



# Criteria for SQF Certification Bodies

SQF Guidance on the Application of  
ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996 General  
Requirements for Certification Bodies  
Offering Certification of SQF Systems

**6th Edition**  
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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 and the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand in the review of this Edition 6.

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

The SQF Technical 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 mandatory document specifies the requirements that Certification Bodies shall observe when operating third party Certification of Suppliers' SQF Systems. It provides requirements 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 considered a supplement to ISO ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996. This document describes the requirements for the application of the SQF standard by SQFI licensed Certification Bodies. 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 mandatory 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

- 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.

- 1.2 The SQF Codes, guidance documents, Criteria for SQF Systems Training Courses, Registration Criteria for SQF Auditors and SQF Consultants, SQF Trainers, 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

- 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 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

- 3.1 The relevant definitions outlined in “SQF Program – Vocabulary” apply.

## 4 Certification Body

### 4.1 General Provisions

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

- 4.1.2 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 Certification Body shall achieve the Accreditation within 6 months after the acquisition of the SQFI license. The Certification Body shall be allowed to execute SQF audits during its initial Accreditation cycle to allow for Accreditation to the SQF standard only. Once all Accreditation witness audits have been completed and Accreditation against the SQF program has been achieved, then general SQF audits can be conducted. The Scope of Accreditation shall cover either:

- i. activities to Certify an individual Supplier’s SQF 1000 or SQF 2000 Systems; or
- ii. activities to Certify an individual Supplier’s SQF 1000 or SQF 2000 Systems and a Multi-site Organization.

- 4.1.3 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.
- 4.1.4 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.
- 4.1.5 The Certification Body shall assess Suppliers against the conditions and restrictions contained in the relevant SQF Code and supporting documentation.
- 4.1.6 The Certification Body shall ensure the Audit includes the evaluation and efficacy of the validation and verification of a Supplier's Food Safety Plan.

## **4.2 Organization**

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.

- 4.2.1 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 the decision process on Certification and the development of policies and principles regarding the content and functioning of the certification system.
- 4.2.2 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.
- 4.2.3 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.
- 4.2.4 The Certification Body shall have sufficient and current Public, Product Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance.
- 4.2.5 Impartiality and independence of the Certification Body shall be assured at three levels:
- i. Strategy and policy;
  - ii. Decision on certification; and
  - iii. Evaluation.

## **4.3 Operations**

### **SQF Requirement**

- 4.3.1 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.
- 4.3.2 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 when applicable 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 when applicable.
- 4.3.3 The Certification body shall determine the scope of certification of the supplier in conjunction with the supplier. The scope of certification shall include the products / processes included in the scope of certification, the site description of the facility, the SQF standard and level of certification. The scope of certification will be defined by the Certification body and the supplier prior to the start of the certification audit. Once the certification audit has begun, the scope of the certification shall not be altered.

## **4.4 Contracting**

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.

- 4.4.1 The Certification Body shall only contract the Audit and not the management and control of the Certification.
- 4.4.2 The Certification Body shall ensure contractors retain impartiality when providing an Audit service and that they are registered as SQF Contract Auditors.
- 4.4.3 The Certification Body shall ensure that the contracting of any inspection or testing activity is conducted by nationally recognized and/or accredited inspection and testing laboratories utilizing the services of qualified personnel.

## **4.5 Quality System**

- 4.5.1 The Certification Body shall develop a quality management system, maintained in accordance with ISO/IEC Guide 65: 1996 Clause 4.5, which shall also address the SQF Program requirements outlined in this document.
- 4.5.2 The Certification Body shall have included in the quality management system provisions that addresses:
  - 4.5.2.1 The training of personnel involved in certification and SQF program management
  - 4.5.2.2 Auditor selection and orientation
  - 4.5.2.3 Implementation of new auditors into the SQF program including at least 2 witness audits by SQF registered auditors, the first 10 audits of each new auditor shall be supervised audits which is a combination of witness audits and review of audit reports
  - 4.5.2.4 Existing SQF auditors calibration program which shall include calibration of auditors using existing audit data, on-going auditor training at least annually, and witness audits as necessary
  - 4.5.2.5 Criteria on auditor performance developed so that corrective action can be taken when performance criteria is not achieved. Corrective action items should be prescribed based on data results from calibration activities.
  - 4.5.2.6 An SQF Audit report review program that includes a schedule of when audits will be reviewed by the Certification Body
  - 4.5.2.7 That no SQF Auditor shall perform an SQF Audit for a Supplier for more than 3 consecutive Certification cycles.
  - 4.5.2.8 Records must be maintained for all quality system activities to verify compliance. Records must be available to SQFI on request.

## **4.6 Conditions and procedures for granting, maintaining, extending, suspending and withdrawing Certification**

- 4.6.1 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.
- 4.6.2 The Certification Body shall implement procedures for suspending and withdrawing Certificates of Registration as described in Annex 1.
- 4.6.3 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.
- 4.6.4 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 or Registration shall be suspended (See Annex 1)

## **4.7 Internal Audits and management reviews**

- 4.7.1 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 contract service providers.
- 4.7.2 The internal audits shall cover all activities in nominated Territories and the country where the Accreditation is granted.
- 4.7.3 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.

## **4.8 Documentation**

- 4.8.1 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 4.6.
- 4.8.2 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 a Codes of Practice (GAP/GMP/GDP).

## **4.9 Records**

- 4.9.1 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 five 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.

## **4.10 Confidentiality**

- 4.10.1 SQFI shall ensure that any records, contracts, license agreements or performance data collected or generated by SQFI of a Certification Body performance shall remain confidential and not for public release or access. This data will be utilized only by SQFI and the applicable Accreditation Body for the improvement of Certification Body performance and the improvement of the SQF program.
- 4.10.2 The Certification Body shall have provisions in place to ensure that all records, data, and information received during the execution of an SQF Audit remains confidential and the property of the Supplier. Only with the authorization of the Supplier can the Certification Body release audit data to any entity other than SQFI.

## 5 Certification Body personnel

### 5.1 General

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

- 5.1.1 The Certification Body shall ensure that all SQF Auditors and Contract Auditors retain qualifications, skills and experience necessary to perform their duties.
  - 5.1.1.1 The Certification Body shall demonstrate that programs are in place for SQF Auditors, including 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.
- 5.1.2 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.
- 5.1.3 The SQFI will provide to the Certification Body a SQF Audit Report format (that includes an Auditing) which shall be used by SQF Auditors when conducting Audits of SQF Systems (Explanatory Notes see Section 10 of the SQF Standard). Each Audit report and rating of each Supplier shall be provided to the SQFI when the Audit report is finalized. The Audit report will follow the Portable Audit Format (PAF) utilizing the SQF Quickfire database whenever those audit tools are available. A Certification Body must utilize the SQF audit tools as described and defined by SQFI.

### 5.2 Qualification Criteria

- 5.2.1 The Certification Body shall ensure that each SQF Auditor who is assigned to conduct an SQF audit is registered as a SQF Auditor and maintains such registration for the term of their employment or engagement.
  - 5.2.1.1 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.
  - 5.2.1.2 Auditors who lack the Auditing experience necessary to enable them to be registered as SQF Auditors can be engaged in Audits of products and processes utilizing the Certification Body audit tool to gain experience in second and third party auditing. Only second and third party audit experience that has been achieved within the last 10 years can be utilized by auditors in applying for registration as an SQF Auditor.
  - 5.2.1.3 The Certification Body shall follow their quality systems when adding new auditors into conducting SQF Audits.

#### Technical Experts

- 5.2.1.4 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.
- 5.2.1.5 The Certification Body must notify SQFI on the use of a Technical Expert and petition the SQFI with the qualifications of the Technical Expert to the Technical Director at SQFI for approval on the use of the Technical Expert. The qualification should describe how the Technical Expert has expertise in the food sector category that is being requested.

#### Conflict of interest

- 5.2.2 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.
  - 5.2.2.1 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.
- 5.2.2.2 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.
- 5.2.2.3 The Certification Body shall ensure through organizational structure that no potential conflict of interest, consulting, or training will occur from auditors contracted or employed by the Certification Body to existing or potential suppliers within the SQF program.
- 5.2.3 The Certification Body shall retain detailed records of all SQF Auditor qualifications, experience and Audit activities (Audit log).

## 6 Changes in the Certification Requirements

- 6.1 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.

### Conditions for change of Certification Body

- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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 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 any Former Certifier) and the impact of any outstanding Nonconformities.
  - v. confirm the stage of the current Certification cycle.
- 6.4 Certificates with outstanding Critical or Major Nonconformities 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.
- 6.5 Where a decision is made to proceed with Certification the New Certifier shall:
- i. conduct the required audit (Re-certification or Surveillance) which was described by the former Certification body within timelines consist with the SQF program audit frequency and certification requirements and
  - ii. issue a new Certificate of Registration under the new Certification Body and issue a new Certification Trade Mark that includes the name of the new Certification Body and
  - iii. ensure the Supplier retains its unique Certification number if requested.

### Change of Ownership of a Certified Supplier

- 6.7 Where a Certified Supplier’s business has been sold and the business name is retained, the new owner shall, within thirty days of the change of ownership, notify the Certification Body and apply to a Certification Body to retain the SQF Certification and the existing Certification Number.
- 6.8 In cases where the ownership of a Certified Supplier changes but 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 application the Certification Body

shall determine that staff with major responsibility for the management and oversight of the SQF System has been retained through confirmation by site Audit within sixty days of change of ownership.

- 6.9 If the conditions outlined in 6.8 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 shall apply.

## 7 Appeals, Complaints and Disputes

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

- 7.1 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 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.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Where upon investigation of a complaint in 7.2 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](#).
- 7.4 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. Records of complaints and investigations must be available to SQFI upon request.

## 8 Certification Process

### 8.1 Information on the procedure

- 8.1.1 The Certification Body shall provide to the Supplier
- 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.
  - iii. a list of the documents that will be required to be reviewed for the document review portion of the certification audit when the document review audit is required.
  - iv. The Certification Body will also provide the Supplier with details regarding the management of corrective action responses using the SQF Quickfire system after the certification audit.
- 8.1.2 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, country, Certificate type and number, Certification expiry date, Food Sector Category(s), Product(s) covered by the Certificate of Registration and Modules implemented.
- 8.1.3 The Certification Body shall obtain the Suppliers consent to have the following Certificate of Registration details accessible by their customer via the SQFI web site as follows:
- i. Customer/retailer name, Supplier name, country, Certificate type and number, Certification expiry date, Food Sector Category(s), Product(s) covered by the Certificate of Registration, Company representative name and contact details, Audit rating, Name of Certification Body, Auditor name, Audit frequency, date of last Audit, date of next Audit.

## 8.2 The registration process

- 8.2.1 The Supplier will register for a Certification Audit at the [www.sqfi.com](http://www.sqfi.com) SQF Quickfire database. The supplier will be required to complete a profile, add contact information and select a certification body. A Certification Body can execute the registration process on behalf of the supplier through the SQF Quickfire registration process. Once registered, a company will need to complete re-registration through the SQF Quickfire re-registration process prior to a re-certification audit. The re-registration process will need to be completed 6 months after the registration. If a supplier has a change in scope within 6 months of a registration or re-registration, the SQF audit to change scope can be conducted without the need for re-registration.
- 8.2.2 The Certification Body shall provide a contract with the supplier for Certification in an official format for completion and endorsement by the Supplier before any evaluation commences. The contract shall include the:
- i. The scope of certification including the 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. estimated date of the Certification Audit; and
  - vi. Suppliers consent to have their Certification of Registration details as outlined in 8.1.3 i displayed on the SQFI website.
  - vii. The Certification Bodies appeal process
  - viii. The requirement that the Supplier must notify the Certification Body in the event of a food safety incident (recall) by the Supplier at any time during their certification in a timely manner.

## 9 Preparation for Evaluation

- 9.1 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 Practitioner; and
  - iii. there is substantiated evidence to show that Food Safety Plans were derived using the HACCP Method.
- 9.2 A desk audit (documentation audit) will be conducted by the Certification Body upon initial certification, when the supplier discloses that there has been major changes to the company's SQF program and procedures, or when there is a change in the applicable SQF standard which requires a new documentation review.
- 9.3 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.

## 10 Evaluation

### The Certification Audit

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 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 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.

- 10.3 The Certification Body shall ensure that SQF Auditors who are conducting an SQF audit use an interviewing technique which involves the questioning of various key personnel within the facility on the implementation of the SQF program. The SQF auditor should use the guideline of 80% of the time during a facility certification or re-certification audit in the facility conducting the audit. This 80% will include auditing processing, storage, packaging and formulation areas within the facility, the exterior of the facility, interviewing key personnel within the facility and on-floor or in-process record review. This does not include the report writing time portion of the audit.
- 10.4 The onsite certification audit cannot begin until all Major and Critical Nonconformances from the document review audit have been closed out and approved by the certification body. Minor Nonconformances from the document review can be carried over to the certification audit, but must be closed out prior to the conclusion of the certification audit.
- 10.5 For Certification of a Multi-site Organization the guidance provided in Clause 10 and [Annex 3](#) applies.
- 10.6 The Certification Body will ensure that SQF Auditors who conduct SQF Audits will be aware of the latest updates in audit tools and materials as provided by SQFI. SQF Auditors will utilize the SQF standards and applicable guidance documents to conduct SQF Audits, but will not add additional standards, criteria, or interpretation to the SQF Audit.

## 11 Evaluation Report

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 The Audit report shall be completed by the SQF Auditor and include all the requirements and the calculated rating as listed in the SQF Audit Report Explanatory Notes described in [Section 10 of the SQF Standard](#).
- 11.3 The Certification Body shall ensure that the audit report shall be available to the Supplier within 5 business days from the last day of the audit.
- 11.4 The Certification Body shall include within its quality management system a program for reviewing of SQF audit reports prior to release of results to suppliers. The program will include a technical as well as a grammatical review and will include criteria and a schedule for the reviews.
- 11.5 The Certification Body will ensure that the SQF Auditors provide a comment in each question of the SQF audit report. The comments shall be concise using objective evidence to justify the rating provided by the auditor. The comments shall fully describe the Nonconformance when present, or describe why a compliant rating was achieved by the supplier. Every question shall have a comment, regards of the rating assigned by the auditor. Where applicable a section comment describing the observations of the standard element can be utilized.

## 12 Decisions on Certification

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 Certification and Re-certification of SQF Systems shall not be granted unless a “C” Audit rating or greater is achieved, all Major and Critical Nonconformities have been corrected and those corrections verified by the Certification Body (by site visit or other appropriate means).
- 12.3 Within forty - five (45) calendar days from the last date of the audit, the Certification Body will render the Certification Decision. If Certification is granted, the Certification Body will create a Certification Record in SQF Quickfire to provide the Supplier:
- a Certificate of Registration in the form set out in [Annex 2](#); with a unique Certification number generated by the SQF Quickfire system;
  - an electronic copy of the relevant Certification Trade Mark which shall include the Certification Body name and certification number for facilities which achieve level 3 certification;
  - a statement detailing the duration of the Certification and the grounds upon which Certification may be suspended or withdrawn;
  - the Audit report including the Audit rating;
  - 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 and the Certification Body shall notify the SQFI of the change.
- 12.4 Once an initial certification date is issued to a supplier, the Certification Body shall use this certification date plus 12 months for all future certificates issued after the re-certification audit, regardless of the re-certification audit date.

## 13 Surveillance

- 13.1 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 impact on product safety or quality, extensions may be granted by the SQF Auditor 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 threat to product safety this period can be extended provided the Corrective Action time frame is acceptable to the SQF Auditor. In such case 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.
- 13.2 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.
- 13.3 The audit frequency for suppliers following their initial certification audit shall be determined by the combination of facility rating and number and type of Nonconformances identified during the audit. The determination will be made following the tables as defined in Section 10 of the SQF Standard :
- i. 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 (13.5 iii.) need not apply.

### The Surveillance Audit

- 13.4 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.
  - vi. Surveillance Audits must be conducted within 30 days of their due date.

### The Re-certification Audit

- 13.5 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:
- i. the effective inter-action between all elements of the SQF System;
  - ii. the overall effectiveness of the SQF System in its entirety in the light of changes in operations; and
  - iii. that the Supplier has demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the effectiveness of the SQF System and to meeting regulatory and customer requirements.
- 13.6 Where a Re-certification Audit or a Surveillance Audit is not completed within the time specified in Clause 13.3 and Clause 13.5 the Certificate of Registration shall be withdrawn (see Annex 1 Clause 6 iv).

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

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

- 14.1 The Certificate of Registration issued by the Certification Body shall be in the format described in Annex 2, and issued only after Certification and Re-certification is granted.
- 14.2. 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**

- 14.3 The SQFI has prepared Rules for Use which outlines the rules that Suppliers must follow when using a SQF Certification Trade Mark.
- 14.4 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.
- 14.4 When conducting Audits the Certification Body shall ensure the Rules for Use are followed.
- 14.5 Use of the SQF Certification Trade Mark by a Supplier is voluntary.

## Annex 1

### Conditions for Suspending and Withdrawing Certification

1. The Certification Body shall suspend the SQF Certificate of Registration where:
  - i. a Critical Non-conformity is detected at Audit; or
  - ii. the Supplier, 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 such notice..
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 i., 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 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 the Supplier's Certificate of Registration is suspended pursuant to clause 1 ii., any subsequent Audit to regain Certification shall be treated as a Certification Audit.
5. Where a Certification Body has suspended a Supplier's SQF Certificate of Registration, for the duration of the suspension the Supplier shall not:
  - iv. 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.
6. 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. fails to allow the Certification Body to conduct a scheduled Audit;
  - 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.
7. 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.



**Annex 2 cont'd**

**SQF 2000 Certificate of Registration Template – Level 1, 2 & 3 (example)**

(delete box  
insert the  
Certification  
Body logo)

(delete box and insert the name and address of the Certification Body)

## Certificate of Registration

Level 1  
Level 1  
Level 1  
Level 1  
Level 1  
Level 1  
Level 1  
Level 1  
Level 1  
Level 1  
Level 1  
Level 1  
Level 1  
Level 1  
Level 1

This is to certify that the Quality Management System of

**is registered as meeting the requirements of the  
 SQF 2000<sup>CM</sup> CODE  
 Level 1 - Food Safety Fundamentals**

**REGISTRATION SCHEDULE**

SCOPE OF REGISTRATION: (Food Sector Category)	PRODUCT
Level 1	
Level 1	
Level 1	
Level 1	
Level 1	
Level 1	
Level 1	
Level 1	

Date of issue:  
Date of expiry:  
Authorised by:  
Issuing Officer:

Certificate Number:

A Division of the Food Marketing Institute

Valid for a period of 1 year from the date of issue subject to satisfactory surveillance.

(delete box  
insert the  
Certification  
Body logo)

(delete box and insert the name and address of the Certification Body)

## Certificate of Registration

Level 2  
Level 2  
Level 2  
Level 2  
Level 2  
Level 2  
Level 2  
Level 2  
Level 2  
Level 2  
Level 2  
Level 2  
Level 2  
Level 2  
Level 2

This is to certify that the Quality Management System of

**is registered as meeting the requirements of the  
 SQF 2000<sup>CM</sup> CODE  
 Level 2 - Accredited HACCP Food Safety Plans**

**REGISTRATION SCHEDULE**

SCOPE OF REGISTRATION: (Food Sector Category)	PRODUCT
Level 2	
Level 2	
Level 2	
Level 2	
Level 2	
Level 2	
Level 2	
Level 2	

Date of issue:  
Date of expiry:  
Authorised by:  
Issuing Officer:

Certificate Number:

A Division of the Food Marketing Institute

Valid for a period of 1 year from the date of issue subject to satisfactory surveillance.

(delete box  
insert the  
Certification  
Body logo)

(delete box and insert the name and address of the Certification Body)

## Certificate of Registration

Level 3  
Level 3  
Level 3  
Level 3  
Level 3  
Level 3  
Level 3  
Level 3  
Level 3  
Level 3  
Level 3  
Level 3  
Level 3  
Level 3  
Level 3

This is to certify that the Quality Management System of

**is registered as meeting the requirements of the  
 SQF 2000<sup>CM</sup> CODE  
 Level 3 - Comprehensive Food Safety and Quality Management System**

**REGISTRATION SCHEDULE**

SCOPE OF REGISTRATION: (Food Sector Category)	PRODUCT
Level 3	
Level 3	
Level 3	
Level 3	
Level 3	
Level 3	
Level 3	
Level 3	

Date of issue:  
Date of expiry:  
Authorised by:  
Issuing Officer:

Certificate Number:

A Division of the Food Marketing Institute

Valid for a period of 1 year from the date of issue subject to satisfactory surveillance.

## **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. The criteria for Multi-Site Certification is also found in Section 13 of the SQF Standard.*

### **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 3 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 Nonconformities**

- 4.7 When Nonconformities 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 Nonconformities found during internal Audits and that all Nonconformities 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.