Social Accountability Auditors Competence & Qualifications – Fisheries FIAPNG 008 v1.0 | November 2026



Seafoodmatter Management system – FIA PNG social auditor competence - fisheries

Procedure Information

This procedure has been prepared with the support
of the Fishing Industry Association members (FIA)
of Papua New Guinea (PNG).
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Photo: Seafoodmatter and FIA PNG staff interviewing

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1. Introduction

This document is intended to provide an overview of the qualifications and expertise needed by an auditor and/or assessor to carry out a social assessment in the fishery and aquaculture sectors to support operational and management decisions in understanding the background, rationale and process of the implementation process and path to be followed.

Social responsibility has become a key component of the responsible management of fishery and aquaculture operations. There is a market need for demonstrating compliance of human rights; in addition, governments and NGOs also are more and more developing and launching regulations and code of conduct that provide a platform to be aligned with human rights in the Seafood Sector.

Seafoodmatter Auditors and Assessors with seafood industry experience know where the weaknesses and loopholes are in terms of labour compliance, working conditions, risk management, and worker welfare; they understand the exceptional conditions, seasons and challenges of the industry for example.

Seafoodmatter will employ the right expertise to facilitate implementation, including guidance and interview techniques on social issues.

2. Purpose

This procedure sets out minimum requirements for any SFM auditor, assessor and subcontractors that will carry out social internal audits and assessments in fisheries, aquaculture and seafood processing sites.

3. Scope

This procedure applies to SFM personnel, FIA PNG auditors, FIA PNG members, and SFM subcontractors.

Referenced documents

- ISO17065 (auditors requirements)
- ISO19011: 2018
- SA8000 standard
- ASC Certification and Accreditation Procedure v2.1 Auditors' and technical experts' competencies
- APSCA competency framework
- FISH standard for Crew

To assess human rights and social accountability in the fishery sector, and get valuable outcomes from each assessment and audit, we need to be familiar with the sector and have specific training and qualifications that will provide the auditor and/or assessor with tools to assess any of these regulations, guidance, standards and sites.

4. Terms and definitions

For consistency and convenience, some of the terms in this procedure are adopted and/ or adapted from the ISO/ IEC Guide 2:2004 and ISO/ IEC 33017 for assessor training.

Auditor: A person with the competency to perform an audit.
Competence: The demonstrated ability to effectively apply appropriate knowledge, skills, and technical understanding to undertake roles and activities in a manner that meets defined levels of achievement.
Assessor: A person who is knowledgeable in a particular field and is called upon for advice, typically by a judge or committee of inquiry. An Assessor makes a judgment or decision about a situation after considering all the information.

5. Requirements for signing off, competence, and qualifications

All personnel involved in delivering auditing and assessment services shall be knowledgeable about the aims and objectives of the SFM tool - Social Accountability and Crew Welfare Tool (SACWT)

This shall include knowledge of the SFM code of conduct, social accountability standards, conventions, and treaties relevant to the audit/assessment. All auditors and technical experts, including subcontracted staff, shall:

- Be registered in the SFM, or FIA PNG authorised list, or FIA PNG member internal auditor list
- Sign off only after 8 audits as a trainee (observer, team member or co-auditor), and an audit as lead auditor witnessed by a Senior qualified auditor. Including audit report review and NC writing
- Provide CV to SFM secretariat and/or audit logbook
- Ensure that any auditor shall not participate or provide auditing services until they have the required experience, completed the required training, and demonstrated the required competencies for their role in SFM.
- Maintenance of Competency, following the SFM procedure 001.
- Auditors/ Assessors shall keep records, a logbook, and certificates, of all training and calibration sessions including the CV. Table # 1

Knowledge Relevant knowledge of national and local laws that apply to the organization being audited that includes but is not limited to:
a) Social auditing Environmental laws b) Workplace safety laws c) Labour laws depending on the country where the assessment will be carried out d) Health and safety laws e) Laws governing ownership and use of land and water f) Licenses and permits g) Environmental monitoring tools and technologies h) The interaction of the activities, products, services, and operations with the environment. i) Sector specific terminology j) Environmental aspects and impacts k) Methods for evaluating the significance of environmental aspects

l) Critical aspects of operational processes, products and services m) Monitoring and measurement techniques

n) Environmental laws o) Occupational Health and safety	
Qualification	
Analytical skills	The individual shall effectively and systematically assess situations and information to make informed decisions on objective and verifiable evidence
Audit Training	The individual shall have knowledge of the purpose and procedure of conducting audits. The individual shall be trained and competent in accordance with the **SFM** procedures (001) as needed for the role that is to be undertaken by a technical expert.
Diplomacy	The individual shall be tactful in dealings with people, as appropriate to achieve the audit objectives.
Education	The individual shall have at least a post-high school diploma or equivalent (minimum course duration of two (2) years) must have been obtained in a discipline related to the scope' procedure (001). In exceptional cases, practical experience can be regarded as equivalent. These cases shall be assessed and documented by The SFM board.
Ethical	The individual shall be fair, truthful, unbiased, sincere, discreet, trustworthy and honest. The individual shall possess a high level of integrity, particularly in relation to bribery and corrupt practices.
Listening	The individual shall understand and interpret verbal material. The individual shall understand and interpret non-verbal communication, such as gestures, and personal expression.
Observant	The individual shall be fully aware of physical surroundings and activities throughout the entire audit process.
Open-minded	The individual shall be open-minded, reasonable and shall be willing to consider alternative ideas or points of view.
Perceptive	The individual shall instinctively be aware of and be able to understand situations.
Professional	The individual shall be courteous, conscientious, discreet and business like in their approach to auditing. The individual shall have the ability to deal sensitively with people from different backgrounds and to make them feel at ease, in order to resolve conflict without losing composure. The individual shall keep relevant information confidential in accordance with non-disclosure or confidentiality agreements. The individual shall communicate confidently and with authority to secure agreement with the client's management. The individual shall maintain strict independence from self- interest or personal bias.
Reading	The individual shall understand and interpret written material.
Respectful	The individual shall act respectfully, show politeness and good manners. The individual shall be empathetic, respectful to others and shall help to build trust during and after the audit, with both colleagues and auditee

Tenacious	The individual shall be persistent and focused in their approach to achieve audit objectives.
Versatile	The individual shall be able to adjust readily to different situations and to effectively resolve conflict and arrive at consensus agreement as far as possible.
Writing	The individual shall have at least five (5) years of experience relevant to the operation (fisheries and/or aquaculture) and, if relevant, the processing facility being audited and assessed.
Writing	The individual shall have good written communication skills. The individual shall produce written documents that can be understood by the intended audience. The individual shall produce clear and accurate reports on audit findings and clearly articulate these in relation to legal requirements and relevant codes.
Experience	

Work experience	The individual shall have at least five (5) years of experience relevant to the operation (fisheries and/or aquaculture) and, if relevant, the processing facility being audited and assessed.
Audit Experience	Lead social auditors: The individual shall initially have completed a minimum of 30 days of onsite audit experience in conducting audits (either for social or environmental compliance). The individual shall have undertaken at least two satisfactory audits as an acting audit team leader, shadowed by and under the supervision of a competent lead auditor. The individual shall have conducted at least five (5) BAP, ASC, FISH, SACWT (RSP), SA8000, ETI, SMETA, CoC audits (any combination) or have been a member of an audit team for ten (10) audit days, for equivalent aquaculture audits, processing facilities or Fishing vessels at more than one (1) production facility. For social auditors: The individual shall initially have completed a minimum of 10 days of onsite audit experience in conducting audits (either for social or environmental compliance). The individual shall have undertaken at least two satisfactory audits as an acting audit team leader, shadowed by and under the supervision of a competent lead auditor. The individual shall have one or more of the following qualifications or equivalent: Has completed an SA8000 five day auditor course that is formally approved by SAAS plus continuing professional development courses as required by SAAS and has successfully completed a 3- day SAAS approved course within 2 years of having taken the four or five day basic course and ISO19011:2018 tailored for

	Social Accountability (Fisheries and Aquaculture) Or Has completed the Verité five day “EICC Labor & Ethics Lead Auditor Course” or the “Lead Auditor Accreditation Training: Investigative Skills Workshop”. Or Is recognized as a lead auditor for FI (Fairtrade International) audits for Trade and Hired Labour Standards by FLOCERT. Or - Global Social Compliance Program - recognized Or recognized auditor by SGS, UL, Intertek, BV, NSF, SAI Global, Control Union and Lloyds register,
Social auditing experience	- Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) - Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition (EICC) - Electronic Industry Code of Conduct - FISH standard for Crew - Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Base Code - Fair Trade USA - Fairtrade International (FI) - Goodweave (Rugmark) - International Council of Toy Industries (ICTI) – Code of Business Practice - Social Accountability International (SAI) SA 8000 - FIA PNG RSP Social Accountability and Crew Welfare - ASC farm training – social auditing - BAP training (Responsible Fisheries Scheme) - Global Gap (GRASP)
Audit principles and techniques	The individual shall be able to apply audit principles, procedures and techniques associated with management systems and possess a detailed knowledge of compliance issues commonly experienced with aquaculture, fisheries and associated processing operations. The individual shall be able to prioritize and focus on matters of significance and understand the appropriateness and consequences of using sampling techniques for auditing (ISO19011:2018). The individual shall be able to verify the accuracy of collected information and be aware of the significance and appropriateness of audit evidence to support audit findings and conclusions. The individual shall understand and assess those factors that can affect the reliability of the audit findings and conclusions. The individual shall be able to apply audit principles in the conduct of a social audit.

Training and skills	
Audit Training	The individual shall have successfully completed of a Lead Assessor training course based on ISO 19011:2018 principles that have a minimum duration of thirty-seven (37) hours. The certificate must specify the course content and duration. Successful completion must be indicated on the certificate. The Lead Assessor training course must cover: applicable standards on quality auditing, auditing techniques, focus of the audits (psychological aspects and communication) and reporting, and it must also include a practical case study. SA8000, BSCI, SMETA, ETI, FISH, ILO, BAP and ASC farm training are recognized.
Auditor training	The individual shall have undertaken and successfully completed a BAP, FISH, ILO, ASC, SA8000 approved auditor training course or courses in relation to specific standards, as required by the **SFM** auditor competence, qualifications and monitoring procedure. The individual shall undertake additional training on changes to legislation, specific standards, codes or conventions as appropriate.
Decisive	The individual shall be able to reach timely conclusions based on logical reasoning and analysis, and in the case of possible conflict, be confident to manage and control discussions. The individual shall assume the leadership role during discussions and other situations in order to resolve issues.
Detection skills	The individual shall have knowledge and investigative skills to detect and document evidence of nonconformities. The individual shall have the investigative skills to determine the authenticity of information and to evaluate allegations made by other sources.
Ethically and morally courageous	The individual shall act professionally and ethically and make decisions even though these actions and decisions may result in disagreement, confrontation or appeal proceedings.
Facilitating meetings	The individual shall effectively control and manage meetings during the audit.
Fraud detection	The individual shall understand and has the skills to detect commonly used methods of document manipulation, fraudulent actions and fraudulent practices.
Interpersonal skills	The individual shall have skills to ensure effective communication between themselves and other people. The individual shall have good people management skills. The individual shall have good communication skills in relation to a situation which warrants careful information gathering such as issues relating to gender, race, culture, discrimination and worker/management dispute.

Language	Unless accompanied by an independent interpreter, the individual shall be a fluent speaker and reader of the language(s) used by managers, administrators and workers of the organisation being audited. The individual shall communicate effectively through an interpreter.
Interviewing	The individual shall be experienced in different types of interviewing techniques. The individual shall understand the principles of sampling techniques with respect to group or individual interviews and cultural considerations. The individual shall have the ability to interview personnel without compromising the source of information. The individual shall deal discreetly with personnel who may feel compromised or feel uncomfortable being interviewed.
Logical judgment	The individual shall make correct decisions based on objective and verifiable evidence.

Management systems and reference documents	The individual shall have a general knowledge of management systems standards (such as ISO 9001), applicable procedures or other management systems documents used as audit criteria.
Oral presentation	The individual shall have good oral communication skills, which makes him/her understood by the intended audience. The individual shall provide clear and accurate oral representation on audit findings at closing meetings and clearly articulate these in relation to legal requirements and relevant codes.
Organisational situations	The individual shall understand the social, economic and cultural relationships in worker communities. The individual shall have knowledge of general business processes and shall understand the workings of organisations in relation to size, structure, function and relationships.
Organisational skills	The individual shall effectively plan, prioritize and adjust the activities to auditee needs as far as possible, without adversely affecting the audit. The individual shall have good organisational and time management skills.
Self-reliant	The individual shall be able to act effectively and function independently during audits
Interpreter	SFM code of conduct for interpreters shall details the role, responsibilities, CoI and Confidentiality.
Technical language	The individual shall have knowledge of the technical language employed in aquaculture and processing of aquaculture products.
Responsibility / due diligent	SFM auditor shall follow up audits, NCs, after the initial audit and ensure the site is implementing RCA, PA, CA and C until the NC is closed

6. Maintaining competence (monitoring)

Assessing and auditing are processes directly associated with the field and hands-on work, SFM assessors and auditors (individual) will need to carry out a minimum of assessments and audits per year to maintain their qualifications and competence.

The individual has had an audit peer witnessed by a qualified lead auditor no less than once in each two (2) year period. The outcomes of this witnessed audit will be recorded in the SFM auditor competence checklist.

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The individual shall lead no less than three (3) audits per year to maintain **SFM** auditor and assessor qualification.

7. Records

7.1 The following records shall be retained:
a. CV
b. Assessor and/or auditor log book/time
c. Certificates of training
d. Witness and monitor reporting

7.2 For transparency purposes, all the records are available on the SFM management system and/or for a minimum of three years after the procedure/project has come into effect.

8. Maintenance

The procedure is subject to review and revision if found necessary at least every five years.

9. History review

Version	Date create/review	Description of Responsible Amendment	Responsible	Section affected
0.0	September 2016	Development/ creation by Seafoodmatter	M.H	all
0.2	11th July 2020	New document draft for revision	M.H	References and times all
1.0	15th December 2022	Full review and revision	MH	all
2.0	9th December 2023	Sign-off details	MH	Point 5
008 V1.0	November 2026	Full document	M. Hidalgo	Full document