

Safe Quality Food Program

At a glance

This document provides an overview of the Safe Quality Food Program (SQF).

SQF is one of the several standard systems that are referenced in Standards Map, the interactive web-based tool on private standards developed by the T4SD program of ITC.

What is the Safe Quality Food Program

The Safe Quality Food Program (SQF) is a leading global food safety and quality certification program and management system, designed to meet the needs of buyers and suppliers worldwide.

SQF is designed as a food safety program, but it also covers product quality. Assuring consistent quality and meeting buyer specifications are important aspects of the buyer-supplier relationship.

SQF provides two standards based on the type of food supplier: SQF 1000 for primary producers and SQF 2000 for manufacturers and distributors. ITC's Standards Map website currently offers information on SQF 1000 standard only, but we are planning to integrate information on SQF 2000 in a near future.

What products are covered by the standard system

SQF covers all sectors of the food supply chain. A detailed overview of all SQF Food Sector Categories can be accessed at <http://www.sqfi.com/wp-content/uploads/FSC.pdf>.

What are the key features of the standard system

- The SQF Program offers many features that ensure trust and consistency in the auditing process and greater oversight of auditing activities conducted by companies and individuals operating on behalf of the SQF Institute.
- SQFI provides complimentary copies of the SQF codes and free, comprehensive practical guidance to assist in the implementation of SQF systems.
- SQF incorporates a strong quality certification component.
- SQF improves process management by helping to proactively identify and manage risk so as to avoid stock recoveries, market withdrawals and rework.
- SQF offers comprehensive and consistent training that upholds the integrity of the Program.

SQF: Facts and Figures

- 19 Licensed Certification Bodies operating in over 200 countries worldwide
- 2925 SQF Certified Suppliers

Support

The Safe Quality Food Institute (SQFI) licenses Training Centers around the world to conduct two-day classes in "Implementing SQF Systems" to help introduce the SQF system to suppliers and prepare professionals to become licensed SQF Consultants. Currently, Training Centers are licensed throughout the United States, Australia, Canada, Ireland and Mexico.

The SQFI has also developed the Ethical Sourcing module, which is a voluntary supplement for SQF 1000 or SQF 2000 Certified Suppliers. To obtain official registration documentation, food suppliers will need to meet audit standards concerning certain social and environmental issues such as wage compliance, child labor, occupational health and safety, pollution prevention, air emissions and waste management.

SQF Contact Details

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The SQF Program can be implemented in over 200 countries worldwide. The certification activities are not restricted to any region of specific geographical scope.

The SQF program is currently implemented in 7 countries.



ASIA Japan, Republic of Korea **OCEANIA** Australia **NORTH AMERICA** Canada, Mexico, United States of America

How to become certified

- Step 1:** Learn about the SQF Standards
- Attend an on-site “Implementing SQF Systems” training course through a [licensed SQF Training Center](#) (Recommended)
 - Take the online “Implementing SQF Systems” [training course](#) provided by LearnSomething
 - Train yourself by utilizing the [SQF documents](#) available for free on the [SQF website](#)
 - Take the SQF online exam.
- Step 2:** Register your Company with the Online [Assessment Registration System](#) (Quickfire Registration). The registration fee to SQF Assessment Database is based on the gross sales of a company. [Click here](#) to view our Registration Fee Structure.
- Step 3:** Designate an employee as the SQF Practitioner. This person will serve as your company’s internal expert on SQF. Further information on the requirements for an SQF Practitioner is available in section 8.2.1 of the SQF 1000 or 2000 Code.
- Step 4:** Choose Your Level of Certification. There are three levels of certification for each SQF standard (SQF 1000 and SQF 2000).
- Level 1 is mainly for low risk products and it incorporates fundamental food safety controls.
 - Level 2 is a certified HACCP food safety plan that is benchmarked by GFSI.
 - Level 3 is a comprehensive implementation of safety and quality management systems that incorporates Level 2.
- In many cases, a supplier’s customer has already designated a minimum level of certification.
- Step 5:** Obtain Proposals from Potential Certification Bodies
Contact a license Certification Body directly to obtain quotes on an SQF audit. [Click here](#) for the duration outline of a general SQF audit.
- Step 6:** Conduct a Pre-Assessment (Optional)
Either an SQF Professional or your SQF Practitioner can identify the “gaps” between your program and the desired level of SQF certification.
- Step 7:** Choose a Certification Body and Schedule an Audit. Use the [licensed Certification Body](#) directory to find a Certification Body that can conduct an audit in your country.
- Step 8:** Certification Body Conducts Initial Certification Audits:
- Document review
 - Facility Assessment

What areas does the Safe Quality Food standard system cover

The following table provides an overview of SQF principles and requirements and related compliance policies covering social, environmental and economic areas applied in production, processing and trade.

Explanation of Standards Maps interpretation of compliance policies in the SQF standard system:

Immediate Requirement: The Standards Map presents the criteria for the SQF 1000 Code (except Section 7) as “immediate requirements” based on the following policy “A Minor Non-conformity shall be Corrected, verified and closed out within 30 days of the completion of the on-site Audit.”

Recommendations: The Standards Map presents the criteria under Section 7.0 (GlobalGAP Criteria) of the SQF 1000 Code as “recommendations” based on the following policy “This section is only applicable for those primary producers who are undergoing SQF 1000 and GLOBALGAP certification. For SQF 1000 Scope of Certification, this section will be not applicable, unless directed by customer requirements.”

	Environment	Social	Economic
Immediate requirements	<p>Chemicals / Natural Organic Inputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of authorized chemicals Integrated Pest/Crop Management (IPM/ICM) systems Chemical substances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fertilizers Pesticides/herbicides Organic natural inputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fertilizers Pesticides/herbicides Equipment and training on chemical use Storage/disposal/waste of chemicals Management of chemicals <p>Biodiversity</p> <p>Animals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy and humane treatment of livestock Feeding, including type, handling and method Use of medicines <p>Waste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste management - collection, treatment, disposal Separate solid waste criteria Pollution management Disposal of waste <p>Energy Use/Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce energy use Renewable energy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar/hydro/other Non renewable energy Energy efficiency 	<p>Work/Labor Rights - Conditions of Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conditions of work Safety at work (ILO 184) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe handling chemicals Healthy work conditions Access to sanitary facilities at work Training requirements on site No forced labor (ILO 29&105) No use of physical violence Child labor prohibited (ILO 182) 	<p>Organizational Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Control System management Human resources management Economic viability/profitability Productivity Compliance with local social and environmental laws and regulations

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Environment

Social

Economic

Short-term requirements

Chemicals / Natural Organic Inputs

Chemical substances

Animals

Animal welfare

Use of medicines

Water

Use in areas of scarcity/high risks

Reduction of water through prevention

Water quality

Water treatment

Water disposal

Recommendations

Soil

Soil conservation/erosion

Soil related nutrients and fertility

Biodiversity

Habitat/eco-system

Impact assessment for new production

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) use

Prohibition

Management system

Social/Human Rights

Promotion/enhancement of medical care

Housing and sanitary facilities in place

Conditions of work

Safety at work (ILO 184)

Training on safety issues

Safe work environment

Safety equipments and emergency kits

Child labor prohibited (ILO 182)

Work/Labor Rights - Conditions of Employment

Condition of employment

Contract labour policies and practices

Written contracts