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If you should require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact us. We will be please to help you.

Please contact us via mail to info.tncert@tuev-nord.de.

TÜV NORD CERT GmbH
Am TÜV 1
45307 Essen
Germany

www.tuev-nord-cert.com

SEDEX (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange) is a membership organisation that provides online platforms for companies to manage and improve working conditions in global supply chains. SMETA (SEDEX Members Ethical Trade Audit) is SEDEX's social auditing methodology, enabling businesses to assess their sites and suppliers to understand working conditions in their supply chain. SMETA uses the Ethical Trading Initiative Base Code and the local law as its monitoring standards. It is a verification scheme so TÜV NORD does not issue a certificate or any other document related to SMETA other than the report and corrective action plan report.

TÜV NORD CERT GmbH (TÜV NORD in the following) is obliged to perform SMETA audits based on latest SEDEX Documents (Minimum Requirements, Auditor Manual etc.)

TÜV NORD is able to initiate the audit if the client has a profile on SEDEX and provide ZC and ZS numbers which are unique numbers that presents the clients' company and the site to be audited.

The auditors are selected by the head of the certification body of the TÜV NORD CERT GmbH according to the authorization for the industrial sector and as per qualification.

1. VERIFICATION PROCEDURE

1.1. Audit Preparation

After the conclusion of contract the auditor prepares himself for the audit on the basis of the "self-assessment questionnaire" (SAQ) of the company and of the audit calculation and agrees with the company on the further course of action. A further part of the preparation is a screening of the company as well as an exchange of information with non-governmental organizations.

The customer receives an audit plan with relevant information (documents to be checked, people to be interviewed etc.) before the audit. The plan is agreed with the customer in advance.

1.2. Audit Performance

The onsite audit consists of the following :

- Opening meeting
- Onsite tour
- Interviews
- Document review
- Closing meeting and creating CAPR

1.2.1. Opening meeting

The purpose of the opening meeting is to achieve a common understanding with the management of the company about the audit criteria, the objective, process and time. In this meeting, the presence of union / workers' representatives and key people at certain stages of the audit shall take part as well as management representatives and employees who have a leadership role within the company.

1.2.2. Onsite tour

Mainly, the purpose of the site tour:

- to observe physical conditions and current practices in all areas
- to establish an overview of health and safety issues
- to hold unstructured conversations with management and workers, seek site- based evidence to support findings and to view site-based records
- to take photos of physical infrastructures, any observation/non conformity/good examples

1.2.3. Interviews

Interview with management and worker's are conducted.

For management interviews (Inc. administration staff, less senior management etc.), the purpose is to understand the strengths of the site's policies and procedures, as well as the level of compliance with law and relevant codes.

For worker interviews (incl. worker representatives), it is the important part of the audit in order to verify information collected during document check or in interviews with the management. It is ensured that these interviews are conducted confidential.

1.2.4. Document review

The purpose of the document review is to understand how the labour code is implemented. At least three months' worth of records from the 12-month set of data and should include records for the most recent month, peak season month, and low season month or random month shall be reviewed.

1.2.5. Closing meeting and creating CAPR

The aim of the closing meeting is to inform and agree the findings of the audit with the employment site's management, and to verify their confirmation of the findings through the signing off of the CAPR and agreed timescales and verification method (document review or follow-up audit). In this meeting, the presence of union / workers' representatives and key people at certain stages of the audit shall take part as well as management representatives and employees who have a leadership role within the company.

1.3. Reporting and submission of the report

Once the audit report has been reviewed and approved by TÜV NORD, it is submitted to the customer at the SEDEX portal for publication. The customer should publish the reports to its buyer or the report will be auto-published by the SEDEX portal after the 14 days since the audit report is submitted.

Before initiating audit follow up actions as defined section 3, the reports shall be published.

1.4. Award of Certificate

Only auditing process is conducted for SMETA, no certificate shall be issued.

2. MANAGEMENT OF NON-CONFORMITIES

For any non-conformity/finding, the company must undertake a root cause analysis and implement corrective action. The registration time in the SEDEX database is then limited to max. 90 days.

The company has the duty, depending on the severity of the non-conformity, to inform the audit team on the determined corrective action in a definite period of time (max. 90 days) to allow the audit team to verify it.

3. AUDIT FOLLOW-UP

Verification of adequate corrective actions can be carried out by:

- A desktop review of corrective actions that the site has uploaded on the Sedex platform
- or
- A follow-up audit when the corrective actions cannot be verified by desktop review and require further verification

Follow-up audits cannot be conducted more than 12 months after the latest full scope audit. Any audits scheduled beyond this timeframe will be treated and classified as periodic audits.

4. CONDUCT SMETA FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS WITH A DISTRIBUTED WORKFORCE (SP-DW)

An adapted SMETA methodology shall be applied when auditing service providers with distributed or mobile workforces (SP-DW), including companies providing services at client-controlled sites (e.g. cleaning, security, catering, and maintenance services) and domestic road transport operators.

Unlike conventional site-based SMETA audits, SP-DW audits are structured around three components (unless otherwise permitted by the applicable methodology):

- **Service Provider Office Visit** – to assess management systems and central controls;
- **Site Visit(s)** – to verify implementation of requirements at representative workplaces where services are delivered; and
- **Office Revisit** – to consolidate findings, review additional documentation where necessary, and complete the audit process.

Additional Workplace Requirements, specific sampling plans, enhanced pre-audit communication procedures, and dedicated templates for the audit report, CAPR and photographs shall be used for SP-DW audits.

In addition to the standard 2-pillar and 4-pillar SMETA audits, a 3-pillar audit option may be applied for SP-DW audits where, due to the nature of the services provided, environmental impacts are negligible or are assessed separately, while Business Ethics risks remain relevant.

Where necessary and appropriate, certain components of an SP-DW audit may be conducted remotely. Any use of remote auditing techniques shall be agreed and communicated during the audit planning stage.