

## The process of certification

A feature of SA8000 is the possibility for the organization to ask for a third party audit aimed at assessing the compliance of its social responsibility system to the standard.

There are three types of audits:

First party assessment: when an organization assesses itself, for instance through an internal audit seeking to ensure the meeting of SA8000 requirements

Second party assessment: when an organization is assessed by a purchaser of its products against a standard selected by the purchaser. This type of assessment does not constitute certification

Third party assessment: when a facility is voluntarily assessed against a uniform standard by an independent, external body that is neither a direct purchaser nor a consultant.

When an organization intends to implement and certify its own social responsibility system, it should go through the following steps:

- evaluation of the gap existing between SA8000 requirements and national laws
- evaluation of the gap existing between the company situation and the stricter requirements of SA8000 and national laws
- formal commitment of management and involvement of personnel
- definition of a social responsibility policy
- definition of documents, procedures, records and practical controls
- eventual integration with other management system (ISO 9001, ISO 14000, etc) when existing
- training of personnel on SA8000 requirements and on the company social responsibility system
- implementation of means for internal and external communication
- definition of supply chain and assessment of supplier risk level
- training of suppliers and subcontractors on SA8000 requirements
- formal commitment of suppliers and subcontractors to comply with the standard
- monitoring and auditing of suppliers and subcontractors
- internal audits
- preventive and corrective actions
- management review
- formal request of a third party assessment to a SAI-accredited independent organization.

In order to gather the formal commitment of suppliers and subcontractors to comply with the standard, the company shall use the following self evaluation questionnaire, to be filled in and signed by the supplier/subcontractor, once informed of the contents of SA8000.