

CHSA Ethical Audit Requirement: Interpretation Guidance

This guidance supports consistent interpretation and application of the CHSA Ethical Audit Requirement across all Manufacturing Schemes. It clarifies acceptable forms of ethical audit and supporting evidence, in line with Ethical Audit Requirement V4 October 2025.

CHSA does not require a specific named scheme. However, members must demonstrate that an ethical audit has been carried out by an internationally accredited audit body, providing site-level evidence of labour standards and health and safety across the manufacturing process.

This is typically achieved through recognised ethical audit schemes such as SMETA or BSCI. Equivalent bespoke audits may also be acceptable where they provide the same level of independent, site-based assurance.

What is recognised

Clearly acceptable with minimal challenge

- SMETA (2 pillar or 4 pillar)
- BSCI (amfori social audit programme providing site-based assessment of labour standards and health and safety)
- SA8000 (certification standard for labour conditions including independent site audit and verification)
- WRAP

Acceptable with review of evidence

- Bespoke third-party social audits carried out by an internationally accredited audit body
- Customer audits conducted on site by an independent such as SGS, Intertek or similar accredited firm
- Intertek Workplace Conditions Assessment (WCA), subject to scope, currency and assessment findings

Not sufficient alone, but may contribute as supporting evidence

- ISO 45001
- B Corp certification
- EcoVadis ratings (all levels)
- Sedex self-assessment

EcoVadis

EcoVadis is a systems-based ESG assessment. It does not represent a site-level ethical audit and relies primarily on documented policies and management systems rather than on-site verification of labour conditions.

Gold and Platinum ratings may reduce the level of additional evidence required, where supported by credible site-level evidence of labour standards and health and safety. Silver and below will normally require further independent ethical audit evidence.

EcoVadis should therefore be treated as supporting evidence and supplemented with site-based assessment where required.

B Corp

B Corp certification is an organisation-level assessment of social and environmental performance, demonstrating governance and commitment to responsible business practices.

It does not in itself provide site-level verification of labour standards or health and safety within manufacturing operations and is therefore not sufficient on its own to meet the CHSA requirement.

B Corp may be used as supporting evidence where combined with additional assurance demonstrating:

- site-level labour standards
- site-level health and safety
- coverage of the full manufacturing process

In practice this will usually require one or more of:

- a recognised ethical audit, for example SMETA or BSCI
- a customer or bespoke audit by an accredited audit body
- a Workplace Conditions Assessment (WCA) or equivalent

Evidence expectations

Members should be able to demonstrate:

- site-based audit activity
- assessment of labour standards, including working hours, pay, contracts and worker rights
- assessment of health and safety in the workplace
- worker interviews where appropriate
- audit findings, including non-conformities and corrective actions
- coverage of all stages of the manufacturing process

The emphasis is on independent, site-level verification rather than policy or systems-based assurance alone.