

Author: L. Bernstein	Social Accountability Accreditation Services	Issue: 1
Approval: J. Hwang	SAI Notification 4: Accreditation Transition Process For SA8000:2026	Effective: June 1, 2026



Notification 4

Issue: 1

Date: June 1, 2026

To: All SAAS Accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs)

From: Lisa Bernstein, Executive Director, SAAS

RE: SA8000:2026 Certification – Accreditation Transition Process

This notification describes the process for accreditation against the normative documents governing the SA8000:2026 certification system. Please also refer to [SAI Notifications](#). SAAS approaches this transition process collaboratively. Every accredited CAB and Program Manager should work together with SAI and SAAS to build a shared understanding of SA8000:2026 during this process. The accreditation transition process consists of the following steps:

- **Transition plan update:** CABs develop a revised transition plan integrating SA8000:2026 requirements and updated timelines.
 - **Provisional Accreditation Authorization:** SAAS issues an authorization letter to CABs to deliver SA8000:2026 audits.
 - **Witness audit:** SAAS witnesses an SA8000:2026 audit, with the CAB's Program Manager participating, as a shared learning exercise.
 - **Management system audit:** a head office audit consisting of a deeper review of implementation, leading to full accreditation.
- A. Transition Plan Update: CABs shall develop and implement a **revised transition plan** that integrates SA8000:2026 and updated certification scheme requirements into their management system. Updated plans must incorporate the [SAI Notifications](#), timelines, system documentation, and training requirements.
- B. Provisional Accreditation Authorization: SAAS will issue a letter confirming **provisional accreditation**, authorizing the CAB to deliver audits and issue accredited SA8000:2026 certificates. This letter will be issued to all CABs who have successfully developed and submitted their transition plan (as communicated in 2025, per SAI Notification 1). This letter must be received before any SA8000:2026 audits begin.
- C. Personnel Training: CABs must meet the training requirements and timelines for SA8000-related personnel defined in [SAI Notifications](#), ensuring all personnel complete SAI's SA8000:2026 transition course and Key Updates Module. Training effectiveness should be evaluated for all personnel.
- D. Revised Documentation
1. A gap analysis by the CAB should identify documentation updates needed as a result of the "SAI Procedure 200 Supplement SA8000:2026 Interim (Bridging) Requirements" covering SA8000 audit and technical review processes.
 2. CABs must develop a process addressing the SA8000:2026 transition audit and certification process in line with "SAI Procedure 200 Supplement SA8000:2026 Interim (Bridging) Requirements" and applicable clauses of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015. This process should be effectively controlled and communicated, recognizing that this system is in transition and

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temporarily exists alongside the SA8000:2014 audit process.

- E. **SA8000:2026 Audits:** Once provisional accreditation is granted and the CAB has appropriately qualified SA8000 auditors and necessary documentation, it **may begin delivering SA8000:2026 audits.**
- F. **Communication with Clients:** CABs are to notify their clients of the new SA8000:2026 requirements and explain the upgrade process.
- G. **Monitoring by SAAS:** Monitoring and final accreditation by SAAS will consist of 2 parts: a witness audit and management system audit.
1. **Witness Audit between approximately January 1, 2027 and April 30, 2027:** following provisional accreditation, SAAS will coordinate an on-site SA8000:2026 witness audit. The CAB's SA8000 Program Manager will participate in this activity as a collaborative learning opportunity.
 2. **Management System Audit between approximately May 1, 2027 and December 31, 2027:** following completion of a successful witness audit, SAAS will conduct a head office management system audit to confirm the CAB's quality management system approach, implementation of its transition plan, and effectiveness of its SA8000:2026 processes. Additional audit time will be added in 2027 to the head office audit. This activity will be completed no later than December 31, 2027.
- H. **Accreditation:** Upon successful completion of the witness audit and management system audits, SAAS will issue a new accreditation certificate. Authorization to conduct SA8000:2026 audits remains subject to ongoing compliance with accreditation requirements, applicable procedures, SA8000:2026 scheme requirements, and ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015. SAAS, with SAI, will convene calibration workshops in 2027.

SA8000:2026 Accreditation Transition Action List and Timeline

Step	Action	What is required	Responsible	Deadline
1	Develop transition plan	-Update management system transition plan	CAB	By 31 July 2026
2	Provisional accreditation	<i>-SAAS issues provisional accreditation letter</i>	SAAS	By 30 June 2026
3	Personnel training	-SA8000-related personnel complete required training -Evaluate training effectiveness	CAB	Per SAI Notification 2
4	Update documents	-Conduct gap analysis and revise procedures	CAB	Per SAI Notification 1
5	Notify clients	-Inform all clients of SA8000:2026 requirements and individual upgrade pathway	CAB	Before first audit of client
6	SAAS witness audit	-SAAS conducts on-site witness of an SA8000:2026 audit -CAB Program Manager participates	-CAB hosts -SAAS conducts	By 30 April 2027

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7	Management system audit	-SAAS head office audit <i>-Full accreditation certificate issued upon successful completion.</i>	-CAB hosts -SAAS conducts	By 31 December 2027
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