

Social Audits for Indian Factories, amfori BSCI, SMETA, SA8000 and WRAP

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Most UK and EU buyers will ask an Indian factory for a social audit before a first order. amfori BSCI and SMETA are audits with reports, not certificates, while SA8000 and WRAP certify a site for a set period. This guide shows importers which one their customers mean and how to read the report, and gives Indian factories the steps, timings and common findings for each.

The Short Version

- amfori BSCI and SMETA produce audit reports, not certificates. SA8000 and WRAP issue certificates with expiry dates.
- Ask which scheme your own customer accepts before you ask the factory for anything. Retailers differ.
- Read the date, the audit type (announced or semi-announced), the site address and the open findings, not the cover page.
- SA8000:2014 audits must finish on site by 31 December 2026. New SA8000 work is to the 2026 version.
- Overtime, wage records and fire safety drive most findings in Indian factories, so a factory can fix most of them before the auditor arrives.

Has your retailer just asked whether your Indian supplier is "BSCI or SMETA"? You're not alone, and the honest answer is that they are four different tools that get used as if they were one word.



This guide sorts them out for both sides of the order. Importers get what each scheme proves, which one their customers mean and how to read a report. Indian factories get the steps to be audited or certified, with the timings the scheme owners publish. It's part of our [certifications hub](#), and if your real question is forced labour law in the UK, EU, US or Australia then start with our [forced labour due diligence guide](#), which covers the law and what a SMETA report can and can't tell you about it.

1. Audit or Certificate, the Difference That Matters

Here's the split -

Scheme	Owner	What you get	How long it counts
amfori BSCI	amfori (Brussels)	An audit report with an A to E rating, on the amfori platform	Two years for A or B, 12 months for D or E (reported by accredited auditors)
SMETA	Sedex (London)	An audit report on the Sedex platform, no certificate	Sedex guidance treats reports older than 24 months as no longer current
SA8000	Social Accountability International	A certificate after Stage 1 and Stage 2 audits	Three years, with surveillance visits typically twice a year
WRAP	WRAP (US)	A facility certificate	One year on WRAP's own page, with longer periods at higher levels reported by accredited auditors

Sources are in the sections below. The thing to hold on to is that "BSCI certified" and "Sedex certified" describe things that don't exist. A factory saying either isn't lying to you, it's using trade shorthand, but your customer will want the report itself.

None of these is a border requirement in any of our markets. They're buyer requirements. Where the law comes in (the UK and Australian modern slavery acts, the EU forced labour regulation from December 2027, US forced labour import bans), an audit is one piece of evidence, not a defence.

2. Which Scheme Your Customer Probably Means

As a rough guide from what buyers ask Indian exporters for –

- **UK retail and food** mostly asks for SMETA on Sedex, because many UK retailers are Sedex members.
- **German, Dutch and Nordic retail** mostly asks for amfori BSCI, since amfori's members are largely European retailers and brands.
- **US apparel and footwear** brands often accept WRAP, which was built for the sewn products sector.
- **SA8000** turns up with buyers who want a certificate rather than a report, and with large Indian groups who use it for many customers at once.

Don't guess. Ask your customer, in writing, which schemes they accept and whether they need to see it on a platform (amfori and Sedex both share results through their own platforms with the supplier's permission). Then ask the factory.

3. What an Importer Should Check on the Report

A report tells you about one site on given days. So check -

1. **The site address.** It must be the unit making your goods, not the head office in another town.
2. **The date and type.** Announced audits show a factory on its best day. Sedex now recommends semi-announced or unannounced audits unless there's a valid reason for announced ([Sedex](#)). amfori BSCI audits are mostly semi-announced within a one-month window (TÜV Rheinland, an accredited auditor).
3. **The scope.** SMETA comes as 2-pillar (labour standards, health and safety) or 4-pillar (adding environment and business ethics). Know which your customer wants.
4. **Open findings.** A report with findings and a closed corrective plan is a better sign than a perfect report from a factory you've never seen.

5. **The certificate, where there is one.** Look up SA8000 holders in SAI's certified organisations search and WRAP facilities on WRAP's facility list.

Buyers on forums tell us inspection integrity is a recurring worry in India, and some rotate agencies or add unannounced visits because of it (our forum signal FS-SUP-060). I think that's sensible for any origin, not an India problem. Read the report, not the cover page.

Subcontracting is the other gap. An audit covers the site on the report and nothing else. If your order goes to a job worker for embroidery or finishing, that unit isn't covered. That's normal Indian business practice and not a red flag in itself. Just ask who else touches the goods.

4. What Indian Factories Usually Get Found On

From the shape of the standards and what Indian compliance managers report, the same handful of findings recur –

- **Overtime** above legal or code limits, often in peak season.
- **Wage and attendance records** that don't match each other or the payroll.
- **Fire safety** (blocked exits, missing drills, expired extinguishers).
- **Contract workers** supplied by labour contractors without full records.
- **Grievance systems** that exist on paper but no worker has used.

These are fixable before an audit. A factory that spends a month on its records usually does far better than one that books the audit first and prepares second.

5. How an Indian Factory Gets an amfori BSCI Audit

amfori BSCI is requested by an amfori member, usually your buyer. A factory can't simply order one for itself in the usual case. We couldn't read amfori's own pages at source (they blocked our reader), so check the current process on amfori.org.

Step 1 – Get the request. Your buyer, an amfori member, links your factory on the amfori Sustainability Platform.

Step 2 – Register and complete the self-assessment on the platform.

Step 3 – Book an audit with an amfori-approved audit company. Ask for its current fee on its quote.

Step 4 – The audit. Usually semi-announced within a one-month window. It covers the amfori Code of Conduct areas, from fair pay and working hours to health and safety.

Step 5 – The rating. A to E. An A or B result stays valid for two years, and a D or E result is limited to 12 months, with a remediation plan due within 60 days and a follow-up audit (TÜV NORD, an accredited auditor).



Step 6 – Share it. Results sit on the platform. Other amfori buyers can see them with your permission, so one good audit can serve several customers.

6. How an Indian Factory Gets a SMETA Audit

SMETA is an audit method. You need a Sedex membership to put the report on the platform. Sedex's site blocked our reader, so check membership rules and the current fee on sedex.com.

Step 1 – Join Sedex as a supplier member and complete the Self-Assessment Questionnaire.

Step 2 – Agree the scope with your buyer. 2-pillar or 4-pillar, and announced, semi-announced or unannounced.

Step 3 – Book an audit with an audit company that offers SMETA. The current version is SMETA 7.0, which adds a management systems assessment.

Step 4 – The audit. Typically one to several days depending on worker numbers, with document review, a site tour and worker interviews.

Step 5 – Corrective action plan. Fix the findings and upload evidence. A follow-up visit may be needed for serious ones.

Step 6 – Share the report with your customers on Sedex. Plan to re-audit before the report turns 24 months old, sooner if your customer rates you high risk (Sedex's recommended cadence is yearly for high-risk sites).

7. How an Indian Factory Gets SA8000

SA8000 is the only one here that a factory starts on its own and ends with a certificate. SAI publishes the path ([SAI](#)).

Step 1 – SA8000 Self-Assessment in the SAI Database. SAI says it takes 60 to 90 minutes. Check the current fee on the SAI site.

Step 2 – Choose an accredited certification body. Only bodies accredited by SAAS can issue credible SA8000 certificates, and SAI lists them. Get quotes from more than one.

Step 3 – Stage 1 audit, a readiness check that typically takes one to two days.

Step 4 – Stage 2 audit, the full audit, typically two to ten days depending on size and scope.

Step 5 – Certificate. Valid for three years, subject to surveillance visits, typically twice a year and a mix of announced and unannounced.

Timing matters right now. SA8000:2026 replaced the 2014 version from 1 January 2026, and initial or recertification audits to SA8000:2014 must finish on site by 31 December 2026 (SAI). Starting fresh today means working to the 2026 version.

8. How an Indian Factory Gets WRAP

WRAP certifies production units only, not brands or holding companies (WRAP).

Step 1 – Apply and register with WRAP. Check the current registration fee on wrapcompliance.org.

Step 2 – Self-assessment against WRAP's 12 Principles.

Step 3 – Audit by a WRAP-accredited monitoring firm, which sets its own fee.

Step 4 – Compliance review of the audit report by WRAP.

Step 5 – Certification decision by WRAP's review board.

WRAP says the whole process typically takes two to six months, sometimes as little as six weeks. Its certification page says certificates are valid for one year, and every certified facility can get a random unannounced post-certification assessment (WRAP). Accredited auditors describe Platinum (two years, after three consecutive clean audits), Gold (one year) and Silver (about six months) levels (TÜV SÜD). We couldn't confirm the levels on WRAP's own pages, so check them there.

What to send the buyer for any of the four – the report or certificate, the site address on it, the audit date and type, and the corrective plan with what's been closed.

If you're a buyer managing audits across several Indian suppliers, the heavy part is the follow-up, not the booking. SourcingSync can run that chase on the ground.

9. A Worked Example With Rugs for a UK Retailer

This example is an illustration built from the rules above, not a real firm.

A UK homeware retailer wants hand-tufted rugs from a maker in Bhadohi. Its supplier manual says "SMETA 4-pillar, semi-announced, under 24 months".



The maker has an amfori BSCI B rating from 14 months ago. That's a decent result, but it's the wrong scheme for this retailer. The maker joins Sedex, books a semi-announced 4-pillar SMETA, and spends the weeks before fixing overtime records in peak season and fire drills.

The audit finds two issues – incomplete records for contract workers and a grievance box nobody uses. Both go on the corrective plan and are closed with evidence. The retailer also asks about home-based weavers, because tufting and finishing in the Bhadohi belt often go out to households. The SMETA doesn't cover them, so the buyer asks the maker to map them as part of its forced labour due diligence. That conversation is the real work, and the audit is what opened it.

FAQ

Is amfori BSCI a certification? ^

No. It's an audit with a rating. amfori itself says so.

Will one audit satisfy all my customers? v

How often does a factory get re-audited? v

Can a small factory get audited? v

Does a good audit mean no forced labour? v

10. Next Steps

- The law behind the audits: forced labour due diligence.
- What textile certificates prove alongside a social audit: textile certifications and getting GOTS, OEKO-TEX and GRS certified.
- Tannery audits for leather goods: Leather Working Group.
- Checking the company behind the factory: verifying Indian suppliers.

Hope this helps. Ask your customer which scheme first, and the rest gets a lot simpler.