

	Sector Specific Scheme Requirements BCR GLOBAL STANDARDS' Food Safety, Packaging and Packaging Materials, Agents and Brokers, Storage and Distribution, START! programs
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General information regarding elements of the certification process is described below. A degree of flexibility and options in the certification process are available so please feel free to contact us to discuss how we can better serve your organization.

SAI Global Full Service Team

Upon selection of SAI Global as your Registrar and submission of the signed Application for Certification, SAI Global will assign your dedicated service team.

Your service team will be selected to suit your specific industry and will consist of an Account Manager, a Regional Account Representative, a Lead Auditor and other team members as needed to support your certification. The roles of each member of your service team are as follows: your Account Manager will manage the business relationship, including contract negotiation and changes to your certification requirements; your Regional Account Representative will manage the back office processes including scheduling and customer service related to certificates and invoicing; your Lead Auditor will manage the delivery relationship. As your primary contact with SAI Global, the Lead Auditor assigned provides you with ongoing industry developments and interpretations and ensures coordination of all audit-related activities for your company. If additional audit team members are required, they are selected from our experienced auditor base. Your audits will be consistent in approach, technically sound and relevant to your business needs.

Introduction

This document provides information for Applicants and Certified Sites. It describes the procedures for application, audit, certification, complaints and appeals. SAI Global operate the BRC Global Standard for Food Safety, BRC Global Standard for Packaging and Packaging Materials, BRC Global Standard for Agents and Brokers, BRC Global Standard for Storage and Distribution, and the BRC GLOBAL MARKETS - FOOD SAFETY ISSUE 1/ START1 programs to the European Standard EN 45011 (ISO Guide 65) for product certification activities.

Certification against the applicable BRC standard ("the Standard") provides a mechanism for giving assurances to retailers and consumers about the production standards of suppliers and thereby assurances regarding the safety, and integrity of the product. The Program has been designed to provide assurances that food products are manufactured in accordance with a specified Standard, which goes beyond the relevant legislation and demands best commercial practice.

Certification will only be granted to Sites who comply with the Standard and follow the Rules set out in this manual ("the Rules"). Participation is conditional on an initial audit together with routine surveillance and announced or unannounced visits to ensure continual conformance with the Standard.

Participation must be renewed annually or when the next audit is due. In the event of any changes to the Standard or Rules, Applicants and Certified Sites must conform to the new requirements from the effective date of introduction of the changes. Applicants and Certified Sites will be given advance notice in writing of any changes.

The registration, audit and certification of Applicants and Certified Sites against the BRC Standards is administered under license by SAI Global, an EN45011 (Guide 65) accredited certification body.

Application

Suppliers who wish to be certified against should read carefully the applicable Standard, Rules and other information in this document before completing and sending in an application on the official form to SAI Global.

Application forms must be completed in full giving details of all locations and types of production. If there is insufficient space on the form any additional information should be given on a separate sheet and attached to the form. The Supplier should determine the product or process types to be evaluated using the standard document for reference and provide this information on the application form.

The owner of the business must sign the application form. Alternatively, a senior representative authorised to sign on behalf of the business may sign the form. In signing the form the Applicant subscribes to a number of declarations, which constitute the contract with SAI Global, and in so doing agrees to comply with the Standard(s) and Rules.

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SAI Global Certification against the BRC Standards can be achieved via various means. Please see the applicable Standard for options regarding multiple Site certification; unannounced audits etc. Any specific requirements for additional audit modules are to be in accordance with the respective protocols.

The application fee (detailed on a separate fee sheet) is payable upon submission of the application form. If the Applicant withdraws his application before the initial audit, the fee may be refundable in part at the discretion of SAI Global. Withdrawals of applications must be made in writing to the SAI Global office.

Audit

The Applicant will be contacted by SAI Global to make an appointment for an audit at a mutually acceptable date. If an Applicant cannot agree a suitable appointment date for the audit the onus is on the Applicant to contact SAI Global when they are ready for the audit. The applicant must contact SAI Global within 6 months of this notice; otherwise their application will be withdrawn. This only applies to new applicants. Once certified, Certified Sites must make themselves available for audit promptly (see surveillance).

The Program Administrator will send the applicant an appointment letter, which will confirm the date and approximate time of the audit and outline the scope of the audit. Audits will cover all aspects of the Standard.

The purpose of the audit is to check that Applicants conform to all the requirements of the Standard. The auditor will need to talk to staff and to see records so that he/she can be assured that conformance can be maintained between audits. The person responsible for the day-to-day management must be available to accompany the auditor and answer any questions. The auditor will need to see a representative sample of production. If any of these requirements are not possible on the day of the audit Applicants must contact SAI Global in advance and preferably in writing to explain the situation. If the auditor cannot complete the audit in full on the day of the appointment due to the Applicant not making available all aspects required for audit, the application cannot be progressed and a further fee will be payable for the auditor to return.

If the auditor identifies any areas that do not comply with the Standard, the Applicant will be informed of these at the time. At the end of the audit, the auditor will list these areas of non-conformity on a report, which will be left with the Applicant. The Applicant will be asked to acknowledge that they have received this report and agree to its contents by signing it.

SAI Global are interested in receiving feedback from Applicants and Certified Sites on the work of auditors. Following an audit, sites may receive a questionnaire asking for their comments.

Certification

Following an audit, the auditor will submit a report to the SAI Global Office. SAI Global will determine the eligibility of the Applicant for certification as a Certified Supplier. Applicants with no outstanding non-conformities will normally receive a certificate within 42 days of the audit.

If the auditor reported that an Applicant did not conform to all requirements of the Standard, SAI Global will make a decision as to certification based on the degree of non-conformity. Documentary evidence or re-visit will be required to verify that non-conformities have been rectified. If re-visit is necessary a further fee will be incurred. Where possible, each Applicant will be notified in writing of the decision in relation to their application for certification within 42 days of the initial audit.

If an application is deferred the reason(s) will be given in writing. This letter will detail the non-conformities, which were identified during the audit. The Applicant must either rectify these non-conformances within the time-scale permitted or put in writing to SAI Global any queries regarding the type or level of non-conformity identified during the audit (see Complaints).

If an application is refused SAI Global shall, by written notice, advise the Applicant of the reason(s) for the refusal, their right of appeal and provide details of the Appeal Procedure (see Appeals). If an Applicant wishes to be reconsidered following refusal a new application is required.

The final decision relating to certification (whether on appeal or otherwise) rests with the SAI Global Certification Committee whose decision is final and binding.

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By joining the Program the Applicant / Certified Site consents to the processing by SAI Global of data and the subsequent release of the audit report to the BRC. In all other cases the audit reports will be confidential to SAI Global and the client unless a consent form (available from the SAI Global office or SAI Global auditor) has been signed by the Applicant or Certified Site.

Certificates are not transferable and remain the property of SAI Global. Only Certified Sites can use SAI Global certificates, and strictly only in relation to the scope of their certification. Certified Sites must not make any express or implied claim that certification applies to product, locations or activities that are not included in the scope of their certificate. Only Certified Sites can use SAI Global marks or logos and only in accordance with the Conditions of Use. By joining the Program the Applicant / Certified Site consents to the transmission of certification status details including an electronic copy of the Certificate of Conformity (where one is issued) to the BRC for inclusion on the BRC Global Standards Directory Website.

Obligations of Certified Sites

Certified Sites must, at all times, continue to comply with the Standard and Rules, and with the declarations detailed on the application form. The Standard and Rules are additional to any statutory requirements and nothing in the Standard or Rules shall be deemed as providing exemption from current legislation.

Certified Sites must inform SAI Global if their circumstances change during the period of certification, which may affect their conformity to the Standard. These would include changes to ownership and significant changes to facilities or management. SAI Global will assess whether a re-audit is necessary to ensure continued suitability for certification.

Certified Sites must notify SAI Global immediately if they are subject to any legal action with regard to legislation concerned with food safety (including use of illegal substances, pesticides, animal welfare, infestation, food poisoning and any other serious contamination issues). Certified Sites must also notify SAI Global of any product withdrawals or recalls. SAI Global will assess whether a re-audit is necessary to ensure continued suitability for certification.

Certified Sites must obtain the consent of SAI Global to use certification against the Global Standard for Food Safety as a defence to any legal action or investigation against them. Prior to giving this consent, SAI Global reserves the right to undertake an audit to confirm continued conformance to the Standard and Rules at any time for an additional audit fee which will be paid by the Certified Site.

Special Visits/Follow-up Audits

SAI Global will carry out special visits/audits or follow-up visits to ensure that certified Sites continue to meet the Standard. Surveillance audits will involve a full audit against all the requirements of the Standard. These visits/audits will involve a follow up on non-conformities raised at the previous audit and relevant sections of the standard to confirm maintenance of the requirements of the standard and provide confidence with respect to on-going certification. It is a condition of these rules that Certified Sites make themselves available for these audits. Details of costs for surveillance, re-visits to clear non-conformities and Special visits/audits are published on the fees sheet.

Special visits/audits may be conducted with or without prior notice. Details of costs for Special visits/audits are published on the fees sheet.

Audit reports from Special visits/audits will be reviewed by SAI Global to ensure that the requirements of the Standard are being maintained.

If the auditor reports that a Certified Site no longer conforms to the Standard, the Certified Site will receive on the day hand written details of non-conformities identified during the audit. The Certified Site must either rectify these non-conformities within the time-scale permitted or put in writing to SAI Global any queries regarding type or level of non-conformity raised (see complaints).

If the non-conformities are not rectified within the permitted time scale, the Certified Site will receive a final reminder notification. If the non-conformities are still not rectified after this final warning, the Certified Site will be suspended.

If a suspended non-conforming supplier does not make contact with the SAI Global office within the 7 days the Sites registration and certification will be revoked. A fresh application will be needed to re-join the Program.

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Renewal of Certification

The period of validity of certification shall be in line with the requirements specified in the applicable Standard. SAI Global will normally contact Certified Sites 3 months before the re-audit due date to arrange renewal.

The renewal fee is payable before the due date. Renewal fees cannot be refunded. SAI Global reserves the right to amend fees as necessary and will notify Applicants and Certified Sites in writing of any amendments to fees.

If SAI Global does not receive a renewal remittance within 14 days after the due date then certification will be suspended. The Supplier must return their Certificate of Conformity and must not make any further claims, whether express or implied, that he is certified by SAI Global.

If a suspended supplier does not make contact with the SAI Global office within a further 14 days (28 days after the due date), the Sites registration and certification will be revoked. A fresh application will then be needed if the Supplier wishes to be certified against the Standard.

Frequency of audit will be as defined by the Standard depending on the grade (score) attained in the previous audit and with due account of the seasonality of any production. It is not acceptable for Certified Sites to delay such audits. The audit must take place within the audit time window associated with the Certificate of Conformity.

It is the responsibility of the Certified Site to maintain certification. If not, participation may be suspended. Where an audit is delayed beyond the due date, except in justifiable circumstances, this shall result in a major non-conformity being awarded at the next audit. If the Certified Site has difficulties in agreeing an appointment with the auditor, then the Certified Site must contact the SAI Global office to explain the position. If it is, the Certified Site will be sent a letter confirming certification, a certificate of conformity and the audit report normally within 42 days.

Refusal/Suspension of Certificate

An Applicant or Certified site who has had a conviction for any offence in connection with food production in the past 3 years or in any longer period which corresponds with any sentence imposed by a Court must declare this (in the case of the Applicant, on the Application form and in the case of a Certified Site immediately in writing to the SAI Global office). The Applicant or Certified Site may be refused/suspended from certification with immediate effect by written notice from SAI Global. Re-application/re-admission will not normally be considered for 3 months from the date of conviction and will be subject to a re-audit.

Suspended Suppliers must return their Certificates of Conformity to SAI Global forthwith and must not make any further claims whether express or implied, that they are certified by SAI Global.

In all cases of refusal/suspension of participation, there is no entitlement to any refund of fees.

Any Applicant/Certified site who is refused/suspended from participation has the right of appeal against this decision. SAI Global shall by written notice advise the applicant/certified site of the right of appeal and provide details of the Appeal Procedure (see Appeals).

Revocation of Participation/ Withdrawal of Certificate

Any certified site who is in breach of any provisions of the Standard and/or Rules may have their certification against the Standard revoked with immediate effect by written notice from SAI Global. This notice will inform the Certified Site of the reasons for revocation and will also provide details of the Appeal Procedure (see Appeals).

A certified site may voluntarily withdraw from certification against the Standard by notification of such in writing to SAI Global. In all cases of revocation/withdrawal of participation, there is no entitlement to any refund of fees. The supplier must return their Certificate of Conformity and must not make any further claims, whether express or implied, that they are certified by SAI Global.

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Certified sites whose certification is revoked must make a new application if they wish to re-gain certification. No new application will normally be considered by SAI Global for a period of at least 3 months following revocation.

A certified site whose certification has been revoked has the right of appeal against this decision. SAI Global shall by written notice advise the Certified Site of the right of appeal and provide details of the Appeal Procedure (see Appeals).

Complaints & Appeals

Where a complaint is made to SAI Global the complainant will be asked to make the complaint in writing.

All complaints whether about Applicants/Certified sites, SAI Global Auditors, or SAI Global Administration or a request to review a non-conformance or concerning a certification decision, will be properly investigated. The complainant will be notified of the outcome of investigation and be informed of the Appeals process.

If an Applicant or Certified site wishes to appeal against a certification decision (dissatisfied by a response/closure of a complaint, or in relation to non-conformities noted on reports, or suspension, refusal or withdrawal/revocation of certification) they must write to SAI Global giving reasons why they believe the decision is wrong, and should also provide any relevant supporting evidence.

Appeal against a certification decision must be received in the SAI Global office within 7 days of the Applicant/Certified Site receiving notification of the certification decision. For the avoidance of doubt, only one appeal will be allowable for each certification decision arising from the same factual circumstances.

SAI Global will usually contact the Applicant/Certified site to clarify the basis for appeal. This may lead to the issue being resolved. Otherwise, after due process, a copy of the determination and reasons would be provided to the claimant. Requests for Appeal may be subject to a non-refundable administration fee. In the event of an unsuccessful appeal SAI Global reserve the right to charge costs of conducting the appeal.

All complaints about Applicants/Certified Sites, SAI Global Auditors or SAI Global Administration will be properly investigated including consideration by SAI Global of any representatives, and all necessary action taken.

Confirmation of Participation

Other than releasing the Applicant / Certified Site certification status to the BRC, including an electronic copy of the certificate of conformity, SAI Global will treat all information about Applicants and Certified Site with strictest confidence, but will respond to queries from third parties who wish to confirm the status of any Certified Site as follows:

SAI Global will give the membership number, name and address and confirm if the site is a Certified Site, the reference number, expiry date and scope of certification.

SAI Global will also comply with the BRC Framework Agreement requirement to release a copy of the audit report to the BRC or any BRC Member to whom the Applicant / Certified Site provides goods or services. Other than complying with this requirement, SAI Global will not divulge more specific information than that described the BRC Framework Agreement (such as details of individual audit reports) to any third party, without the Applicants/Certified Sites written agreement.

SAI Global may notify those with a commercial interest, for example other suppliers, retailers, and customers, that a certified site's certification has been suspended or revoked.

Liability

SAI Global will not be liable for any potential, estimated loss of earnings by Applicants or Certified Sites with regard to any provisions of the Standard or Rules or the administration or operation of the Standard or rules by SAI Global.

SAI Global will not be liable in regard of any audit, or the exercise of any of their rights, or powers, or duties under the Standard or Rules.

SAI Global will not be liable for any losses that arise from, including without limitation, any industrial action or the failure of any machine, data processing system, transmission link or any other events outside its reasonable control.

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Witness Audits /Assessments

SAI Global reserve the right to conduct witness audits /assessments, be this for Accreditation or internal/external monitoring of SAI Global Auditors. The auditor may be accompanied by other personnel for training, assessment or calibration purposes. Witness audits are carried out to a documented procedure; this procedure is available on request. These activities may be:

- Training of new auditors by SAI Global
- Routine SAI Global shadow audit programmes
- Witness audits by Accreditation Bodies
- Witness audits by the BRC
- Witness audits by a specifier where a specifier specific additional audit module is included

Compliance Audits

To support the standard, BRC operates a compliance program which reviews the performance of certification bodies. This involves sampling audit reports, complaints investigation and compliance audits. Feedback is provided to certification bodies through KPIs.

PLEASE NOTE:

Compliance activities may involve:

- ***BCR contacting certificated Sites for feedback on Certification Body performance, or investigation into reported issues***
- ***BCR undertaking independent visits to certificated Sites to ensure standards of food safety and quality are being maintained in line with its certification status and ensure that the audit and reporting process is to the expected standard.***

These compliance visits may be announced or unannounced and are independent of BRC certification audits. These compliance visits are typically 1 day in length and are no cost to the certified Site and depending on the results, it may affect the Site's BRC certification. Access and cooperation will need to be extended to the BRC representative during a compliance visit.