



Ethical Sourcing Standard

Appendix 4: Auditor Competence and Registration

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SQF Institute is a division of the Food Marketing Institute (FMI).

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Introduction

The Safe Quality Food Institute Ethical Sourcing Standard, 2nd edition (SQFI ES Standard) is a third-party accredited certification intended for sourcing and supplier organizations whose customers require an independent assessment of their commitment to the implementation of responsible practices related to trading activities, social management programs, and programs for managing environmental impacts and occupational health & safety risks. This document describes the competency, qualifications and registration requirements for individuals who will audit the implementation of the SQFI ES Standard, 2nd edition, in sourcing and supplier organizations.

The development of the ES Standard has been a significant move toward recognizing the importance of third-party independent assessment of social, environmental, and occupational health and safety management programs and practices in sourcing and supplier organizations. The criteria for SQFI Ethical Sourcing auditors have been developed to align with the Global Social Compliance Program (GSCP) *Reference Tool for Auditing Competence* and ISO 19011:2011, *Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing*.

SQFI Ethical Sourcing auditor registration is conducted by the SQFI. It is designed to enhance the integrity of the SQFI ES Standard by providing sourcing and supplier organizations with a register of auditors who have appropriate competency, qualifications and work experience to effectively audit SQFI ES programs. The requirements presented in this document are applicable to all SQFI ES auditors, who audit against the SQFI ES Standard 2nd edition, applying for registration beginning January 1, 2014.

1. Fundamentals

1.1 Registration Criteria Applicability

The criteria described in this document are for the SQFI Ethical Sourcing Standard, 2nd edition, and associated appendices.

1.2 Overview of the Requirements for SQFI ES Auditor Registration

Applicants pursuing registration as an SQFI ES auditor will be evaluated based on specific criteria within the following categories:

- Education
- Training
- Work Experience
- Auditing Experience

2. Requirements for Registration

The following educational, training, work experience and auditing experience requirements apply to all applicants unless otherwise specified.

2.1 Education

All applicants must have attained a two-year degree (i.e., Associate degree or comparable)_or higher from an accredited institution in a field related to the subject areas of the Ethical Sourcing Standard (e.g., environmental management, occupational health and safety management, human resources management, food science, etc.).

2.2 Training

Prior to applying for SQFI ES auditor registration, applicants must have successfully completed the following training courses:

2.2.1 Management System Lead Auditor training course of 40 hours duration through an accredited program (e.g., Exemplar Global, IRCA, etc.) or SQF Lead Auditor training.

2.2.2 Auditing SQFI Ethical Sourcing Programs (see Attachment 1).

2.3 Work Experience

Applicants shall have a minimum of 5 years work experience in environmental (EMS), occupational health and safety (OHSMS), quality (QMS) and/or food safety management system activities. Exposure to human resources (HR) management activities is also desirable and up to 2 years of HR experience can be used in lieu of 2 years of EMS, OHSMS or QMS work experience.

2.4 Auditing Experience

All applicants must provide evidence of management system auditing experience, within the past 7 years, comprising a minimum of 160 hours (20 audit days) in EHS (environmental / occupational health and safety), and/or human resources (HR) management systems. Applicants with QMS and/or food safety management system auditing may be considered depending on their overall scope of their auditing experience.

To demonstrate their auditing experience, all SQFI ES auditor applicants must provide a completed Audit Log. Audit experience used as justification must be of either a third-party nature or second-party from a corporate auditing standpoint. Internal audits of a facility by an employee of that facility will not be considered and should not be included on the Audit Log.

Audits that can be included on the Audit Log must reference the management system being audited, the audit protocol or audit tool, criteria for conducting the audit, and the applicable industry of the facility that was audited. Applicants should emphasize any applicable auditing experience related to EHS and/or HR management systems.

3. Key Competencies for SQFI ES Auditors

3.1 General Competencies

Applicants must demonstrate, through their competency, qualifications and/or work experience with an interview and/or witness audit, that they have achieved a satisfactory level of knowledge, skills and abilities in the following areas:

- Proficiency in management system auditing techniques (reference ISO 19011:2011);
- The ability to demonstrate the personal attributes and professional integrity necessary for the effective performance of audits (reference ISO 19011:2011);
- Basic understanding of business management practices (reference ISO 10014:2006);
- The ability to plan, lead, execute and document/report the audit;
- The ability to analyze and understand complex technical procedures with regard to audited processes;
- The ability to clearly and concisely communicate with clients' management and employees, and with other audit team members (both verbally and in report writing, as well as for documenting the details of objective evidence reviewed during the audit);
- Sufficient stamina and flexibility to maintain physical/mental alertness during the course of the audit (preparation, conduct and wrap-up) and to witness customer operations (with accommodations, if necessary); and
- Proficiency with Microsoft Word and e-mail programs.

3.2 Ethical Sourcing Competencies

Additional competencies are essential for auditors to perform an Ethical Sourcing audit in an effective and efficient manner, including:

- A working familiarity with environmental and occupational health and safety (EHS) processes, including applicable laws and regulations, and any applicable customer requirements;
- A working familiarity with human resources (HR) processes, including applicable laws and regulations;
- The knowledge of how/to identify the EHS and HR laws that are applicable to the country, state/province and locality being audited;
- A working familiarity with techniques used to identify, analyze and prioritize potential/ actual EHS and HR issues that may be present at audited facilities (i.e., risk assessment techniques); and
- The ability to assess the effectiveness of controls that have been implemented to prevent, minimize or mitigate the impacts of EHS and HR issues at audited facilities.

4. Application for Registration

The SQFI assesses the competencies of applicants for SQFI ES Auditor registration by evaluating education, training, work experience and auditing experience against the requirements specified in these registration criteria. The online application is available from the SQFI website (www.sqfi.com).

Applicants should ensure that their application includes evidence of all competencies detailed in the criteria, evidence of required training and other relevant educational qualifications and that all other information requested has been provided.

All applications are completed and submitted online at www.sqfi.com. You will be required to upload your evidence supporting your application, upgrade application or re-registration in PDF format as part of the online process. Be prepared to have the following documentation available prior to starting the application process:

- Educational diploma/ transcripts;
- Training and professional development records/certificates (lead auditor training, risk assessment technique training, etc.);
- Work experience records;
- Audit log; and
- Sponsor verification form.

A non-refundable application fee must be paid before registration can begin. Once an application is approved, applicants will be responsible for paying a registration fee before their SQFI Ethical Sourcing Professional credentials can be issued. Applicable amounts for fees can be found at www.sqfi.com.

Applications will not be processed unless all required information is provided.

4.1 Audit Log

Applicants shall provide details of audits conducted to meet the requirements of these criteria. All details required on the SQFI Audit Log must be provided.

4.2 Sponsors

Each applicant for initial registration shall be sponsored by their employer and one other person with whom they have a business relationship. Alternatively, two persons who have a business relationship with the applicant may sponsor the applicant. Sponsors must have evidence and/or personal knowledge of the relevant information contained within the application that they have verified.

4.3 Personal Declaration

Each applicant for registration or re-registration is required to acknowledge a declaration personally attesting that they will comply with the SQF Institute Code of Conduct and that any complaints regarding their performance will be dealt with in a manner to prevent recurrence (as addressed in §7, Complaints Against Registered SQFI ES Auditors.)

5. Application Processing

On receipt of an application, all information is reviewed for accuracy, including documentary evidence of training, experience and formal qualifications. The auditing and work experience claimed by the applicant is verified, on a sample basis, to establish the validity of such claims. This is done by direct contact with sponsors and with company contacts at the site(s) where the audit activity was performed.

Applications are evaluated by an independent body that evaluates the qualifications, related training courses undertaken, and work and auditing experience of the applicant. The review may also evaluate the feedback received on the applicant's performance.

Applicants with less than five years work experience should not be discouraged from applying for SQFI ES Auditor registration, as the overriding consideration will be to establish the applicant's competence to audit.

The independent body may request additional supporting information from the applicant or from other industry representatives as required. If the SQFI is unable to obtain satisfactory verification of information and experience from competent referees, an interview may be required.

Should interviews be required, they will be arranged with consideration being given to convenience for all parties; however, costs to attend an interview will be at the applicant's own expense.

The independent body will decide whether to grant registration. The SQFI maintains a file on each applicant, which will remain confidential. The file will include the original application documentation; check sheets; records of investigations, appeals and complaints; auditing logs; and re-registration documents.

5.1 Certificate of Registration and Identification (ID) Card

Each successful applicant will receive a Certificate of Registration and ID card issued by the SQFI. Certificates and ID cards have an expiration date, which is the date re-registration falls due. The terminology to be used by SQFI ES Auditors in describing their registration on business cards, letterhead etc. is: “Registered SQFI Ethical Sourcing Auditor”.

5.2 Publication of Registration

A register of SQFI Ethical Sourcing Auditors is displayed on the SQF Institute website, www.sqfi.com.

6. Appeals

Written appeals against the outcome of an application for registration will be referred to the SQFI Senior Technical Director. Decisions made by the Senior Technical Director relating to any appeal are final.

7. Complaints against Registered SQFI ES Auditors

Complaints regarding an SQFI ES Auditor’s conduct will be acknowledged and investigated by the SQF Institute’s Senior Technical Director. Substantiated evidence of misconduct may result, at the discretion of the Senior Technical Director, in remedial actions up to and including the withdrawal of registration.

8. Re-registration of SQFI ES Auditors

Re-registration is required every three (3) years from the anniversary date of initial registration. Requirements for re-registration include submission of the following with the required fee:

1. Evidence of auditing experience, as detailed below.
2. Evidence of professional development, as detailed below.
3. Evidence of participation in SQF Professional Development Update.

8.1 Auditing Experience

For re-registration, all SQFI ES Auditors shall submit an audit log demonstrating a minimum of six (6) complete SQFI ES Program audits. All audits shall be certification, re-certification or surveillance audits.

8.2 Professional Development

SQFI ES Auditors also need to undertake at least 15 hours of continuing professional development annually, that is relevant to their ethical sourcing work and their personal needs for skills and knowledge. Professional development information shall be provided on the Professional Development Record. The following activities are examples of professional development, if related to ethical sourcing topics, which can be included:

- Formal short course participation;
- In-house course/workshop participation;
- Conference seminar attendance;
- Professional Body/Association meeting attendance;
- Relevant committee and working group meeting attendance;
- Preparation and public presentation of papers; and
- Preparation and publication of articles.

Note: In the selection of appropriate professional development, SQFI ES Auditors need to consider their personal strengths and weaknesses and identify areas for personal improvement. These activities should target acquiring new or the improving of existing ethical sourcing and quality management methodologies. Consulting, training, development of programs, or other activities completed in the execution of work product are not considered professional development and should not be included.

8.3 SQFI ES Professional Update

For re-registration, all SQFI ES Auditors shall submit an audit log demonstrating a minimum of four (4) SQFI ES audits. All audits shall be certification, re-certification or surveillance audits.

8.3.1 SQFI Professional Update

Auditors shall participate in an annual professional update delivered by SQFI. This update will be delivered via webinar for general participation or delivered directly to Certification Bodies upon request.

9. SQFI ES Auditor Code of Conduct

All registered SQFI ES Auditors have an obligation to maintain the integrity of the SQFI ES Program by observing the following Code of Conduct. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal of their registration. The Code of Conduct is detailed in the online application and by submitting the application, the auditor agrees to the requirements listed in this section and outlined in the application.

9.1 Fundamental Principles

9.1.1 Act professionally, accurately, honestly, impartially and in an unbiased manner.

9.1.2 Do not to act in any way that would prejudice the reputation of the SQFI ES Program. Co-operate fully with an inquiry in the event of any alleged breach of the SQFI ES Program.

9.2 Relations with the Public

9.2.1 Use your best endeavors to promote the worth of the SQFI ES Program.

9.2.2 Act with professionalism and integrity when promoting your services.

9.2.3 Make it clear, when dealing with the public, the capacity in which you are acting and on whose behalf (if applicable) you are acting.

9.3 Relations with Employer's Colleagues and Clients

9.3.1 Act in professional matters as a faithful operator to each employee/client.

9.3.2 Inform employees and clients of any business connections, interest or affiliations, which might influence judgment or impair the equitable character of your services.

9.3.3 Indicate to your employer or clients the adverse consequences to be expected if an auditor's professional judgment is overruled.

9.3.4 Not disclose information concerning the business affairs or technical process of any present or former client without the client's consent.

9.3.5 Not accept compensation from more than one party for the same service without the consent of all parties.

9.4 Relations with Peers

9.4.1 The SQFI ES Auditor will assist those under their supervision to develop their professional skills.