



**GULF SUSTAINABILITY AND QUALITY
ASSURANCE (GULF SQAS)
ASSESSOR ACCREDITATION MANUAL**



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OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

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GPCA Gulf SQAS Accreditation Manual

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1. Introduction:

1.1 Purpose

The Gulf “Sustainability and Quality Assessment System” (Gulf SQAS) Accreditation Manual defines the qualification requirements for the accreditation of ‘GPCA Gulf SQAS Assessor’ and covers all Gulf SQAS modules. Maintaining a high and consistent quality of both the Assessors and the assessment process will be essential in ensuring broad recognition that the system is reliable, trustworthy and that the results drive continuous improvement. This manual describes the Assessor pre-qualification requirements, the training and accreditation processes, the mechanism for monitoring Assessor performance and the process for maintaining accreditation.

The primary objectives of the Gulf SQAS Assessor Accreditation system are as follows:

- To ensure a consistent high quality across all Assessors;
- To ensure a uniform interpretation of the assessment questionnaires and associated guidelines by all Assessors, independent of their background or country;
- To provide training in the correct use of the electronic Gulf SQAS Database;
- To provide an understanding of the relationship of Chemical Companies with the Logistics Industry.
- To provide insight into the activities, organizational structures and infrastructure of such typical partner companies (Logistics Companies);
- To create a common standard of assessment amongst Assessors as to the legislative requirements and the industry standards, relating to the safety, health, environment, security and quality (EHSS & Q) aspects of these partner industries.

2. Accreditation

General accreditation as a Gulf SQAS Assessor will be obtained on the basis of satisfying the pre-qualification requirements, basic training, a written examination and an interview. However, to be entitled to perform assessments, Assessors must also obtain “Accreditation Titles” for each of the Gulf SQAS modules of interest by meeting the additional specific modular training and examination requirements specified in this document.

2.1 Assessor Pre-qualification Requirements

Applicants for accreditation as a Gulf SQAS Assessor shall meet the following requirements:

- be registered as a quality lead auditor i.e.:
 - have a valid qualification with an accredited certification body; or
 - be registered with a recognized auditor registration organization (e.g. IRCA)
- have performed, during the last 3 years, at least five ISO 9001, ISO 14001, RC 14001 or OHSAS audits or Gulf SQAS (equivalent) assessments at chemical distributors or at companies providing logistic services to the chemical industry;
- be able to demonstrate knowledge of the requirements for the transportation and handling of dangerous goods, including but not limited to ADR. Note: There may be a future requirement for Dangerous Goods Training;

- be fully independent from the Logistics companies being assessed (no financial, commercial or advisory links with the company).
- have a good working knowledge of the English and Arabic language.

Pre-qualification requirements must be documented by the applicant in their application and supported by copies of certificates and other relevant documentation, where applicable.

2.2 General Accreditation

2.2.1 Training Course

All applicants for accreditation as a Gulf SQAS Assessor must fulfill all pre-qualification requirements and will then be required to attend a two day General Accreditation training course conducted in English and held in a location defined by GPCA. The training course will cover the following:

- The general features of the Gulf SQAS system;
- The assessment process and principles (preparation, fieldwork, evidence seeking, conformance with guidelines, administration, reporting);
- The topics which are relevant to all modules, such as risk assessment, security, safety at work, subcontracting, etc;
- The CORE questionnaire of the logistics modules.

2.2.2 Examination

2.2.2.1 Written examination

After attending the General Accreditation Training course, applicants must participate in a written examination to demonstrate their knowledge of the Gulf SQAS assessment system. The examination will be conducted as follows:

- The examination will be in English. During the examination, the English version of the Core questionnaire may be used by the Candidate
- The questions will be chosen from a selection of questions approved by the Gulf SQAS T & A Committee;
- The examination will be marked without the marker knowing the name of the applicant.

2.2.2.2 Interview

All applicants will be interviewed in English by a panel consisting of members of the T&A Committee. The purpose of the interview will be to validate the applicants' technical knowledge, experience, communication skills and ability to carry out Gulf SQAS assessments.

2.2.2.3 Passing/failing the examination

The applicant will be judged to have passed when the average score of the interview and the written examination is 80% or higher.

Candidates whose total average is greater than 70 % and less than 79% may re-sit (once) the written examination through an e-exam. They will pass if the total average of the initial interview and the re-sit e-exam is 80% or higher.

Candidates who obtain less than 70% may apply to participate at the next Gulf SQAS General Accreditation Training and examination organized by GPCA.

2.2.2.4 Demonstration of Practical Competence

An Assessor will be required to observe an assessment performed by a certified Assessor. On completion of this stage there will be a need to lead an assessment, while being observed by a certified Assessor, preferably the same Assessor. The process of verification will be completed by the certified Assessor, who will prepare a letter to the Gulf SQAS Technical and Accreditation Committee, recommending that the Assessor is competent to be certified.

2.3 Accreditation Titles for Gulf SQAS modules

Successful completion of the Gulf SQAS General Accreditation program, will allow applicants to progress and obtain an Accreditation Title for each Gulf SQAS module in which they want to conduct assessments. The T&A Committee will define the training and examination requirements for each module and organizes regular examination opportunities. This training will be based on self-study and e-learning of the relevant subjects as well as an understanding of the reference documents posted on the Gulf SQAS website. When required, for example upon a significant revision of a module, a specific “in-class” training course may be organized by GPCA, dedicated to that module.

2.3.1 General Requirements

The requirements for being listed as an accredited Assessor for a module are:

- To study the associated documents (system guideline, questionnaire and specific guidelines);
- To study the defined literature and documents relevant to the industry or activity covered by the module, as defined by the T&A Committee and posted on the Gulf SQAS website;
- To successfully pass an examination on the subject matter with a minimum score of 80%. Unless otherwise specified, the examination will be an e-exam, downloaded from the website or sent by email and submitted to GPCA before the requested due-date.
- If the applicant fails the e-exam at the first attempt, he/she may re-sit the examination once
- The countries where the Assessor knows the local legislation and local language will be called the “Assessors’ territory”. When Assessors undertake assessments out of their territory, it is also essential:
 - To be fluent in English and sufficiently proficient in the local language, when assessments will be conducted in a language different from the Assessor’s native tongue. Alternatively, the Assessor should be accompanied by a colleague, with local language skills but independent of the company to be assessed.
 - To be knowledgeable of the relevant local regulations and guidelines provided by GPCA (e.g. ADR) to ensure that key documents and procedures (e.g. operating permits, training records, inspection certificates) can be interpreted correctly
 - The T&A committee grants an approval for each individual case/country after the Assessor concerned has provided the necessary application and supporting evidence
 - This approval is based upon the Country Application Form filled in by the Assessor and the evaluations done by the members of the T&A committee and observers. The form can be found on www.gulfsgas.com/download/download-assessor-documents

2.3.2 Gulf SQAS Transport Services

In addition to the above general requirements, applicants for Gulf SQAS Transport Service need to demonstrate through their Continued Professional Development (CPD):

- Knowledge of national and international regulations related to road transport operations.

- When appropriate for the supply chain, knowledge of national and international regulations covering intermodal operations (e.g. IMDG, ADR, RID, ADN, etc.).
- Knowledge of basic technical issues concerning Transport.

2.3.3 Gulf SQAS Warehouse

In addition to the above general requirements, applicants for Gulf SQAS Warehouse need to demonstrate, through their Continued Professional Development (CPD):

- Knowledge of national regulations related to warehousing operations and permitting.
- Knowledge of basic technical issues concerning Warehousing.

2.4 Granting the Accreditation

The T&A Committee grants the Gulf SQAS accreditation if the candidate has:

- demonstrated that he/she has the requisite knowledge and experience;
- attended the General Gulf SQAS training course;
- successfully passed the written examination and the interview;
- successfully obtained an Accreditation Title for one or more specific modules.

The applicant will receive a GPCA Certificate of Accreditation, which is valid for 3 years.

In the event that an applicant considers that a decision made by the Technical & Accreditation Committee is unreasonable, he/she may appeal to the GPCA Supply Chain Committee. In this case, the procedure referred to in section 5 will be followed.

3. Evaluating Assessor Performance

Each Assessor's performance will be continuously monitored to ensure not only a high standard of individual work but also to ensure a consistent approach amongst the Assessors. Performance feedback may be obtained from observers appointed by the Gulf SQAS T&A Committee, present during the assessments. The performance criteria and the appraisal process are described below.

3.1 Performance Criteria

To ensure a consistently high quality of Assessor performance the following must have been demonstrated:

- at least three complete Gulf SQAS assessments per year. **NOTE:** it is recommended that Assessors perform no more than two consecutive assessments at the same site.
- efficient communication between the assessor and GPCA is important. The Assessor must be accessible by e-mail and phone. **NOTE:** If, after reasonable efforts to contact the Assessor, he/she does not answer the emails or the phone calls, his/her accreditation can be suspended, pending a final decision of the T&A Committee on continued accreditation.
- compliance with all the requirements defined in the Gulf SQAS system.

3.2 Evaluating Performance

The qualifications of each Gulf SQAS Assessor will be reviewed by the Technical & Accreditation Committee on a periodic basis depending on the performance of the Assessor, but at least once every three years, based on:

- Assessors Evaluation Scheme
- Review of recent assessments,
- Feedback from observers,
- Assessor interview, (if required).

Noted concerns or improvement opportunities will be recorded on an Appraisal Form and sent to the Assessor. The Assessor will be required to respond with propose corrective actions, as appropriate.

3.3 Revoking Accreditation

Assessor accreditation may be withdrawn when performance does not meet the required standards, as defined solely by the T&A Committee. Depending on the circumstances of the discrepancy, this may result in the withdrawal of one or more Accreditation Title(s) or in full revocation of the basic Gulf SQAS-Accreditation.

When continued or repeated deviations from the required performance criteria are observed, the Assessor may be called to an interview with a panel drawn from the T&A Committee to discuss their appraisal. The Assessor has the opportunity to present his/her case. The assessor will be formally informed of the outcome of such an interview by the Gulf SQAS Representative.

In the event that an applicant considers that a decision made by the Technical & Accreditation Committee is unreasonable, he/she may appeal to the GPCA Supply Chain Committee. In this case, the procedure referred in section 5 will be followed.

4. Accreditation Renewal

4.1 Refresher Accreditation Training

Regular refresher training will be held by GPCA to ensure the continual high quality of the Assessors and to facilitate the general accreditation renewal process. All Assessors must attend refresher training once every 3 years.

The refresher training will cover the following aspects:

- A general update on the status and content of all modules, including regulatory changes;
- Selected topics chosen from all modules, where assessors experienced difficulties or where the T&A Committee noticed inconsistencies;
- An exchange of learning. The sessions will allow sufficient time for debate amongst Assessors and with the industry specialists in attendance.

4.2 Continued Professional Development (CPD)

In order to maintain accreditation, Assessors must ensure they stay abreast of technical and legislative developments and changes in the regulations relevant to the subjects covered in Gulf SQAS and applicable to the countries where the assessments are to take place. For that purpose, assessors shall engage in the required regular training and self-study. They shall self-monitor their professional development and provide a periodical status/progress report to the T&A Committee.

4.3 Granting the Accreditation extension

In order to renew the Gulf SQAS Accreditation for the next 3 years, the Gulf SQAS Assessor shall:

- maintain the ISO Lead Auditor qualification (documentary proof has to be sent)
- maintain current knowledge of the requirements for the transportation and handling of dangerous goods, including but not limited to ADR;
- ensure that he/she is up-to-date on the changing regulations regarding the carriage and handling of dangerous goods. (i.e. the 2 yearly cycle of ADR/RID changes).
- Submit, in January every year, a report summarizing and documenting their CPD achievements (e.g. training, self-study etc.) for the preceding year. The report shall be submitted to the Gulf SQAS Representative using the format provided in www.gulfsqas.com/download/download assessor documents.

Accreditation will be extended for a further 3 year period if the Assessor is successfully evaluated by the T&A committee in regard to the re-fresher training (either by an exam or an evaluation of his cooperation and/or competencies shown during the refresher training) and upon delivery of the CPD form to the Gulf SQAS Representative confirming compliance with the above requirements.

5. Appeal Procedure

In the event that an applicant considers that a decision made by the Technical & Accreditation Committee is unreasonable, he/she may appeal to the GPCA Supply Chain Committee.

- The applicant should write to the GPCA Supply Chain Committee indicating in detail the reasons why he/she believes that a decision taken by the T&A Committee is unreasonable or not in accordance with the Gulf SQAS Accreditation Manual, and that the applicant wishes to appeal.
- The Gulf SQAS Representative will be notified of receipt of an appeal notice by the Supply Chain Committee and then collect the relevant information that may be helpful in reviewing the case and convene an Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel will consist of five members, none being member of the T&A Committee panel who interviewed the assessor.
- The Gulf SQAS Representative will provide the Appeal Panel with the necessary background information on the decision
- The applicant shall be entitled to be heard by the Appeal Panel.
- If the majority of the Appeal Panel decides that the original decision should not be upheld or the applicant should be given another opportunity to succeed, the applicant will be informed in writing accordingly. Otherwise the original decision will be upheld and the applicant informed in writing accordingly by the Gulf SQAS Representative.