

## **SIZA ETHICAL AUDIT GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS DURING THE COVID-19 (PHASE 4) LOCKDOWN REGULATIONS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has become an increasingly challenging situation, which has impacted all business operations. SIZA recognises that this is a developing situation, and the protection of people living and working on farms and within agriculture is paramount. Due to President Cyril Ramaphosa's declaration, SIZA has a responsibility to ensure members, buyers, and other stakeholders are protected and adhere to new regulations set by the South African Government. South Africa and its citizens will be subject to lockdown level 4 regulations until further notice.

As a control measure, SIZA, along with its relevant stakeholders and contingency committees, understands the effect that these regulations will have on all businesses, citizens, and relevant role-players around the world. It is therefore important that all parties involved practice understanding during this time and allow for the necessary regulations to be implemented.

This document seeks to provide suppliers and audit firms with:

- Guidance and clarity on managing the audit process; and
- Obtaining a provisional extension on the current audit validity to bridge the pandemic period, only in cases where access to the facility is not possible.

### **2. SIZA THIRD-PARTY SOCIAL (ETHICAL) AUDITS**

Agriculture and all related services to food production and export purposes can continue with their operations to ensure food sustainability during this period. Rules and regulations pertaining to the validity of on-site audits will continue to apply and will in no way be disregarded. However, each audit company

has put measures in place to ensure that audits can be scheduled during this time as per SIZA's emergency procedures, while still adhering to the SIZA Audit Process and Methodology (APM). ***Third-party Ethical audits will therefore continue as per normal by on-site visits taking place, unless the facility can provide adequate reasoning why access to the site is not possible. The latter will be deemed a last resort.***

#### 2.1 The continuation of Ethical Third-party Audits

Audits can continue in accordance with the SIZA APM by having an on-site ethical audit conducted by the auditor visiting the facility. This option will be subject to all regulated Occupational Health and Safety regulations, as set out by Government. Businesses should furthermore agree to meet the required precautionary measures prior to the auditor visiting the site. ***These precautionary measures will be communicated by each audit company during the scheduling process to ensure full compliance and protection for both the auditor and the farm.***

#### 2.2 Ethical Audits with an option to do a 50% partially remotely with a follow-up visit to complete the audit

Due to the precariousness of the virus and changing lockdown regulations, audits can be conducted in two parts over a period of time, only if a full on-site audit is not possible due to regulations as set out by Government. The 1<sup>st</sup> part of the audit will be a partial remote/desktop audit review of 50% of the normal audit checklist; and the 2<sup>nd</sup> part must be a follow-up on-site visit to review the remaining 50% of the checklist once this emergency period is over or sooner if the auditors can access the farm. The details regarding this option is available on request. A provisional audit extension letter can be issued by SIZA after a partially remote audit was conducted (T&C apply).

##### 2.2.1 Completion of Audits that were conducted remotely during Level 5 Lockdown

All audits that took place during the Level 5 restrictions (27 March to 30 April 2020), should be completed in full with an on-site visit that needs to take place. These audits can be completed from Level 4 onwards which will allow auditors to gain access to the business and complete the remainder of the audit. Note that these audits must be completed and cannot be postponed, and extension will not be repeated. Unless the audit is completed in full, no Audit Completion Letter will be issued.

### Receive Buyer Approval

In the event that any auditee/business believes that a remote audit will be necessary, the business will have to ensure their market/buyer will accept the validity of a remote/online verification as part of the full third-party audit, prior to continuing with the process. *While every attempt is being made to assure retailer buy-in for the SIZA programme, members are urged to verify with their relevant buyers to confirm their audit requirements during this time. SIZA cannot override the requirements of buyers.* It is important to note that SEDEX does not allow remote audits. Therefore, as the supplier, you need to clarify with your buyers before you apply for an audit to be partially conducted remotely.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

We are acutely aware of the significant impact that COVID-19 may have on us and our surroundings and therefore we ask everyone to act in a socially responsible manner during this period. To help prevent the spread of the disease, we encourage staff, members, auditors, and relevant stakeholders to adhere to safety procedures and measures in order to protect yourself and those you interact with.

SIZA will meet regularly with relevant contingency committees to ensure all the interests of parties involved are considered and protected. During this process, all parties are expected to maintain the integrity of the SIZA programme.