

**Responsible sourcing**

**The  
right  
way**

**LRQA**



# Sedex SMETA: frequently asked questions

The Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit (SMETA) is an audit that can help you understand standards of labour, health and safety, environmental performance and ethics within your business and supply chain. Here are some frequently asked questions regarding responsible sourcing and Sedex SMETA.

## Q | Why is responsible sourcing important?

A | ESG regulations continue to gain momentum and consumer expectations increasingly prioritise responsibly sourced products and supply chain transparency. As a result, navigating the evolving landscape, exceeding consumer expectations, and positioning your business as a responsible leader in its industry is more crucial than ever.

## Q | What is the difference between SMETA and Sedex?

A | The Supplier Ethical Data Exchange (Sedex) is a global membership organisation aiming to manage and improve working conditions in global supply chains. The Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit (SMETA) is the audit methodology designed to help protect workers from unsafe conditions, overwork, discrimination, low pay, and forced labour.





## Q | Do I have to be a Sedex member to share my SMETA audit with clients?

A | Yes, only members are permitted to have a full SMETA audit or follow-up. Each company would be responsible to get its own membership from the Sedex platform.

## Q | What's the difference between a 2-pillar audit and a 4-pillar audit?

A | A 2-pillar audit covers the mandatory pillars of any SMETA audit, which are the labour standards and health and safety modules. This includes looking at additional elements including management systems, entitlement to work, subcontracting and homeworking and a shortened environmental assessment are looked at as additional elements. The 4-pillar audit is a full SMETA audit and includes the same modules as a 2-pillar audit with the addition of the environmental assessment (extended) and business ethics.

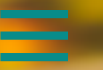
## Q | How do I know whether to choose a 2-pillar or 4-pillar SMETA audit?

A | The 2-pillar audit is a great start to your auditing journey and can help overcome challenges within your supply chain.

The 4-pillar audit is suitable for those that have extensive environmental management requirements as well as want to look at business practices within their supply chain.

## Q | What are the benefits of choosing a responsible sourcing programme like SMETA for my company?

- A |
- **Enhanced Reputation:** Participation in a recognised social auditing program like SMETA indicates a commitment to ethical conduct and can enhance your company's reputation among consumers, stakeholders, and the broader business community.
  - **Mitigate risk:** Social audits help identify and mitigate risks related to labour practices, health and safety, and environmental concerns within the supply chain. Addressing these issues proactively can prevent potential legal, financial, and reputational risks.
  - **Stakeholder Engagement:** Social audits contribute to building positive relationships with various stakeholders, including suppliers, employees, investors, and local communities. Engaging in responsible business practices fosters trust and long-term partnerships.
  - **Global Recognition:** Social auditing programmes, especially those recognised globally like SMETA, are widely accepted. This recognition can be instrumental for companies operating in international markets, as it aligns them with widely acknowledged ethical and social responsibility standards.



## Q | What is the Sedex Virtual Audit (SVA) and is it suitable for me?

A | The SVA is a remote SMETA audit and is available with LRQA if certain criteria are met. The tool can be used as part of an initial audits, announced audits and partial or full follow-up audits. Once an audit is requested, LRQA will verify that the site meets the established criteria.

## Q | My clients have requested a SMETA audit, what do I do next?

A | [Get in touch](#) with our technical experts, who will guide you through the process.



# Why choose LRQA?



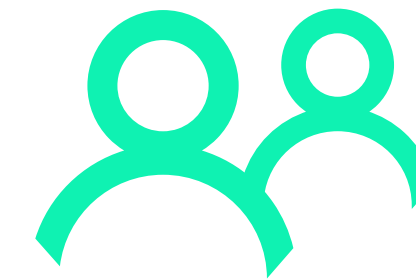
## Global capability

We operate in more than 160 countries with a team of more than 6,000 people, helping more than 61,000 clients to anticipate, mitigate and manage risk.



## A respected partner

With over 20 years' experience in responsible sourcing audits, we are here to partner in every aspect of management systems and supply chain assurance.



## Expertise

Our people are experts in compliance, supply chain, cybersecurity and ESG and our auditors are some of the best regarded in the industry.



## Actionable insight

We invest in digital platforms that deliver and enhance insight into your business. This data-driven approach means our expertise is underpinned by extensive analytics.

[Contact us to find out how LRQA can help you with your responsible sourcing needs →](#)



YOUR FUTURE. OUR FOCUS.

## About LRQA:

LRQA is a leading global assurance partner, bringing together decades of unrivalled expertise in assessment, advisory, inspection and cybersecurity services – underpinned by data-driven insights – to help its clients navigate a new era of risk.

Operating in more than 160 countries with a team of more than 6,000 people, LRQA’s award-winning compliance, supply chain, cybersecurity and ESG specialists help more than 61,000 clients across almost every sector to anticipate, mitigate and manage risk wherever they operate.

## Get in touch

Visit [www.lrqa.com/en-gb/](http://www.lrqa.com/en-gb/) for more information, email [enquiries.uk@lrqa.com](mailto:enquiries.uk@lrqa.com) or call **+44 121 817 4000**



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