amfori
Trade with purpose

amfori QMI
System Manual

June 2025

Contents

1. Introduction of amfori QMI

1.1 Importance of quality management capability in Managing Responsible Sourcing & Sustainable Supply Chains (Quality Management Initiative)

Quality management capability is the pre-requisite to start sustainable sourcing journey and build a responsible supply chain.

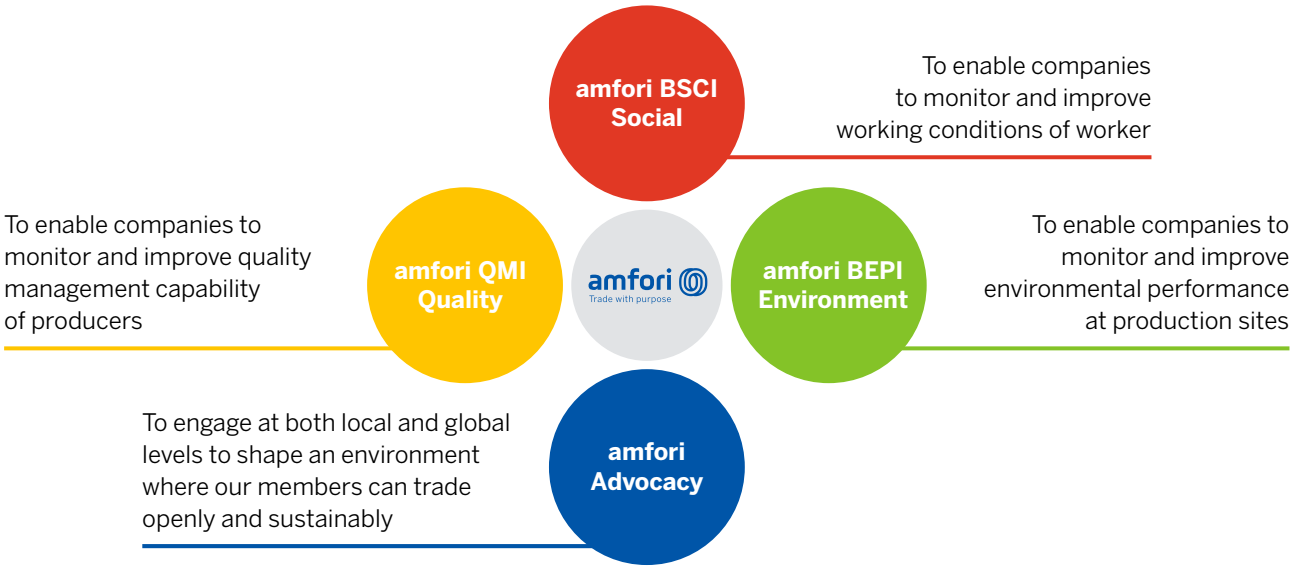
amfori QMI is an initiative for companies committed to providing professional guidance and assessment tools for manufacturing practices and quality management at production sites with a common standard applicable across non-food industries.

Aims to:

- ✓ Reduce duplicated audits
- ✓ Reduce costs
- ✓ Improvement on quality management competence
- ✓ Joint risk monitoring

1.2 Integrated Approach for Responsible Sourcing & Sustainable Supply Chain

One platform multi-dimensional risk/performance monitoring for responsible sourcing and sustainable supply chain.



1.3 Sustainable Supply Chain Benefits (Non-Food) – One Standard for All

Quality management capability is the pre-requisite to start sustainable sourcing and build a responsible supply chain. Buyers generally need to develop a set of common standards for assessment, sharing of reports, joint monitoring of risks and collaborations on long term improvements. A fast scan of factory quality management capabilities for producers includes standardized assessment tools, auditor training, report sharing template, audit reports sharing.

amfori QMI (Quality Management Initiative) is an initiative for companies committed to providing professional guidance and assessment tools for manufacturing practices and quality management at the production sites. It offers a common standard for cross industries (non-food) that aims to avoid audit fatigues, reduce audit costs, and joint monitoring of sustainability risks of quality management capability along the global supply chain.

2. Aspects Assessed in the amfori QMI Audit

- amfori QMI Questionnaire includes 2 Parts: Part A and Part B.
- Part A covers 4 core aspects, overall rating of an amfori QMI audit is based solely on the results of Part A only. This part addresses core and critical questions.

Part A Total 100%				
	A1 20%	Infrastructure, System & Environment	A3 20%	Incoming Materials Quality Control (IQC)
	A2 20%	Product Design	A4 40%	Production Control

- Part B Bonus section contains all bonus questions covering 4 areas to demonstrate factories' performance. The results of the bonus section will **NOT** affect overall amfori QMI rating but will serve as additional references for good practices.

Part B Bonus section				
	B1	Workforce & System	B3	Ongoing Monitoring of Finished Products
	B2	Laboratory Testing	B4	Client Portfolio

3. amfori QMI Auditing Process Overview

Step		Business Partner (Producer)	amfori Member	Monitoring Partner (Auditing Company)
1	Sign Terms of Implementation (TOI) of amfori QMI	✓	✓	
2	Member invite business partner (Producers) to register on the platform * Only for the business partners who are new to amfori programmes	✓	✓	
3	Schedule audit *Member should take the amfori QMI RSP before requesting any audit		✓	
4	Conduct onsite audit			✓
5	Auditee	✓		
6	Submit audit report and upload onto platform			✓
7	Share report	✓	✓	
8	Complete remediation/CAP (W/I 60 calendar days)	✓		
9	Conduct follow-up audit (if applicable)	✓	✓	✓

3.1 Steps to initiate and complete an amfori QMI audit

amfori provides additional documents to support business enterprises in successfully scheduling an audit.

There the 9 key steps to always keep in mind:

STEP 1: Terms of Implementation (TOI) (Participants/Producers)
Business Partners (Producers) and amfori members need to sign the relevant Terms of Implementation (TOI) of amfori QMI. This is a consent agreement for both parties to adhere to the terms and participate in amfori QMI audit.

Terms of Implementation (TOI) for Participants
Terms of Implementation (TOI) for Producers

STEP 2: This step is specified for the Business Partners (Producers) who are new to amfori programmes. Members invite Business Partners (Producers) to register on the platform. If Business Partners (Producers) already have an amfori business partner profile on amfori sustainability platform, they may ignore this step.

STEP 3: Members send an invitation to Business Partners (Producers) on amfori sustainability platform. Business Partners (Producers) accept QMI audit invitation to schedule an amfori QMI audit. If a Member is not RSP, they should complete the amfori QMI RSP before requesting any audit. Only RSPs can send invitation via amfori sustainability platform.

What is RSP?

RSP stands for responsibility. The RSP holder can use their leverage to engage more closely with their business partners and drive improvement activities. Compared to other linked members, the RSP holder has stronger influence on the amfori Sustainability Platform for the monitoring processes. Although multiple members may source from the same business partner, only one member can be the RSP holder for that business partner. Members should take the RSP for those business partners where they intend to actively monitor and support. The RSP applies for the whole business partner company and all sites.

The RSP holder has the exclusive right to request a monitoring activity three months before the expiry date:

- A monitoring cycle ends three years after the submission of the full monitoring
- If the RSP does not act within two months before the cycle ends, the RSP will become claimable by other linked members. Until the RSP is claimed, the current RSP holder retains all rights and obligations.

The RSP becomes claimable two months before the audit cycle expires.

Notifications are automatically sent by email from the Platform to relevant users, depending on their permission level. These settings are managed in the admin section of the Platform. Notifications are sent for all the main features, related to Monitoring, notice of RSP becoming claimable, and any unacceptable cases that are raised. These notifications can be configured to only send certain notifications to specific users.

STEP 4: Business Partners (Producers) are the Auditee during amfori QMI audit. Auditing Company (Monitoring Partner) will contact Auditee for scheduling details and pre-audit preparation. Based on the information provided by Auditee, auditor will visit the Auditee's site to conduct an amfori QMI onsite audit.

STEP 5: Auditee shall cooperate with auditor during the audit process. For example, auditee should prepare the audit documents in advance, relevant auditee representative should attend the audit, accompany auditor during factory tour.

STEP 6: After onsite audit and report writing, the auditor submits amfori QMI report and uploads it to amfori sustainability platform normally within 10 business days to complete this process.

STEP 7: Business Partners (Producers) and amfori members can review amfori QMI report on amfori sustainability platform.

STEP 8: Based on the findings of amfori QMI report, Business Partner (Producer) needs to complete remediation/CAP within 60 calendar days.

STEP 9 (if applicable): To trigger a follow-up audit, the steps are the same as the initial audit (Please refer to **STEP 3**).

4. Duration of the amfori QMI Audit

Regardless of workforce size or site area, the amfori QMI audit for the business partner with a single product family is required to be completed in 1.5 audit person-day. This applies to both initial audit and follow-up audit.

Breakdown of amfori QMI workday schedule:

1 Person-Day	**On Site Audit 8 hours**
0.5 Person-Day	**Report Writing**
1.5 Person-Day	**Total**

Onsite Audit: Auditor spends 8 hours, equivalent to 1 person-day, at auditee's site to conduct an onsite audit. During this process, auditor needs to review auditee's relevant documents and visit auditee site to collect information/evidence for amfori QMI report.

Report Writing: In the following day of onsite audit, auditor uses 0.5 person-day to finalize amfori QMI report writing.

Report Publishing: amfori QMI audit report is published within 10 business days after the date of onsite audit. amfori members can review the audit report on amfori sustainability platform once the amfori QMI report is published.

5. Structure & Content of the amfori QMI Audit Report

The full audit report will only be available on the platform, which contains 4 major sections: Details, General Description, Report and Report Attachments.

Details: Provides general information about the audit and the auditee site details.

General Description: Offer an overview provided by the auditor, which may include confidential comments accessible only to linked members (not the Business Partner).

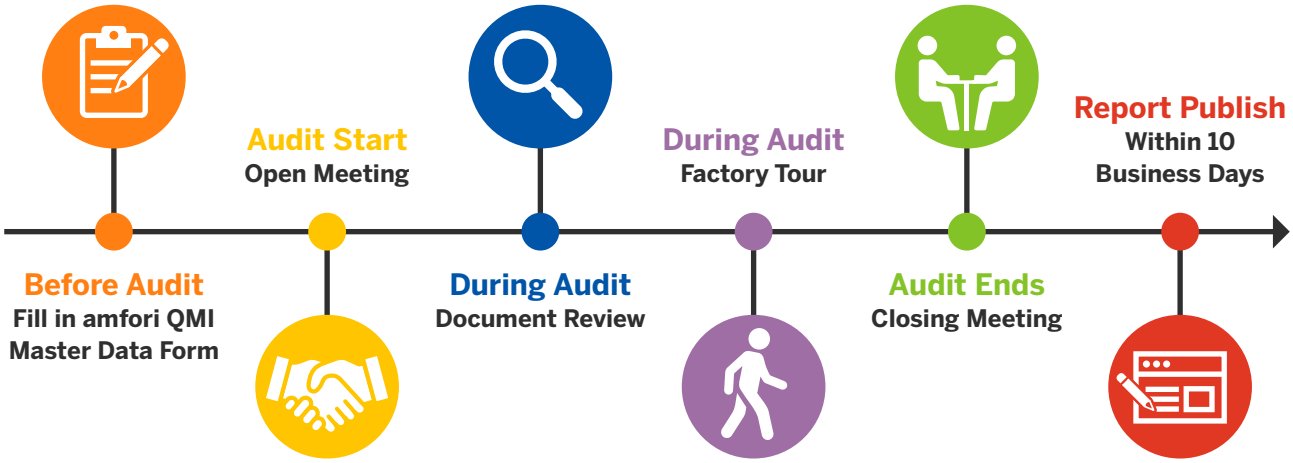
Report: Constitutes the core part of the audit report, detailing business partner's operations, audit questionnaire, and findings. The Report section includes 12 sub-sections:

1. Monitoring Details
2. Producer Basic Information
3. Employment Structure
4. Product Type
5. Production Structure & Process
6. In-house Testing Laboratory
7. Summary of Findings That Are Not Addressed by The Audit Questions
8. Aspects 1: Infrastructure, system & environment
9. Aspect 2: Product design
10. Aspect 3: Incoming materials Quality Control (IQC)
11. Aspect 4: Production control
12. Bonus Question

The first 6 sub-sections of the Report contain the information collected from Master Data Form submitted by business partner. Auditor will verify this data during the onsite audit and include the verified data in the final report. Sub-sections 7-12 comprise the amfori QMI audit questionnaire, which includes 4 core aspects and 1 bonus question section. The findings are available in both English and the local language. The report also indicates the source of evidence that the auditors used to assess each question. Each aspect has a dedicated space to report good practices on the specific topic.

Finally, **Report Attachments** contains the relevant documents related to the monitoring activity, such as pictures of the site, the business licence, certificates. We required auditors to upload business license, the signed copy of Terms of Implementation of business partner, a copy of closing meeting report and the offline audit report in the Report Attachments section.

6. amfori QMI Audit Overview



6.1 amfori QMI auditing procedure

Before Audit:
Fill in amfori QMI Master Data Form to let auditor have an overview of the production line of business partners.
And auditee received a typical document checklist and typical audit attendee list to prepare for amfori QMI audit.

Audit Start:
Auditor arrives auditee's site to conduct an onsite amfori QMI audit. For starter, auditor will meet auditee's representatives to ensure auditee's representatives understand the audit process flow.

During Audit:
The first part during audit, auditor will review auditee's documents that are relevant to amfori QMI audit and verify the document against amfori QMI master data form.

After document review, auditor will conduct a factory tour to observe the production site conditions and gather evidence during factory tour.

Audit Ends:
Auditor will go through the findings with auditee during closing meeting and obtain auditee's agreement of the findings. If auditee does not agree with or has doubts about the findings that auditor points out, auditee shall raise these issues during closing meeting.

Report Publish:
Within 10 business days, auditor will upload the report to amfori sustainability platform.

7. Deciding on the Type of Monitoring

amfori QMI offers 3 types of monitoring: fully unannounced, semi-announced or fully announced.

Whether amfori QMI audits are fully unannounced, semi-announced or fully announced, which is determined through consultation between an amfori member and the business partner. The commonly chosen format is fully announced because it is a one-day audit; the absence of essential representatives due to a lack of prior notice may affect the arrangement of the onsite audit.

7.1 amfori QMI grading and validity overview

Grade	Validity	Follow-up Audit	Continuous Improvement (Remediation)
A	3 years	N/A	Optional
B	2 years	Optional	Optional
C	1 year	Optional	**Mandatory**
D (Not acceptable)	• Follow-up audit required **within 6 months.** • Validity subject to the result of follow-up audit	**Mandatory**	**Mandatory**

7.2 amfori QMI Audit Rating System

In amfori QMI, there are 3 types of scores: **Critical, Core and Bonus.**

The **overall rating is based on Part A only,** which includes Aspect 1 – 4, only containing core and critical questions, each **aspect with an assigned weighting.**

There are total 71 questions in amfori QMI:

Core Questions:	56	Bonus Questions:	12
Critical Questions:	2	Not Rated Questions:	1

Aspect		Weighting	
Part A	A1 Infrastructure, system & environment	20%	**Total 100% = Core Score**
	A2 Product design	20%	
	A3 IQC	20%	
	A4 Production control	40%	
Part B	Bonus section	In %	**Bonus Score**

7.3 The amfori QMI Audit Cycle

The amfori QMI audit cycle is a three-years period between full audits. In other words, for producers that obtain the highest rating in an amfori QMI audit (i.e., overall rating of 'A'), all aspects will be evaluated every three years. For producers that obtain an overall rating of 'B,' 'C' or 'D', a follow-up audit, which will address not all aspects but only those with findings, is required between 6 and 24 months after another audit.

Grade	Core	Critical	Description
A	≥ 90%	100%	If core questions scores equivalent to or more than 90% and critical questions scores 100%, then based on this condition, this amfori QMI report shall obtain a result of 'A'
B	≥ 75%	100%	If core questions scores equivalent to or more than 75% and critical questions scores 100%, then based on this condition, this amfori QMI report shall obtain a result of 'B'
C	≥ 60%	100%	If core questions scores equivalent to or more than 60% and critical questions scores 100%, then based on this condition, this amfori QMI report shall obtain a result of 'C'
D (Not acceptable)	< 60%	< 100%	If core questions scores are less than 60% and critical questions scores are less than 100%, then based on this condition, this amfori QMI report shall obtain a result of 'D'

Rating validity

The validity period of audit results varies according to the producer's ratings on both the full and follow-up audits.

Rating A: amfori QMI full audits with an overall rating of 'A' is valid for 3 years. The RSP holder can challenge this validity by raising specific concerns to the amfori QMI Team. If the result of a follow-up audit shows an overall rating 'A', then the audit is valid until the next full audit is due at the end of the three-year cycle.

Rating B: amfori QMI full and follow-up audits with an overall rating of 'B' are valid for a maximum of 2 years. Both follow-up audit and continuous improvement (remediation) are optional. Provided that the period between two full audits never exceeds 2 years.

Rating C: amfori QMI full and follow-up audits with an overall rating of 'C' are valid for a maximum of 1 year. A follow-up audit is optional, but continuous improvement (remediation) is mandatory. Provided that the period between two full audits never exceeds 1 year.

Rating D: amfori QMI full and follow-up audits with an overall rating of 'D' are not acceptable. Both follow-up audit and continuous improvement (remediation) are mandatory. Validity is subject to the result of follow-up audit, the follow-up audit is required **within 6 months.**

Example:

If a factory rated "D" on the 1st full audit, required to receive the follow-up audit within 6 months

- follow-up audit rated "C", the audit validity extended to 1 year from the full report submission date
- follow-up audit rated "B", the audit validity extended to 2 years from the full report submission date
- follow-up audit rated "A", the audit validity extended to 3 years from the full report submission date (end of the audit cycle)

Timelines to Consider for New and Relocated Factories:

To ensure audit readiness and compliance, a criteria need to be met before proceeding with a QMI audit of a new or relocated factory. For both new and relocated factories, there must be at least 6 consecutive full calendar months of operational records. For exceptional cases where a QMI audit is required with less than 6 months of records, please contact the amfori QMI team by email at info@amfori.org.

8. Selecting A Monitoring Partner

Only auditing companies that have signed the amfori framework contract are qualified to coordinate and conduct amfori QMI audits.

In addition, only qualified auditors who have completed a qualification process can conduct amfori QMI audits. Both auditing companies and their qualified auditors are subjected to a rigorous third-party integrity program.

There are three main ways how amfori QMI members engage auditing companies:

- **Ad-hoc engagement:** The RSP holder engages different Monitoring Partner for each audit it requests.
- **Long-term engagement:** The RSP holder may engage the same Monitoring Partner (or companies) for all audits it requests.
- **Mixed engagement:** The RSP holder may engage the same Monitoring Partner for all audits in one region or sector and engage different auditing companies for ad-hoc cases. amfori does not prescribe the best engagement approach.

amfori does not prescribe who pays for the amfori QMI audit, whether it is a full or follow-up. There is a unit cost per audit and the rate is offered to all the same as per the Agreement stated.

Capacity: Monitoring partners should be approached early enough to plan the amfori QMI monitoring and assign a monitoring person who has the right experience. Requesting monitoring three or four months in advance is a good practice.

Price: While amfori determines the minimum duration of an amfori QMI audit, but each monitoring partner defines its own service rates. A complete monitoring requires good preparation, expertise, and professionalism (prior to, during, and after the monitoring). Opting for low-cost audit may end up being expensive in the long run, if they fail to provide the necessary information.

Potential conflict of interest: Monitoring partners have mechanisms in place to avoid conflicts of interest. The RSP holder should, however, keep this issue in mind when selecting the monitoring company.

Some examples of potential conflicts of interest include:

- ! The monitoring person has previously provided training and/or technical advice to the business partner.
- ! The monitoring person is not paid for beforehand, and the price depends on the results of the audit.

9. Corrective action/remediation

Business Partners (Producers) can develop a remediation plan that suggests feasible solutions and steps for correcting identified problems.

A Business Partner (Producers) can create a remediation plan in the amfori QMI platform whenever they become aware of the need for improvements in their business.

Seven steps to creating a remediation plan

When drafting a remediation plan, the producer should follow these seven steps:

STEP 1 **Analysis:** Review the audit report or the results of the assessment that has triggered the need for remediation.

STEP 2 **Root cause:** Identify the origin of the conduct(s) that has been causing the breach.

STEP 3 **Solutions:** Identify feasible solutions (distinguish between short-term and long-term solutions).

STEP 4 **Responsibility:** Identify a person(s) responsible for the implementation process.

STEP 5 **Budget:** Allocate a realistic budget.

STEP 6 **Strategy:** Define and adhere to the implementation steps.

STEP 7 **Monitor:** Establish a strategy to monitor improvements and adjust approach if necessary.

Response to findings report: After an amfori QMI audit, Business Partners (Producers) should develop a remediation plan in response to the findings report issued by the auditor and share it with linked members on the amfori QMI platform.

Timeline: The auditee is granted 60 calendar days to draft and submit the final remediation plan on the amfori QMI platform. If the auditee encounters difficulties in submitting the document in the amfori QMI platform, he or she should attempt to share the remediation plan by other means with the RSP holder and, at the latest, with the auditor who will conduct the follow-up audit as part of the preparation process before it takes place.

Missing the timeline: Not submitting the remediation plan does not prevent nor delay the amfori QMI follow-up audit that verifies the degree of the improvements implemented. In absence of a remediation plan issued by the Business Partner (Producers), the amfori QMI follow-up audit will be scheduled within the timeframe defined in the findings report, and the auditor will use the findings report as a point of reference.

10. Follow up audit

Continuous improvement is a core value of the amfori QMI system. amfori QMI members expect their producers to continuously show improvements in their business operations.

amfori QMI members are encouraged to support their producers to:

- Remediating findings in both the short and long term.
- Making necessary long-lasting changes.
- Integrating the amfori QMI into their business culture.

Balancing autonomy and responsibility: amfori QMI relies on a balanced combination of autonomy and responsibility to guide the relationships between amfori QMI members and their producers. The goal is for members to support producers' progress and continuous improvement while allowing them to take ownership of their own business responsibilities.

Two key concepts are relevant here:

- **Autonomy:** It refers to a Business Partner (Producers)'s aptitude after an assessment to make their own decisions regarding their improvement process. Producers are offered specific trainings and support to overcome any identified shortcomings, including unacceptable issues. Additionally, Business Partners (Producers) are encouraged to proactively utilize any other available learning resources in a self-motivated manner. Furthermore, producers with an overall rating of "A" and "B" are expected to have the level of maturity that allows them to independently design and maintain their continuous improvement process without the need for an amfori follow-up audit.
- **Responsibility:** For producers with an audit rating of 'C', an amfori QMI follow-up audit should be conducted within 12 months of the previous amfori QMI audit date. For producers with an audit rating of 'D' (Not acceptable), an amfori QMI follow-up audit should be conducted within 6 months of the previous amfori QMI audit date. If this deadline is missed, an amfori QMI full audit will need to be requested to maintain the producer within a valid audit cycle.

Circumstances where verification of progress (including amfori QMI follow-up audit) may be pursued in an early stage: amfori QMI follow up audit typically occurs within 6 – 12 months from previous amfori QMI audit. However, there may be circumstance where amfori QMI members see the need to schedule a follow-up audit earlier. This can take the form of an amfori QMI follow-up audit or another agreed-upon method. Here are some examples:

- **Auditee proactively seeks a follow-up:** The auditee may have identified ways to implement the necessary improvements within a short period and is eager for these improvements to be verified by a third party, which could positively impact their rating.
- **amfori QMI participant (RSP holder) is proactive:** Experience shows that attentive follow-up may be required to encourage the short-, medium- and long-term changes to fully integrate amfori QMI practice into the business.

11. Audit Quality Assurance Programme

The quality of QMI audits is of paramount importance to the sustainable success of amfori QMI and its value to members.

amfori members can leverage audit results as a basis for rating and monitoring the performance of producers. As the scheme gains accepted among more buyers, the risk of duplicated audits at the same factories is reduced, streamlining assessment efforts and minimizing audit fatigue for producers.

Auditing companies play a vital role in the scheme by deploying competent auditors to conduct QMI audits impartially and consistently, with due professional care regarding proper audit process and reporting, as well as confidentiality and personal data protection.

amfori is committed to continuously improving the quality, integrity, and professionalism of QMI auditors. To enhance the value and effectiveness of independent quality management capability audits, amfori is implementing a comprehensive Audit Quality Assurance Programme.
This programme focuses on key areas such as ethics, audit process, coverage, judgment, and reporting of findings.

It employs five Quality Activities – **Offsite System Review, QMI Management Office Audit, Local Office Audit, Witness Audit and Duplicate Audit** – to evaluate performance and audit results, ensuring QMI audits consistently meet the highest standards of reliability and integrity. Further reference can also be made to the amfori BSCI/BEPI Audit Quality Programme for additional guidance.

Through these efforts, amfori QMI provides a robust, standardized framework that supports responsible supply chain management, strengthens governance, and drives continuous improvement across global supply chains.

The QMI Audit Quality Assurance Programme will be implemented by amfori or a designated Audit Quality Partner. It is the intention of amfori to integrate the amfori QMI Quality Assurance Programme into the amfori AQP in due course, subject to further decision in consultation with Auditing Companies and based on feedback from amfori QMI service users.

11.1 Roles of amfori QMI Participating Parties

amfori:	• Standard Developer and Owner • Sustainability Platform Operator • Quality Assurance/Integrity • Programme Lead and Design
Industry Standard Partner (ISP):	• Industry Standard Development and Maintenance • Auditor's Training Service Provider • Audit Quality Assurance Programme Implementation Partner
Monitoring Partner (Auditing Company):	• Onsite Audit and Reporting • Calibration of Best Practices and Feedback for Auditing Tools and System Enhancement
amfori Member (Buyer):	• Service User: Initiate Audit and Reviews Reports • Engages Producers • Monitors Producers' Performance
Business Partner (Producer as Auditee):	• Auditee • Undertakes Remediation • Provides Feedback for System Enhancement

11.2 Risk-based approach

Operational and reputational risks, when turned into failures, may lead to complaints, withdrawal of membership, negative media news coverage etc., affecting sustainable success of the scheme.

When QMI audit was developed in 2020 – 2021, ISO9001:2015 "Quality Management Systems – Requirements" and ISO19011:2018 "Guidelines for Auditing Management Systems" as well as major buyers' quality audit checklists, were used as reference. The audit approach involved is typical to quality audits which have been widely practiced by auditing companies in the market. The scheme has been vetted by Project Team formed by members of amfori in accordance with amfori's scheme development.

The overall reputational and operational risks of the scheme, due to systematic material misrepresentation of quality performance of factories audited against QMI, are considered as critical success factors within amfori to scale up the service.

Performance of individual auditing companies may give rise to a higher level of risk to the scheme. A risk-based monitoring mechanism is established to prioritize efforts according to risk rating of auditing companies.

12. Features Of The amfori QMI Auditing System

These are the six distinctive features why the amfori QMI auditing system is unique:

Online IT Platform: All amfori QMI members linked to the same producer have online access to the producer's audit data, auditors' professional judgement, and related remediation plans. This avoids duplication of audits and enhances synergies in remediation efforts.

Holistic Audit Methodology: All principles of the amfori QMI are interconnected and incorporated into the QMI monitoring approach. During an amfori QMI audit, the auditors apply their professional judgment to conduct a comprehensive assessment of how the 8 interconnected aspects and the amfori QMI values are implemented by the producer.

This holistic audit approach includes:

Effectiveness and Coherency Checks: Auditors assess not only whether procedures and infrastructure are in place but also both are relevant and adequate. They ensure that these elements align with amfori QMI values.

Triangulation: Auditors must cross-verify multiple sources, such as documents revision and site observations, to compile satisfactory evidence and reach their professional judgement.

Collaborative Approach to Remediation: amfori QMI members linked to the same producer can jointly support the producer's continuous improvement through capacity-building activities. They can also pursue remedies, especially for the most severe breaches identified in the supply chain. This is the case for Not acceptable and emergency episodes, where immediate and time-bound collaborative remediation is needed.

Audit Integrity: The amfori QMI audit integrity program consists of policies and procedures to protect and maintain the credibility of the amfori QMI auditing process through regular verification of:

- ✓ The endorsement and implementation of amfori QMI values and principles in the audits.
- ✓ The independence and legitimacy of the auditing companies.
- ✓ The integrity of the auditing process and associated activities.
- ✓ The consistency of the application of the audit process.
- ✓ The ongoing performance and competence of individual auditors.

13. Implementation for auditors

All amfori QMI audits are to be implemented following a standard of quality, due diligence, and practical wisdom.

Practical Wisdom and Professional Judgement: amfori QMI auditors are expected to incorporate the use of two key concepts into all audits: practical wisdom and professional judgement.

Use Practical Wisdom: Within the amfori QMI, auditors are requested to use practical wisdom, i.e., to make informed and rationale judgments without a black and white decision procedure. amfori QMI audit questionnaires are there to guide auditors in the assessment. However, findings need to be formulated by considering the evidence collected throughout the audit and across various aspects. To that aim, amfori QMI auditors shall interpret rules and principles as well as unspoken or informal signals considering the specificities of the auditee.

Practical wisdom implies that auditors can:

Contextualise: Auditors should be able to put the reality they are assessing into context.

Empathise: Auditors should be able to take the perspective of others and understand how the situation is perceived from their side.

Balance: Auditors should be able to be receptive to conflicting interests without compromising their neutrality.

Use Professional Judgement: Auditors are expected to use their professional judgement in connecting facts and information with the different values and aspects of the audit. The auditor will analyse the interconnection between certain business practices and the aspects. amfori expects auditors to use their professional judgement to make these connections. Professional judgement also helps auditors to decide whether the information gathered qualifies as satisfactory evidence or just information to keep in mind but not necessary evidence.

14. amfori QMI Audit Aspects

Aspect A1 – Infrastructure, System & Environment

A1.1 Building & Facility

Focus area

Structurally sound buildings, well maintained supporting facilities and logically arranged production activities are the cornerstones of smooth and efficient production operations.

Factory site walk is conducted to check conditions of building and supporting facilities.

When apparent issue(s) with building structure, conditions of supporting facilities as well as layout is(are) identified, factory can initiate immediate action(s) to prevent issue(s) from developing into problem(s) that can cause unnecessary suspension or hold up of production activities.

A1.1.1 Are the building(s) and facility(ies) able to support production activities?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Visit following facilities, where applicable: electrical room, power generator, compressed air generator, water pumps & valves, boiler, workshops, and production lines.

A1.2 Housekeeping

Focus area

Clearly defined rules and practices in the factory environment ensure smooth and efficient production operations.

Factory site walk is conducted to check housekeeping practices and results.

When loopholes and apparent issue(s) with housekeeping is(are) identified, factory can initiate immediate action to improve housekeeping management and prevent issue(s) from developing into problem(s) that can cause interruptions of production activities.

A1.2.1 Is the factory clean and tidy?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Visit the following areas, where applicable: production floors, warehouses, and office areas.
- Review pest and hygiene control procedure and records.

A1.3 Inventory Management

Focus area

Clearly defined warehouse practices can help prevent lost, damage, deterioration and aging of inventories, leading to unnecessary material shortages.

Warehouse operations are audited to evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of inventory management practices.

When apparent damage(s) and deterioration of inventories or loophole(s) in inventory management is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve inventory management practices to ensure production is supported with adequate supply of inventories.

A1.3.1 Are the conditions of storage able to prevent inventories from deterioration or aging?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Visit warehouses where inventories are stored.
- Pick 3 samples of raw materials or parts or subassemblies made of plastic, metal, or wood (materials susceptible to aging), check the in/out record and actual condition of samples.

A1.3.2 Is the condition of storage able to prevent inventories from being contaminated by undesirable foreign objects?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Undesirable foreign objects may include pest, dirt, hazardous chemicals.
- Visit warehouses where inventories are stored. Look around and inquire where chemical substances are stored and what pest and hygiene control measures are implemented.

A1.3.3 Are actual balance and identification of inventories matched with the inventory ledger?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Count the quantity of the picked samples and check the quantities of stock against inventory record.
- Pay attention to availability of doors, gates or fences that can isolate storage areas with locks after working hours.

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

A1.4 Management System Planning

Focus area

To ensure quality requirements of products are fulfilled in a systematic and structured manner, a quality management system is required to facilitate control and coordination of design and manufacturing activities in a factory.

Quality system documentation is audited to evaluate the control and coordination mechanisms of the factory to achieve desirable outcome.

When loophole(s) in quality system planning is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial action(s) to improve the mechanism.

A1.4.1 Are quality policy, quality objectives and quality management system manual documented?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Review quality policy, quality objectives and quality management system manual.
- Record the current version of quality management system manual.

A1.5 Organization, Responsibilities & Authorities, QA Independence

Focus area

Clearly defined responsibilities and authorities of all functions of the factory, as well as an independent QA function, are necessary to ensure that products are shipped when all quality requirements are fulfilled.

Factory management and organization charts are audited to evaluate responsibilities and authorities are adequately defined.

When inadequacy(ies) in organizational structure is identified, factory can initiate remedial action(s) to improve the organizational control(s).

A1.5.1 Are organization chart prepared to show the reporting line of departments of the producer?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Review organization chart and verify the names of department heads.

A1.5.2 Is Quality Assurance (QA) independent from Production?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Check the reporting line of QA and Production.
- Talk to head of QA to understand the authorities regarding shipment release.

A1.6 Product Safety Management

Focus area

Compliance with product safety laws and regulations depends on an effective system to keep all relevant staff of factory informed such that timely actions can be taken.

Product safety management procedures and actual implementation are audited to evaluate factory's ability to keep relevant staff informed and take timely action to address change(s).

When loophole(s) or deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can take remedial action(s) to improve the details of procedure or the competence of staff.

A1.6.1 Does the producer have a documented procedure for monitoring updates of legal and regulatory requirements applicable to product safety?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Interview the staff responsible for monitoring legal and regulatory requirements applicable to product safety, ask how they monitor updates of the requirements.

A1.6.2 Are updates of legal and regulatory requirements converted into internal procedures, work instructions or other documents used to control activities such as design change, purchasing, production and inspection?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- If an update has been identified that required a product design change or a change of production process, follow this lead during visit to Product Design, Purchasing, Production and QA departments and ask for documents that have been updated according to the update.

A1.6.3 Does the producer confirm all updates are implemented before release of the first affected shipment?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Sample a case and walk through the procedure to confirm its effectiveness.
- If there is no case, interview personnel from different functions to confirm that the procedure is known and understood correctly.

A1.7 Supplier Management

Focus area

Suppliers play a crucial role in the product quality as factories rely on them to control certain properties of incoming materials.

Supplier management procedure and its actual implementation are audited to evaluate factory's ability to evaluate, select and manage suppliers ensuring the incoming materials are received at the right time, in the right quantity and with right quality.

When loophole(s) or deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can take remedial action(s) to improve details on procedure or competence of staff.

A1.7.1 Is supplier evaluation and selection procedure documented?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Review supplier evaluation procedure for the approval of new suppliers and the regular review of approved suppliers.
- Record the version number the procedure.
- Pay attention to the evaluation items and criteria. Criteria may include ethical status (e.g., BSCI or other social compliance standards), quality standard (e.g., AQL), sample evaluation results.

A1.7.2 Are supplier evaluation and selection activities implemented according to the documented procedure?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Talk to the staff responsible for supplier management.
- Utilize the audit samples picked in the warehouse, sampling a supplier (safety critical raw material/ component supplier is preferable).

A1.7.3 Are records maintained to confirm raw materials are purchased from approved suppliers?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Utilize the audit samples picked in the warehouse, ask the staff responsible for purchasing to provide purchasing documents of the raw materials/components.
- Check the suppliers against approved supplier record.

A1.7.4 Are material specifications and delivery requirements specified in purchasing documents?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Check the purchasing information on material specifications and delivery requirements given in purchasing documents.
- Producer may adopt its own requirement or the customers' requirement for the particular orders.

A1.8 Handling of Customer Complaint & Field Quality Issue

Focus area

In order to maintain a positive relationship with customers and keep products in the market, factory needs to react swiftly to customer complaints and field quality issue.

Customer complaints and/or field return cases as well as handling procedure are audited to evaluate factory's ability to investigate causes of nonconformity(ies) and take corrective actions to prevent recurrence of nonconforming services or products.

When loophole(s) or deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can take remedial action(s) to improve details on procedure or competence of staff.

A1.8.1 Does the producer have dedicated personnel or team to perform field failure analysis as well as impact assessment (track down production lots and materials that may be affected)?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Sample a case and review field failure analysis, pay attention to identification of possible causes and formulation of corrective actions to prevent recurrence.
- Follow up the investigation of why the failure was not detected before delivery.
- When review impact assessment of field quality issue, pay attention to study of the influence to end-users and tracking of production lots and materials that may be affected.

A1.8.2 Are inventories traceable by using shipment information or date code on products and vice versa?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Use the same case as in A1.8.1 and walk through the tracking process.

A1.9 Training Program

Focus area

Factory needs to implement a training program to cope with variation in skill and experience of production operators and quality inspectors, especially for new workers.

Training program is audited to evaluate type of skill and knowledge to be taught.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can take remedial action(s) to improve details on training program.

A1.9.1 Does the producer have a training program for new workers?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Talk to the staff responsible for worker training and ask how they to ensure that new workers or workers who are assigned to a new production station are able to perform duties independently.

A1.10 System Document Control

Focus area

Consistent implementation of design and manufacturing activities relies on staff and workers being correctly informed about guidance and requirements for processes and their work.

Document control is audited to evaluate factory's ability to ensure that pertinent issues of documents are communicated to relevant staff and workers.

When loophole(s) or deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can take remedial action(s) to improve system document control method.

A1.10.1 Are the versions of procedures, work instructions, documents, forms correct when comparing with the approved master copies?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Talk to the staff responsible for maintaining the master copies of system documentation. Ask them to provide following master copies:
  - Quality management system manual
  - Supplier evaluation procedures
  - Product design procedure
  - Incoming inspection procedure
  - Production control procedure
  - Work instruction for incoming materials inspection of safety critical material/ component sampled in warehouse
  - Incoming materials inspection record (blank form)
  - Final Quality Control (FQC) inspection/ testing record (blank form)

A1.11 Internal Audit

Focus area

The effectiveness of quality management system needs to be evaluated by factory at regular intervals.

Procedure and actual implementation of internal audit are audited to evaluate factory's ability to arrange independent auditors to collect objective evidence, determine system effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement.

When loophole(s) or deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can take remedial action(s) to improve details on procedure or competence of staff.

A1.11.1 Does the producer plan and conduct internal audit at least once a year?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Discuss internal audit process with the staff responsible for internal audit.

A1.11.2 Are needs for improvement identified and reported to management with supporting evidence?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Review internal audit report, pay attention to the audit coverage and audit findings. Sample a case where nonconformity was identified and check its status.

A1.12 Corrective Action and Continual Improvement

Focus area

To maintain the effectiveness of quality management system, factory needs to establish and implement a mechanism to improve management practices and procedures, staff competence, machine capabilities, product designs, etc., to meet and exceed market expectations.

Practices and actual implementation of corrective and continual improvement are audited to evaluate factory's ability to arrange for independent auditors to collect objective evidence, determine system effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement.

When loophole(s) or deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can take remedial action(s) to improve practices or competence of staff.

A1.12.1 Are quality objectives monitored and reviewed by factory management at least on a monthly basis?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Discuss with factory management of the mechanism for monitoring and reviewing quality objectives.
- Samples the data/information on quality objectives from the past three months.

A1.12.2 Are actions taken to improve quality performance with inputs from monitoring of quality objectives, customer complaints, field return and internal audits findings?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Ask factory management if any actions are required to improve quality performance. Sample a case associated with quality objectives and check its status, e.g., monthly passing rate as a performance review and verify if data are shared among the different departments to initiate improvement actions.
- Pay attention to whether improvement actions are taken to address actual or possible causes. Improvement can be in form of reduction of process variation, prevention of failures, simplification of procedures, enhancement of consistency of execution.

Aspect A2 - Product Design

A2.1 Product Design Responsibility & Procedure

Focus area

Factory needs understand its role and responsibilities in product design. Even if factory is involved in only a part of the entire design process, associated activities need to be implemented and controlled. Records demonstrating compliance with product safety and quality requirements are required.

Procedure and actual implementation of product design are audited to evaluate factory's ability to plan product activities based on design inputs and to carry design work effectively.

When loophole(s) or deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can take remedial action(s) to improve details on procedure or competence of staff.

A2.1.1 Is product design procedure documented?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Discuss product design procedure with the staff responsible for product design.

A2.1.2 Are product design activities implemented according to the documented procedure?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Select a product that is being produced on the day of visit or a product has been/will be delivered to buyer (similar product under the same product family is also acceptable) as a sample to walk through the product design procedure.
- Pay attention to the system controls and supporting evidence rather than merely repeating the approval process for the design, packaging and labeling of the product.

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

A2.1.3 Are records maintained to confirm effective implementation of product design activities?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Continue to use the audit sample in 2.1.2.
- Pay attention to the filing system.
- Evaluate the efficiency of record retrieval and filing location.

A2.2 Laboratory Testing

Focus area

Product safety testing results from third party testing laboratory are required to confirm compliance with legal and regulatory requirements as a minimum.

Laboratory testing reports are reviewed to confirm test results are correctly interpreted by factory.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve product design or laboratory testing arrangement.

A2.2.1 Is compliance to product safety and regulatory requirements supported by laboratory testing report?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Continue to use the audit sample in 2.1.2 and ask the staff responsible for product design to provide laboratory testing report to confirm compliance with product safety requirements.
- Pay attention to the conclusion of the laboratory testing reports. If test results are reported without conclusion, ask the staff responsible to compare the testing results against product safety standard.

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

A2.3 Product Technical Documentation

Focus area

To ensure a product design is realized consistently, clearly communicated design outputs are required.

Specifications of incoming materials, assemblies, and product as well as drawings and instructions for manufacturing activities are audited to evaluate the factory's ability to document design outputs.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve product design procedure or staff competence.

A2.3.1 Is product technical documentation distributed with identifications and versions to prevent misuse?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Pay attention to the linkage between the design outputs and the identification and version of the product.

A2.4 Safety Warning to Consumers

Focus area

Factory needs to identify safety hazards to consumers that is associated with product and packaging design and provide warning message(s) to consumers as per legal and regulatory requirement(s) as a minimum.

Safety warning messages and means to provide them are audited.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve product design procedure or staff competence.

A2.4.1 Are risks associated with potential product safety and/or possible misuse communicated to and accepted by customer?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Pay attention to the means used to communicate warning message to consumers, e.g., warning label printed in user manual or included in sales packaging and asked for evidence of acceptance by importer (or its sourcing agent).

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

A2.5 Change Control

Focus area

Product design changes need to be implemented by factory with phase in arrangement agreed upon by consumers.

Phase in agreement and means to track actual change that have taken place are audited to evaluate the factory's ability to identify products with change implemented.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve product design procedure or staff competence.

A2.5.1 Is product design change to product, which affects safety and key function of products, implemented after receiving affected customers' acknowledgement?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- In case there are any changes to the product design (e.g., form, fit, function, materials), select a change and ask for evidence of acceptance by importer (or its sourcing agent).

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

A2.5.2 Can the products before and after product design changes be distinguished on the products themselves or on sales packaging?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- When an end-user returns a product with sales packaging, it is important for producer's customer and importer of the product to identify whether the product was produced after design change or not. This detail is also useful for product recall.
- Pay attention to the means used to distinguish the products after a change is made (e.g., product code, UPC, etc.)

Aspect A3 - Incoming Materials Quality Control (IQC)

A3.1 IQC Inspection

Focus area

Factory relies on suppliers to control quality of incoming materials and needs to implement controls according to risk involved. Inspection can be performed by a dedicated function (e.g., IQC section) or shouldered by trained staff (e.g., purchasing staff or warehouse staff) depending on the scale and system of factory. Methods of inspection can include sampling inspection or testing of incoming materials for incoming materials that pose significant risks to the manufacturing activities or product quality. Other methods of inspection, such as external packing checks to confirm shipments are correct and free from physical damages, checking of certificates of compliance, etc., may be used depending on quality of suppliers and severity of consequences of defective or shortage of incoming materials.

Inspection methods and competence of personnel are audited to evaluate the effectiveness of controls over incoming materials.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve incoming materials inspection procedure or staff competence.

In case where factory does not implement any controls on incoming materials to ensure correct shipments without physical damages are received, quality of product is in significant doubt.

CRITICAL QUESTION
A3.1.1 Is incoming materials inspection implemented onsite?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Ask the staff responsible for Incoming Materials Inspection (IQC) about the inspection process, including sampling plan, inspection/test instructions and acceptance criteria.

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

A3.1.2 Is incoming material inspection activity documented?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Pay attention to sampling plan, inspection/test instructions and acceptance criteria (specifications, drawings, samples, photos, etc.).

A3.1.3 Are incoming materials inspection activities implemented according to the documented procedure or work instructions?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Use the samples picked in 1.3.3, and ask the inspector(s) responsible for the inspection to demonstrate how the materials are inspected/tested.
- Pay attention to inspection/test method, equipment, acceptance criteria and inspector's skill. Interview the inspector(s) to confirm their understanding of the inspection/test method, acceptance criteria and reporting requirements.

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

A3.1.4 Are records maintained to confirm effective implementation of incoming materials inspection activities?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Pay attention to the inspection/test results and the conclusion of inspection (e.g., lot accepted, lot rejected)

A3.2 Non-Conforming (Rejected) Incoming Material Control

Focus area

Factory needs to establish and implement measures to prevent non-conforming incoming materials from being used in production.

Identification and segregation of non-conforming incoming materials are audited to ensure these materials cannot be mistaken as incoming materials that are released for use in production.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve non-conforming incoming materials handling procedure or staff competence.

A3.2.1 Are rejected incoming materials kept in a designated location for disposal with identification that will prevent misuse?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Visit the location and pay attention to the identification of the location and the inspected materials to ensure materials kept in the location are indeed rejected.

Aspect A4 - Production Control

A4.1 Production Planning

Focus area

Factory needs to establish and implement a mechanism to arrange production activities according to delivery requirements. Actions shall be taken in case the available production capacity is not sufficient to meet shipment schedule. Additionally, production activities need to be controlled to ensure that conforming raw materials, parts and sub-assemblies are used, production lines and machines are set up correctly as well as instructions are given to workers.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve production control procedure or staff competence.

In case where factory does not implement any controls to the production activities, quality of product is in significant doubt.

A4.1.1 Does the producer have a production scheduling process?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Pay attention to suspicious issues like 100% outsourcing of production processes (entire or part of the shipment orders) as well as insufficient workers.
- Discuss production scheduling process with the staff responsible for scheduling.
- Pay attention to how production activities are scheduled with consideration of information on production capacity, scheduled orders, daily output and material availability.

CRITICAL QUESTION
A4.1.2 Is production control implemented on site covering key production steps?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Pay a visit to production lines and workshops.
- Pay attention to how production activities are planned and implemented with adequate information related to contractual and product safety requirements.
- Key production steps can be referred to industry specific guidance.

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

A4.1.3 Is production control activity documented?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Pay attention to details on production schedule, product requirements (specifications, drawings, samples), and packaging requirements (drawings, samples, carton markings).

A4.1.4 Are production line and workshops set up according to the documented procedure or work instructions?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Check the actual settings against information required in 4.1.2.
- In case other production control procedures and work instructions (e.g., process flow charts, equipment & tooling lists, assembly drawings, bill of materials, packaging drawings, etc.) are used, check the actual arrangement against the documents.
- Pay attention to how production activities are measured, e.g., key performance indicators (KPIs) for production output rate, pass rate and rework percentage.

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

A4.2 Prevention of Mixing of Inventories

Focus area

Raw materials, parts, sub-assemblies and products can appear similar, leading to quality problems (e.g., defective products, customer complaints, field failures) when they are incorrectly used in production. To prevent this, identification of inventories, containers or areas by using labels, markings or other means is required to assist workers in selecting the correct inventories for production.

Identification of inventories is checked to evaluate the control of mixing of inventories.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve identification method.

A4.2.1 Are inventories identified to prevent mixing or misuse with part number and lot number?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- When visiting the production lines and workshops, sample inventories stored in production areas and pay attention to the methods used for identification to ensure correct materials are used for production.
- Lot numbers are used for traceability purpose and are applicable that will affect product safety.

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

A4.3 Workmanship

Focus area

Quality of product relies on adequate control of workmanship by workers.

Workmanship standards are checked, and workers are evaluated on their ability to follow workmanship standards to produce products.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve presentation of workmanship standards and enhance workers' competence.

A4.3.1 Are work instructions and workmanship standard followed by workers?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Observe the work of operators and talk to them to confirm their understanding of workmanship standard, which may exist in various forms such as reference sample, defect classifications, pictures, descriptions, etc.
- Check their outputs to confirm that workmanship standard is followed.

A4.4 Equipment & Tools Maintenance

Focus area

Factory needs to establish and implement maintenance program to control variations caused by machines and tools, as excess variations will lead to defective products. Besides, the availability of machine and tools is crucial for meeting delivery schedules.

Equipment & tools maintenance program, along with its actual implementation are audited to evaluate production activities are supported adequately.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve maintenance program and/or staff competence.

A4.4.1 Are production equipment & tools at workstations maintained with a schedule to ensure they function properly?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Select production equipment & tools that their availability will affect the quality of product. Maintenance recommendations from equipment manufacturer will be a good reference but not a mandatory. Focus on equipment and tools in operation rather than those are idle.
- Observe the equipment & tools in operation, pay attention to any abnormal noise or workmanship issue of the outputs.
- Talk to the staff responsible for maintenance and ask the staff how the equipment & tools are maintained to ensure products are produced according to product requirements.

A4.4.2 Is the date of the last maintenance recorded?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Use the samples in 4.4.1, check maintenance schedule and records for the last 12 months.

A4.5 Line Quality Control (LQC)

Focus area

Factory needs to identify potential product defects that can be generated throughout the production process and set up line quality inspection stations to confirm products produced conforms to quality requirements in a practical manner. Factory may rely on supplier control or other sampling inspection or testing to assure quality characteristics of products not inspected by LQC.

LQC stations are audited, and inspectors are interviewed to evaluate the effectiveness of inspection to screen out defective products according to product specifications and inspection acceptance criteria.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve LQC set up and/or inspectors' competence.

A4.5.1 Are instructions documented and made available at Line Quality Control (LQC) stations?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Pay attention to details on sampling plan, inspection items, acceptance criteria for visual and functional inspection/test.

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

A4.5.2 Are inspection and testing conducted according to Line Quality Control (LQC) instructions?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Observe line quality control (LQC) inspectors to perform visual and functional inspection/test. Interview them to confirm their understanding of acceptance criteria.
- Check the setup of test equipment and fixtures to confirm the documented inspection/test conditions are followed.

A4.5.3 Are inspection and testing records maintained to confirm effective implementation of inspection and testing activities?

Guidance to auditor that assist judging of compliance:

- Pay attention to common malpractices such as records being completed before or long after the inspection/test.

A4.5.4 Are product safety requirements documented?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Pay attention to details on sampling plan, inspection/test items, acceptance criteria for product safety tests.

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

A4.5.5 Are product safety inspection or testing conducted in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Observe Line Quality Control (LQC) inspectors to perform product safety tests. Interview them to confirm their understanding of acceptance criteria.
- Check the setup of test equipment and fixtures to confirm the documented legal and regulatory requirements are followed.

A4.5.6 Are inspection and testing records maintained to confirm effective implementation of product safety inspection and testing activities?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Pay attention to common malpractices such as records being completed before or long after inspection.

A4.6 Inspection Status & Lot Reject Control

Focus area

Inspection status is important to distinguish defective products screened out by LQC such that non-conforming products are not inadvertently shipped. When a whole production lot is rejected internally or by customer, the lot needs to be identified and segregated to prevent mixing with other lots.

Identification of inspection status and rejected production lot are checked to evaluate controls to prevent mixing of conforming and non-conforming products.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve identification and segregation method.

A4.6.1 Are rejected inventory kept in a designated location for disposal with identification that will prevent them from use or shipping out?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Containers, shelves, pallets or quarantine areas are commonly used for temporary storage of rejected inventories. Colour, texts or infographics are commonly used for identification.
- Talk to workers who transport inventories to workstations and warehouses, pay attention to their understanding of identification of rejected inventories, e.g. presence of clear and well-labelled date of rejection on trays containing the rejected materials.

A4.7 Calibration of Monitoring & Measuring Equipment

Focus area

Factory needs to use monitoring and measuring equipment with adequate accuracy and precision to determine whether a measured process or product characteristic conforms to specifications or not.

Calibration program, status and records are checked to evaluate the control over monitoring and measuring equipment.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve calibration program and/or staff competence.

A4.7.1 Does process monitoring and measurement equipment at workstations, Line Quality Control (LQC) stations function properly and provide adequate resolution to distinguish defective parts or products from conforming ones?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Sample the equipment used during production setup/process monitoring and Line Quality Control (LQC) inspection.
- Pay attention to the resolution of equipment to allow Line Quality Control (LQC) inspectors to sort out nonconforming products.
- Talk to line QC inspectors to check how the meter readings are read.

A4.7.2 Is calibration status of equipment supported by calibration records and valid?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Continue to use the samples in 4.7.1. Pay attention to the expiry date of calibration.
- Ask the staff responsible for calibration to provide the calibration records and calibration schedule.
- Pay attention to results of calibration and reference equipment/standards used for calibration.
- Select a sample of the reference and ask for the calibration certificate of it.

A4.8 Non-Conforming Products & Rework

Focus area

Identification of non-conforming products and arrangement of rework and re-inspection are required to ensure only conforming products are shipped.

Identification method is checked, and rework flow is audited to evaluate the controls over non-conforming products.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve identification method, rework flow and/or staff competence.

A4.8.1 Are inventories rejected or found not suitable for use segregated from the conforming ones and identified to prevent misuse?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Talk to the staff responsible for production to understand how rejected inventories in the production floor are handled.
- Visit the location where rejected inventories are stored and pay attention to the identification of the inventories.

A4.8.2 Are reworked inventories inspected in the same way as those processed in the normal production line?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Talk to the staff responsible for production to understand how rejected inventories (e.g., products rejected by Line Quality Control (LQC)) are repaired and re-inspected.

A4.9 Foreign Objects Control

Focus area

Foreign objects on or inside products or packing can cause field returns and even hold up shipments. Factory needs to establish and implement measures to ensure no foreign objects are assembled into products or packed together with the products.

Foreign object control measures are audited, and production line leaders are interviewed to evaluate effectiveness of these controls.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve foreign objects control measures.

A4.9.1 Are foreign objects control measures documented?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Talk to the staff responsible for production to confirm his/her awareness of the types of objects which will cause quality issues and discuss the preventive measures required (e.g., restriction of personal items, tethering of small tools, counting of small production tools before and after each shift).
- Pay attention the actual situation on the production floor.

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

A4.9.2 Are the quantities of small production tools that can be mixed into to finished products checked at the beginning and end of each production shift?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- In case small production tools are used and may cause quality issues, check the record of counting.
- In case no record is established talk to workers to confirm the practice.

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

A4.10 Chemicals Control Improvement

Focus area

Contamination of products by chemicals, especially hazardous substances, can lead to field returns and even shipments delay. Factory needs to establish and implement measures to ensure that applicable restrictions are met.

Chemical control measures are audited, and production line leaders are interviewed to evaluate effectiveness of control.

When deficiency(ies) is(are) identified, factory can initiate remedial actions to improve chemical control measures.

A4.10.1 Is usage of chemicals controlled to prevent restricted or hazardous substances from contacting the inventories?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Talk to the staff responsible for production to confirm their awareness of the types of restricted or hazardous substances that could contaminate inventories and discuss the preventive measures required.
- Pay attention the actual situation on the production floor.

Industry specific guidance for auditor assessment is available for the following three product types as of May 2025: Electrical, Garment, and Toy.

Bonus Area

B1 – Workforce & System

B1.1 Stable Workforce

Focus area

Factory is encouraged to use the same team of workers for production as workers need time to develop their skill.

Worker recruitment and deployment practice are reviewed and checked to evaluate the control of workforce.

B1.1.1 Does producer deploy same team of workers for producing products rather using "come and go" freelance workers?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Talk to head of production to understand how workers are recruited and arranged to work.
- Interview 3 workers to cross check the recruitment process, initial training, pay arrangement and work arrangement.
- In case an agency is used, producer needs to provide an agreement with the agency specifying the type of workers and also a training plan.

B1.2 Risk Based Approach & Assessment Tool

Focus area

Factory is encouraged to implement disciplined approach to assess and manage risks related to the fulfilment of quality objectives, product safety requirements, contractual requirements, purchasing requirements, etc. to ensure conforming products are shipped.

Risk assessment tool is requested, and its usage is checked to evaluate effectiveness of risk management.

B1.2.1 Does the producer implement a risk assessment tool, e.g., Failure Mode and Effect Analysis (FMEA), to evaluate risks and prioritize actions to mitigate risks with risk level classified as high?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Interview the staff responsible for risk assessment and inquire about how risk assessment is conducted.
- Focus on failure modes, causes of failure and mitigation measures associated with design and production processes.

B1.2.2 Have all actions determined to mitigate risks taken with supporting evidence (e.g., updated procedure or WI, internal audit report)?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Sample completed actions that were determined to mitigate risks and check their status.

B1.3 Business Continuity/ Crisis Management

Focus area

Factory is encouraged to formulate plans to deal with major disruptive incidents to maintain design and manufacturing activities during disruptions.

Disaster recovery plan is requested, and drills are conducted to evaluate suitability of the plan.

B1.3.1 Does the producer evaluate possible disruptive incidents and formulate disaster recovery plans to maintain a certain level of operation to support shipment demands?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Talk to factory management and understand how the factory addresses disruptive incidents.
- Disruptive incidents, which may include power outage, sudden suspension of raw material supply, typhoon, flooding, and outbreak of epidemic diseases can cause delays of shipments or suspension of product supply.
- Sample a disruptive incident caused by extreme weather (e.g., flooding) or epidemic disease (e.g., outbreak of COVID-19) and review the disaster recovery plan.

B1.3.2 Did the producer conduct drill to test the disaster recovery plan with supporting evidence?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- In addition to verbal inputs from factory management on disruptive incidents and recovery plans, ask if drills have been conducted for at least one disaster recovery plan.

B2 – Product Design

B2.1 Laboratory Testing

Focus area

Factory is encouraged to use reputable third-party laboratory and obtain recognition for its in-house laboratory.

Recognition of testing laboratory(ies) used by factory is requested and accreditation or approval is checked to confirm the recognition is relevant and valid.

B2.1.1 Is the testing report issued by third party test laboratory recognized internationally with accredited test scope?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Continue to use the audit sample of A2.2.1, check the accreditation status of the report.

B2.1.2 Is the producer's laboratory recognized by internationally recognized third party test laboratory to conduct product safety tests against legal and regulatory requirements?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- In case the in-house laboratory is used for the test mentioned in A2.2.1, check the recognition of the laboratory.

B3 – Ongoing Monitoring of Finished Products

B3.1 In-Process Random Sampling

Focus area

Sampling inspection and testing are encouraged to determine the conformity of certain process or product characteristics that are not practical for LQC.

The implementation of sampling inspection and testing before a product is fully assembled is requested and checked to evaluate effectiveness of inspection activities.

B3.1.1 Are random sampling inspection conducted at various stages of production?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Talk to the staff responsible for production to understand how production processes are monitored by random sampling inspection.
- **Monitoring may include:**
  - Regular sampling inspection and testing of product characteristics against specifications, especially for those that cannot be inspected by 100% Line Quality Control (LQC), such as workmanship of internal parts or wiring, weight checks of products that cannot be inspected in the later stages.
  - Regular checking of line setup and machine settings which affect product quality.
- Pay attention to the actual practice (demonstration by inspector responsible for the monitoring) and check the monitoring frequency, acceptance criteria, results and control of nonconforming inventories.

B3.2 Random Sampling of Finished Products

Focus area

Sampling inspection and testing are encouraged to determine conformity of a production lot before shipment.

The implementation of sampling inspection and testing after a production lot is ready for shipment is requested and checked to evaluate effectiveness of inspection activities.

B3.2.1 Are shipments inspected by random sampling?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Talk to the staff responsible for QA to understand how production lots are inspected before release for shipments.
- Pay attention to sampling plan, inspection items (including laboratory testing) and acceptance criteria.

B3.2.2 Is the inspection result of random sampling of finished products accepted by customer for waiving Final Random Inspection by the customer or its representative?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Talk to factory management to confirm written waiver of Final Random Inspection by customer or its representative has been received from a member who joined QMI.

B4 – Client Portfolio

B4.1 Customer Satisfaction

Focus area

It is commendable if factory has diversified knowledge and experience in producing products that are marketed in different regions. Besides, written recognition or appreciation received from customers is a good sign of quality.

Portfolio of customers and any recognition received are requested and checked to evaluate relevancy of achievements.

B4.1.1 Is the producer currently producing products exporting to more than 1 region?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- Producer with extensive experience in exporting goods to various regions will help customers to develop new markets.
- Discuss with factory management to identify the region(s) to which the products have been exported. Request samples of products and shipment records for reference.

B4.1.2 Did the producer receive written commendation from its customers?

Guidance for auditors to assist in judging compliance:

- To receive commendation from its customer, it requires not only on-time shipment and quality products but also a helpful manner and sharing of knowledge and experience.
- Discuss with factory management to determine if the producer has received any written commendations or trophies from its customers.

Guide:
Zero Tolerance Protocol

This guide assists amfori QMI members, auditors and business partners on how to proceed when Zero Tolerance issues are identified during an amfori QMI audit.

The Zero Tolerance Protocol (ZTP) supersedes the regular audit process. It must be followed by the auditor, the auditing company's (monitoring partners') scheme managers, the amfori QMI Team, and amfori QMI members and business partners.

Possible Zero Tolerance Situations

The following actions or issues may qualify as zero tolerance cases:

1. **Unethical Behaviour – Attempted Bribery**

   Attempted bribery of auditors is a form of unethical behaviour that can severely impact the integrity and credibility of audit processes. In the context of an amfori QMI audit, where ethical standards and compliance are paramount, any instance of attempted bribery represents a significant breach of trust and undermines the purpose of the audit.

2. **Unethical Behaviour – Intentional misrepresentation in the supply chain**

   Intentional misrepresentation in the supply chain is a serious form of unethical behaviour that undermines the integrity and transparency of QMI audits. Examples of such misrepresentation include hiding production sites, operating without a valid business license, or deliberately under-declaring the size of the workforce.

   These actions not only compromise the credibility of audit results but also pose significant risks to buyers and other stakeholders relying on accurate supply chain information.

Recognizing the gravity of such misconduct, amfori QMI has established a Zero Tolerance Protocol to address these issues. This protocol provides a clear framework for members, auditors, and stakeholders to follow when confronted with attempted bribery, ensuring that appropriate actions are taken to safeguard the integrity of the audit process and maintain the highest ethical standards.

By strictly adhering to the Zero Tolerance Protocol, amfori QMI members demonstrate their commitment to upholding ethical conduct, fostering a culture of integrity within their organizations, and promoting transparency, accountability, and trust in their operations. This approach reinforces the importance of ethical conduct and continuous improvement across all levels of the supply chain.

Auditors' professional judgement

It is the auditor who, using their professional judgement, will need to:

- Ponder the level of severity of the finding
- Decide to trigger a process towards immediate remediation (Zero Tolerance Protocol) or report the finding

Protocol For the Auditor in Unethical Behaviour

Step 1: Triggering Alert (amfori QMI platform doesn't provide ZT button)

Immediately report: Auditor must immediately report suspected/attempted/confirmed unethical behaviour to supervisors and/or integrity teams through ACs' internally approved channels (e.g., phone, email).

Step 2: Due Diligence

Collect evidence: The auditor must collect as many facts and as much evidence as possible to illustrate the identified zero tolerance issue (e.g., pictures taken, recordings).

Reassess audit time: The auditor shall use their practical wisdom to reassess the best way to maximize the audit time available to collect as much evidence as possible.

This reassessment may demonstrate that the auditor prioritises gathering evidence over finalisation of the regular audit report.

Step 3: 24 Hours Notification

Within 24 hours of the detection of the zero-tolerance issue, the scheme manager must notify of their professional judgement and collected evidence to:

- The amfori QMI Team
- The RSP holder

In such cases, the auditor must provide the scheme manager with all relevant information, so the zero-tolerance notification is in line with the requirements of this document.

IMPORTANT: amfori QMI platform does not provide a Zero Tolerance button. Therefore, notifications must be sent via email to the amfori QMI Team and the RSP holder to raise the alert. If the auditor detects more than one Zero Tolerance situation during monitoring, they must trigger a separate Zero Tolerance alert for each situation. Not using this channel is a breach of the auditing companies' obligation to respect amfori QMI system requirements and may initiate actions from the amfori QMI Team to protect the integrity of the amfori QMI system.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All Zero Tolerance cases, including instances of bribery or other unethical behaviour, must remain strictly confidential. Information related to these cases should only be disclosed to authorized personnel directly involved in handling or resolving the issue. Confidentiality ensures that sensitive information is protected, prevents unnecessary reputational damage, and fosters trust among stakeholders. Unauthorized sharing of Zero Tolerance alert information may result in breaches of protocol and compromise the integrity of the remediation process.

Step 4: Investigation & Remediation

Auditors/Scheme Manager will need to make themselves available to the amfori QMI Team for any further clarification needed in preparation of the Zero Tolerance conference call. Submit an Unethical Behaviour Case Report to amfori within **two (2) business days** of the auditor's work location) including:

This includes:

- Relevant details about the incident (who, when, where, what).
- Supporting materials (e.g., photos, recordings)
- Additional clarification on the professional judgement or use of the precautionary principle

The audit report: Do not submit the audit report to the platform until investigation is completed and agreed by the RSP holder, amfori and Monitoring Partner.

Protocol For the amfori QMI Team

Step 1: 3 Business Days Conference Call Coordination

Within the **three (3) business days** following the alert, the amfori QMI Team should facilitate:

- A conference call with the RSP holder
- Agreement among the amfori QMI members on the qualification of the case as Zero Tolerance and strategic decisions, including:
    1. The timing and need for scheduling a Zero Tolerance investigation.
    2. Reviewing the issue and identifying root causes.
    3. Defining remediation steps and assigning responsibilities.
    4. Setting deadlines for corrective actions.
    5. Determining the timing and need for scheduling an amfori QMI audit (e.g., full audit or follow-up audit).
- Definition of investigation and remediation steps, including:
    1. The business partner must submit a remediation plan within two weeks, detailing corrective actions, timelines for implementation, and preventive measures.
    2. Additional engagement with local stakeholders and the amfori QMI regional network (when relevant).
- Feedback to the auditing company (monitoring partner) that triggered the Zero Tolerance alert, summarizing:
    1. The decisions made by the ad-hoc remediation group.
    2. Specific instructions or expectations for follow-up actions.

Step 2: Follow-up and Communication

The amfori QMI Team may organise an additional follow-up conference with the amfori QMI members linked to the relevant producer when it's necessary to follow up on the success of the immediate remediation (e.g., during the 10 business days of incidental disclosure).

After the zero-tolerance conference call, the amfori QMI Team will communicate to the concerned auditing company (monitoring partners), and when needed to the specific auditor, on the learnings from the ad-hoc remediation.

Furthermore, three (3) months after the alert was triggered, the amfori QMI Team should organise a follow-up conference with the amfori QMI members that were linked to the producer at the time of the zero-tolerance alert to:

- Verify that the agreed upon Remediation Plan has been implemented satisfactorily.
- Follow-up actions, such as site visits or reviews, will verify that the issue has been resolved effectively.
- Once resolved, amfori will close the case and notify all relevant stakeholders via email.
- Evaluate communication between amfori QMI members and the producer during remediation.
- Request support from local authorities if relevant or feasible.
- Collect feedback and satisfaction ratings from amfori QMI members regarding actions taken to support the producer in resolving the issue.

Protocol For All amfori QMI members Linked to the Case

The Zero Tolerance Protocol relies on the close collaboration between concerned amfori QMI members, which, due to the nature and severity of the issue, this requires incidental disclosure and a collective and pre-competitive remediation approach.

In this context, amfori QMI RSP holder linked to the concerned producer at the time the alert is triggered must:

- Participate in the conference call to develop the ad-hoc remediation group facilitated by the amfori QMI Team
- Never share zero tolerance alert information with the concerned producer, unless otherwise agreed upon by the ad-hoc remediation group after the 72 hours conference call
- Cooperate within the ad-hoc remediation group to, among other things, communicate collectively to the producer
- Not use the conference call for any reasons that may breach competition law
- Commit to verification in due course that the Remediation Plan has been successfully implemented (may be by means of a zero-tolerance investigation or an amfori QMI audit)
- Participate in a three (3) months follow-up call to give feedback on the implementation of the Remediation Plan
- Share any relevant evidence with the ad-hoc remediation group

The ad-hoc remediation group created at the time of the 72 hours conference call will make decisions based on consensus or absolute majority (50% +1) about the following elements:

- Nature of the zero-tolerance issue
- Maintenance or removal of the zero-tolerance label within three (3) months of the alert
- Need for scheduling a zero-tolerance investigation or an amfori QMI audit when relevant, so the producer may get back on its audit cycle

Non-Compliance Consequences:

Failure to resolve Zero Tolerance issues may result in:

- Suspension or termination of business relationships with the concerned producer or business partner.
- Reporting to relevant authorities if required by law, ensuring compliance with legal obligations.

amfori QMI System Manual Guides

A.1. amfori QMI TOI for Participants (Members)

A.2. amfori QMI TOI for Business Partners (Producers, Auditee) : English version and English and Chinese version

A.3. amfori QMI Master Data Form for Business Partners (Producers) : English version and English and Chinese version

A.4. amfori QMI Typical Document List

A.5. amfori QMI Glossary: English version

A.6. amfori QMI Typical Attendee List for Onsite Audit: English and Chinese version

A.7. amfori QMI audit Questionnaire template (For amfori QMI Members & Business Partners (Producers Only): English version and English and Chinese version

A.8. amfori QMI - Easy Guide for Producer: English version

All documents can be accessed in amfori's Resource Library.
Please note that the latest updated versions are available there.

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