Introduction

The SA8000 standard is the benchmark against which companies and factories measure their performance on workplace quality - together with its verification system, it is a credible, comprehensive and efficient tool for assuring humane workplaces. SA8000 is based on international workplace norms in the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions and the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on Rights of the Child.

The procedures detailed in this document are in accordance with and modeled after the P005 ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards. These procedures are to serve as the guidance for the preparation, adoption and revision of the 2008 SA8000 standard, with the revision process taking place every 5 years. These procedures will be posted on the SA8000 Standard Revision section of SAI’s website for all to review.

1. Decision Making

Social Accountability International shall strive for consensus among a balance of interested parties, which will be represented on the multi-stakeholder Standard Revision Committee (SRC) of the SAI Advisory Board (SAI-AB).

Standards Revision Committee

The Standard Revision Committee (SRC) shall be made up of SAI-AB members and other experts as nominated by SAI Staff and SAI-AB members. The membership will be made up of half business and half non-business representatives and of manageable size (the recommended committee size is 6-20 members). SRC members can also be self-nominated and must be approved by the SA-AB Standard Revision Committee members.

The SRC will recommend changes to the full SAI Advisory Board, which will agree by consensus on final revisions to the SA8000 standard. The SRC terms of reference, as approved by the SAI-AB in November of 2005 are:

- Agree on the Standard Revision work plan and procedures in accordance with P005 ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards
- Review comments received on SA8000:2008 and consider changes recommended therein
Critically analyze and examine the content of SA8000:2008 and consider any elements that may need revision

Review and propose text revisions to SA8000:2008

Develop text for additions or changes to SA8000:2008

Agree on a preliminary draft for comment of a revised SA8000:2014

Review comments on preliminary draft and consider revised text on the final draft of SA8000:2014

Recommend final version of SA8000:2014 to SAI Advisory Board

Remand any unresolved complaints about the SA8000 redrafting process to the full SAI-AB

Should there be an absence of consensus, the following procedures shall ensure that no group of interested parties can dominate nor be dominated in the decision-making process. The Standard Revision Committee will issue a report to the full SAI Advisory Board and all members will discuss an issue and/or seek additional research and proposals until consensus is reached. If consensus cannot be achieved on a change to the standard, any one member may call for an Advisory Board vote. The vote must be a super majority of three quarters of the voting members present. The resolution shall give preference to language that adheres to the international normative elements upon which the standard is based or to existing principles established by the standard.

2. Revision Commencement

SAI will announce the commencement of the current version of the SA8000 Standard revision process on its website, newsletter, bulletins, email and any other form of face-to-face and verbal communication, to all interested parties.¹

Balance of Inputs:

The SAI Advisory Board (SAI Procedure 301) calls for equal representation of business and non-business representatives. This multi-stakeholder approach also applies to the standard setting and revision process. A balance is sought both in equal number of comments as well as equal quality of comments from these different perspectives.

Outreach to Affected and Disadvantaged Stakeholders:

SAI will also make extra efforts to identify and involve the participation of any/all disadvantaged groups directly affected by the SA8000 standard in order to seek their input on how well the standard is meeting its goals and determine if they have any changes to recommend.

Given that the purpose of the standard is to ensure employer social accountability and it is based on international labor rights conventions, SAI will reach out to worker and employer groups, particularly those with less access to the international standard setting arena. Specific outreach will be made to workers through trade union and workers’ rights advocates on SAI’s Advisory Board. SAI-Accredited certification bodies will be asked to use their international networks with employers to seek feedback from employers, particularly those in developing countries. SAI’s Programs are designed to continuously garner this input and such programs will be tapped to generate specific comments during the standard revision process.

¹ Interested parties are hereby defined as any person or group concerned with or directly affected by the SA8000 standard.
Language Access:

SAI will gather as many translations of the standard as are available and post them on the Standard Revision section of SAI’s website. Any interested parties, will then be able to download the different language versions of the standard and review, as well as request a mailed hardcopy of an available language version of the SA8000 standard at a minimal charge covering the postage and administrative costs to mail these documents. The official version of SA8000 is, however, the English version and this is noted on the standard. Comments are preferred in English.

3. Public Review Phase for Comments

The public review phase for substantive comments on the current version of the SA8000 standard shall include at least one round of comment submissions by interested parties, and a second round if substantive, unresolved issues persist after the first round. The revision process includes extensive outreach before the first round of public consultation in order to gather comments from a balanced representation of interested parties. This should meet stakeholder participation goals.

The “public” is hereby defined as any interested parties including but not limited to: employers/producers, workers, trade unions, wholesale buyers (brands, retailers, and any buying agents), consumers, certification bodies, international organizations, worker rights advocates, NGOs, employer associations, government and local authorities, as well as any other individuals with vested interests in the standard and those directly affected by the implementation of the standard. All queries will be routed through SAI’s Senior Manager of Research and Stakeholder Relations both during the revision process and in between active revision periods.

The first round of public consultation shall include a period of at least 60 days for the submission of comments. Should the need for an additional round of consultation arise, SAI will announce the specific purpose for such an additional consultation. In any case, the comment period for an additional round shall still be no less than 30 days. Interested parties can submit their comments to SAI for review via the public consultation internet platform that will be created for this purpose, or via email, fax or mail, and/or through workshops and other face-to-face meetings. However, it is advised that the preferred method of comment submission is in writing.

After the first round of comments has ended, SAI will circulate the comments in full and in summary form to the Standard Revision Committee (SRC) of the SAI Advisory Board for review. Upon receiving the SRC’s recommendations of which comments should be considered, SAI staff will investigate and draft revisions to the standard. SAI staff will post to the SAI website a summary of comments received and a note on any that are not going to be incorporated and why not. Once all the necessary information has been gathered from all interested parties, SAI will submit a report and draft language to the SAI-AB Standard Revision Committee.

Once the SRC members complete their review, a new draft of the standard will be resubmitted to the SRC, and the SRC will again determine changes to be made. Upon acceptance by the SRC, a revised version of the standard will be submitted to the full SAI-AB for consideration of approval. Either the SRC or the full SAI-AB may determine the need for additional comment rounds.
4. SAI Review of Comments Submitted

All comments received by SAI will be considered on an equal and objective basis. SAI will consider comments in the revision of the standard and an explanation will be given to the person/entity that submitted the comment, should the issue area that the comment addresses not be incorporated.

The Senior Manager of Research and Stakeholder Relations will be responsible for response and will file comments for consideration in a currently active or upcoming round of standard revision. All comments and requests for clarification shall be documented and filed at SAI’s offices for future use in the next revision process for the standard. SAI will compile all comments received during the public review phase, according to the issues raised and will prepare a written synopsis of how each material issue has been addressed in the standard revision. A redline version comparing the new standard to the previous edition will also be made available free of charge through the SAI website for the first six months after publication.

This synopsis shall be made publicly available on SAI’s website. A notice of its availability shall be made on SAI’s website, newsletters and through email distribution. All interested parties will be able to request a mailed hardcopy of this synopsis at a minimal charge covering the postage and administrative costs to mail these documents.

SAI will keep a record on file documenting all of the standard revision procedures, comments received, list of the interested parties involved at each stage of the process, all draft and final versions of the standard, as well as any other documents related to the standard revision process. These records shall be kept for a minimum of five years. Comments received in between active standard revision periods will be kept on file by the Senior Manager of Research and Stakeholder Relations and posted at the beginning of the next revision period.

5. Complaints and Dispute Resolution

Complaints can be lodged by any interested party. All complaints, formal or informal, will be considered until determined to be unfounded by the SRC. Complaints shall be divided into two categories: Substantive and Procedural complaints. This Complaints and Dispute Resolution mechanism shall apply to both complaint categories. Substantive complaints are those that relate to the content of the standard and are being addressed through the revision process. Procedural complaints are those which relate to the way in which the revision process is being conducted. The Standard revision committee of the SAI Advisory Board will review each complaint; consider and, if possible discuss with the complainant whether to change procedures or content accordingly; and report publicly and to the complainant on the decision.

Complaints Process:
- Complaint filed or note on complaint reported is filed.
- Complaint should preferably include:
  - Statement of whether it is procedural or content oriented, per definitions above;
  - A recommended resolution for consideration;
  - How the issue affects workers directly or indirectly (e.g. through excessive strain on the sustainability of the employer); and
  - Contact information for the complainant to allow follow-up.
• SAI acknowledges complaint within 10 days of receipt and invites complainant to join the standard revision list serve.
• SAI will forward the complaint to SRC.
• Based on the SRC recommendation, SAI staff will send an initial response on whether and how the SRC will address the complaint.
• If a complaint is content oriented, it will be added to the elements to consider for incorporation and the result of such consideration will be reported. If the content recommendation has already been rejected, the SRC will send a full explanation to the complainant.
• If the complaint is procedural in nature, the SRC will reply within 30 days.

6. Approval of Revised Standard

Once the standard revision has been completed and approved by SAI’s Advisory Board, the newly revised SA8000 Standard shall be posted on SAI’s website within one month and made available to all interested parties electronically free of charge and in a hardcopy version at a minimal charge covering the postage and administrative costs to mail these documents. Should parties with legitimate financial constraints request a hard copy of the new standard or any other documents related to the standard revision itself, SAI will make the provisions necessary to provide these documents at cost or free of charge to them. SAI will then work to obtain different language versions of the newly revised standard as possible and post them in SAI’s website, as they become available.