Guidance notes on certifications with more than one location

There are 2 main categories of certifications that may have multiple locations to consider:

1] Organizations where some functions pertinent to the certification may be controlled from a head office separate to the manufacturing location[s]. Such organizations may or may not meet the requirements for multi-site certification as described in ISO/TS22003.

For example, the head office may determine procurement policy and lead the approval of suppliers, or may take overall responsibility for the group quality management system requirements.

2] Organizations with numerous manufacturing locations

H/O Note 1:
• In all cases where functions pertinent to the certification are controlled by a head office or other remote location FSSC requires that those functions be audited directly with the person[s] described in the documented FSMS as having responsibility.
• This will usually mean that the auditor must attend the head office to conduct that part of the audit, but in some cases it may be appropriate for the responsible person to attend the manufacturing site. This will depend upon local access to required files, records and other evidential material.
• It is strongly recommended that the H/O audit is carried out prior to the manufacturing location audit.

H/O Note 2:
• The head office cannot take responsibility for all functions within the scope of the certification, and cannot therefore receive a separate certificate.
• It is acceptable to mention the H/O on the manufacturing certificate by use of wording such as “An audit was carried out at [H/O location] on DDMMYY to assess the following function[s]…”

H/O Note 3:
• An audit of H/O control of functions within the FSMS cannot assess the degree of implementation at manufacturing level. The subsequent audit at the manufacturing site[s] must therefore include a confirmation that the requirements set out by H/O are appropriately incorporated into manufacturing documents and implemented in practice.
Multiple manufacturing locations
Each location requires a separate audit, report and certificate, and will be entered separately on the FSSC database.

In cases where more than one manufacturing identity is used but the operations are on one site – for example where a manufacturing operation is named differently to a packing operation, both may be named on the certificate provided that:
A] they are subject to one audit appropriate to the combined scope
B] they are part of the same legal entity

The preferred description in such cases is to use the name of the legal entity as the primary name. *For example: “XYZ company, operating as ABC processing and 123 packaging, [insert address]”.*

Dealing with Non-Conformance

Where NC’s are noted in H/O or multi-site manufacturing operations, these must be assumed to impact the equivalent procedures at all locations. Corrective actions must therefore address issues of communication across the certified locations and appropriate actions for impacted sites. Such NC’s and corrections must be clearly identified in the relevant section of the audit report.