



# **Rules for the Certification of Social Accountability Management Systems**

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Technical rules



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## **CHAPTER 1 GENERAL**

### 1.1

These Rules define the additional and/or substitutive procedures applied by RINA for the certification of Social Accountability Management Systems in relation to what is already defined in the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems

### 1.2

RINA issues certification in accordance with the requirements of the UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 Standard and of SAAS Procedure 200:2019, to organisations whose Management System has been recognised as fully conforming to all the requirements of the SA 8000:2014 Specification, issued by SAI (Social Accountability International) and available on the RINA website ([www.rina.org](http://www.rina.org)), on the SAI website [www.sa-intl.org](http://www.sa-intl.org) or on the SAAS (Social Accountability Accreditation Services) website [www.saasaccreditation.org](http://www.saasaccreditation.org).

### 1.3

In addition to what is stated in the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems in point 1.3, for Social Accountability Management Systems Organizations without active operations or significant assets (i.e. Shell Companies) are prohibited from being certified to SA8000. Therefore any organization that applies for SA8000 certification shall have been actively engaged in its stated business for at least 6 month prior to its application for SA8000 and shall demonstrate to have active contracts at the time of certification.

### 1.4

For any additional requirement not specifically indicated in this document, reference shall be made to SAAS Procedure 200:2015 available on SAAS website([www.saasaccreditation.org](http://www.saasaccreditation.org)).

## **CHAPTER 2 REFERENCE SPECIFICATION / CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

### 2.1

Organisations wishing to obtain RINA certification for their Social Accountability Management System must first and henceforth satisfy the requirements of SA 8000:2014.

### 2.2

Instead of what is stated in the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems in point 2.3, for Social Accountability Management Systems, Conformity of the Management System with the reference standard is verified by means of an audit programme comprising:

- an initial audit in two stages,

- Semi-Announced surveillance audits annually starting from 6 (six) months from the date of conclusion of the second certification stage (see what is indicated in § 5.3 of this regulation)
- Follow-up Review / Recertification Follow-up review audits at least annually starting from the end of the second certification stage (see what is indicated in § 5.4 of this rules)
- surveillance audits at least annually starting from the sixth month starting from the closing date of the second certification stage
- a certification renewal audit after 30 months from the closing date of the second certification stage.

For exceptions referring to “multi-site certifications, see what is indicated in § 7

The following are considered when establishing the audit programme: the size of the organisation, the scope and the complexity of the Management System, the products and processes, the level of effectiveness of the Management system and previous audit results, and any certificates already issued to the customer or other audits already performed.

### 2.3

In addition to what is stated in the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems, for Social Accountability Management Systems, Companies are expected to perform a Management System Self Assessment (SA) on SAI online platform (<https://database.sa-intl.org>)

Management Systems Self-Assessment is 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 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 RINA because SA scores are not a component of the SA8000 certification program.

Costs and fees related to Social Fingerprint are charged to the client directly by the Accreditation Body, in charge of this service.

## CHAPTER 3 INITIAL CERTIFICATION

### 3.1

In addition to what is stated in the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems in point 3.1, for Social Accountability Management Systems, Companies shall provide to RINA, together to what is foreseen in the document "Informative Questionnaire", some additional information reported in the document annexed thereto. This information includes:

- Presence of present or past legal actions against the organization
- Presence of grievances, legal proceedings and other complaints for a period of time of at least six months before the request for certification
- Evidence of the existence of valid contracts with its clients and the business continuity in the six months prior to the request for certification

### 3.2

In addition to what is stated in the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems under point 3.2 for Social Accountability Management Systems, RINA prior to the certification audit, will check that the applicant Organization does not have a recent or pervasive history of major unaddressed violations with regards to any elements of the sa8000 standard.

This research will be carried out using RINA internal database as well as documents and information publicly available and may include meetings with "interested parties" in order to acquire advance information on the most common types of problems in the area in which the organisation operates.

During the meetings, the interested parties are unaware of the name(s) of the organisation(s) which has/have applied for certification. The minutes of the meeting, prepared by the RINA Operational Area, may be sent to the Accreditation Body.

Based on the information collected and the documentation provided, RINA reserves in any case the possibility to refuse the request for certification of the company.

### 3.3

Together with or following the certification request, the organisation is to send RINA the following documents, in addition to what is stated in the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems in point 3.4:

- a Social Accountability Management manual describing the organisation's social policy, aims and Social Accountability Management System (latest valid version);
- organisation chart with names;

- a list of applicable Social Accountability laws in the country where the production site is located;
- data concerning the organisation's minimum and maximum wages, examples of contracts, a copy of agreements signed with trade unions;
- supplier control plan (meaning the planning of actions regarding suppliers which specify the methods and activities related to awareness, involvement and control including time required, resources, responsibilities);
- self-assessment questionnaire on the organisation's Management System (downloadable from the RINA web site [www.rina.org](http://www.rina.org))

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION**

#### 4.1

As well as what is stated in point 4.2 of the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems, for Social Accountability Management Systems, the organisation must keep records of:

- any reports and/or complaints received from interested parties concerning the aspects covered by SA 8000:2014;
- any observations or reports from national or local authorities responsible for controlling occupational health and safety and staff management aspects;
- any disciplinary measures taken;
- any other record certifying compliance with the requirements of the SA 8000:2014 specification

and must make them available to RINA, together with the relative corrective action implemented, during the periodic audits.

#### 4.2

In addition to what is stated in point 4.4 of the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems, for Social Accountability Management Systems, RINA will have the possibility to perform duplicate audits on-site each year. A duplicate audit in principle repeats the audit that was performed previously to check if the audit findings are credible. The audit won't be charged to client as part of the three years audit plan. All the costs related to this activity will be borne by RINA.

## CHAPTER 5 PERFORMANCE OF AUDITS

### 5.1

#### 5.1.1

In addition of what is stated in the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems in point 6.1, for Social Accountability Management Systems and as established by the Accreditation Body, during the stage 2 and recertification audit the auditor will collect some photographic as a record of the audit. During the surveillance audits photographic evidence will be acquired only in the event of variations.

These evidences will include at minimum:

- Place (s) of exposure of the SA8000 standard
- Place (s) of display of RINA and SAAS contact information
- Buildings / premises
- Workstations / production areas
- Dorms
- Canteens / places of consumption of meals
- Place of display of the Policy
- Chemical storage areas
- Evacuation tests
- Emergency exits
- Warehouse
- Support structures (eg waste water treatment, boiler, generator)
- Attendance system
- Work in progress
- Any non-conformities found in the H&S area
- Best Practice
- Operating sites
- All organizational documents reviewed as part of management systems
- Personal protective equipment
- Fire-fighting equipment

The photographic evidences, chosen on the basis of Company's processes and activity, will not include any proprietary process, individual worker or sensitive documents related to the organization or any of its employees.

These evidences will be kept confidential within RINA internal database and used exclusively for the certification purposes.

At the end of the audit, the Client will be able to view the photographs collected by the auditors. However consent to the collection of photographic images as described above cannot be denied

### 5.1.2

In addition of what is stated in the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems in point 6.1.3 for Social Accountability Management Systems the Non conformities already foreseen are integrated with the following type of non-conformity:

- **Critical Non conformity:** a grievous breach of the SA8000 standard that results in an immediate severe impact to individual rights, workers lives and safety or in presence of a major non conformity (type A) that has not been addressed or for which no significant improvement has been verified by the audit team during the supplementary audit. The corrective action for a critical NC shall be proposed within 1 week and performed within 1 month. During this period the certificate issued to the company will be suspended until the critical NC is effectively closed
- **Time Bound non conformity:** a special non conformity that can only be raised against point 8 and 9 of the relevant standard, as a result of evidence and findings that show that the organisation meets local law but not the higher requirements of SA8000:2014 standard or vice versa. Only in this case the necessary corrective actions put in place by the organisation may be implemented, differently from what happens for the minor non-conformities (type B) in a period of time comprised between 18 and 24 months maximum. RINA will check the progress of the actions for the closure of the problems highlighted every six months

Corrective actions for major Non-conformities (see General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems) must be implemented within 3 months and for Minor Non-Conformities within 6 months

### 5.1.3

In addition to the provisions of the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems in point 6.1.5, for Social Responsibility Management Systems, in the presence of a critical non-conformity, the validity of the Certificate of conformity will be immediately suspended in accordance with the provided by the "General contract conditions for the certification of systems, products and personnel" and what is established in chapter 11 of the "General Regulations for the Certification of Management Systems

### 5.1.4

In addition of what is stated in the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems in point 6.2.1 and 6.4.1, for Social Accountability Management Systems the Organization shall provide during stage 1 and recertification audit, evidence of completion of the self-assessment questionnaire provided by SAI (Social Accountability International) and available at website (<https://database.sa-intl.org>)

### 5.2

Instead of what is stated in the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems in point 6.3.1, for Social Accountability Management Systems RINA performs periodic audits on the Social Accountability Management System, at intervals of not more than 6 months, in order to evaluate whether it remains compliant with the



requirements of the reference specification. The date within which the audits must be performed is indicated on the three yearly audit programme sent to the organisation.

This programme may be modified by RINA according to the results of the previous surveillance audits.

If the limits of the surveillance audits are exceeded for justified reasons, this must be agreed with RINA in advance and recovered at the subsequent audit.

With regard to the admissibility of any deviations, refer to § 5.3 of these Rules.

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5.3

Notwithstanding the provisions of the General Regulations for the Certification of Management Systems in point 6.3.2, for Social Responsibility Management Systems and as prescribed by the Accreditation Body, starting from the sixth month from the closing date of stage 2 two semi-announced surveillance audits will take place annually.

These audits will not take place at the exact deadline planned according to the above, but over a period of 2 months between the same. In cases where, without reasonable reason (eg closing period for holidays) the customer does not agree to have the Semi Annunciata audit performed, the certificate will be immediately suspended.

At least every 12 months an audit must be carried out at the customer's site (either Semi Announced or Recertification).

The Recertification audit will be carried out after 30 months from the closing date of the second certification stage.

Even during the Semi Announced audits, the names of the technicians are previously communicated by RINA to the Organization, which has the right to object to their appointment, justifying the reasons.

5.4

In addition to the provisions of the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems at point 6.3.2, for Social Responsibility Management Systems and as prescribed by the Accreditation Body, starting one year from the closing date of stage 2 certification audit, three Follow-up Review / Recertification follow up Review activities will take place on an annual basis.

These activities will be carried out preferably remotely, through video conferencing methods agreed from time to time with the audit team. The Follow-up Review activities are therefore aimed at confirming:

- the continuous adequacy of the certification purpose with the activities carried out by the organization
- the number of employees,
- the closure of previously formalized minor non-conformities and progress of actions for time-bound non-conformities
- the organisation's commitment to health and safety requirements, including monitoring results and records and any consequent actions taken
- the organization's commitment to its internal "monitoring", "complaint management" and "improvement" processes

The Recertification Follow-up Review activity is scheduled at 33 months from the closing date of the second certification Stage and must take place over an eight-week time window.

This audit aims to confirm the conditions verified during the Recertification:

- certification purpose
- number of employees
- certified
- management and closure of critical or major non-conformities

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **TRANSFER OF ACCREDITED CERTIFICATES**

The first paragraph of chapter 10 of the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems is replaced, for Social Accountability Management Systems, by the following:

If an organisation with a valid certificate issued by another body which is accredited by SAAS (Social Accountability Accreditation Services) wishes to transfer its certificate to RINA, it must send RINA the Informative Questionnaire as per point 3.1 of the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems and explain why it is requesting the transfer.

All the other paragraphs of chapter 10 of the General Rules for the Certification of Management Systems apply, with the exception of the necessity to always perform an on-site audit at the site of the organization requesting for transfer of the certificate, using recertification times and equivalent to a recertification.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MULTISITE ORGANIZATION**

This paragraph contains additional requirements to the General Regulations for the Certification of Management Systems in point 9.1 for Social Responsibility Management Systems for multisite organizations.

#### 7.1

Internal audits carried out by the Organization

To proceed with the first certification process, the organization must have carried out an internal audit cycle on all sites included in the certification perimeter before carrying out the second certification stage

The internal audit cycle must be repeated on all sites before the Recertification

Internal audits must take place every two years in the three-year cycle of validity of the certificate.

#### 7.2

Audit planning

The planning of audits in the three-year period of validity of the Certification (in partial exception to what is defined in § 5.3), foresees the performance of on-site audits announced at a minimum frequency of six months (instead of alternating between Follow-up Review Audits and Valid Half-Announced Audits for single site Organizations).

The six-month period is counted from the closing date of the second certification stage and must take place within a time window of 8 weeks. Each six-monthly audit will involve the Headquarters (Management) and a selected sample of sites.

As for single site organizations, a Recertification audit is scheduled at 30 months from the end date of the Stage 2 certification.

At 33 months after the closing date of the Certification audit, a Follow-up and Recertification Review audit is scheduled to take place at the Organization's headquarters (with the same purposes already outlined for audits on single-site companies)



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