

SA8000[®] Certification Program Timeline

Transitioning to SA8000:2026

Updated: 04/21/26

Introduction

As of January 1, 2026, SAI has published the final version of the SA8000:2026 Standard for Decent Work, which replaces the previous SA8000:2014 Standard. This document for SA8000-certified organizations (and those interested in seeking certification) details the timeline for transitioning certification to the new Standard, including specific deadlines based on your last year of (re)certification.

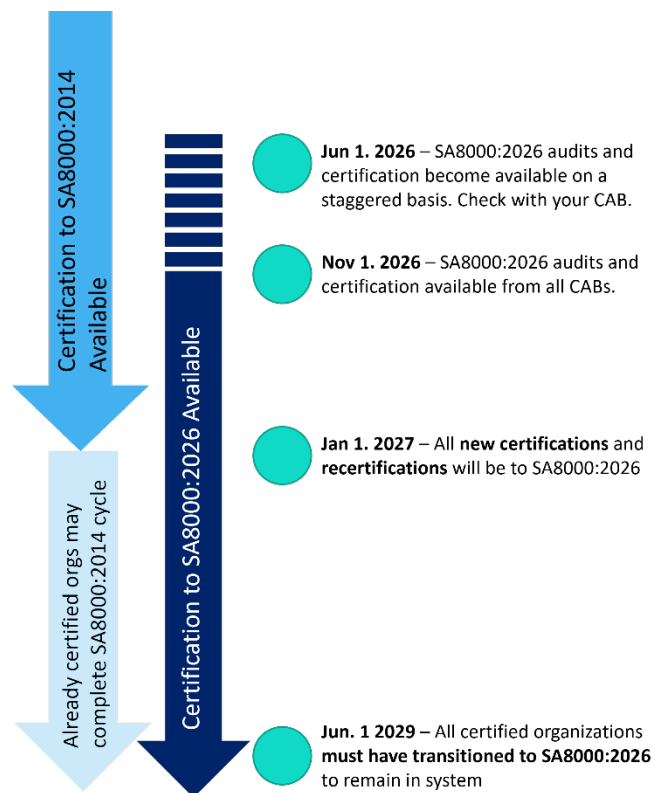
Detailed process requirements for Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) are available in the [SAAS Document Library](#).

General Transition Timeline and Expectations

From June 1-October 31, 2026, audits and certification to SA8000:2026 will become available on a staggered basis as CABs update their processes and get SAAS approval. As of November 1, 2026, all CABs are expected to offer SA8000:2026 audits and certification to maintain their accreditation.

Audits and certification to SA8000:2014 will remain available throughout 2026. At the time of a (re)certification audit, if the organization's CAB has been approved to offer SA8000:2026 audits, the organization may choose which Standard to be certified to.

Organizations certified to SA8000:2014 in 2026 may need to recertify early (by May 31, 2029). Early recertification refers to



scheduling the required recertification cycle to occur earlier than the normal three-year cycle to enable the transition to SA8000:2026.

As of January 1, 2027, all new certifications and recertifications shall be to the SA8000:2026 Standard.

As of May 31, 2029, all organizations shall be certified to the SA8000:2026 Standard to stay in the system.

NOTE: Certified organizations may only transition to SA8000:2026 during a recertification audit. Organizations cannot transition during a surveillance audit. Organizations are encouraged to discuss transition planning early with their CAB. Availability of SA8000:2026 audits and certification depends on CAB approval status.

Date	Milestone	What to know
June 1-October 31, 2026	SA8000:2026 audits and certification become available on a staggered basis. Check availability with your CAB.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your next (re)certification date is in 2026, you may choose to recertify to either SA8000:2014 or SA8000:2026.
November 1, 2026	SA8000:2026 audits and certification will be available from all CABs. SA8000:2014 audits and certification will remain available until year end.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your CAB is not yet able to deliver SA8000:2026 audits at the time of your audit, you must (re)certify to SA8000:2014 or work with a different CAB. • If you (re)certify to SA8000:2014, you may need to complete your next recertification audit early (by May 31, 2029).
December 31, 2026	All organizations must have completed the Getting Started with SA8000:2026® and Due Diligence training and self-assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your next (re)certification date is in 2026, you may complete this as part of your (re)certification process • If you are not getting (re)certified in 2026, you must still complete this by December 31, 2026.
January 1, 2027	Certification and recertification to SA8000:2014 is no longer available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All (re)certifications after this point must be to SA8000:2026.
May 31, 2029	All certified organizations must be certified to SA8000:2026 to remain in the system.	
June 1, 2029	Any remaining SA8000:2014 certificates will be withdrawn.	

About SA8000 Self-Assessments

All certified organizations must take the [Getting Started with SA8000:2026® and Due Diligence](#) training and self-assessment by December 31, 2026. This serves to ensure all certified organizations are familiar with the updated requirements. [See more details about this requirement.](#)

Organizations with (re)certification audits in 2026 must complete the training and self-assessment ahead of their audit (whether they are being audited to SA8000:2014 or SA8000:2026).

The SA8000:2026 self-assessment is provided as a learning tool for companies. While SAI collects the results for aggregated analysis, your scores and any information you provide will never be shared with auditors or be reviewed during any SA8000 audit process. Only the status of the organization's training completion and self-assessment submission will be reviewed for audit purposes.

What Organizations Needs to Do

Step 1: Complete the Getting Started with SA8000:2026 Training (Deadline: December 31, 2026)

All SA8000-certified organizations must complete the *Getting Started with SA8000:2026 and Due Diligence* on-demand training course, available in the SAI Training Center, by December 31, 2026. Organizations that do not complete the course by the deadline will be unable to have audits assigned to them in the SAI Database.

When completing the course, you must enter your organization's SAI Database organization number (ORG#) when prompted for your participation to be properly recorded for audit tracking purposes.

Note 1: Organizations that completed and paid for the SA8000:2014 Self-Assessment within one year of the launch of the SA8000:2026 Self-Assessment, will receive complimentary enrollment in the Getting Started with SA8000:2026 and Due Diligence course.

For more information and to get started go here: <https://sa-intl.org/services/getting-started-with-sa80002026-and-due-diligence-guided-self-assessment/>

Step 2: Complete the SA8000:2026 Self-Assessment (Deadline: December 31, 2026)

All SA8000-certified organizations must complete the SA8000:2026 Self-Assessment by December 31, 2026. This replaces the SA8000:2014 Self-Assessment, which will no longer be available once the 2026 version is launched. After 2026, the Self-Assessment will continue to be required within six months prior to any Stage 1 or Recertification audit.

Completing the 2026 Self-Assessment before this deadline can be done in either of two ways:

- 1) Through the SAI Database, once the SA8000:2026 Self-Assessment is live.

Organizations choosing to use this method will pay for the *Getting Started with SA8000:2026 and Due Diligence* course and self-assessment in the SAI Database. The self-assessment will be completed directly in the Database and the organization will receive an enrollment key to access the training course in the SAI Training Center. We encourage all organizations to complete the training before the self-assessment.

- 2) Using the downloadable Excel version of the SA8000:2026 Self-Assessment, available after completing the *Getting Started with SA8000:2026 and Due Diligence* course in the SAI Training Center.

Note 2: CABs will verify completion of the SA8000:2026 at the next audit or follow-up review for each organization.

Step 3: Prepare for Your Transition Audit

To transition to SA8000:2026, you must complete a recertification audit against SA8000:2026 requirements. This audit will be conducted by CABs and must be completed by the applicable transition deadline (see table above).

Before the transition audit, organizations should:

- 1) Conduct a gap analysis to identify where current policies, procedures, and practices need to be updated to meet SA8000:2026 requirements. CABs will review this gap analysis during the audit.
- 2) Update all SA8000-related procedures, documents, and policies to reflect SA8000:2026 requirements. Where possible, begin making these changes as soon as possible rather than waiting until the audit.

During the transition audit, CABs will assess the implementation of SA8000:2026 across the organization, with a particular focus on significant changes introduced in the revised Standard.

Management System Maturity Declarations (MSMDs)

For organizations currently certified to SA8000:2014, CABs are still required to fulfill all existing Management System Maturity Declaration (MSMD) obligations until the organization completes its transition to SA8000:2026. Once an organization transitions to SA8000:2026, the MSMD is no longer required. Management system maturity is instead assessed through the SA8000:2026 Audit Tool, which is integrated into the certification process. CABs will inform their clients of any changes to their specific obligations.

Continuing Education Requirements

Beginning in January 2027, SAI will introduce continuing education requirements for SA8000-certified organizations. These will set minimum levels of ongoing training for relevant SA8000 management representatives. Further details will be communicated in advance of this date.

Key Resources

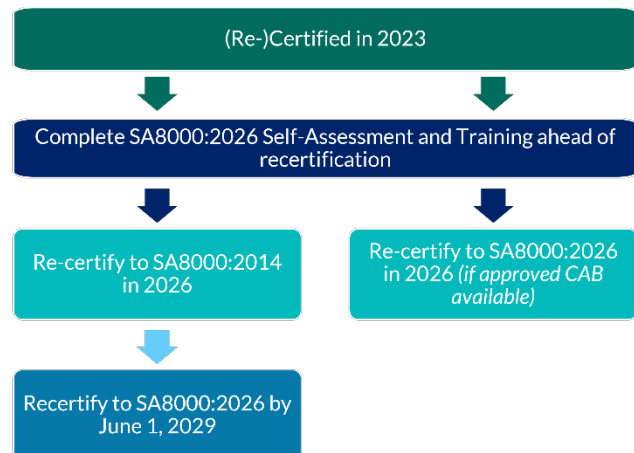
The following documents and tools are available to support organizations in their transition:

- 1) SA8000:2026 Standard: Published in January 2026 and available for download on the SAI website at: <https://sa-intl.org/resources/sa8000-standard/>. (Multiple languages now available)
- 2) SA8000:2026 Indicator Library (IL): Published in January 2026 and available for download on the SAI website at: <https://sa-intl.org/resources/sa8000-resource-center/>.
- 3) SA8000:2026 Guidance Document: Currently in draft. Once published, it will be available from SAI and distributed by CABs. In the meantime, continue to reference the SA8000:2014 Guidance Document where relevant.
- 4) *Getting Started with SA8000:2026 and Due Diligence* Training Course: Available in the SAI Training Center. More information is available on the SAI website at: <https://sa-intl.org/services/getting-started-with-sa80002026-and-due-diligence-guided-self-assessment/>.
- 5) SA8000:2026 Self-Assessment: Available as a downloadable Excel file from the SAI Training Center by completing the *Getting Started with SA8000:2026 and Due Diligence* training course. Will be available directly on the SAI Database beginning in 2026.

Transition Timeline for Specific Cohorts of Certified Organizations

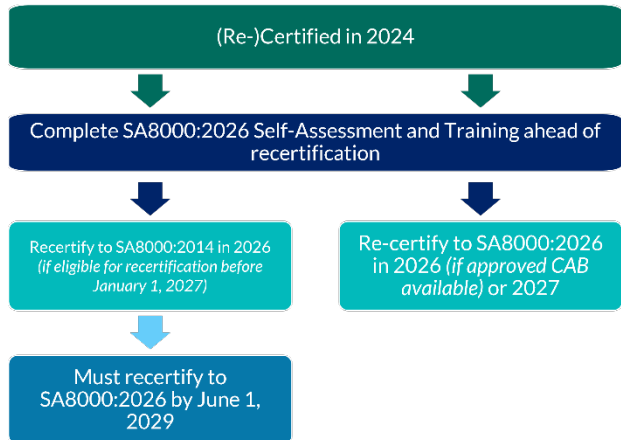
Organizations Certified or Recertified in 2023 (due for recertification in 2026)

Organizations (re)certified to SA8000:2014 in 2023 are due for recertification in 2026. **If an approved CAB is available** at the time of the organization's recertification, they may choose to recertify to either SA8000:2014 or SA8000:2026. If no approved CAB is available, they must recertify to SA8000:2014. Organizations that recertify to SA8000:2014 may be required to complete their next recertification audit early—by May 31, 2029—to transition to SA8000:2026.



Organizations Certified or Recertified in 2024 (due for recertification in 2027)

Organizations that (re)certified to SA8000:2014 in 2024 and are **eligible for recertification before January 1, 2027** may choose to recertify in 2026 to either SA8000:2014 or SA8000:2026 (dependent on CAB availability). Those that **recertify to SA8000:2014 must complete their next recertification audit early** –by May 31, 2029– to transition to SA8000:2026.



Organizations (re)certified to SA8000:2014 in 2024 that are **NOT eligible for recertification before January 1, 2027** must recertify to SA8000:2026 in 2027 to stay in the system.

Organizations Certified or Recertified in 2025 (due for recertification in 2028)

Organizations (re)certified in 2025 must **recertify to SA8000:2026 by May 31, 2029** to stay in the system.



Organizations Seeking Certification in 2026

Organizations seeking certification in 2026 may choose to be certified to either SA8000:2014 or SA8000:2026 (dependent on CAB availability). Organizations that certify to SA8000:2014 may need to complete their next recertification audit early—by May 31, 2029—to transition to SA8000:2026.

