Get to know more about our Auditing Services

For more information about Partner Africa’s audits and assessments, please visit our website www.partnerafrica.org or email audits@partnerafrica.org
take a more active role in the audit process. We use a combination of participatory methodologies, which enable workers to have the flexibility to audit against individual supplier codes of conduct and undertake smallholder assessments.

We work across 50 countries in Africa and the Near East to safeguard workers’ rights and improve working conditions in supply chains, while facilitating access to markets.

**In a nutshell**  
**Our Auditing Services**

We are a leading social audit and assessment provider, trusted by global brands, ethical trading bodies and industry associations.

Partner Africa is a member of the Association for Professional Social Compliance Auditors (APSCA) and has expertise in a range of standards and certifications. We audit against leading industry standards, such as the SMETA 2 and 4 Pillar and the Wine and Agricultural Ethical Trade Association (WIETA) code, and global brand standards, including the Coca-Cola Supplier Guiding Principles and the Unilever Responsible Sourcing Audit. We also have the flexibility to audit against individual supplier codes of conduct and undertake smallholder assessments.

We use a combination of participatory methodologies, which enable workers to take a more active role in the audit process. Workers can freely explain the true nature of their working conditions, without the need for high levels of literacy, or from fear of reprisals from management. Our participatory approach also enables auditors to understand the root causes of specific and often more sensitive issues, such as examining sexual harassment or discrimination. Our expert team of local auditors means that we are equipped with the necessary linguistic and cultural knowledge to accurately identify and rank non-compliance findings.

We develop innovative and client-specific technological solutions to data gathering, including integrating direct worker reporting technology and desktop-based documentation and questionnaire reviews. Our proprietary data allows us to map audit trends and provide clients with dashboards for supply chain non-compliance monitoring purposes. We offer various advisory services to follow on from audits, working with non-compliance data to develop proactive risk management, training and ethical reporting solutions.

**Small Producer Assessments**

In many African countries, small-scale producers and informal sector workers feed into export supply chains. Applying codes of conduct to these small, family-run businesses is a complex process.

Partner Africa assesses the ethical standards of small-scale producers and informal workers to minimise risk to a brand. A small producer assessment seeks to establish the characteristics, needs and priorities of small producers and their workers, and outline recommendations to improve on the standards required, with the aim of also improving their livelihoods.

Partner Africa frequently works with small-scale producers and the informal sector across Africa. We are a member of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) working group, which developed the ETI smallholder guidelines, used to assist in extending ethical sourcing to smallholder farmers. We have adopted this approach to assess a number of smallholder farmers and other informal producers.

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**Sector Expertise**

- Horticulture
- Floriculture
- Agriculture
- Garment / Textiles
- Packaging & Processing
- FMCG
- Crafts
- Extractives
- Services

**Audit Process**

Our auditing process involves the following steps:

1. **Opening meeting** with worker and management representatives to review the audit process and the daily activities that will take place.
2. **Transect walk of the facility** and health and safety inspection.
3. **Group and individual worker interviews** using participatory techniques, such as Problem Ranking, to understand issues faced by workers and the severity of these in the workplace.
4. **Documentation review**
5. **Verification of information** through Triangulation of Data, where any issues arising from interviews are investigated through official documentation and discussed with management before compliance decisions can be made.
6. **Closing meeting** with management, where we provide feedback to the client, highlighting the positive action noted and identifying best practices, and review areas for improvement. We draw up a corrective action plan to close out any non-compliances found.
7. **Report writing**, including quality review, calibration and submission to the client within the agreed timeframe.
8. **Report upload** onto Sedex or another platform, as requested.

N.B. We offer audit preparation training to explain the audit process and prepare you to meet ethical audit requirements. It is now possible to pay for your audit by credit card through the Partner Africa website.
THE WAY WE WORK

Key Auditing Principles

**Transparency:** All parties involved are informed of the purpose, scope and limitations of the audit.

**Inclusion:** At the pre-briefing and closing feedback meetings, worker and management representatives are encouraged to be present and contribute to the meetings.

**Participation:** Workers and management are encouraged to share their thoughts and opinions through a variety of participatory activities throughout the audit.

**Qualitative information:** Audits use narrative appraisal techniques, which avoid tick-boxes or leading questions.

**Confidentiality:** Partner Africa audit staff ensure confidentiality to protect both the organisations and individuals involved in the audit process.

**Verification:** Any issues highlighted to auditors go through our process of triangulation of data before they are escalated to management in the closing meeting.

**Why we are different**

- **Local People, Local Solutions:** By employing local expertise, we give our clients a unique insight into the context, culture, regulations, standards, labour laws and working practices in the countries where we work. This ensures that the services we offer our well-balanced, offering practical solutions for compliance requirements, which consider local cultures and sensitivities.


- **Social Entrepreneurship:** We aim to improve the livelihoods of local workers and producers while promoting socially responsible business practices. Any surplus generated from our services is used as seed capital to access larger funds from institutional donors so that we can deliver trade development projects, supporting the livelihoods of vulnerable workers and their communities.

- **Gender Balance:** We employ a good balance of both genders across our audit teams. This ensures that the profile of the workforce is reflected in the make-up of the team as workers are more comfortable when they engage in worker interviews and training programmes.

- **Working in Partnership:** Developing partnerships and joining trade associations raises our profile as a credible body within the industry and enables us to develop services according to sector needs and market demand. Partner Africa is a member of the Associate Auditor Group of Sedex, Supplier Ethical Data Exchange programme that is committed to continuous improvement of ethical performance. With supplier approval, audit reports can be uploaded onto Sedex and accessed by a range of customers – reducing the need for multiple audits.

- **Participatory Approach:** We use a combination of participatory methodologies and techniques throughout all our ethical trade services. This allows the inclusion of all levels of workers in auditing activities and training programmes regardless of literacy or language barriers. Our auditing process does not give a “pass or fail” result. We engage with management and workers through participatory activities to understand the root causes of any areas of non-compliance and work with sites to develop practical tools and action plans to address any issues discovered.

OUR APPROACH TO AUDITORS

Partner Africa has been a member of the Association for Professional Social Compliance Auditors (APSCA) since 2017 and our systems and processes have been benchmarked against the Global Social Compliance Programme (GSCP) guidelines for auditor competency. Below is a summary of our expectations of auditors and processes to manage auditors:

**QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:**

- Relevant tertiary qualification (for example: Human Resource Management, Social Sciences or Law), with additional trainings preferred (SA8000, H&S etc.)
- Minimum of three years’ experience in the Human Resources, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Health & Safety or Ethical/Social Compliance sector.

**AUDITOR ACCREDITATION PROCESS:**

- 3x observation audits – observing a lead auditor during the process.
- 25x assistant audits – assisting the lead auditor in all parts of the audit process.
- 2x shadow audits – lead auditor shadows the prospective auditor as part of the sign-off process.

**CALIBRATION AND TRAINING:**

- Monthly calibration sessions with auditors and assistants/interviewers. Each month a different topic will be discussed, such as any standard changes, interview skills, fraud detection techniques or any aspects of a standard requiring additional guidance.
- Feedback on audit reports during each report review for quality.
- All auditors are in the process of completing the APSCA exam.
- Ad hoc sharing of resources and documentation as and when relevant new information becomes available.
- Quality managers offer one-on-one consultation with auditors that require clarity on specific topics on a request basis or if ongoing training needs are identified.
- Quality and training managers undertake shadow audits in different regions as part of a calibration process over a 5-year cycle.
Partner Africa have been instrumental in supporting our responsible sourcing programme across our African supply chain. Their experience and expertise have been hugely valuable in delivering the programme management of our supplier ethical audit activity, as well as supporting agricultural supply chain assessments, and the creation of supplier capability development tools.

- Diageo

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