



*A commitment to safe, quality food.*

# CRITERIA FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES

## **SQF GUIDANCE ON THE APPLICATION OF ISO/IEC GUIDE 65:1996**

General Requirements for Certification Bodies  
Offering Certification of SQF Systems  
4TH EDITION - MAY 2004

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655 15th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20005, USA



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SQFI is a Division of the Food Marketing Institute

[www.sqfi.com](http://www.sqfi.com)

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## FOREWORD

The authorization and distribution of the SQF Program is the culmination of extensive development and piloting of the system. The developmental process included consultation with the food sector and quality professionals.

The Food Marketing Institute (FMI) acquired the rights to the SQF Program in August 2003 and has established the SQF Institute (SQFI) Division to manage the Program. The SQFI has established a Technical Committee (TC) to review and recommend changes to the SQF Program.

It is important that users of the SQF Program ensure they are in possession of the latest edition and any amendments.

The Certification Body may not provide an Auditing service in accordance with this document unless it has first entered into a License Agreement with the SQFI and that it provides the service in accordance with the terms and conditions of its License Agreement.

Prior to acquiring a license to Audit and Certify SQF Systems the Certification Body must be Accredited, by an International Accreditation Forum (IAF) Accreditation Body licensed by FMI, as meeting the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 65: 1996 and the requirements set out in this document. The Certification Body shall maintain such Accreditation for the term of the License Agreement and during this term the Certification Body shall provide its Auditing service strictly in accordance with its license, this document and the Scope of its Accreditation.

The SQFI acknowledges the assistance provided by the American National Standards Institute in the review of this Edition 5.

Suggestions for improvements to this document and the SQF Program should be submitted in writing and be sent to:

The Executive Director  
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## INTRODUCTION

### SQF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDANCE

The international criteria for the Accreditation of Certification Bodies operating certification of products (tangible products, processes and services) are detailed in ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996.

This Guide specifies the requirements that Certification Bodies shall observe when operating third party Certification of Suppliers' SQF Systems. It provides guidance on ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996 in order to satisfy the requirements implicit in the Certification of SQF Systems.

This document, in respect to the SQF Program, should be read in conjunction with the ISO ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996. For convenience guidance where it is offered is, for ease of reference, prefixed with the letter G.

This document provides the basis for the consistent application of the SQF Program by Certification Bodies.

The term "shall" is used throughout this document to indicate mandatory requirements. The term "should" is used to indicate those provisions that the Certification Body is expected to adopt. Any variation from the guidance by a Certification Body shall be an exception and only after the Certification Body has demonstrated to their Accreditation Body and the SQFI that the exception meets the requirements of the relevant ISO/IEC Guide 65 and the intent of this guidance document.

It is important to note that these are requirements that shall be met by Certification Bodies. They are not requirements that shall be met by the Supplier that is Audited by the Certification Body. The Supplier is required to meet the requirements outlined in the appropriate SQF Code. The Supplier determines how its food safety and quality management system will be arranged to ensure it meets the legislative and customer requirements that apply to its operations.

Certification of SQF Systems by a Certification Body is not a statement that the Certification Body guarantees the safety of a Supplier's food or service. It is also not a guarantee that all food safety regulations are being met, or will continue to be met, at all times. It is a statement that the Supplier's food safety plans have been implemented in accordance with the HACCP Method and applicable regulatory requirements, and that the validation and verification of the Food Safety Plan has been evaluated and determined effective to manage food safety. It is also a statement of the Supplier's commitment to:

1. Produce safe, quality food.
2. Comply with the requirements of the SQF Code.
3. Comply with applicable food legislation.

The development of the SQF Program has been a significant move towards the recognition of the importance of independent third party assurance of food safety and quality by all sectors of the food industry.

# General Requirements for Certification Bodies Offering Certification of SQF Systems

## 1 Scope

### SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 1

G.1.1 The guidance applies to the Certification of the "product" and "process" under a SQF System and includes all processes and services used to make a final product.

The term "process" requires the application of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), built upon a sound foundation of Pre-requisite Programs such as Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), Good Hygiene Practice (GHP) or Good Agriculture Practice (GAP) to document and control critical food safety and quality criteria during production in order to deliver product as specified.

G.1.2 The SQF Codes, guidance documents, Criteria for SQF Systems Training Courses, Registration Criteria for SQF Auditors and SQF Experts, Guidance Documents for Implementing and Auditing SQF Systems, Rules for Use of Certification Trade Marks and Audit reporting formats outline the purpose and the minimum requirements of Audit by a Certification Body.

## 2 References

### SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 2

G.2.1 The following references apply:

HACCP guidelines developed and managed by the Food and Agriculture Organization's CODEX Alimentarius Commission. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System and Guidelines for its Application - Annex to CAC/RCP 1 - 1969, Rev. 3 (1997).

HACCP guidelines developed and managed by the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF). Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Principles and Application Guidelines, adopted August 14, 1997.

The SQF 1000 Code - Published by FMI as amended from time to time.

The SQF 2000 Code - Published by FMI as amended from time to time.

ISO/IEC Guide 62:1996, General Requirements for Bodies Operating Assessment and Certification/Registration of Quality Systems as amended from time to time.

IAF Guidance on the Application of ISO/IEC Guide 62: 1996, General Requirements for Bodies Operating Assessment and Certification/Registration of Quality Systems, Issue 2, 14 October 2002.

ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996, General Requirements for Bodies Operating Product Certification Systems as amended from time to time.

ISO/IEC 17011: 2004 Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies

ISO/IEC 17000:2004 Conformity assessment - Vocabulary and general principles.

## 3 Definitions

### SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 3

G.3.1 The relevant definitions outlined in "SQF Program - Vocabulary" apply.

## 4 Certification Body

### 4.1 General Provisions

#### SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 4.1

G4.1.1 The Certification Body shall be licensed by the Food Marketing Institute before providing a service to Audit and Certify a SQF System.

G4.1.2 Once Licensed the Certification body shall be Accredited by an Accreditation Body licensed by the Food Marketing Institute and demonstrates compliance with ISO/IEC 17011:2004. The Scope of Accreditation shall cover either:

- i. activities to Certify an individual Suppliers SQF 1000 or SQF 2000 Systems; or
  - ii. activities to Certify an individual Suppliers SQF 1000 or SQF 2000 Systems and a Multi-site Organization.
- G4.1.3 Where a Certification Body provides a service in Territory outside the country in which Accreditation was attained it shall be subject to assessment and witness assessments of its activities by the Accreditation Body where it conducts Audits:
- i. of a Multi-site Organization; or
  - ii. of a High Risk Supplier; or
  - iii. more than ten (10) Low Risk Suppliers.
- G4.1.4 The assessment of Territories outlined in G4.1.3 shall be completed by the Accreditation Body after consultation with the SQFI. The minimum annual number of additional Territories in which activities are assessed shall not be less than the square root of the number of Territories nominated and all Territories nominated shall be assessed within each three year Accreditation term.
- G4.1.5 The Certification Body shall make their services available to all Suppliers and in areas in which they have expertise. In so far as the law permits the Certification Body shall limit its services to Suppliers operating within the Food Sector Category(s) in which it has technical competence. A Certification Body may use the list of Suppliers that it has Certified as part of its promotional activities but it shall not publish a list of such Certifications.
- G4.1.6 The Certification Body shall assess Suppliers against the conditions and restrictions contained in the relevant SQF Code and supporting documentation.
- G4.1.7 The Certification Body shall ensure the Audit includes the evaluation and efficacy of the validation and verification of a Supplier's Food Safety Plan.

## **G4.2 Organization**

### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 4.2**

Accreditation shall only be granted to a body that is a legal entity as referenced in clause 4.2d) of ISO/IEC Guide 65 and will be confined to declared scopes and locations. Certification of a SQF System by a Certification Body shall provide confidence that the system meets the specified requirements and that the Supplier has implemented and is maintaining and operating the SQF System effectively and in accordance with the Scope specified on the Certificate of Registration.

- G4.2.1 The Certification Body shall appoint an impartial and independent committee selected from the primary production, manufacturing, food service and retail sectors of the food industry to oversee decisions on Certification and the development of policies and principles regarding the content and functioning of the certification system.
- G4.2.2 The Certification Body shall ensure that committees, groups or persons with direct overall responsibility for activities, and decisions including:
- i. overseeing and making decisions on Certification;
  - ii. supervision of its implementation policies; and
  - iii. the technical basis for granting Certification,
- are free from any commercial, financial or other pressure that might influence the results of Certification and that they have the appropriate experience to enable them to carry out their role effectively.
- G4.2.3 The Certification Body shall ensure that decisions to grant Certification are made by a person(s) different from those who carried out the evaluation and Audit.
- G4.2.4 The Certification Body shall have sufficient and current Public, Product Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance.
- G4.2.5 Complaints, appeals and disputes shall be handled promptly and without undue delay. The majority of such matters should be resolved within one month of receipt.
- G4.2.6 Impartiality and independence of the Certification Body shall be assured at three levels:
- i. Strategy and policy;
  - ii. Decision on certification; and
  - iii. Evaluation.

## **G4.3 Operations**

### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 4.3**

- G4.3.1 The certification body shall be able to demonstrate to the accreditation body that all conformity assessment activities it conducts are carried out in a competent and reliable manner.
- G4.3.2 In relation to product inspection the Certification Body shall ensure the relevant product standard requirement is adhered to, that statistically proven lot sampling and sampling techniques with stated confidence levels are used for product sampling and that procedures are in place to ensure the integrity of sample selection, control and traceability and that testing is undertaken in an unbiased manner.

## **G4.4 Subcontracting**

### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 4.4**

- G4.4.1 The Certification Body shall ensure that the subcontracting of any inspection or testing activity is conducted by nationally recognized and/or accredited inspection and testing laboratories utilizing the services of qualified personnel.

## **G4.5 Quality System**

### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 4.5**

- G4.5.1 The Certification Body quality management system, maintained in accordance with ISO/IEC Guide 65: 1996 Clause 4.5, shall also address the SQF Program requirements outlined in this document.

## **G4.6 Conditions and procedures for granting, maintaining, extending, suspending and withdrawing Certification**

### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 4.6**

- G4.6.1 The SQFI specifies the conditions for granting, maintaining, and extending Certification under the SQF Program that are described either in this document or in notices issued from time to time. The Certification Body shall implement procedures to ensure these requirements are met.
- G4.6.2 The Certification Body shall implement procedures for suspending and withdrawing Certificates of Registration as described in [Annex 1](#).
- G4.6.3 The Certification Body shall ensure the Supplier's documented SQF System conforms to the relevant SQF Code and any amendments to the SQF Codes by the due date as specified by the SQFI.
- G4.6.4 Where a Re-certification Audit or a Surveillance Audit is not completed within the time specified in Clause 13.3 and Clause 13.4 the Certificate of Registration shall be withdrawn (see Annex 1 Clause 6 iv).

## **G4.7 Internal Audits and management reviews**

### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 4.7**

- G4.7.1 The Certification Body shall conduct annual internal audits of its Certification procedures applicable to their SQF Certification program. Management reviews and internal audits shall cover the activities of subcontract service providers.
- G4.7.2 The internal audits shall cover all activities in nominated Territories and the country where the Accreditation is granted.
- G4.7.3 The Certification Body shall review its quality system and Certification procedures applicable to these requirements at least annually. Records of internal audits and management reviews shall be made available to the SQFI or its representative on request.

## **G4.8 Documentation**

### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 4.8**

- G4.8.1 The Certification Body shall make available to interested parties all documentation and criteria including (without limitation) written procedures for the Certification Body's implementation of G4.6.
- G4.8.2 The Certification Body shall maintain documents and data related to its Scope of Accreditation and the food industry sectors in which it will operate. Typically the Certification Body shall demonstrate access to

reference documentation such as Pre-requisite programs, HACCP, appropriate legislation, food additives, chemical registration and MRL's and relevant industry Codes of Practice (GAP/GMP/GDP).

## **G4.9 Records**

### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 4.9**

G4.9.1 The Certification Body shall maintain sufficiently detailed records of all Audits of Suppliers to demonstrate that Certification and other action (such as suspension or withdrawal of Certificate of Registration, corrective actions and disputes resolution) has been effectively carried out. Records shall be kept for a minimum of seven years, as otherwise specified or as required by law whichever is the greater. Records of Accreditation Audits, Certification Audits and all procedures and quality manuals shall be made available to the SQFI on request.

## **G4.10 Confidentiality**

### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 4.10**

No additional comment.

## **5 Certification Body personnel**

### **G5.1 General**

#### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 5.1**

The Certification Body shall be able to conduct all Audits using resources under its control and in accordance with its Scope of Accreditation.

G5.1.1 The Certification Body shall ensure that all SQF Auditors and SQF Contract Auditors retain qualifications, skills and experience necessary to perform their duties.

G5.1.1.1 The Certification Body shall demonstrate that programs are in place for SQF Auditors, including SQF Contract Auditors, to undertake the training required maintaining their qualifications and awareness of the SQF Program and current food safety and quality issues and how they relate to technical judgments they make.

G5.1.2 The Certification Body shall have procedures in place to ensure SQF Auditors are made aware of their role and responsibilities and that SQF Auditors are competent and qualified to undertake Desk Audits, Certification Audits, Surveillance Audits and Re-Certification Audits and make technical judgments and recommendations as necessary.

G5.1.3 The SQFI will provide to the Certification Body a SQF Audit Report format (that includes an Audit-rating) which shall be used by SQF Auditors when conducting Audits of SQF Systems (Explanatory Notes see [Annex 2](#)). Each Audit report and rating of each Supplier shall be provided to the SQFI when the Audit report is finalized.

### **G5.2 Qualification Criteria**

#### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 5.2**

G5.2.1 The Certification Body shall ensure that each SQF Auditor is registered as a SQF Auditor and maintains such registration for the term of their employment or engagement.

G5.2.1.1 The Certification Body shall ensure SQF Auditors do not Audit SQF Systems that relate to or include Food Sector Categories in which the SQF Auditor is not registered to Audit.

G5.2.1.2 Auditors who lack the Auditing experience necessary to enable them to be registered as SQF Auditors can be engaged to undertake, under supervision, Audits of low risk products and processes. This provision does not apply to SQF Contract Auditors. In such cases the Certification Body shall ensure the auditor demonstrates knowledge and experience of the particular Food Sector Category and has completed and passed all required SQF training requirements prior to registration.

G5.2.1.3 The Certification Body shall provide the following details to the SQFI before the auditor commence Audit duties:

- i.) the Certification Body name and address
- ii.) the name of the auditor
- iii.) the applicable Food Sector Categories

- iv.) the auditor's SQF Training Certificate numbers; and
- v.) provide a statement verifying the auditor is a company employee with a responsibility for Auditing food safety and quality systems.

G5.2.1.4 Such auditor(s) shall be registered as SQF Auditors within three months of their commencement of Audit duties.

### **Additional SQF Requirement – Technical Experts**

G5.2.1.5 The use of a Technical Expert to assist a SQF Auditor in the performance of a SQF Audit is permitted provided the Supplier has been notified before the Audit and accepts their participation and that the Technical Expert signs a deed of confidentiality with the Certification Body.

### **Additional SQF Requirement – Conflict of interest**

#### **Guidance to clause 5.2.2**

G5.2.2 The Certification Body shall ensure that all Certification activities are separately controlled and managed (including the development of policy and practices) from any consulting activity. It shall preclude any prospective SQF Auditor from undertaking any Audit in relation to the Certification of SQF Systems that constitute a conflict of interest as outlined below or any other condition that could lead to a conflict of interest.

G5.2.2.1 SQF Auditors shall not Audit a SQF System where they have participated in a consulting role involving the Supplier in question, or any body related to the Supplier, within the last two years (considered to be participating in an active and creative manner in the development of the SQF System to be Audited including the development of Food Safety Plans). Consulting would include, but is not limited to, activities such as:

- i.) producing or preparing Food Safety Plans, Food Quality Plans, manuals, handbooks or procedures.
- ii.) participating in the decision making process regarding SQF Systems.
- iii.) giving advice – as a consultant or otherwise - toward the design, documentation, development, validation, verification, implementation or maintenance of SQF Systems; and
- iv.) deliver or participate in the delivery of an "in-house" training service at which advice and instruction on the development and implementation of Food Safety Plans and SQF Systems for eventual Certification is provided.

G5.2.2.2 The Certification Body shall ensure an SQF Auditor discloses to it any existing, former or proposed link between themselves or their organization and the Supplier.

### **Additional SQF Requirement – Contracting of assessment personnel**

The Certification Body shall demonstrate full control over the Audit and shall screen SQF Contract Auditors thoroughly before appointment to ensure they meet all requirements for completing Audits of SQF Systems.

G5.2.2.3 Where a Certification Body engages SQF Auditors under contract, those SQF Auditors shall be Registered SQF Contract Auditors and the Certification Body shall retain records of all SQF Contract Auditors as outlined in clause G5.2.3.

G5.2.2.4 The Certification Body shall only contract the Audit activity and not the management and control of the Certification.

G5.2.2.5 The Certification Body shall ensure SQF Contract Auditors retain impartiality when providing an Audit service and that they are registered as SQF Contract Auditors.

G5.2.2.6 The Certification Body shall notify the Supplier when SQF Contract Auditors are engaged to provide an Audit service.

### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 5.2.3**

G5.2.3 The Certification Body shall retain detailed records of all SQF Auditor qualifications, experience and Audit activities (Audit log).

## **6 Changes in the Certification Requirements**

### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 6**

G6.1 Changes to the Certification requirements shall include any new criteria released by the SQFI and any amendments to existing documentation. All changes shall be implemented by the Certification Body within the time frame specified by the SQFI.

### **Additional SQF Requirement to clause 6 - Conditions for change of Certification Body**

- G6.2 A Certified Supplier may elect to cease being a client of a Certification Body (**Former Certifier**) and to have or agree to have an alternative Certification Body (**New Certifier**) undertake Audits of its SQF System. A Certified Supplier shall ensure it has a Certification Body appointed at all times.
- G6.3 Where a Certified Supplier elects to transfer its Certificate of Registration the New Certifier shall undertake a pre transfer review of the Supplier's Certification to:
- i. confirm the Certificate of Registration is current, valid and relates to the SQF System so Certified.
  - ii. confirm the Supplier's Food Sector Category(s) falls within the New Certifier's Scope of Accreditation.
  - iii. confirm any complaints received are actioned;
  - iv. review the Supplier's Audit history (where the Supplier can demonstrate such history to the satisfaction of the New Certifier by way of copies of Audit reports completed by the Former Certifier) and the impact of any outstanding Non-Conformities; and
  - v. confirm the stage of the current Certification cycle.
- G6.4 Certificates with outstanding Critical or Major Non-Conformities that have not been closed out, or Certificates known to have been suspended or withdrawn or under threat of suspension or withdrawal shall not be accepted for transfer until they are closed out to the satisfaction of the New Certifier.
- G6.5 In the case of a SQF 2000 Certification, unless the Supplier can demonstrate evidence of a good audit history as described in G13.4 vii, the option of a reduced Audit frequency under clause G13.4 vii is not applicable until the three year Audit period is completed with the New Certifier.
- G6.6 Where a decision is made to proceed with Certification the New Certifier shall:
- i. conduct a Certification Audit when the next Surveillance Audit is due after which a new Certificate of Registration is issued under the new Certification Body and issue a new Certification Trade Mark that includes the name of the new Certification Body.
  - ii. complete the current Certification cycle leading to the Re-certification Audit.
  - iii. ensure the Supplier retains its unique Certification number if requested and
  - iv. notify the SQFI that the Supplier is its client and provide to the SQFI the details outlined in 8.2.
- G6.7 The Former Certifier shall notify the SQFI that the Supplier is no longer its client.

### **Additional SQF Requirement to clause 6 - Change of Ownership of a Certified Supplier**

- G6.8 Where a Certified Supplier's business has been sold and the legal entities business name is retained, the new owner shall, within thirty days of the change of ownership, apply to a Certification Body to retain the SQF Certification and the existing Certification Number. In such cases the Certification Body shall complete a Certification Audit.
- G6.9 In cases where the ownership of a Certified Supplier changes and the staff with major responsibility for the management and oversight of the SQF System has been retained, the Certification Body may retain the existing Audit frequency status. In making this determination the Certification Body shall verify, by site Audit within sixty days of change of ownership, that staff with major responsibility for the management and oversight of the SQF System has been retained.
- G6.10 If the conditions outlined in G6.9 do not apply the Certification Body shall complete a Certification Audit and issue a new Certificate of Registration and a new Certification Number. The Audit frequency applicable to a new Certification and as outlined in either clause G13.3 and G13.4 shall apply as the case may be.

## **7 Appeals, Complaints and Disputes**

### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 7**

This clause deals only with complaints received by the Certification Body.

- G7.1 The Certification Body shall document its procedure for handling and resolving appeals, complaints and disputes about its activities and decisions made by a Supplier (including the activities and decisions of its SQF Auditors and SQF Contract Auditors).
- i. Appeals regarding decisions on the suspension and/or withdrawal of the SQF Certification by a Certification Body shall not delay the decision to suspend or withdraw the Certification.

- ii. Complaints received by a Certification Body from a Certified Supplier shall be investigated and resolved without delay.
- G7.2 The Certification Body shall document its procedure for handling and resolving appeals, complaints and disputes made by other parties about a Supplier.
- i. Complaints received by a Certification Body from other parties about a Supplier shall be investigated and resolved without delay.
- G7.3 Where upon investigation of a complaint in G7.2 it is determined that there has been a substantiated breakdown of a Supplier's SQF System or any other condition not in accordance with the SQF Code and/or other supporting documents the Certification Body shall implement action outlined in [Annex 1](#).

## 8 Application for Certification

### G8.1 Information on the procedure

#### SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 8.1

- G8.1 The Certification Body shall provide to the Applicant
- i. details of the Certification procedure including how an Audit is conducted and the Audit frequency;
  - ii. a description of the type of objective evidence that will be collected during the Audit and the action taken (as described in [Annex 1](#)) as a result of any Critical, Major or Minor nonconformity found. The Certification Body shall also provide details of the type of SQF Auditor to be used, including an estimate of all fees and charges that apply, and outline the rights of the Supplier to object to an SQF Auditor if the situation arises.
- G8.1.1 The Certification Body shall inform the Supplier that details of the Supplier's Certificate of Registration will be made available on the SQFI web site for public display as follows:
- i. Supplier name, state/province, country, Certificate type and number, Certification renewal date, Food Sector Category(s), Product(s) covered by the Certificate of Registration and Modules implemented.
- G8.1.2 The Certification Body shall offer to the Suppliers the opportunity to have the following Certificate of Registration details accessible by their customer via the SQFI web site. In such cases the Certification Body shall obtain the suppliers consent and indicate this when entering Supplier Audit details in the SQFI database.
- i. Customer/retailer name, Supplier name, state/province, country, Certificate type and number, Certification renewal date, Certification level, Certification expiry date, Food Sector Category(s), Product(s) covered by the Certificate of Registration, Company representative name and contact details, SQF Expert Name, Audit rating, Name of Certification Body, Auditor name, Audit frequency, date of last Audit and Modules implemented.

### G8.2 The application

#### SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 8.2

- G8.2 The Certification Body shall provide an application for Certification in an official format for completion and endorsement by the Supplier before any evaluation commences. The application form shall include the:
- i. SQF Code, Level of Certification and Module (if applicable); to be applied;
  - ii. Supplier/company name, its site address to which the Certification will apply and postal address, telephone and facsimile number and E-mail address;
  - iii. name of the Supplier/company representative, their telephone and facsimile numbers and email address;
  - iv. Food Sector Category(s) and Product(s) to be covered by the Certification;
  - v. SQF Expert details (see Annex 5);
  - vi. estimated date of the Certification Audit; and
  - vii. Suppliers consent to have their Certification of Registration details as outlined in 8.1.2 i displayed on the SQFI website.

## 9 Preparation for Evaluation

### SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 9

- G9.1 Before commencing an on-site Certification Audit the Certification Body shall complete a comprehensive review of the SQF System as presented at a Desk Audit to ensure that:
- i. the Supplier's SQF System meets the requirements of the relevant SQF Code;
  - ii. SQF Plans have been derived as required in the relevant SQF Code and that they have been developed, validated and verified by a SQF Expert; and
  - iii. there is substantiated evidence to show that Food Safety Plans were derived using the HACCP Method.
- G9.2 In addition to its evaluation plan for all SQF System Certification activities the Certification Body shall prepare a written site Audit plan and make that plan available to the Supplier.
- G9.3 The Certification Body shall ensure SQF Auditors are qualified as outlined in G5.2.1.

## 10 Evaluation

### SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 10

#### The Certification Audit

- G10.1 The Certification Audit of the SQF System is undertaken to verify the effectiveness of the Supplier's SQF System in its entirety. It shall establish and ensure:
- i. the effective inter-action between all elements of the SQF System; and
  - ii. that the Supplier has demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the effectiveness of the SQF System and to meeting regulatory and customer requirements.

#### The Surveillance Audit

- G10.2 The purpose of the Surveillance Audit is to:
- i. verify that the SQF System continues to be implemented as documented;
  - ii. consider and take appropriate action where changes to the Supplier's operations are made and the impact of those changes on the Supplier's SQF System;
  - iii. confirm continued compliance with the requirements of the relevant SQF Code;
  - iv. verify all critical steps remain under control; and
  - v. contribute to continued improvement of the Supplier's SQF System and business operation.

#### The Re-certification Audit

- G10.3 A Re-certification Audit of the SQF System is undertaken to verify the continued effectiveness of the Supplier's SQF System in its entirety. The Re-certification Audit shall provide for a review of past performance of the SQF System over the period of Certification and may replace and/or extend a regular Surveillance Audit). It shall ensure:
- iii. the effective inter-action between all elements of the SQF System;
  - iv. the overall effectiveness of the SQF System in its entirety in the light of changes in operations; and
  - v. that the Supplier has demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the effectiveness of the SQF System and to meeting regulatory and customer requirements.
- G10.4 Certification Bodies shall allow SQF Auditors sufficient time to undertake all activities relating to a Desk Audit, Certification Audit or a Re-certification Audit and shall also monitor all SQF Auditor (including SQF Contract Auditors) activities to ensure they do not take excessive time to conduct an Audit. The time allocated shall be based on factors such as the size, complexity of operations, whether it involves a High Risk Product and/or a High Risk Process, the degree of organization of the Supplier and the number of locations. The Certification Body shall be prepared to justify or substantiate the amount of time spent on any Certification Audit, Surveillance Audit or Re-certification Audit.
- G10.5 At any stage during a Desk Audit, Certification, Surveillance or Re-certification Audit the SQF Auditor may make an Advisory Finding in respect of a Supplier's SQF System. The Supplier shall be made aware that they are under no obligation to implement the Advisory Finding and the Supplier shall not be penalized nor have its Certificate of Registration suspended or withdrawn if it elects not to, or fails to, implement an Advisory Finding.
- G10.6 For Certification of a Multi-site Organization the guidance provided in Clause 10 and [Annex 4](#) applies.

## 11 Evaluation Report

### SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 11

- G11.1 Where an Audit involves more than one type of product or process the report shall clearly identify all the elements important to each type Audited.
- G11.2 The SQF Audit Report, in the format provided by the SQFI and described in G5.1.3 shall be completed by the SQF Auditor for each Audit completed. The SQF Auditor shall include all the requirements and the calculated rating as listed in the SQF Audit Report Explanatory Notes described in [Annex 2](#).

## 12 Decisions on Certification

### SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 12

- G12.1 The Certification Body shall have a procedure outlining how it will provide services in new Food Sector Categories, what steps it will take if approached to operate in dormant Food Sector Categories and how it will acquire the required knowledge, skills and experience before accepting such applications. Where a Certification Body is accredited to certify SQF Systems that include test and calibration laboratory services it shall make it clear to Suppliers that such Accreditation is not equivalent to a service provided by a testing or calibration laboratory service accredited by a recognized laboratory Accreditation body.
- G12.2 Certification and Re-certification of SQF Systems shall not be granted unless a "C" Audit rating or greater is achieved, all Major and Critical Non-conformities have been corrected and those corrections verified by the Certification Body (by site visit or other appropriate means).
- G12.3 Once the decision to grant Certification is made the Certification Body shall apply to the SQFI for a unique Certification Number for that Certification.
- G12.4 Within fourteen (14) days of receiving the unique Certification Number the Certification Body shall provide to the Supplier:
- i. a Certificate of Registration in the form set out in [Annex 3](#);
  - ii. an electronic copy of the relevant Certification Trade Mark which shall include the Certification Body name;
  - iii. a statement detailing the duration of the Certification and the grounds upon which Certification may be suspended or withdrawn;
  - iv. the Audit Report including the Audit rating;
  - v. the requirements for undertaking Surveillance Audits and Re-Certification Audits and their frequency; and
  - vi. where the Scope of Certification is changed (i.e. expanded or reduced) as a result of an Audit a new Certificate of Registration shall be issued which includes the changed Scope of Certification and the Certification Body shall notify the SQFI of the change.

## 13 Surveillance

### SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 13

- G13.1 The Certification Body shall have documented procedures laying out the circumstances and conditions in which Certification will be maintained. Where Non-conformity is found it shall be corrected within the time agreed by the Certification Body and as follows:
- i. a **Minor Non-conformity** shall be Corrected within 30 days. In circumstances where there is no immediate threat to product safety or quality, extensions may be granted by the Certification Body but a Minor Non-conformity shall be Corrected and appropriate Corrective Action verified by the SQF Auditor before or at the next Surveillance or Re-certification Audit;
  - ii. a **Major Non-conformity** shall be Corrected and appropriate Corrective Action verified within 14 days. In circumstances where the Corrective Action involves structural change or where the Major Non-conformity cannot be Corrected due to seasonal conditions, or where there is no immediate threat to product safety or quality this period can be extended provided the Corrective Action time frame is acceptable to the Certification Body. In such cases the Major Non-conformity shall be Corrected and appropriate Corrective Action verified by the SQF Auditor before or at the next Surveillance or Re-certification Audit; and
  - iii. a **Critical Non-conformity** shall be dealt with as outlined in Annex 1.
- G13.2 The Certification Body shall maintain facilities, resources and procedures to ensure that Surveillance undertaken provides assurance that a certified Supplier continues to comply with the requirements of the relevant SQF Code.

### **SQF 1000 Audit Frequency**

- G13.3 For SQF 1000 Systems, the Audit frequency shall be as follows:
- i. a Desk Audit;
  - ii. a Certification Audit; and
  - iii. one (1) Re-certification Audit a year conducted within (30) thirty days of the anniversary of the initial date of Certification.

### **SQF 2000 Audit Frequency**

- G13.4 For SQF 2000 Systems, the Audit frequency shall be as follows:
- i. a Desk Audit;
  - ii. a Certification Audit;
  - iii. one (1) Re-certification Audit a year conducted within (30) thirty days of the anniversary of the initial date of Certification.
  - iv. Where a Supplier operates under Seasonal conditions (a period in which the major processing activity is conducted over not more than five consecutive months) the Certification Audit and the Re-certification Audit shall be completed within thirty (30) days after the start of the main part of the season. In such circumstances a Surveillance Audit (G10.2.) need not apply.
  - v. one (1) Surveillance Audit, six (6) months after the Certification Audit and the Re- certification Audit. Surveillance Audits shall be conducted within (30) thirty days of the due date.
  - vi. the detail covered in the Surveillance Audits shall be sufficient to establish the effective implementation and ongoing maintenance of the SQF 2000 System; and
  - vii. where after three (3) years a Supplier has demonstrated a good Audit history (no Critical or Major Non-Conformities over a three-year period of continuous Certification and an Audit rating over this period of G (Good) or greater is maintained during this period), the Supplier may elect to move to one annual Re-certification Audit.

## **14 Use of Licenses, Certificates and Marks of Conformity**

### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 14**

#### **Issuing a Certificate of Registration**

- G14.1 The Certificate of Registration issued by the Certification Body shall be in the format described in Annex 3, and issued only after Certification and Re-certification is granted.
- G14.2. All Certificates of Registration issued by the Certification Body shall be within its Scope of Accreditation and may bear the Accreditation Body mark.

#### **Issuing a SQF Certification Trade Mark**

- G14.3 The SQFI has prepared Rules for Use which outlines the rules that Suppliers must follow when using a SQF Certification Trade Mark.
- G14.4 The Certification Body shall approve the Suppliers application of the unique Certification Number in the space allocated on Certification Trade Mark issued to a Supplier before use. Such approvals shall be documented.
- G14.4 When conducting Audits the Certification Body shall ensure the Rules for Use are followed.
- G14.5 Use of the SQF Certification Trade Mark by a Supplier is voluntary.

## **15 Complaints to Suppliers**

### **SQF Requirement - Guidance to clause 3.7 (Clause 15 of Guide 65)**

- G15.1 This clause deals only with complaints received by the Supplier, not by the Certification Body.
- G15.2 Complaints may indicate a possible Non-conformity. On receipt of a complaint involving a Critical or Major Non-conformity the Supplier shall notify its Certification Body without delay. In addition the Supplier shall establish the cause of the non-conformity and implement immediate and appropriate corrective action.
- G15.3 The Certification Body shall, either at Surveillance Audits or as otherwise determined, check where any such Non-conformity or failure to meet the requirements of the relevant SQF Code is identified, that the Supplier has investigated its own systems, procedures and has taken appropriate corrective action.
- G15.4 The Certification Body shall satisfy itself that the Supplier is using such investigations to develop remedial / corrective action, which shall include measures for:
- i. notification to appropriate authorities if required by regulation;
  - ii. restoring conformity as quickly as practicable;

- iii. preventing recurrence;
  - iv. evaluating and mitigating any adverse food safety aspects and their associated impacts;
  - v. ensuring satisfactory interaction with other components of the SQF System; and
  - vi. assessing the effectiveness of the remedial / corrective measures adopted.
- G15.5 The implementation of the remedial or corrective action shall not be deemed to have been completed until its effectiveness has been demonstrated and the necessary changes made in the procedures, documentation and records.

**End of main text.**

## Annex 1

### Conditions for Suspending and Withdrawing Certification

1. The Certification Body shall suspend the SQF Certificate of Registration where a Critical Non-conformity is detected at Audit.
2. Where the Supplier's Certificate of Registration is suspended the Certification Body shall immediately amend the Suppliers details on the SQFI database to a "suspended" status indicating the reason for the suspension and the date of effect; and in writing
  - i. inform the Supplier of the reasons for the action taken and the date of effect; and
  - ii. request the Supplier to provide to the Certification Body, within 48 hours of receiving notice of the suspension, a detailed Corrective Action Plan outlining the Corrective Action to be taken.
3. Where the Supplier's Certificate of Registration is suspended pursuant to clause 1, the Certification Body shall upon receipt of the detailed Corrective Action Plan:
  - i. by the means of an on-site Audit and within thirty (30) days of receiving the Corrective Action Plan verify that the immediate Correction has been taken;
  - ii. not more than three (3) months after suspension the Certification Body shall verify by on site Audit the effective implementation of the Corrective Action Plan to verify the SQF System is achieving stated objectives; and
  - iii. where Corrective Action has been successfully taken re-instate the Suppliers status on the SQFI database and give written notice to the Supplier that their Certificate of Registration is no longer suspended;
4. Where a Certification Body has suspended a Supplier's SQF Certificate of Registration, for the duration of the suspension the Supplier shall not:
  - i. represent itself as holding a SQF Certificate of Registration; or
  - ii. use any goods, products, packaging, stationary or other items that may indicate the Supplier holds a SQF Certificate of Registration or which contain a Certification Trade Mark shall comply with the requirements outlined in clause (6) of the "SQF 1000 Certification Trade Marks - Rules for Use" and/or the document entitled "SQF 2000 Certification Trade Marks - Rules for Use" as the case may be.
5. The Certification Body shall withdraw the Certificate of Registration where the Supplier:
  - i. has been placed under suspension and fails to take Corrective Action within the time frame specified;
  - ii. has falsified its records;
  - iii. fails to take Corrective Action in relation to a Critical or Major Non-conformity within the time frame specified;
  - iv. after being notified by a Certification Body that its SQF System is due to be Audited in accordance with the frequency specified in this document, fails to have the required Audit conducted within 30 days of the due date;
  - v. fails to comply with its Certificate of Registration;
  - vi. uses the Certification Trade Mark while under suspension;
  - vii. uses the Certification Trade Marks inappropriately and not in accordance with the "SQF 1000 Certification Trade Marks - Rules for Use" and/or the document entitled "SQF 2000 Certification Trade Marks - Rules for Use" without a valid reason; or
  - viii. has an administrator, receiver, receiver and manager, official manager or provisional liquidator appointed over its assets or where an order is made or a resolution passed for the winding up of the Supplier (except for the purposes of amalgamation or reconstruction) or the Supplier ceases to carry on business or becomes bankrupt, applies to take the benefit of any law for the relief of bankrupt or insolvent debtors or makes any arrangement or composition with its creditors.
6. Where the Supplier's Certificate of Registration is withdrawn the Certification Body shall immediately amend the Suppliers details on the SQFI database to a "withdrawn" status indicating the reason for the withdrawal and the date of effect; and in writing:
  - i. inform the Supplier that the SQF Certificate of Registration has been withdrawn, the reason for such action and the date of effect;
  - ii. instruct the Supplier to return the Certificate of Registration and the electronic copy of the Certification Trade Mark;
  - iii. inform the Supplier that all packaging, stationary and other means that may indicate the Supplier holds SQF Certification or which contain a Certification Trade Mark. Such materials shall be treated as outlined section 6 of the "SQF 1000 Certification Trade Marks - Rules for Use" and/or the document entitled "SQF 2000 Certification Trade Marks - Rules for Use" as the case may be.

## SQF System Audit Report Explanatory Notes

### Introduction:

The SQFI provides these explanatory notes to assist in the uniform Audit of SQF Systems. Customer requirements will vary and it is the responsibility of the Certification Body to ensure that Audits undertaken by their SQF Auditors are thorough, that all requirements are fulfilled and the report is completed.

### Guidelines:

1. The audit report is used by SQF Auditors to record their findings in determining the extent to which Supplier operations comply with stated requirements.
2. Each aspect is assessed according to its condition at the time of the Audit. The following criteria are used:
  - 3 - Does not meet the criteria (Critical Non-conformity)
  - 2 - Does not meet the criteria because of major variations (Major Non-conformity)
  - 1 - Does not meet the criteria because of minor variations (Minor Non-conformity)
  - 0 - Meets the criteria

3. Defects listed in the report are to be accurately described and include a suggested time frame to correct the defect (detailed in the Corrective Action Request (CAR)).

4. A rating is calculated for the premises as a whole. It provides a basis for comparing the overall condition of the premises against GMP/GAP standards. The rating is determined as follows:

$$\frac{A - B}{A} \times 100 = \text{Rating}$$

Where A is the product of multiplying the number of aspects assessed by 3; and B is the sum of the individual rating criteria allocated.

To achieve and maintain SQF Systems Certification a Supplier must achieve a minimum rating of C and have no Critical or Major Non-conformity identified during a Certification or Re-certification Audit. The following rating represents the standard of the premises. It can also be used to rate areas within the premises:

0	-	59	<b>R</b>	Fails to comply
60	-	70	<b>M</b>	Considered Marginal
71	-	85	<b>C</b>	Considered to Comply
86	-	95	<b>G</b>	Considered Good
96	-	100	<b>E</b>	Considered Excellent

**Note:** Where a Critical or Major Non-conformity is identified at the Certification or Re-certification Audit the Supplier shall not be Certified. When a Critical Non-conformity is identified during a Surveillance or Re-certification Audit the Certification of Registration will be suspended regardless of the rating.

5. Corrective action to rectify Non-conformities involving food safety must be implemented as outline by the SQFI. Recommendations to suspend production and isolate product may be necessary if defects cannot be rectified immediately. Correction of these defects must be made to ensure product is no longer at risk. All Non-conformities shall be documented.

6. **Non conformity** – refers to the following definitions:

6.1 **Critical Non-conformity** Includes but is not limited to:

- i) A break down of control(s) at a critical control point, Pre-requisite Program or other process step and judged likely to cause a significant public health risk whereby product safety is compromised and judged likely to result in a Class 1 or Class 2 recall and effective corrective action is not taken.
- ii) Falsification of records relating to food safety controls and the SQF System.
- iii) A series of three (3) Major Non-Conformities that collectively result in a systems element breakdown.
- iv) More than four (4) Major Non-Conformities identified across the total system.

6.2 **Major Non-conformity** means a lack or deficiency in the SQF System producing unsatisfactory conditions that carry a food safety or quality risk and likely to result in a systems element breakdown or five (5) Minor Non-Conformities that collectively cause a systems element breakdown.

6.3 **Minor Non-conformity** means a lack or deficiency in the SQF System that produces unsatisfactory conditions that if not addressed may lead to a risk to food safety and quality but not likely to cause a systems element breakdown.





## **Multi Site Certification**

*This annex provides guidance on Clause 10 of ISO/IEC Guide 65 in regard to Certification of a Multi-site Organization under the SQF Program.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The aim of this annex is to provide guidance for the assessment and Certification of a Multi-site Organization where a Central-site currently Certified to the SQF 2000 Code, or eligible for such Certification, has a network of Sub-sites that are eligible for Certification to the SQF 1000 Code. The Certification shall provide adequate confidence in the conformity of the management system implemented by the Central-site and should be practical and feasible in economic and operative terms.
- 1.2 The Certification Audit and subsequent Surveillance and Re-certification Audit of the Multi-site Organization are centred on the SQF 2000 Central-site and statistically valid sampling of Sub-sites. The Central-site shall have Sub-sites that carry out essentially similar activities, all under its control. The Certification Body shall implement appropriate procedures for Auditing the Sub-sites at each Certification, Surveillance and Re Certification Audit. This annex outlines the conditions under which Certification Bodies will Certify a Multi-site Organization.
- 1.3 This annex is applicable to licensed SQF Certification Bodies Accredited to undertake this activity.

### **2. DEFINITIONS**

#### **Multi-site Organization**

- 2.1 A Multi-site Organization means a SQF 2000 Certified Supplier (hereafter referred to as a Central-site) at which activities are planned to control and manage the food safety and quality management system of a network of Certified SQF1000 Suppliers (hereafter referred to as Sub-sites) under a legal or contractual link.
- 2.2 In addition to maintaining a legal or contractual link with the Central-site the Sub-sites shall be subject to a common SQF 1000 management system, which is established and subject to continuous surveillance by the Central-site. This means that the Central-site has the rights to implement corrective actions when needed in any Sub-site. Where applicable this shall be laid down in the contract between the Central-site and the Sub-sites. Examples of possible Multi-site organizations are:
  - i. a slaughterhouse operating with a group of contracted Primary Producers who supply animals for slaughter;
  - ii. a fruit pack-house receiving fruit from a group of contracted fruit growers;
  - iii. a grain receival depot or flour mill operating with a group of contracted grain Producers who supply grain for further processing or for storage and consolidation prior to bulk shipment;
  - iv. a fish processor operating with a group of contracted fishermen who supply fish for further processing; or
  - v. a cheese manufacturer receiving milk from a group of contracted dairy farmers.

### **3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE MULTI-SITE ORGANIZATION**

- 3.1 The product(s) supplied by Sub-sites should be substantially of the same kind and produced according to the same fundamental methods and procedures.
- 3.2 The Central-site shall establish a management system in accordance with the SQF 2000 Code and shall maintain SQF 2000 Certification for the duration of the multi-site arrangement.
- 3.3 The Central-site's SQF 2000 management system shall be administered under a centrally controlled plan and be subject to central management review. All the relevant Sub-sites (including the central administration function) shall be subject to the Central-site's internal Audit program and shall be Audited in accordance with that program prior to the Certification Body starting its assessment.
- 3.4 The Central-site shall demonstrate an ability to collect and analyze data (including but not limited to the items listed below) from all sites, including the Central-site, and authority and ability to initiate organizational change if required.
  - i. System documentation and system changes;
  - ii. management;
  - iii. complaints;
  - iv. evaluation of corrective actions; and
  - v. internal Audit planning and evaluation of the results.
- 3.5 The Central-site shall document its internal Audit procedure. The procedure shall include an internal audit schedule and outline the method and frequency of conducting audits of all Sub-sites and the Central-site.
- 3.6 The Central-site shall ensure that personnel conducting internal Audits of the Multi-site Organization, and

evaluating the results of those internal Audits, are trained in internal Audit procedures and that they are registered as a SQF Consultant or a SQF Auditor.

#### **4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE CERTIFICATION BODY**

The Certification Body shall provide information to the Central-site about the criteria laid down in this Annex 4 before commencing the Certification, and shall not proceed with it if any of the criteria are not met.

##### **Contract Review**

- 4.1 The Certification Body shall identify the complexity and scale of the activities covered by the Multi-site Organization subject to Certification and any differences between Sub-sites as the basis for determining the level of sampling.
- 4.2 The Central-site is the entity responsible for the Multi-site Organization and as such is the client of the Certification Body.
- 4.3 The Certification Body shall check, in each individual case, to what extent Sub-sites of a Central-site produce or provide substantially the same kind of products or services according to the same procedures and methods. Only after a positive examination by the Certification Body that all the Sub-sites proposed for inclusion in the Multi-site Organization meet the criteria may the sampling procedure be applied to the individual Sub-sites.
- 4.4 If all the Sub-sites are not ready to be submitted for Certification at the same time, the Central-site shall be required to inform the Certification Body in advance of those Sub-sites to be included in the Certificate of Registration.

##### **Assessment**

- 4.5 The Certification Body shall have documented procedures to deal with assessments of a Multi-site Organization. The procedures shall outline the methods the Certification Body applies to establish that the Central-site's SQF 2000 management system governs the activities at all the Sub-sites, that it is actually applied to all Sub-sites and that all the criteria in clause 2 of this Annex are met.
- 4.6 If more than one Audit team is involved in the Audit of the Multi-site Organization, the Certification Body shall designate a unique Audit team leader with responsibility to manage and lead the audit and to consolidate findings from all the Audit teams into one comprehensive audit report.

##### **Dealing with Non-conformities**

- 4.7 When Non-conformities are found at any individual Sub-site, either through the Central-site's internal Auditing or from Auditing by the Certification Body, investigation shall take place to determine whether the other Sub-sites may be affected. The Certification Body shall require evidence that the Central-site has taken action to rectify all non-conformities found during internal Audits and that all non-conformities are reviewed to determine whether they indicate an overall system deficiency applicable to all Sub-sites or not. If they are found to do so, appropriate corrective action shall be taken both at the Central-site and at the individual Sub-sites. The Central-site shall demonstrate to the Certification Body the justification for all follow-up action.
- 4.8 The Certification Body shall increase its sampling frequency until it is satisfied that control is re-established by the Central-site.
- 4.9 At the time of the initial Certification and subsequent Re-certification, if the Central-site or any Sub-site has a Critical Non-conformity or Major Non-conformity, a Certificate of Registration shall not be issued to the Multi-site Organization until satisfactory corrective action is taken.
- 4.10 It shall not be admissible that, in order to overcome the obstacle raised by the existence of Non-conformity at a single Sub-site, the Central-site seeks to exclude from the Scope of Certification the "problematic" Sub-site during the Certification, Surveillance or Re-Certification Audit.

##### **Certificate and Marks of Conformity Issued for a Multi-site Organization**

- 4.11 A SQF 2000 Certificate of Registration shall be issued to the Central-site. The Central-site's Certificate of Registration shall include an appendix listing all Sub-sites participating in the Multi-site Organization. The format for the Certificate of Registration and the appendix list is provided by the SQF Institute.
- 4.12 The Certification Body may issue a SQF 1000 Certificate of Registration for each Sub-site covered by the Central-site's Certificate of Registration. Sub-site Certificates of Registration issued by the Certification Body shall be in a format provided by the SQF Institute.
- 4.13 Where a SQF 1000 Certificate of Registration for each Sub-site is not issued by the Certification Body the Central-site may issue a letter to the Sub-site indicating its participation in the Multi-site Organization. In such cases the letter shall be written on the Central-sites letterhead, signed by senior management and include the following:
  - i. Header: SQF Multi-site Organization – Participating SQF 1000 Sub-site details.
  - ii. The statement:

- “This letter outlines the participation of (name and site address of Sub-site) in the Multi-site Organization administered by (name and Certification Number of Central-site). Participation in the Multi-site Organization is valid for 1 year subject to satisfactory surveillance and provided the Sub-site remains a member of the Multi-site Organization.”
  - iii. SQF 1000 Certification Number;
  - iv. SQF 1000 Certification - Level (insert level of Certification - either level 1, 2 or 3);
  - v. Sub-site Registration Schedule
    - Scope of Registration (Food Sector Category)
    - Product
  - vi. Date of issue;
  - vii. Date of expiry; and
  - viii. Name of Certification Body.
- 4.14 The Certificate of Registration will be withdrawn in its entirety, if the Central-site or any of the Sub-sites does not/do not fulfill the necessary criteria for the maintaining of the Certificate of Registration (see 3.3 above).
- 4.15 The list of Sub-sites shall be kept updated by the Certification Body. To this effect, the Certification Body shall request the Central-site to inform it about the closure of any of the Sub-sites. Failure to provide such information will be considered by the Certification Body as a misuse of the Certificate of Registration, and the Multi-site Organization’s Certificate of Registration shall be suspended until the matter is corrected to the satisfaction of the Certification Body.
- 4.16 Additional Sub-sites can be added to an existing Certification as the result of Surveillance or Re Certification Audits. The Certification Body shall have a procedure for the addition of new Sub-sites.
- 4.17 The SQF 2000 Certification Trade Mark and its Rules for Use is issued by the Certification Body to the Central-site for use by the Central-site only.
- 4.18 The SQF 1000 Certification Trade Mark and its Rules for Use is issued to the Central-site by the Certification Body. The Central-site shall be responsible for issuing this Mark to each Sub-site and for monitoring the use of the SQF 1000 Certification Trade Mark in accordance with its Rules for Use.

## 5. CRITERIA FOR SAMPLING

### Methodology

- 5.1 The selection of the sample is the responsibility of the Certification Body.
- 5.2 The sample is partly selective based on the factors set out below and partly non-selective, and shall result in a range of different Sub-sites being selected, without excluding the random element of sampling.
- 5.3 At least 25% of the sample shall be selected at random.
- 5.4 Taking into account the criteria mentioned hereafter, the remainder shall be selected so that the differences among the Sub-sites selected over the period of validity of the Certificate of Registration is as large as possible.
- 5.5 The Sub-site selection criteria shall include among others the following aspects:
- i results of internal Audits or previous Certification assessments;
  - ii records of complaints and other relevant aspects of corrective and preventive action;
  - iii significant variations in the size of the Sub-sites;
  - iv variations in the work procedures;
  - v modifications since the last Certification assessment; and
  - vi geographical dispersion.
- 5.6 This selection does not have to be done at the start of the Audit process. It can also be done once the Certification Audit of the Central-site has been completed. In any case, the Central-site shall be informed of the Sub-sites that will comprise the sample. The central-site shall be allowed adequate time to prepare for the Audit.
- 5.7 The Central-site’s SQF 2000 System, including its Sub-site internal Audit procedure, shall be examined during the Certification Audit and each Surveillance and Re Certification Audit. The SQF 2000 Central-site shall not qualify for reduced Audit frequency under Clause G13 5 vi of this document.

### Size of Sample

- 5.8 The Certification Body shall have a procedure for determining a sample size outside that described in this annex.
- 5.9 The Certification Body shall record the justification for applying a sample size outside that described in this annex.
- 5.10 The following guidance is based on the example of a **low risk activity** at each Sub-site. The minimum number of Sub-sites to be visited per Audit is:  
**Certification Audit:** The sample size equals the square root of the number of Sub-sites with 1.5 as a co-

efficient ( $y=1.5\sqrt{x}$ ), rounded to the upper whole number.

**Surveillance Audit:** The sample size equals the square root of the number of Sub-sites ( $y=\sqrt{x}$ ), rounded to the upper whole number.

**Re-certification Audit:** The sample size equals the square root of the number of Sub-sites with 1.5 as a co-efficient ( $y=1.5\sqrt{x}$ ), rounded to the upper whole number.

- 5.11 The following guidance is based on the example of a **high risk activity** at each Sub-site. The minimum number of Sub-sites to be visited per Audit is:  
**Certification Audit:** The sample size equals the number of Sub-sites with 2.0 as a co-efficient ( $y=2\sqrt{x}$ ), rounded to the upper whole number.  
**Surveillance Audit:** The sample size equals the square root of the number of Sub-sites with 1.5 as a co-efficient ( $y=1.5\sqrt{x}$ ), rounded to the upper whole number.  
**Re-certification Audit:** The sample size equals the square root of the number of Sub-sites with 2.0 as a co-efficient ( $y=2.0\sqrt{x}$ ), rounded to the upper whole number.
- 5.12 The Central-site shall be visited at the Certification Audit and each Surveillance and Re Certification Audit.
- 5.13 The size of sample shall be increased where the Certification Body's risk analysis of the activity covered by the management system subject to Certification indicates special circumstances in respect of factors like:
- i) the complexity of the activity and of the management system applied at each Sub-site.
  - ii) variations in activities undertaken.
  - iii) records of complaints and other relevant aspects of corrective and preventive action.
  - iv) indication of an overall breakdown of food safety controls.
  - v) results of internal Audits.

### **Audit Times**

- 5.14 The Audit time to spend for each individual Sub-site is another important element to consider, and the Certification Body shall be prepared to justify the time spent on Multi-site Audit in terms of its overall policy for allocation of Audit time.
- 5.15 The complexity of the activity is another factor that may be taken into consideration.
- 5.16 No reduction is permitted for the Central-site.
- 5.17 The total time expended on Certification, Surveillance and Re-certification Audits (understood as the total sum of the time spent at each Sub-site plus the Central-site) shall never be less than that which would have been calculated for the size and complexity of the operation if all the work had been undertaken at a single Sub-site (i.e. with all the employees of the company in the same Sub-site). In most cases it will be considerably more.

### **Additional Sub-sites**

- 5.18 On the application of a new group of Sub-sites to join an already certified Multi-site network, each new group of Sub-sites shall be considered as an independent set for the determination of the sample size. After inclusion of the new group in the certificate, the new Sub-sites shall be cumulated to the previous ones for determining the sample size for future Surveillance or Re-Certification Audits.

## **SQF EXPERTS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

SQFI considers it essential that a supplier retain the services of a technically competent person (company employee or consultant) having responsibility for the management and maintenance of the SQF system after the auditor has completed the Audit. *The SQF Expert is either a SQF Practitioner or a SQF Consultant.*

### **2. COMPLIANCE**

This Supplier may comply with this requirement by either of the following means:

- i. Designating a suitably qualified staff member as a SQF Practitioner; or by
- ii. Engaging the services of a SQF Consultant.

### **3. VERIFICATION**

The Certification Body shall ensure the SQF Auditor verifies prior to the Certification and Re-Certification Audit and during a Surveillance Audit that the Supplier has designated a SQF Practitioner or engaged the services of a SQF Consultant.

### **4. CRITERIA**

#### **SQF Practitioner**

The SQF Practitioner shall be responsible for developing, validating, verifying, implementing and maintaining SQF Systems. They shall:

- i. be employed by the company and hold a position of responsibility in regard to the management of the company's SQF System;
- ii. have completed recognized HACCP training and be experienced and competent to implement and maintain HACCP based Food Safety Plans;
- iii. have demonstrated knowledge and experience of the product and the process under consideration; and
- iv. have completed and passed a SQF Systems Training Course (Implementing SQF Systems, 2 days).

The Certification Body shall provide to SQFI the following details:

- i. SQF Practitioner name;
- ii. position title;
- iii. Company name and site address and Food Sector Category;
- iv. applicable Food Sector Category(s);
- v. details of Recognized HACCP Training;
- vi. details of Implementing SQF Systems Training – Number of Certificate of Attainment; and
- vii. SQF Practitioners e-mail address.

#### **SQF Consultant**

The SQF Consultant will continue to be registered by the SQF Institute and be required to comply with the SQF Consultant Code of Practice.

The SQF Consultant Criteria is available at [www.sqfi.com](http://www.sqfi.com) .