

SAAS Accreditation Issue Update: February 2026

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1. 2026 Accreditation Program – In Progress

Each CAB should, by now, have received a communication from their assigned 2026 SAAS Lead Auditor. Many kick-off meetings and a handful of audits have already taken place. If you are confused about your CAB's 2026 audit program, please contact your assigned SAAS Lead Auditor for clarification as soon as possible. SAAS Oversight will primarily focus on SA8000:2014 Audits this 2026 Oversight Year.

Witness Audits will remain semi-announced, where feasible. Please, therefore, keep the SAI Audit Tool/Database up to date for scheduling purposes and with all audit-related details. Please note (for your advance information), the following list represents (in no particular order) some of the 'major focus areas' that SAAS management has asked Lead Auditors to review in 2026:

- a. Personnel Competency and SAI Industry Sector Competence;
- b. CAB implementation of Transition Plan for SA8000:2026 and subsequent approval to deliver SA8000:2026 audits;
- c. Personnel Training on the SA8000:2026 system;
- d. Implementation of Updated Certification Policies and Procedures (when published);
- e. Use of SAI audit tool;
- f. CAB's Implementation of APSCA Membership;
- g. Compliance with Procedure: 200 v4.2-2020;
- h. Scope of SA8000 Client Certification
- i. Effectiveness and integrity of audit 'technical reviews';
- j. KPI data maintained, analyzed, and utilized to drive improvements.

Note 1: SA8000:2026 Documents are found on the SAI website in the [SA8000 Resource Center](#).

Note 2: SAAS Documents can be found in the publicly available [Document Library](#) on our website.

2. Italy Anti-Mafia Interdiction Measures

We remind all Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) delivering SA8000 audits in Italy to remain informed as follows: We are aware that a number of SA8000 certified clients in Italy have recently been subject to anti-mafia interdiction measures or related prosecutions.

We would like to clarify SA8000-related expectations regarding certification status in such circumstances. The SA8000:2014 Standard does not address corruption, bribery, or mafia-related conduct under a standalone "Business Integrity" clause - integrity-related issues are captured indirectly through:

Clause 9 – Management System, in particular:

- 9.1 Policies, Procedures and Records
- 9.3 Risk Assessment
- 9.4 Monitoring
- 9.10 Corrective and Preventive Action
- 9.11 Control of Suppliers/Subcontractors

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And potentially through:

- Clause 2 – Forced or Compulsory Labor
- Clause 3 – Health and Safety
- Clause 4 – Freedom of Association
- Clause 8 – Remuneration

Because SA8000 is not a legal compliance audit, the initiation of a criminal investigation or prosecution does not, in itself, constitute grounds for automatic suspension or withdrawal of certification.. However, CABs are required to determine whether the circumstances giving rise to the legal action indicate non-conformity with SA8000 requirements. A non-conformity shall be raised if confirmed mafia involvement results in the determination of:

- coercion,
- labor exploitation,
- interference with worker representation,
- unsafe working conditions,
- illicit subcontracting,
- or systemic governance failure.

The critical question is not whether prosecution has occurred, but whether there is objective evidence that the SA8000 certified management system failed to prevent, detect, or address conduct inconsistent with SA8000 requirements. Where credible evidence indicates management system failure, exploitation, coercion, interference with worker rights, unsafe practices, or failures in supplier control linked to the clauses identified above, this may constitute a major non-conformity and require suspension and/or withdrawal in accordance with documented procedures.

Certification decisions must be based on objective evidence, properly documented, and made impartially. Failure to appropriately evaluate and respond to significant integrity risks may raise concerns regarding certification credibility. Where necessary, a special audit or expanded surveillance activity should be undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of the management system in light of the allegations. SAAS expects CABs to:

1. Conduct a documented risk assessment upon becoming aware of such cases.
2. Evaluate the relevance of the legal action to the applicable SA8000 clauses identified above.
3. Take proportionate certification decisions in line with their suspension and withdrawal procedures.
4. Maintain clear records demonstrating the rationale for any decision taken.
5. Discuss the affected clients at CAB management review meetings.
6. Make the records from 1-5 available to SAAS upon request.

3. SA8000 Updated Version

On behalf of SAI, we wish to thank all of you, and your staff, who contributed time and expertise to help shape the [revised version of SA8000](#). The [SA8000:2026 Indicator Library](#) is now available, as are translated versions of the SA8000:2026. For additional information about the SA8000:2026 Upgrade Training, please visit the [SAI website](#).

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