

Dear CB SA8000 Program Manager,

We hope you are all keeping well. Welcome to the second SAAS “Accreditation Issues Update” of 2023 (the prior being April 2023). This official SAAS notification serves to keep you abreast of ongoing significant SA8000 Accreditation Program (and other) issues.

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### 1. SAAS COVID-19 Alternative Process Requirements – Canceled

Following significant improvements to the COVID-19 situation globally, SAAS is happy to announce that all SAAS COVID-19 Alternative Process Requirements for the SA8000 Program are now fully canceled. CBs should now be following ‘regular’ on-site audit protocols fully in accordance with SAAS procedure 200 (version 4.2 – March 2020), including unannounced/semi-announced audits as required by procedure 200.

### 2. SA8000 Living Wages – Alert!

(Particularly Relevant to Worker Cooperatives and all involved CBA named “multiservizi”, the Italian Security Sector, and Sicuritalia Group)

SAI & SAAS wish to make it clear that **in all cases, SA8000 Audit Teams are required to verify and record payment of wages in accordance with SA8000 requirements:**

Criterion 8.1 – “The organisation *shall* respect the right of personnel to a living wage and ensure that wages for a normal work week, not including overtime, *shall* always meet at least legal or industry minimum standards, or collective bargaining agreements (where applicable). Wages *shall* be sufficient to meet the basic needs of personnel and to provide some discretionary income.”

*("Living Wage" is presently defined in SA8000 [definitions section 12] to be: "The remuneration received for a standard work week by a worker in a particular place sufficient to afford a decent standard of living for the worker and her or his family. Elements of a decent standard of living include food, water, housing, education, health care, transport, clothing, and other essential needs including provision for unexpected events.")*

... and SAAS Procedure 200 v4.2 – March 2020:

Paragraphs 12.1.4; 14.1.1e); Table 5; Table 10; Table 11; Table 22; Table 25; and Annex C – "Living Wage"

**Under the SA8000 certification scheme, it is not acceptable for auditors or certification bodies to assume that:**

- **a company's adherence to national law or national collective bargaining agreements (or similar) is sufficient to assure that SA8000 requirements are being met.**
- **the absence of a legal minimum wage (as is the case in Italy) obviates a company's responsibilities to meet some of the SA8000/SAAS requirements.**

Both of which we have heard from CBs and audit teams.

We particularly wish to alert Certification Bodies operating in Italy to allegations of major violations of SA8000 requirements within the Italian security sector (notably by Sicuritalia and its affiliates), as outlined in the attached documents (Circolare ministero Interno su monitoraggio straordinario Istituti di Vigilanza Privata; and sentenza-cassazione-vigilanza-02\_10\_2023), and as previously published in the Italian press (for example, in this [Milano Corriere news article](#)).

Any certification body that has certified any Sicuritalia Group member is requested to take immediate investigative and remedial action. Any certification body approached by a Sicuritalia Group member company (or, indeed, any other organization claiming to operate as a cooperative under Italian law) needs to apply extreme caution before entering into an agreement to provide SA8000 services.

SAAS will review this situation during accreditation audits etc. and will continue to monitor publicly available information concerning workers' rights allegations in Italy and elsewhere.

SAAS expects Certification Bodies to evaluate internal practices, further communicate requirements (as needed), and ensure that SA8000/SAAS procedure 200 expectations are being applied by audit teams in all situations.

### **3. Interpretation/Clarification – Client Companies That Fail to Readily Accommodate an Audit**

SAAS Procedure 200 v4.2 – March 2020 Figure 3 / Paragraph 16.1.2.2 'guidance note'. **This note was intended to also include clients' accommodation of (fully announced) Re-Certification Audit** (Prior to 30 months). i.e. it should read

"Any client company that does not readily accommodate a required audit visit (announced, or semi-announced) during the prescribed window SHALL have its certification initially **SUSPENDED**

and, if the situation is not satisfactorily addressed within three weeks, SHALL have its certification subsequently CANCELED.”

The same statement applies with respect to a company’s adherence to multi-site audit timeline windows prescribed in SAAS Procedure 200 v4.2 Figure 4/ paragraph 21.2.5 requirements.

We apologize for these SAAS typographical omissions and any confusion they may have caused. SAAS auditors have been requested to apply this interpretation immediately. We will ensure that the clarified language is included in future revisions of SAAS Procedure 200.

#### **4. Interpretation/Clarification – Audit Preparation – SAI Database Usage and Company Research**

Database entry reminder. CBs should enforce the requirement that their clients update Profile Information in the SAI Tool BEFORE each audit. This will alert CBs to relevant issues (such as head office details, scope/industry sector adjustments, changes to the number of sites, increased/decreased number of personnel), thereby enabling the CB to adjust audit team composition, competence and audit effort accordingly.

SAAS will soon be introducing requirements for CBs/Auditors to undertake research as part of the preparation for every SA8000-related audit. In advance of this, CBs are requested to undertake audit preparatory reviews which, as a minimum, should evaluate the certified company’s:

- Public records (related to SA8000 requirements)
- Follow-up of any nonconformity investigations (including complaints)
- SAI/SA8000 database details
  - Client Profile is updated and verified.
  - Scope of operations verified
  - Prior audit status and NC closure details recorded and verified

#### **5. SAAS Accreditation Oversight Operations**

Both the 2023 SA8000 Accreditation Program and the SA8000 2023-24 Market Surveillance Visit (MSV) Program are underway and progressing according to plan. If you have concerns, please contact your assigned SAAS Lead Accreditation Auditor or Lisa Bernstein.

#### **6. APSCA**

SAI continues to support the APSCA goals and auditor certification program. As always, SAI and SAAS expect accredited SA8000 CBs that are APSCA signatories to meet scheme requirements, including the requirement for CSCA auditors to lead SA8000 audits, which recently became mandatory under the APSCA program.

For questions related to APSCA audit fees related to SA8000 audits, please refer to the SAI email of September 25 from Rochelle Zaid.

Please Join me in welcoming Colleen Vien to her new role as President & CEO of APSCA. Her significant past experience with numerous social performance schemes, including SA8000, make her an ideal fit for the position. We look forward to working with her to advance the quality, integrity and professionalism of social audits. [Link to APSCA Announcement.](#)

## **7. SA8000 CB Calibration**

Major changes to SAAS Procedures 200, 201A, and 201B are in the pipeline and will be the subject of the next CB calibration sessions. The timeline for completion of these changes remains uncertain at present, therefore we have not yet fixed a date for the next 'CB Calibration' (During 2024).

## **8. SAI Database – Omissions and Delays**

We thank all CBs for compiling certification records in the SAI database. With broader and continuing use, numerous database shortcomings have been identified. These will be prioritized and addressed by SAI over time. Please continue to report any/all database reporting (and other) anomalies to [Chris Lamoureux](#) at SAI as soon as possible ([CLamoureux@sa-intl.org](mailto:CLamoureux@sa-intl.org)) with a copy to Peter Scott ([pscott@saasaccreditation.org](mailto:pscott@saasaccreditation.org)). We wish to thank those CBs who have already forwarded anomalies/suggestions to us. SAI is working to respond to issues identified.

As conveyed previously, SAAS recognizes that CBs' use of the database may contradict certain specific requirements in SAAS Procedure 200 ('Audit Requirements for Accredited Certification Bodies for the SA8000 Program'). At the present time, SAAS auditors have been instructed to recognize and record such deviations, but not cite 'database only' instances as nonconformities or OFIs.

## **9. IRIS Program – International Recruitment Integrity System**

IRIS and SAAS are actively seeking audit companies interested in carrying out IRIS certifications globally. Please contact [John Brookes](#) for further information. We anticipate that the next IRIS Auditor training Program will take place in either the USA or Mexico during Q1/Q2 2024. Further details of the program may be found on the [IRIS](#) and [SAAS](#) websites.

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*Note: These 'Accreditation Issue Updates' remain 'advisory' in nature – i.e. although these updates may be used to advise CBs of changes to accreditation requirements, the changes themselves will be defined within other 'normative' documents. SAAS Accreditation Issue Updates are aimed primarily at CB SA8000 Program Managers, however, SAAS anticipates that critical information contained in these updates be appropriately promulgated to all CB SA8000 staff and auditors and as appropriate their clients.*

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