

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS CERTIFICATION REGULATION



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**SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
CERTIFICATION REGULATION**

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INTRODUCTION – EUROCERT’ S PRINCIPLES

1. **EUROCERT – EUROPEAN INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION COMPANY S.A.** is a private Anonymous Company activating in National, European and international level.
2. EUROCERT is not involved, in any way, in providing consulting services for designing and implementing the management systems of the interested companies.
3. EUROCERT’s independence is assured by its Statutory, its organisational structure and the operation of its Certification Committee.
4. All companies that cooperate with EUROCERT are treated equally, with exclusive object the right interpretation and implementation of Certification Standards according to this Regulation.

USED ABBREVIATIONS

C.C.R.	:	Certified Companies Register
SAMS	:	Social Accountability Management System
SAAS	:	Social Accountability Accreditation Services

ARTICLE 1 : PURPOSE OF THE REGULATION

- 1.1. The present document is written in Regulation form, according to internal procedures which are applied by EUROCERT and are in conformity with the ISO/ IEC 17021 standard requirements and the corresponding IAF guidelines. The present Regulation determines the obligations of companies and EUROCERT and the procedures for issuance, surveillance, extension, interruption, renewal and withdrawal of the Social Accountability Management Systems Conformity Certificate. The Certification of a company brings the immediate record in C.C.R. and it’s publication in EUROCERT web site.
- 1.2. The implementation of the present Regulation is supervised by the Committee Certification. It’s an independent Committee, in which the interested for Certification parts per branch, products/ services are represented. In the Committee Certification there are representatives from, at least, the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV), the Consumers Union “Quality of Life”, the Greek Association of Plant Protection and EUROCERT.
- 1.3. In order to certify a company’s Social Accountability Management System (SAMS), it’s necessary to show compliance with requirements of this Regulation and requirements of corresponded standard SA 8000.

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- 1.4. The issuance of a SAMS Certificate requires the evaluation of the SAMS of a company. It must not be used as or confused to a Product Conformity Certificate.
- 1.5. Certified companies can use the following EUROCERT's logo:



CERTIFIED SAMS
SA8000:2008
Cert. No. XXX/CC - SC/MM.YY

XXX: Certificate Number

CC - SC: Country Code (or agency code), - the Standard Code

MM: The month

YY: The year

In case the SAMS Conformity Certificate scope does not cover every activity of the company then logo must be accompanied also by a mark which will identify the accurate certified activities. Logo is exclusive property of EUROCERT, it concerns only the approved company and it cannot be transferred for any reason.

- 1.6. SAAS logo cannot be used on its own but only in combination with the EUROCERT logo. EUROCERT's logo must also always be accompanied by the SAAS logo as above
When using the SAAS accreditation mark for SA8000, its size shall not differ from the size of the EUROCERT 's mark. Neither SAAS nor EUROCERT logos can be used in any other colour scheme or dimensional proportions apart from the above.
- 1.7 Neither the EUROCERT's mark nor the SAAS accreditation mark for SA8000 SHALL be used on a product of Certified Organisation, its labelling or packaging, or in such a way as to suggest that EUROCERT or SAAS have certified or approved any product, process or service of a certified organisation, or in any other misleading manner
- 1.8 For any further information concerning the use of LOGOS, the client must contact the EUROCERT Head Offices

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ARTICLE 2 : GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1 All kinds of companies, independently of size or activity, can apply for the Certification of a SAMS to EUROCERT. SA8000 certification is not possible for maritime activities, fishing workplaces and offshore workplaces. Certification is not be possible also for organizations without active operations (shell companies).
- 2.2 All applications are evaluated, but in order to be accepted for the starting of the Assessment and Certification process, they must meet the following conditions:
- A. The company must have available the relevant system's documentation and send it to EUROCERT upon request
 - B. Have applied the SAMS for over three months
 - C. Have signed the EUROCERT's Certification Contract
- 2.3 The company must include all requirements according to the relevant Legislation (National and Community, if applicable) in the SAMS.
- 2.4 EUROCERT management and staff (permanent and external associates) handle all information that comes in their hold during Certification process, as strictly confidential.
- 2.5 EUROCERT ensures impartiality issues, for all its activities, through the operation of the Certification Commission, as well as the systematic Risk Analysis for Impartiality

ARTICLE 3 : APPLICATION'S REGISTRATION AND DISPATCH FOR ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION

- 3.1 The company must submit the Application for SAMS Certification to EUROCERT along with the relevant system documentation preferably in electronic form.
- 3.2 The application will be examined by the Certifications manager or his Deputy and the SA8000 Product Manager. Points of interest are indicatively the country of the company's location, the nature of the business and the number of company's and on-site sub-contractors' personnel. Immediately after the submission of the Application the evaluation process begins, during which the content of the Application is checked, as well as any other attached documentation. If required, further documentation may be requested. In case the application is accepted, the audit team to carry out the audit of the company is assigned.

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In case the application is not accepted, the Company shall be informed in writing.

After approving the application, the company will receive an offer-agreement document.

- 3.3 The offer-agreement document will be signed by the Certifications Manager or his Deputy for Greece and by the Development Manager for cases abroad.
- 3.4 If the company employs the services of a consultant for setting up the SA8000 management system and other duties and responsibilities, then the details of the consultant and his/her degree of involvement must be stated in the application form. The consultant cannot participate to the audit but his/her presence is allowed as an observer.
- 3.5 In order to schedule the audit, the Company must have a contract signed with EUROCERT. The contract is valid for three years and can be renewed.
- 3.6 EUROCERT, after receipt of the signed contract, prepares and sends the initial audit plan that describes the audit team formation, time and site of audit and the relevant Certification standard. The client's organization has the obligation to accept the audit plan by signing the fax or letter or ask its modification in writing explaining the reason. If there is no written answer within five (5) days it is considered as acceptance. The same apply for the periodical surveillance audits, except for the unannounced audits.
- 3.7 The initial assessment of the SAMS includes two (2) stages. The time interval between the two stages cannot exceed six months.
- 3.8 The audit team is composed by one or more Auditors, permanent or external associates, approved by EUROCERT Board of Directors according to International Standard ISO 19011 requirements and occasionally from Technical Experts. The team formation is selected in order to have the technological, industrial and business sufficiency to be able to assess the SAMS of the candidate company. At least one member of the team will be expert in interviewing workers on human right issues and familiar with local and national labour and human rights issues and legislation. The team will have appropriate gender mix based upon workforce demographics as well as the appropriate language skills.
- 3.9 Technical experts may come from different sectors of industries, public sector, educational institutions, research centers, working unions, etc.
- 3.10 When external associates are used during an audit, EUROCERT takes all the appropriate measures in order to safeguard impartiality, confidentiality and objectivity. In any case, the company has the right to object and ask for replacement as long as there is an objective and documented reason.

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- 3.11 The company has the obligation to allow to the audit team members access in it's premises, to provide any documents and records relevant to the audited SAMS, to provide a proper area for the audit team meetings, to facilitate auditors by giving them all other required documents and allow them to interview company's staff. Also, the company has the obligation to ensure that the legal representative of the company and the suitable responsible staff will be present and available during the audits. The same apply for the case of an unannounced audit that will take place throughout the 3-year certification cycle.
- 3.12 If the company's activities apply to more than one shift, then all shifts and all crews will be audited at least during initial and recertification audits.
- 3.13 The company has the obligation to accept the presence of an accreditation body representative during the audit.
- 3.14 The company has the obligation to provide the proper safety equipment to the audit team, if it is required.
- 3.15 During the audit the company's procedures are assessed for their compliance with standard' requirements and its implementation. The effectiveness of SAMS is assessed with regard to the company's policies and objectives.
- 3.16 The findings are grouped in critical, major and minor non-conformities.
A Critical non-conformity is:
A grievous breach of the SA8000 that results in severe impact to individual rights, life, safety and/or SA8000, SAI, or SAAS reputation including a breach of ethical standards, immediate threats to worker lives or grievous and intentional violations of human rights.
The issuance of a Critical NC to an already SA8000 certified organisation results in the immediate suspension of the certificate.
- A Major non-conformity is one or more of:
- a. the absence of, or total breakdown of, a system to meet an SA8000 requirement. A number of minor nonconformities against one requirement can represent a total breakdown of the system and thus be considered a major nonconformity;
 - b. a nonconformity that judgment and experience indicate is likely either to result in the failure of the social management system in meeting its goals and expectations or to materially reduce its ability to assure control of its policies and directives in the

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workplace to protect its workers;

- c. a nonconformity that poses an imminent threat to the health and safety of workers
- d. a minor NC that has not been addressed, or for which no significant improvement has been made by the time of a follow-up audit, in spite the organisation's commitment to resolve the issue

A Minor non-conformity is a failure to comply with SA8000 which, based on judgment and experience, is not likely to result in the failure of the social management system or reduce its ability to assure the ongoing viability and effectiveness of policies and procedures to protect its workers' rights. It may be one of the following:

- a. a failure or oversight in some part of the organization's social management system relative to SA8000 which is not systemic in nature;
- b. a single observed lapse in following one item of a organisation's social management system;

A Time-Bound non-conformity is a special non-conformity that may be raised when the organisation meets the local law requirements but not the higher requirements of SA8000 or vice versa. A time-bound NC may be issued only regarding remuneration clause and especially as "the organisation pays workersthe legal minimum wage but not a living wage" and a specific timeframe is set for its resolution.

All non-conformities shall be recorded. During initial and recertification audits, the organisation shall not be certified unless all critical and major non-conformities are resolved.

EUROCERT shall require the organization to submit root cause analysis and evidence of systemic corrective action for each non-conformity issued.

The timeframe for the resolution of the recorded NC's is displayed in the following table:

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6 Table 1. NC response and close-out timeframe

Critical NC		Major NC		Minor NC		Time-bound NC
Send Corrective action plan	Complete Corrective action	Send Corrective action plan	Complete Corrective action	Send Corrective action plan	Complete Corrective action	Implement corrective action
1 week	1 month	1 month	3 months	2 months	6 months	18-24 months

Corrective actions not completed within the allocated timing shall result in upgrading the NC and/or suspension or loss of the SA8000 certificate, depending on the nature of the lapse of the SAMS. All corrective actions shall be implemented and verified prior to the expiration of certification.

Observation is the isolated observed deviation in the documentation, or in the implementation that may lead to a non conformity in the future.

A considerable number of single observations (as defined above), that consistently focus on specific procedures of the SAMS lead to a non-conformity.

Apart from the findings, the audit team may include in the report Opportunities for Improvement (OFI) for certain clauses of the standard regarding continual improvement. These opportunities shall not be listed in the findings section of the report, but in the relevant section and at no means shall be regarded as consulting.

- 3.17 The company shall receive from the lead auditor the final audit report within 1 month of the last day of the audit. As soon as the appointed representative of the company for signing the report signs it (including the stamp of the company), the company is obliged to return the signed report back to the lead auditor as well as Eurocert's head office by email (addressed to sovarda@eurocert.gr and kkarvounakis@eurocert.gr) or fax (to +30 210 6203018 for the attention of Sofia Ovarda and Kostas Karvounakis).
- 3.18 EUROCERT does not proceed with the certificate issuance if there are any open major non-conformities. The confirmation of the non-conformities obliteration is done either with relative documentation (corrective actions) sent to EUROCERT or with a special audit, if on-site evidence is required.
- 3.19 The Appointed Manager's decision for the issuance or not, of the SA8000 Certificate is based on the audit's results and the technical reviewer's approval. The technical reviewer shall be a competent person, not having participated in the audit.

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3.20 The Committee Certification validates the Appointed Manager decisions. If the Committee Certification denies the validation, then a Special Audit is conducted under EUROCERT's responsibility, to examine the Committee remarks.

3.21 EUROCERT is not responsible in case demands arise from non-conformities on the certified company's relevant legislation. In this case the company is compelled to inform EUROCERT immediately and in writing.

3.22 Audit Disruptions

When during the audit actions occur that may affect its credibility, such as attempted bribery, power outage, fire, serious accident, denied access to any part of the premises, denied access to records, denied access during an unannounced audit, and other such matters, EUROCERT shall immediately examine each case and decide on the continuation or suspension of Certification. In each case SAAS is informed accordingly.

3.23 Eurocert's detailed Anti-bribery policy is presented in Annex A.

ARTICLE 4 : CERTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION

4.1 After the Certification Manager's decision and the payment of the agreed invoice, SA8000 Certificate is issued. On the certificate, the following information is recorded:

- Scope statement including the certified site address(es) and all activities for related products and services;
- The edition of the SA 8000 Standard to which certification applies; date of certification decision; and date of expiration;
- The certified company's name and address;
- Any remote sites which are part of the social management system, including their location;
- The SA 8000 mark;
- For multi-site certification, each site shall receive a separate certificate, with EUROCERT's certificate number plus suffix or a single certificate to the Corporation with names and addresses of the sites covered under the certification scope in an annex;
- EUROCERT's unique certificate number;

4.2 The SA8000 Certificate certifies that the company has established, maintains and applies a SAMS, which is in compliance with the requirements of the reference standard and that the company has the infrastructure, the resources and the trained personnel to ensure a constant level of conformity to the standard. However, it does not stand for or replace a Certificate of Conformity (Quality) for products or/and services offered.

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- 4.3 During the three-year certification cycle, every regional office, work site, production unit or other unit, that is relevant to the certification scope, shall be audited.
- 4.4 After the issuance of the SA8000 Certificate, the company is recorded to C.C.R. (Certified Companies Registration). C.C.R. includes the company's name, category or kind of products and/ or services which are covered from the certification scope, the standard according to which the assessment is conducted, and other information required.
- 4.5 C.C.R. is frequently updated and is permanently registered on the internet on the website: www.eurocert.gr. It may also be published to the media.
- 4.6 In EUROCERT's website, there is the possibility of information of clients on all matters relating to the activities of EUROCERT. The certificate's validity may also be verified with the use of a unique code that is evident in each certificate.
Any interested party may request to obtain the necessary information in the context of confidentiality and impartiality, in the website of EUROCERT (Contact Us)
- 4.7 EUROCERT informs SAAS periodically regarding the list of its SA8000 certified facilities and this list is made available to the public through SAAS website: www.saasaccreditation.org.

ARTICLE 5 : SURVEILLANCE AND RE-ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 EUROCERT, during the certificate validation period, carries out surveillance audits for the full and continuous management system implementation of the certified company in order to ensure the continuous conformity with reference standard and the present regulation.
- 5.2 EUROCERT has the right to conduct and the company has the obligation to accept at least one unannounced surveillance audit in the three year certification, depending on the country categorisation risk. A major non-conformity may indicate the need for an additional unannounced audit during the period of certification.
- 5.3 The certified company has the obligation to inform in written when there are changes in structure or documentation (changes in the organizational structure, change of the management representative, change of address, extension of activities or stopping of production, changes in main mechanical equipment etc), which may affect the implementation of the management system that was assessed during the last audit.

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EUROCERT may need to conduct a special audit in case of:

- Complaint or auditor bribery investigation
- On-site verification of open non-conformities, if required
- Extension/expansion of company's certification scope
- Calibration/duplication process
- Follow-up after certification suspension
- SAAS request

All special audits may be scheduled in short notice depending on one of the above causes. EUROCERT is obliged to inform the client's organization about the reason that a special audit is scheduled. The company agrees to the possible conduction of a special audit during signing of the contract. Required man-days shall be calculated per case and upon a risk assessment.

All of the above shall be documented in the client's file and/or audit report».

5.4 The re-certification audit shall be scheduled three (3) months before the expiry of the client's SA8000 certificate. In no cases shall there be a gap between the old and new certification cycles.

5.5 If the re-certification is conducted after the expiration of the certificate, then the same procedure for Stage 2 audit is applied.

ARTICLE 6 : CERTIFICATION EXTENSION

6.1 For the certification scope extension, the certified company must send an application and relative documentation to EUROCERT. Depending on the case, a special audit or combined with the yearly audit surveillance, is conducted.

6.2 For the dispatch of the case the procedure described in the article 4 is followed and a new certificate is issued.

ARTICLE 7 : REFUSAL, INTERRUPTION, SUSPENDING, WITHDRAWAL OR REDUCING THE SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION

7.1 The company may decline the certificate's use, with a written notification, at least 3 months in advance. In this case it must return the original certificate to EUROCERT's head offices and must stop the use of the EUROCERT Logo.

7.2 EUROCERT has the right to suspend an SA8000 certificate when:

- the company's certified management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system,

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- the certified company does not allow surveillance or recertification audits to be conducted at the required frequencies (exceeding two months from the planned time), or
- the certified company has voluntarily requested a suspension.

The suspension period (except for the last case) shall not exceed a period of 6 months, under which company's SA8000 certification is temporarily invalid. EUROCERT shall restore the suspended certification if the issues that have resulted in the suspension have been resolved. Failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in the suspension, within a 6 month period, shall result in withdrawal or reduction of the certification scope.

- 7.3 EUROCERT shall restore the suspended certification if the issue that has resulted in the suspension has been resolved. Failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in the suspension, in a time established by the Certification Dpt, shall result in withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification.
- 7.4 Regarding any suspension or withdrawal of certificate, SAAS shall be informed accordingly.
- 7.5 In case of permanent withdrawal, the C.C.R. is updated with the condition of withdrawal and the disqualification is announced to the media. After the withdrawal, the company has the obligation to stop every use and advertisement of the certificate and logo within a week and return the original Certificate to EUROCERT's head office.
- 7.6 The company is obliged to stop using the Logo if certificate's validity expires.

ARTICLE 8 : CHANGES – REVISIONS

In case there are changes or revisions of the reference standards and of the Certification procedure, EUROCERT informs directly and in written the company, which has the right to decline the Certificate or continue its use. In the second case the Management System must be adjusted within a time limit which will be specified by EUROCERT. The verification of the adjustment with the new requirements will be assessed with a Special Audit. The company will be charged with the relevant cost, if applicable.

ARTICLE 9 : APPEALS

- 9.1 Appeal is any request by the provider of the object of conformity assessment to EUROCERT, for reconsideration by EUROCERT of a decision it has made relating to that object

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- 9.2 The company can appeal against EUROCERT's decisions in written, within thirty days from the notification of the decision. Appeals will be examined and the conclusion, positive or negative, will be given in written and fully documented within three months from receiving the appeal.
- 9.3 Every difference which will be resulted will be solved from an arbitral tribunal, according to relative provisions of the Civil Law. The decision for the tribunal is final, not lodged in further appeals and directly executed.

ARTICLE 10 : COMPLAINTS

The certified company has the right to submit complaints directly to SAAS regarding EUROCERT's certification activities. These complaints against EUROCERT may include:

- misuse of the SA 8000 mark;
- failure to identify critical problems at a facility during the audit;
- failure to properly respond to an appeal or complaint previously filed;
- repeated certifications given inappropriately to facilities not conforming to normative documents within the scope of SAAS accreditation.

ARTICLE 11 : FINANCIAL TERMS

- 11.1 Before the issuance of the Certificate, the company must pay the invoice for the total cost for the initial certification, as agreed in the contract.
- 11.2 After the issuance of the certificate and depending on the interval for the required surveillance audits, the company must pay the invoice before any surveillance audit.
- 11.3 The total cost for the audits is the amount which has already been agreed with the company in the signed contract.

Annex A

Anti-bribery policy

Organizations seeking SA8000:2014 certification shall agree to support the Certification Body's anti-bribery policy and support the efforts of SA8000 auditors in undertaking impartial assessment of conformance during the SA8000 certification audit.

EUROCERT provides third-party independent SA8000 certification services which are recorded and reported to our Impartiality Committee, Certification Committee, SAAS and others, as applicable, as per our contractual agreement. We request organizations' cooperation to enable us to do our job in a professional manner. In return, we commit to treating them and their staff with respect, objectivity and fairness during and after each audit.

EUROCERT has implemented a strict 'Code of Ethics' for our auditors which prohibit the acceptance of gifts, payment, or benefit of any kind. This policy is presented to all our clients to explain the expectations we have for our own auditors as well as their staff during our visit:

1. **Bribe requests:** Client staff shall never under any circumstances give in to demands or requests for benefits or payments from EUROCERT Auditors. If a EUROCERT Auditor requests or solicits for any direct or indirect benefit or payment, we expect client to contact us immediately.
2. **Bribe offers:** Never, under any circumstances shall client staff offer a payment, bribe, gift or benefit to any EUROCERT Auditor. Any benefit given or offered to a EUROCERT Auditor will be considered as a corrupt practice and will be reported to SAAS within 24 hours.
3. **Undue pressure:** Client staff shall not put any pressure on our employees to execute their work in a subjective way or to amend their findings. Furthermore, they shall not seek out EUROCERT Auditors outside of the audit time period, for example, at their homes, hotel for any reason.
4. **Work environment:** Organizations shall create an environment where auditors can work freely and constructively in a way that allows them to do their job properly, timely, and in such a way that SA8000 audit expectations can be met.
5. **Lunch:** EUROCERT Auditors may not take lunch at an outdoor restaurant with client company management outside agreed audit plan
6. **Rides:** EUROCERT Auditors may not accept rides to the client company location. EUROCERT Auditors may only accept rides under unique circumstances where alternative transportation is not available and with approval from their supervisor.

REPORTING OF UNETHICAL PRACTICES

Any attempt of bribing Eurocert auditors shall: a) Be reported to SAAS and b) Result in placing the company on our internal "not to be audited" list and sever all relationships with it.

In all cases of potential unethical practice, companies may:

1. Contact EUROCERT immediately and we will objectively investigate any complaint
2. Report the issue directly to SAAS at: **Social Accountability Accreditation Services**, 15 West 44th Street, 6th Floor New York, NY 10036; Tel: +1 (212) 391-2106 fax: +1 (212) 684-1515 email: saas@saasaccreditation.org