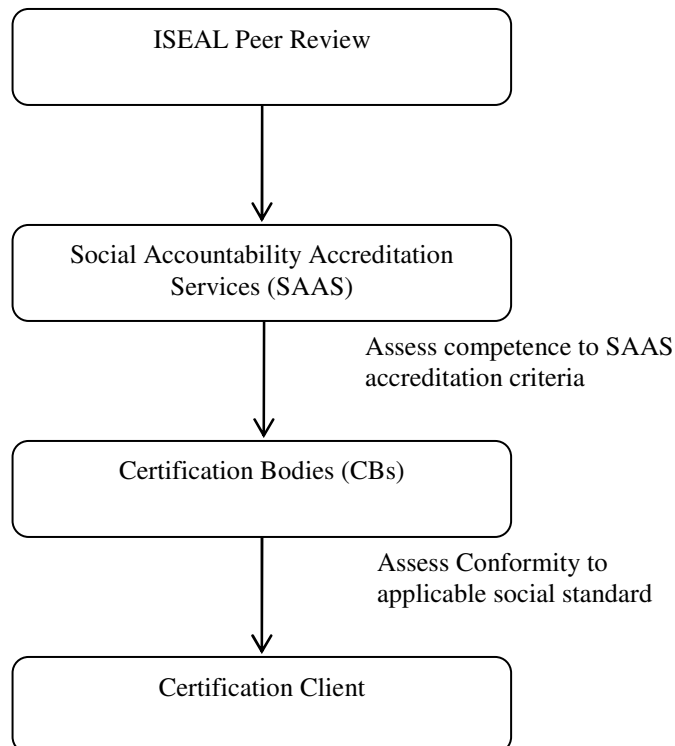
- Procedure 202 Procedure for Complaints and Appeals
- Procedure 203 Staff and Contractor Appointment, Training and Appraisal
- Procedure 303 Guidelines For Accreditation Review Panel Members
- Procedure 304 Guidelines For Making a Complaint or Appeal
- Work Instruction 311 Accreditation Process: Document Review and Initial Office Audit
- Form 312 Document Review Report
- Form 313 Initial Accreditation/Reaccreditation Office Audit Report
- Work Instruction 314 Accreditation Process: Witness Audit
- Form 315 Witness Audit Report
- Work Instruction 316 Accreditation Process: Office Surveillance Audit
- Form 317 Surveillance Office Audit Report
- Work Instruction 318 Instruction for Writing and Analyzing CARs
- Form 406 Schedule of SAAS Fees
- Form 415 Corrective Action Request
- Form 419 Accreditation & Applicant Register
- Form 423 Confidentiality Agreement
- Procedure 426 Conditions for Use of the SAAS Accreditation Mark
- Form 435 Accreditation Application
- Letter 602 Acknowledgement of Application
- Letter 604 Acceptance of Application
- Letter 605 Application Declined Letter
- Letter 611 Advice of Negative Accreditation Decision
- Letter 612 Advice of Positive Accreditation Decision
- Letter 613 Letter of Auditor Appointment

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### 3.0 ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Stakeholders in social certification need to know that SAAS accredited CBs are competent to perform their tasks in certifying organizations to social standards. SAAS undertakes a verification of Accredited CBs' competence that is impartial in relation to both those CBs and their clients (see Figure 1).

SAAS participates in a peer evaluation system that has been created by the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling (ISEAL) Alliance through which assurance is provided that SAAS is operating in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011:2004.



**Figure 1**

### 4.0 ACCREDITATION CRITERIA AND INFORMATION

4.1 The general criteria for the SAAS Accreditation of CBs is that set out in ISO/IEC Guide 62:1996 (ISO/IEC 17021:2006<sup>1</sup>), SAAS Procedure 150 (or SAAS Procedure 200<sup>2</sup>) and other procedural documents as produced from time to time by SAAS.

<sup>1</sup>Guide 17021 will replace ISO/IEC Guide 62:1996 for required implementation by September 15, 2008 for Certification Bodies accredited by SAAS prior to January 1, 2008. Organizations seeking accreditation by SAAS after January 1, 2008 will be required to conform to Guide 17021 by the date of accreditation. SAAS will transition to required compliance to ISO/IEC 17021:2006 to replace ISO/IEC Guide 62:1996 for existing Certification Bodies and will require compliance to ISO/IEC 17021:2006 in lieu of ISO/IEC Guide 62:1996 by September 15, 2008 in line with IAF requirements as sent via notice to accredited CBs on December 10, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> SAAS Procedure 200 is replacing Procedure 150 for required implementation by September 15, 2008 for Certification Bodies accredited by SAAS prior to January 1, 2008 as sent via notice to accredited CBs on December 10, 2007. Organizations seeking accreditation by SAAS after January 1, 2008 will be required to conform to Procedure 200 by the date of accreditation.

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- 4.2 SAAS makes publicly available, and updates at adequate intervals, the following information via its publicly accessible internet site [www.SAASaccreditation.org]:
- a) detailed information about SAAS assessment and accreditation processes, including arrangements for granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending and withdrawing accreditation;
  - b) documentation containing the requirements for SAAS accreditation; (see proc 200)
  - c) general information about the fees relating to SAAS accreditation; (proc 406)
  - d) a description of the rights and obligations of SAAS Accredited CBs; (proc 201)
  - e) information on SAAS accredited CB's;
  - f) information on procedures for lodging and handling complaints and appeals to SAAS (proc 304);
  - g) information about the authority under which the SAAS accreditation program operates;
  - h) description of SAAS's rights and duties;
  - i) general information about the means by which SAAS obtains financial support;
  - j) information about its activities and stated limitations under which it operates;
  - k) information about any related bodies.
- 4.3 Steps for applying for accreditation include: application submission, document review, certifying office assessment, witnessing a certification or transfer assessment, including an assessment of a supporting office as appropriate, and final decision-making by SAAS.

## **5.0 APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION**

- 5.1 Upon receipt of a request for an application for accreditation as a Certification Body (CB), the interested party will be sent an information package which will include, as a minimum the following documents:
- a) SAAS "Requirements for Gaining and Maintaining Accreditation" (Procedure 200)
  - b) SAAS "Accreditation of Certification Bodies of Social Accountability Systems" (Procedure 201)
  - c) SAAS "For Making a Complaint or Appeal" (Procedure 304)
  - d) SAAS "Accreditation Application" (Procedure 435-3)
  - e) SAAS "Fee Schedule" (Procedure 406)
  - f) SAAS "Conditions for Use of the SAAS Accreditation Mark" (Procedure 426)
  - g) A covering letter defining the responsibility of the Applicant CB for fully completing the Application Form, and its other rights and responsibilities as outlined in the documents above (Procedure 435-2)
  - h) Model accreditation certificate (Procedure 418)
  - i) The appropriate SAAS recognized Social Standard normative document, such as the SA8000 Standard, and certification methodology, such as Procedure 200
  - j) Model accreditation agreement (Procedure 435-4)
- 5.2 Upon receipt of the properly completed Application Form (that is completed by a duly authorized representative of the applicant CB), accompanied with the required application fee, the SAAS Director of Accreditation or designee will, within 10 working days, acknowledge receipt of the application in writing (Letter 602), where requested provide the applicant CB with an official SAAS receipt, and update the Accreditation & Applicant Register (Form 419). The minimum of information to be provided by the applicant CB in completing the Application Form and supporting attachments is:
- a) The general features of the applicant body, such as corporate entity, name, addresses, legal status and, where relevant, human and technical resources. This will include the

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- number of employees in the organization, including a breakdown between full-time employees and subcontractors<sup>3</sup>.
- b) General information concerning the body covered by the application, such as its functions, its relationship within or to a larger corporate entity, and its physical locations<sup>3</sup>.
  - c) A description of the systems it certifies, and the standards or other normative documents applicable to each system.
  - d) A controlled copy of its quality manual and, where required, any associated documentation.
  - e) A description of the scope of the desired accreditation.
  - f) A commitment that the applicant CB will comply with the requirements for accreditation to a social accountability system and will supply any information needed for its evaluation.
  - g) The name and contact information of the management representative from the CB for SAAS accreditation.
  - h) The identification of the CB's client for the witness assessment, location of the client, and the proposed assessment plan (if available at the time of the application submission).

## **6.0 RESOURCE REVIEW**

- 6.1 Within 10 working days of the receipt of the application and all documents by SAAS, the client information shall be recorded on Form 419. The SAAS Director of Accreditation or designee shall conduct, and maintain records of, a review of the application within 15 working days of receipt of the final document to ascertain whether:
- a) The SAAS requirements for accreditation are clearly documented by the applicant;
  - b) Any difference between the understanding of SAAS and that of the applicant CB is resolved;
  - c) SAAS is able to carry out the assessment of the applicant CB, in terms of its own policies and procedures, its competence and the availability of suitable auditors and experts;
  - d) SAAS has the ability to carry out the initial assessment and related services in a timely manner through review of its current assessment schedule;
  - e) SAAS accepts the application for the accreditation service requested, the scope of the accreditation sought, the location of the applicants' premises, and any further special requirements.
- 6.2 SAAS's Director of Accreditation or designee shall review the application for conformance to SAAS criteria, and may request further information from the CB if required. If this review shows that the applicant CB has the potential to meet the accreditation criteria, SAAS shall accept the application and notify the CB accordingly (Letter 604). If SAAS, after due consideration of the application, believes that the applicant CB does not have the potential to achieve accreditation, it will advise the applicant that its application has been declined (Letter 605). In doing so, SAAS will justify its reasons for reaching this conclusion, and shall refer the applicant to "For Making a Complaint or Appeal" (Procedure 304).

## **7.0 SUBCONTRACTING THE ASSESSMENT**

SAAS does not subcontract its accreditation activities but does contract external individual auditors and experts to undertake accreditation assessments.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to that portion of the organization which will be involved in the certification of organizations to SA8000.

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## **8.0 PREPARATION FOR ACCREDITATION ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 After acceptance of the application by SAAS, a Fee Schedule for the document review, utilizing the fees listed on Form 406, will be prepared and a Senior Lead Auditor and audit team members will be nominated by the Director of Accreditation.
- 8.1.1 The Applicant CB shall confirm acceptance of the draft document review fees and its lack of objection to proposed auditors within 15 working days.
- 8.1.2 If an objection to a member of the proposed SAAS assessment team is lodged by the applicant, the Director of Accreditation shall consider such objections using the following criteria: conflict of interest or personality conflict. Objections will not be considered in relation to location or other such related travel issues.
- 8.1.3 If an objection is accepted by the Director of Accreditation, SAAS shall nominate an alternate assessment team member for the applicant's acceptance.
- 8.1.4 Fees for each part of the assessment are due to SAAS prior to being conducted.
- 8.2 SAAS shall authorize the Senior Lead Auditor to evaluate all material submitted by the applicant CB. Pending successful resolution of any issues raised in the document review, SAAS shall draft an assessment plan that defines the stages of the accreditation process, including the office and witness assessment, list of potential ARP members, and draft fee schedule and submit it to the CB. After acceptance by the CB, SAAS shall authorize the assessment team to conduct the office and witness assessments on its behalf. These assessments shall be conducted in agreement with Work Instructions:
- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Work Instruction 311 | Accreditation Process: Document Review and Initial Office Audit, and |
| Work Instruction 314 | Accreditation Process: Witness Audit                                 |
- This authorization shall be communicated to the applicant CB. Auditors must have completed and signed an SAAS confidentiality agreement (Form 423).
- 8.3 When selecting the assessment team for each assessment, SAAS shall ensure that the skills brought to the assessment are appropriate (see Procedure 203).  
As well as technical expertise, auditors are selecting based on the following criteria:
- a. Availability
  - b. Expertise in issues of concern
  - c. Expertise in local industry
  - d. Location
  - e. Knowledge of local language
  - f. Acceptance by CB
  - g. Lack of conflict of interest
- 8.4 The Lead Auditor shall conduct the accreditation process per Work Instruction 311 and 314. With the applicant CB, the Senior Lead Auditor, in consultation with SAAS Secretariat, shall establish the assessment date and locations for the office and witness assessments. The applicant CB is obligated to arrange the witnessing of CB services. Any arrangements the assessment team may require (such as travel arrangements, accommodation, meals, assessment team review rooms, access to photocopiers etc.) should be confirmed with the applicant CB in writing at this point. Where able and appropriate, the applicant CB is obligated to make travel and other required arrangements for the accreditation assessment team.
- 8.5 In the case that the SAAS assessor does not speak the local language, an independent interpreter must be present. Interpreters and translators will be provided by SAAS whenever possible and

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charged out to the CB. If this is not possible, the CB, in conjunction and upon approval by SAAS, will arrange for the hiring of the interpreter.

## **9.0 PRELIMINARY VISIT**

A preliminary visit shall only be required when the document review cannot be completed, or the assessment cannot be planned without direct discussion with the applicant CB's personnel. This will be at the discretion of the Lead Auditor in consultation with the SAAS Director of Accreditation and the expense will be included in an amended fee schedule.

## **10.0 DOCUMENT AND RECORD REVIEW**

- 10.1 The purpose of the document review is to review all relevant documents and records supplied by the CB to evaluate its system for conformity with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021:2006 and/or ISO/IEC 62:1996, SAAS Procedures 150 and/or 200 (see footnotes 1 and 2 for further information on this matter) and applicable Advisories, and other procedural and guidance documents as produced from time to time by SAAS, the applicable standard-setting organization, and/or ISEAL. Assessments shall be performed in accordance with the SAAS work instruction 311.
- 10.2 After the completion of the document review, the lead auditor shall submit the document review report (Form 312) and recommendation for future action to the SAAS Secretariat. The Director of Accreditation shall review the report and recommendation and decide on future accreditation action.
- 10.3 If the decision is that further action is required for the documentation before accreditation assessments may proceed, the CB will be contacted and appropriate arrangements made to resubmit documentation. This process will continue until the documentation is acceptable or the CB decides to withdraw its application.
- 10.4 If the decision is that the accreditation can proceed, the Director of Accreditation shall select the remainder of the CB accreditation office and witness assessment team, with the concurrence of the senior lead auditor and agreement by the applicant. At that time, a final fee schedule for the office and witness portion of the assessment will be drafted and submitted to the applicant for review, acceptance, and payment. Additionally, the CB shall be responsible for making necessary arrangements for an office and witness assessment, in consultation with SAAS.
- 10.5 SAAS may decide not to proceed with an on-site office and witness assessment based on the deficiencies found during the document review and included in the report. The applicant will be notified of this decision and shall have the opportunity to appeal, per SAAS Procedure 304.

## **11.0 ON-SITE ASSESSMENT**

In the case of an on-site office and witness assessment, these steps shall be followed:

- 11.1 The Applicant CB shall confirm acceptance of the Assessment Plan fees and its lack of objection to proposed auditors and potential ARP members within 15 working days.
- 11.2 If an objection to a member of the proposed SAAS assessment team is lodged by the applicant or accredited CB, the Director of Accreditation shall consider such objections using the following criteria: conflict of interest or if objection is based on a personality conflict, it must have been noted in a previous assessment (for currently accredited CBs). Objections will not be considered in relation to location or other such related travel issues.

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11.3 If an objection is accepted by the Director of Accreditation, SAAS shall nominate an alternate assessment team member for the applicant CB's acceptance.

11.4 Fees for each part of the assessment are due to SAAS prior to the activities being conducted.

### 11.5 Office Assessment

The purpose of the office assessment is to assess the degree and effectiveness of the implementation of the Applicant CB's system within its defined scope. During the office assessment, the SAAS accreditation auditors shall review the organization's procedures, documents and files, and conduct interviews with staff.

11.5.1 The Lead Auditor is responsible for the conduct of the assessment and preparation for the submission of the assessment report (Form 313) to SAAS. This assessment shall be planned, conducted and reported, per the requirements of SAAS Work Instruction 311.

11.5.2 In all cases, the site granting certificates will be assessed at this time. If the certification decision and granting of certificates will be decentralized, SAAS shall assess the office where the CB representative responsible for managing the SAAS-granted accreditation system is located. In some situations, the Director of Accreditation may deem it necessary for SAAS to conduct an office audit of a regional/local office as part of the witness. Please see Appendix A for further information.

11.5.3 The applicant shall have the opportunity to accept the proposed assessment team and fees per 11.1-11.4. The assessment team shall be chosen per 8.3.

### 11.6 Witness Assessment

The purpose of the witness assessment is to assess the degree and effectiveness of the implementation of the Applicant CB's system and to determine the CB's auditors' competence. The SAAS auditor(s) witness the applicant assessing a facility against the applicable social standard. SAAS auditors witness the applicant to ensure it is following its own certification procedures and that the procedures are effective. The SAAS witness assessment shall be performed in accordance with SAAS Work Instruction 314 and shall include all assessment phases, including research, planning, conducting the assessment, reporting, and closing of nonconformities.

11.6.1 It is necessary for the applicant to have a client willing to go through the process of certification with the intention of becoming certified once the accreditation process is completed for the applicant. Audits witnessed by SAAS shall be stage 2 audits. Stage 1 audit reports shall be reviewed by the SAAS auditor as part of the review of the planning process.

11.6.2 Witness assessments shall be scheduled pending satisfactory results of the document review and initial office assessment, unless otherwise agreed upon with the Director of Accreditation. The witnessed assessments shall be initial certification assessments or transfer assessments, not a surveillance assessment, since the CB cannot have any existing SA8000 or other SAAS-accredited certifications prior to accreditation.

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- 11.6.3 For witness assessments, the CB's audit team must be accompanied by at least two auditors from the SAAS assessment team. Exceptions to this rule, if required, must be approved by the Director of Accreditation.
- 11.6.4 The SAAS assessment team shall witness a certification or transfer assessment(s) conducted by the Applicant CB. If the assessment is a transfer, the audit shall be conducted per 6.7 of SAAS Procedure 200, with the exception that stakeholder engagement shall be conducted as if it was an initial audit. The witness assessment shall be planned, conducted and reported in accordance with the SAAS Work Instruction 314. Based on the results of the initial witness audit, the Director of Accreditation may deem it necessary for SAAS to conduct an additional witness audit. This exception shall be noted and explained to the applicant and the process will be conducted per this procedure.
- 11.6.5 The SAAS assessment team members shall take care to raise any issues found in this area against the CB auditor training and competency requirements rather than against individual auditors.
- 11.6.6 The Lead Auditor is responsible for the conduct of the assessment, the submission of the final assessment report to SAAS (using SAAS Form 315), and management for all CARs written during the assessment. Submission of the final report for the witness assessment shall complete the assessment phases of the accreditation process. Follow up activities shall be determined by SAAS.

See section 15 for rules on oversight at surveillance and reaccreditation assessments.

## **12.0 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS AND ASSESSMENT REPORT**

- 12.1 Within 10 working days of the completion date of the final accreditation phase and once all nonconformities have been addressed, the Lead Auditor shall provide SAAS with a summary of findings and assessment team recommendations as to the applicant CB's conformity to all of the SAAS accreditation requirements.
- 12.1.1 The witness assessment phase by SAAS includes a review of the certification body's assessment report prepared by the applicant and the applicant's follow-up on any nonconformities issued to its client. Therefore, the SAAS assessment report is not considered complete and able to be reviewed by SAAS until after the certification assessment report is received. The certification assessment report, consequently, should be submitted by the CB to the SAAS Lead Auditor within 15 working days of the witness assessment. See Work Instruction 314 for additional details on review of the Applicant's assessment report.
- 12.1.2 Nonconformities shall be prepared using SAAS Form 415 for presentation to the client during the closing meeting. The CB representative and the SAAS auditor shall each sign the form. SAAS shall retain the original signed copy and a copy shall be left with the CB representative.
- 12.1.3 If the assessment team cannot reach a conclusion about a finding, the team shall contact the SAAS Director of Accreditation prior to the closing meeting with the CB's assessment team for clarification.
- 12.2 If there are major and/or minor nonconformities (Corrective Actions Requests) issued to the applicant as a result of the assessment, the Lead Auditor shall manage the process for closing out

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those CARs per SAAS Work Instruction 318. The closing of major CARs may necessitate additional assessments of the applicant.

- 12.3 Within 30 working days of receipt of the assessment report from the lead auditor, after SAAS review, SAAS shall send a copy of the report to the applicant CB for comment. The applicant will have 10 days to submit comments. Then, a final report, if any revisions were required to the draft, will be sent to the Applicant CB with a cover letter; copies of an affirmative report shall also be sent to each of the Accreditation Review Panel members when the on-site assessment and CAR process is complete.
- 12.4 If the report is not affirmative, the applicant will be informed of procedures for submitting an appeal (Procedure 304).

### **13.0 DECISION-MAKING AND GRANTING ACCREDITATION**

- 13.1 The final report and assessment team's recommendations on accreditation will be reviewed by the Accreditation Review Panel (ARP), per Procedure 303. The ARP shall be comprised of at least three independent persons who shall not have participated in the assessment. The Director of Accreditation shall be the SAAS staff representative on the ARP. All members will have completed and signed requisite confidentiality agreements, and shall be free from any potential conflicts of interest.
- 13.2 The ARP members shall consider the final assessment report, and, if required, may contact the Lead Auditor for clarification of any issues. On no account will they contact the applicant CB directly. The members of the ARP shall only consider the information provided in the final reports, along with clarifications provided by the Lead Auditor and Director of Accreditation, in making their recommendation.
- 13.3 After due consideration of the contents of the report, and in any event not longer than 30 calendar days after its receipt, the ARP shall recommend granting or refusal of accreditation by way of a supermajority vote, and the ARP chair will advise the SAAS Director of Accreditation of the outcome of their deliberations. If the ARP recommends declining accreditation, its reasons for doing so shall be clearly set out.
- 13.4 Within 30 days after receipt of the ARP recommendation, the SAAS Director of Accreditation shall make a final decision, taking into account the ARP recommendation and the final audit report. The Director of Accreditation shall notify the applicant CB of SAAS's decision, in writing. If the application is declined, the applicant CB's attention will be drawn to "For Making a Complaint or Appeal" (Procedure 304). If the application is approved, the CB shall be instructed that it may not make any public claims whatsoever regarding its accreditation by SAAS until such time that the Accreditation Agreement (Procedure 435) has been duly signed by both parties and the CB has paid all moneys owed to SAAS.
- 13.5 Within 30 working days after receiving approval, final outstanding payments received, and signing of the Accreditation Agreement, SAAS shall present to the accredited CB a signed Certificate of Accreditation. The accreditation certificate shall include:
- a) effective date of the accreditation and the term for which the accreditation is valid;
  - b) SAAS's identity and symbol;
  - c) the unique identity of the accredited CB and SAAS client number and name and address of the CB's location where certification decisions are made. If the CB makes

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decentralized certification decisions, the address on the certificate shall be the location of the CB staff designated to interface with SAAS;

- d) a brief indication of, or reference to, the scope of accreditation;
- e) the name of the normative document to which the CB will be granting certifications;
- f) for SA8000: a statement of conformity and a reference to SAAS Procedure 200 (upon replacing Procedure 150), ISO/IEC 62:1996 or ISO/IEC 17021, including the issue or revision used for assessment of the CB.

## 14.0 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

SAAS has established Procedure 202, “Complaints and Appeals” for managing complaints and appeals, and an external instruction “For Making a Complaint or Appeal” (Procedure 304) to address how complaints and appeals may be made by CBs and others against the accreditation process and resultant decisions made by SAAS.

SAAS shall ensure that complaints and appeals are properly investigated and addressed through the implementation of these processes.

## 15.0 REACCREDITATION AND SURVEILLANCE

15.1 SAAS shall carry out periodic surveillances of the accredited CB to verify that it continues to comply with the SAAS accreditation criteria. SAAS, with the appointed lead auditor, shall manage the surveillance and reaccreditation process per sections 10 through 12 of this document and conduct the office assessment per Work Instruction 316, reporting the assessment result using Form 317, and the witness assessment per Work Instruction 314, reporting the assessment result using Form 315. Any nonconformities shall be prepared using SAAS Form 415 for presentation to the client during the closing meeting. The CB representative and the SAAS auditor shall each sign the CAR Form 415. SAAS shall retain the original signed copy and a copy shall be left with the CB representative.

15.1.1 Surveillance assessments shall be scheduled by the SAAS Director of Accreditation or designee, who shall also nominate the lead auditor and assessment team members and provide the lead auditor with all required documentation to allow the conduct of the assessment. Surveillance office assessments and witness assessments shall be conducted in each country or region as described below.

- a. In all cases, the CB’s site granting certificates will be assessed annually, at a minimum.
- b. See Appendix A for required scheduling of surveillance assessments for accredited certification bodies issuing SA8000 certificates.

15.1.2 **Office assessment:** The purpose of the office assessment is to ensure continued compliance with the requirements of SAAS. The SAAS assessment shall be performed in accordance with the SAAS Work Instruction 316 and shall be reported using Form 317.

At each surveillance office assessment, the SAAS assessment team shall review, at a minimum:

- a) The CB’s records of management review;
- b) The CB’s records of internal audits;
- c) The CB’s records of corrective action;
- d) The records of any complaints, appeals and disputes;

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- e) The CB and its certified clients use of the SAAS Accreditation Symbol;
- f) Auditor records and the procedure for allocating auditor teams, which must include requirements and auditor qualifications as referenced in Procedure 200 (or Procedure 150, per footnote 2);
- g) A sample of certified organization assessment packages;
- h) A review of current reports from other accreditation agencies.

15.1.3 **Witness assessment:** The purpose of the witness assessment is to assist in the determination of CB auditor competence and verify that relevant procedures are followed. SAAS assessment team members raise issues in this area against the CB auditor training and competency requirements rather than against individual auditors. The SAAS assessment shall be performed in accordance with the SAAS Work Instruction 314 and shall include all assessment phases, including research, planning, conducting and reporting the assessment. The assessment shall be reported using Form 315.

At each surveillance witness assessment the assessment team shall review, at a minimum:

- a) The CB assessment team's qualifications;
- b) The CB assessment team's preparation including the determination of auditor days for the certification, NGO/trade union consultation, basic needs wage determination, and other research;
- c) The conduct of the assessment, including interview techniques;
- d) The CB's assessment report, issuance and management of Corrective Action Requests.

15.2 Re-accreditation:

15.2.1 See Appendix A for minimum number of clients required for accredited certification bodies applying for reaccreditation to conduct SA8000 certifications.

15.2.2 Complete reassessment of the accredited CB's compliance with accreditation procedures will begin within 3 months of the end of the accreditation term of three years, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Director of Accreditation. The reaccreditation assessments shall cover all elements and cover all steps of the accreditation requirements, as described herein and in SAAS Procedure 200. CBs applying for reaccreditation shall complete an application form, pay the required reaccreditation application fee, and submit any revised documentation in advance of the office assessment. See section 10 through 13 of this document for further details on the application process.

## 16.0 EXTENDING ACCREDITATION

Extensions to accreditation are dealt with in Section 17 below.

## 17.0 REDUCING, EXTENDING & WITHDRAWING ACCREDITATION

There are various reasons for changing accreditation status, which would be based upon a reassessment or other steps specified below.

17.1 SAAS may reduce the scope of, suspend or withdraw the accreditation, partially or in total, if it considers that the accredited CB has infringed the requirements of accreditation in any significant manner and report such information to the ARP. This process is further detailed in SAAS Procedure 210.

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- 17.2 The Director of Accreditation may decide to order a full or partial reassessment as a result of changes that materially affect the operation of the accredited CB (such as change in ownership or changes in senior personnel), or if analysis of a complaint or any other information indicates that the accredited CB may no longer comply with the accreditation criteria. Where full or partial reassessments are required, the procedures set out in this document shall be followed. The decision to perform such a reassessment shall be made by the Director of Accreditation in consultation with the Lead Auditor. The CB shall be given a minimum period of notice of 21 working days, if possible and reassessments shall follow the procedures set out in this document.
- 17.3 If the accredited CB wishes to extend or reduce its scope of accreditation, it must apply to SAAS in writing to do so, setting out the proposed changes and justifications. The SAAS Director of Accreditation will consider this application and will decide what, if any, assessment procedure is appropriate in order to determine whether or not the amendment should be granted, and act accordingly. The decision to perform such a reassessment shall be made by the Director of Accreditation in consultation with the ARP. Where full or partial reassessments are required, SAAS shall follow the procedures set out in this document.
- 17.4 SAAS may choose to reduce the scope of a CB's accreditation, by geographic region or industry, should it persistently fail to meet requirements set out by SAAS. In this case, procedures set out in SAAS Procedure 210 shall be utilized. Should a decision by the Director of Accreditation be for reduction, suspension or withdrawal of SAAS Accreditation then the ARP shall be notified.
- 17.5 Detailed procedures for withdrawal, suspension and cancellation of accreditations are found in SAAS Procedure 210.

## **18.0 RECORDS ON CBs**

- 18.1 SAAS maintains records on CBs to demonstrate that requirements for accreditation, including competence of personnel, have been effectively fulfilled.
- 18.2 Detailed procedures for document control are found in SAAS Procedure 204 and maintenance of files and records in Procedure 205.
- 18.3 SAAS keeps and manages appropriate records on CBs secure to ensure confidentiality.
- 18.4 The records kept on CBs shall include but are not limited to:
- a) Relevant correspondence,
  - b) Assessment records and reports,
  - c) Records of committee deliberations, if applicable, and accreditation decisions, and
  - d) Copies of accreditation certificates.

## **19.0 PROFICIENCY TESTING AND OTHER COMPARISONS FOR LABORATORIES**

This clause of ISO 17011 is not applicable to SAAS at this time.

## **20.0 OBLIGATIONS OF THE CERTIFICATION BODIES**

- 20.1 SAAS requires that applicant and accredited CBs:
- a) Always comply with the accreditation criteria and associated documents.
  - b) Make all necessary arrangements for the conduct of accreditation, reaccreditation and surveillance assessments per the requirements found in this Procedure, Procedure 200,

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including provision for examining documentation and the access to all areas, records (including internal audit reports, third party assessment reports by other bodies, personnel records and complaints) and personnel for the purposes of assessment, surveillance, reassessment and resolution of complaints. This includes accommodation for a document review, office assessment and witness assessment.

- c) Make available, when requested, all records of complaints, appeals and disputes in which the CB may be involved, and subsequent actions taken by the CB.
  - d) Only claim to be accredited with respect to the scope for which they have been granted accreditation.
  - e) Do not use accreditation in such a manner as to bring SAAS or the standard-setting organization into disrepute, and do not make any statement regarding accreditation which SAAS or the standard-setting organization may consider misleading or unauthorized.
  - f) Upon suspension or withdrawal of accreditation (however determined), discontinue use of all advertising matter that contains any reference thereto and returns any accreditation documents as required by SAAS.
  - g) Do not allow the fact of their accreditation to be used to imply that a product, process, system or person is approved by SAAS or the standard-setting organization.
  - h) Ensure that no accreditation document, symbol or report, or any part thereof, is used in a misleading manner.
  - i) In making reference to accreditation status in communication media such as documents, website, brochures or advertising, comply with SAAS requirements.
  - j) Report in writing, every three months, a list of SAAS accredited certifications, withdrawals and, when requested, statistical information on assessment practices, corrective actions issued, and audit results.
- 20.2 It is required that each accredited CB shall promptly notify SAAS of any intended or actual changes to its management system or other changes that may materially affect conformity to accreditation criteria. See Appendix A for additional requirements for SA8000 certification. As examples, these may be changes to its:
- a) Legal, commercial or organizational status;
  - b) Organization and management, for example key managerial staff and accreditation decision process;
  - c) Policies and procedures;
  - d) Personnel, equipment, facilities, location, working environment or other resources.

## **21.0 OBLIGATIONS OF SAAS**

- 21.1 SAAS shall ensure that at all times it operates non-discriminatory policies and procedures, administered in a non-discriminatory manner. SAAS procedures will not be used to impede or inhibit access by applicant bodies other than as specified in this procedure.
- 21.2 SAAS shall make its services accessible to all applicants whose activities fall within the defined accreditation area. There shall not be undue financial or other conditions. Access shall not be conditional upon size of the applicant CB or membership of any association or group, nor shall accreditation be conditional upon the number of bodies already accredited.

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- 21.3 SAAS shall confine its requirements, assessments and decisions on accreditation to those matters specifically related to the scope of accreditation being considered.
- 21.4 SAAS shall safeguard confidentiality of information obtained in the course of its accreditation activities at all levels of the organization, including committees and external bodies or individuals acting on its behalf.

Except where required in the procedures set out by SAAS, or per Article Seven of the Accreditation Agreement between SAAS and the CB, or by U.S. law, information about a particular CB shall not be disclosed to a third person without the written consent of the CB.

- 21.5 SAAS shall give CBs due notice of any changes it intends to make in its requirements for accreditation of procedures that affect implementation of their certification systems. Such SAAS procedural changes will be based upon a review of the effectiveness of SAAS policies through internal audits, peer and management reviews, analysis of CARs issued to CBs, complaints, changes to the relevant normative document, and other such input. SAAS will provide adequate notice to CBs and others affected by such changes and will take into account views expressed by interested parties (including CBs) before deciding on the precise form and effective date of the changes. Following a decision on, and publication of, the changed requirements, it shall verify that each accredited CB carries out any necessary adjustments to its procedures within such time as, in the opinion of SAAS, is reasonable.
- 21.6 Any complaint, appeal or dispute brought before SAAS by CBs or other parties shall be subject to review and investigation per SAAS Procedure 202.

## **22.0 REFERENCE TO ACCREDITATION AND USE OF SYMBOLS**

- 22.1 SAAS will allow accredited CBs to refer to accreditation in certificates, reports, stationery, website and publicity material relating to the accredited activities. Those organizations certified by an accredited CB that fall within the CB's scope of accreditation by SAAS are also entitled to use the SAAS accreditation symbol, known as an accreditation mark. All users of the SAAS accreditation mark, and all references to accreditation by the CB, must comply with SAAS policy "Conditions for Use of the SAAS Accreditation Mark" (Procedure 426).
- 22.2 Users of the accreditation mark must not use the mark in any way that implies that SAAS or the standard-setting organization itself approved a system certified by an accredited CB. The symbol shall not be used on a product or in any other way that may be interpreted as denoting product conformance.
- 22.3 Should the accreditation mark be incorrectly referred to, or used in misleading ways, SAAS shall take appropriate actions, which could include asking the CB to take appropriate corrective action, withdrawal of certificate, publication of the transgression and if necessary, legal action.

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## **Annex A: SA8000-SPECIFIC CERTIFICATION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

The following criteria are mandated for CBs undertaking certification to SA8000:

### **15.0 Reaccreditation and Surveillance**

This clause is amended as follows:

#### **15.1.1**

- c. **Office assessment:** SAAS will survey all CBs to specify and identify location of certification approval and decision making process; based on that data, office reviews will take place as follows, based on the CB certificate granting process:
- i. **Global decisions:** SAAS shall conduct an **annual** assessment of **main CB headquarters**. If the certification decision by the CB is decentralized, SAAS shall visit annually the CB office where the management representative for SA8000 activities is located.
  - ii. **Regional/multi-country decisions:** Assessments will take place annually at a minimum of: SAAS assessment of **main headquarters** (as detailed above) and 1 of the **Regional** offices authorized to make certification decisions and review auditor qualifications. In addition, SAAS will conduct an office assessment of **each regional office** at least once in every accreditation term.
  - iii. **National/local decisions:** SAAS will conduct an office assessment when conducting witness assessments in the country.
- d. **Witness assessment:** SAAS will conduct a minimum of **2 witness assessments** of each CB annually, and more depending on activity thresholds indicated below. Additional assessments may be necessitated under certain circumstances, per SAAS's discretion. If the Certification Body has an office that conducts SA8000 activity in the same country as the witness assessment is taking place, SAAS shall require an office assessment as well, per 15.1.1.c.iii, above.

Witness assessments are determined based on the following geographical sampling criteria:

- i. For CB activity in **new countries** and countries with up to **4** SA8000 certifications: no site visit required.
    - a. Document review of SA8000 procedures required. Evidence of compliance with SAAS requirements should be submitted to SAAS upon the first certification in a new country.
    - b. Interview of auditors required.
    - c. Review all auditors' personnel files to verify adequacy of training provided.
  - ii. **Countries** with **5** or more SA8000 certifications:
    - a. SAAS requires a site visit at least once in the three year accreditation term.
  - iii. **Countries** with **10** or more SA8000 certifications:
    - a. Annual site visit required.
    - b. This requirement may be relaxed, at the discretion of the Director of Accreditation, based on CB's growth in the country, history, and country risk factors.
- 15.1.2 Based on the criteria in 15.1.1, a minimum of 1 surveillance assessment (office and/or witness) of accredited quality systems certification bodies will occur at intervals of six months. These surveillance assessments may be carried out within three months before or after the nominal due date, the actual date to be agreed between the SAAS Director of Accreditation or other designated SAAS staff or designated Lead Auditor and the CB.
- 15.2.1 The CB must have a minimum of 5 active SA8000 certification accounts to apply for reaccreditation.

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## **20.0 Obligations of the Certification Bodies**

This clause is amended as follows:

20.2 It is required that each accredited CB shall promptly notify SAAS of any intended or actual changes to its management system or other changes that may materially affect conformity to accreditation criteria. This requirement encompasses, as an example, any such changes in a country within the scope of accreditation where new countries, 5-10 or more SA8000 assessments, or other such expansions have taken place, as well as at its headquarters.

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