Management System Maturity Declaration Process Requirements for Accredited Certification Bodies for the SA8000 Program

1. Revision History

This document supersedes and replaces all previous versions of Procedure 200A.

Revision #	Revision Date	Revision Description	Approved By
Version 1	Issued February 2016	Initial Version	Rochelle Zaid
Version 2	Issued May 2020	Revision to Align with MD Tools	John Brookes
Version 2.1	Issued July 10, 2020	Clarifications only (based on CB feedback received)	John Brookes

2. Contents

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3. Introduction, Purpose and Approach

This Procedure defines requirements for a Certification Body (CB) performing Management Systems Maturity Declarations of SA8000 applicant and certified organisations.

The Management Systems Maturity Declaration process is designed to align with the management systems focus of the organisation by highlighting the extent to which management system controls are in place to support and underpin the organisation's social performance. Utilizing a 'monitor, measure, and improve' approach, this process helps organisations, auditors, certification bodies, and SAI to better understand the level of management systems maturity and significant elements that may be missing.

Note 1: This procedure replaces the February 2016 issue of SAAS Procedure 200A "Audit Requirements for Accredited Certification Bodies For Social Fingerprint," which has been withdrawn. This revision (coinciding with the launch of SAI's SA8000 Certification Database and ongoing movement toward measuring a certified organisation's SA8000 process effectiveness as part of SA8000 audits) introduces changes to terminology surrounding the management system evaluation process. The term "Social Fingerprint" is no longer being used by SAI in the context of SA8000. With the launch of this procedure, the following terms apply:

> *Management Systems Self-Assessment: Performed by an organisation seeking or maintaining SA8000 certification as a reflection of that organisation's management system maturity in order to provide benchmarking and insight to help the organisation identify areas for improvement. Results of self-assessments remain the property of the organisation performing them.*

> *Management Systems Self-Assessment may be abbreviated as "SA." SAs are to be completed by an applicant or certified organisation within 6 months prior to a Stage 1 or Recertification Audit only. The organisation may also conduct additional SAs at any time of its choosing. The organisation is not obliged to share its SA scores with the CB audit team, because SA scores are not (no longer) a component of the SA8000 certification program.*

> *Management Systems Maturity Declaration: Performed by the CB's audit team to independently evaluate and declare the audited maturity of the organisation's management system. This activity replaces the CB management evaluation activity formerly referred to as a "[Social Fingerprint] Independent Evaluation," however, the CB audit team no longer has access to SA results.*

> *Management Systems Maturity Declaration may be abbreviated as "MD." MDs are to be independently conducted by a CB's audit team in conjunction with each Stage 1, Stage 2, Surveillance, Recertification and Transfer Audit. See further details below defining the use of MDs within the SA8000 certification program.*

Note 2: At the time of publication of this procedure, SAI is in the process of developing further guidance to assist organisations, auditors and other interested parties interpret the expectations of the Self-Assessment and Management Systems Maturity (MD) tools. This will be finalized and distributed by SAI in due course.

Note 3: The requirements of this procedure also supersede those requirements within version 4.2 of SAAS Procedure 200 "Audit Requirements for Accredited Certification Bodies for the SA8000 Program" which

refer to the term 'social fingerprint.' Rather than making multiple incremental changes to SAAS Procedure 200 as elements of the SAI database are introduced, SAAS will update the procedure more completely in due course to reflect these and other CB operational requirement changes related to use of SAI's SA8000 Certification Database.

4. MD General Requirements

The CB Audit Team shall independently conduct a Management Systems Maturity Declaration (MD) of each Organisation in accordance with the requirements of this procedure. Based on evidence gathered (including audit evidence demonstrating an organisation's commitment to, and accomplishment of, SA8000 social performance elements) and using the guidance provided, the CB Audit Team shall evaluate each individual MD question to determine and record the most appropriate score. MD data may be used by the CB and its audit staff to drive improvement by:

- Evaluating risks and focusing future audit effort
- Identifying areas of Organisation management system conformity/non-conformity.

5. MD Frequency and Planning During the SA8000 Certification Cycle

5.1. Organisations on annual surveillance cycle:
During the initial Stage 1 and Stage 2 certification audits, then during each subsequent surveillance and recertification audit. *(In accordance with requirements of SAAS Procedure 200 version 4 and later.) Also at any Transfer Audit.*

5.2. Organisations remaining on a semi-annual surveillance cycle:
During every second surveillance visit (i.e. audits #2 and #4, approximately 12 and 24 months after certification) and subsequent recertification audit, then migrated to annual certification cycle requirements *(in accordance with Section 16 requirements of the former SAAS Procedure 200 version 3.1 – now withdrawn and replaced). Also at any Transfer Audit.*

5.3. Multi-site Organisations:
During the initial certification Stage 1 and Stage 2 audits, then annually thereafter (i.e. during every second Head Office surveillance - visit #2 and #4, approximately 12 and 24 months after certification) and at each recertification audit *(in accordance with section 21 of SAAS Procedure 200 version 4 and later). Also at any Transfer Audit.*

Note: *Internet Connectivity: It is recognized that in some situations, poor internet connectivity prohibits real time connection to the SAI Database. Under these circumstances, the SAI Database Entry Off-Line Tool, (or previously distributed Excel Workbook) should be used. Data should be transferred from the Excel Workbook to the SAI Database within 2 working days of the last day of the audit.*

6. Stage 1 Audit – MD Specific Requirements

6.1. Audit Preparation

a. A Stage 1 Audit may not be performed until the applicant Organisation has successfully completed a SA within the SAI Database. The CB shall check to confirm the applicant Organisation has successfully completed a SA within six months prior to commencing the Stage 1 Audit. This can be accomplished by reviewing the Organisation's Profile in the SAI Database, which indicates the date of the last completed SA.

b. The Stage 1 Audit Plan shall include sufficient time for the Audit Team Leader to perform a management system documentation review and complete the MD.

6.2. Audit Performance

a. The CB Audit Team Leader shall collect evidence during the Stage 1 Audit to complete the MD.

b. Because the Stage 1 Audit is a limited audit, the auditor may not have all of the detailed information about the Organisation's management system, so the auditor shall answer the questions as accurately as possible with the information available. The results of the MD provide a general impression of the maturity/immaturity of the Organisation's management system planning and identify areas for improvement before the Stage 2 Audit.

c. The Audit Team Leader may choose to answer some questions of the MD as he/she conducts the audit and collects evidence; or, the auditor may choose to answer all of the questions of the MD after the evidence collection is complete.

d. The Audit Team Leader shall answer all of the questions in the MD in order to produce the scores and report during the classification of any audit findings and before the closing meeting.

e. The MD results (scores, difficult questions, highlighted weaknesses, and strengths, etc.) shall be reviewed with the Organisation during the closing meeting.

f. The MD results (scores, difficult questions, highlighted weaknesses, and strengths, etc…) shall be reviewed as one factor for determining whether the Organisation is ready for the Stage 2 Audit, in conjunction with the other audit findings.

g. The auditor may assist the Organisation's management in their understanding of the SA/MD questions and their significance. The auditor shall NOT provide direct guidance or advice to help the Organisation improve its scores.

6.3. Audit Outcomes

a. MD report/results shall be recorded and maintained in the online SAI Database.

b. If more than 6 months pass between the end of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Audits, the CB shall conduct an additional Stage 1 Audit and corresponding MD. The Organisation is not required to repeat the Self-Assessment under these circumstances.

7. Stage 2 Audit – MD Specific Requirements

7.1. Audit Preparation

a. Prior to performing the Stage 2 Audit, the CB Audit Team Leader shall review the results of the Stage 1 (and any previous) MD(s).

b. The Stage 2 Audit Plan shall include sufficient time for the Audit Team Leader to complete the MD on-site (either directly, or using the SAI off-site form, if necessary).

c. Typically, about 2 hours should be allocated for this activity (in conjunction with the audit evaluation of SA8000 section 9 – management system).

7.2. Audit Performance

a. The Audit Team shall use the results of the MD as input information to provide focus during the Stage 2 Audit, particularly those components of the audit that assess the organisation's management system as per Requirement 9 of SA8000:2014.

b. The audit team may choose to answer relevant questions of the MD as they conduct the audit and collect evidence, or choose to answer all of the questions of the MD after the evidence collection is complete. Either way, the auditors shall collect sufficient evidence during the audit to answer all of the questions in the MD.

c. After the Audit Team has collected all the evidence for the audit, the team shall confer to prepare for the closing meeting, as described in the appropriate section(s) of Procedure 200. Team members shall provide feedback to the Audit Team Leader about their full assessment of the maturity of the Organisation organisation's management system. Based on this feedback and other evidence collected during the audit (including the Social Performance Criteria Flagging from the SAI Audit Tool), the Audit Team Leader and Audit Team Members shall finalize answers to all of the questions in the MD. Prior to the closing meeting the Audit Team Leader shall compare the results of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Audits to assess the Organisation organisation's implementation of changes, and thereby commit to continual improvement.

d. The MD report/results (scores, difficult questions, highlighted weaknesses, and strengths, etc…) shall be reviewed with the Organisation during the closing meeting.

e. MD outcomes and audit findings (i.e. N/C's raised) should correlate.

7.3. Audit Outcomes

a. The MD report/results shall be maintained in the online SAI Database.

8. Surveillance Audit – MD Specific Requirements

8.1. Audit Preparation
a. Prior to performing a Surveillance Audit with a required MD, the Audit Team Leader shall review the results of the previous MDs.

b. The Audit Plan developed for the Surveillance Audit shall include sufficient time for the Audit Team Leader to complete the MD on-site or complete the SAI Database off-site form.

8.2. Audit Performance
a. The MD results (scores, difficult questions, highlighted weaknesses, and strengths, etc.) shall be reviewed as one factor for determining whether the Organisation shall maintain SA8000 Certification. It shall also be reviewed to assess the Organisation organisation's progress in implementing improvements.

b. The MD results (scores, difficult questions, highlighted weaknesses and strengths, etc…) shall be reviewed with the Organisation during the closing meeting.

8.3. Audit Outcomes
a. The MD report/results shall be maintained in the online SAI Database.

9. Recertification Audit – MD Specific Requirements
In general, MD processes for Recertification Audits follow the same process requirements as Stage 2 Audits. One addition is that the CB shall check to confirm the certified Organisation has successfully completed a SA within six months prior to commencing a recertification Audit (similar to Stage 1 preparation requirement).

10. Transfer Audit – MD Specific Requirements
In general, MD processes for Transfer Audits follow the same process requirements as Stage 2 Audits.

Note: No SA is required at the time of a Transfer Audit.

----------End of SAAS Procedure 200A---------