Frequently Asked Questions: BAP's Remote Audit Process

How does BAP determine whether an onsite or remote audit should take place?
To be eligible for a remote audit:
1) An onsite audit at the facility is not a possibility due to COVID-19 restrictions.
2) The facility cannot have had a serious regulatory, food safety, environmental or social incident over the past year.
3) The facility must have a history of GFSI Benchmark certification (if certifying to the Seafood Processing Standard), or a history of certification (all other standards), or owned and managed by an organization with BAP certification history.

Which standards do we undertake in a remote audit?
All standards are eligible to participate in a remote audit.

Am I still benchmarked if I go through a remote audit?
Seafood Processing Standard remote audits (currently in pilot) will not be benchmarked to the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) unless the facility participates in a blended audit, which incorporates both remote and onsite elements.

Are there any extra pre-assessments/documentation required by the facility?
Certification bodies require facilities to answer a risk assessment questionnaire before a remote audit is approved. Two additional questionnaires and document requests are required prior to the remote audit for the Seafood Processing Standard.

What technology capabilities are needed for a remote audit?
A good internet connection is needed (no specifications regarding internet speed at this time). Office meetings are typically conducted in Microsoft Teams or Zoom, although not required. Facility IT capabilities are part of the risk assessment and the certification body will test IT technology prior to the remote audit.

How much of a facility will an auditor see by remote audit vs an onsite audit? And is all the footage 'live' or can some be recorded?

The remote audit will consist of an initial meeting, document review, site inspection, Q&As, interviews — similar to an onsite audit. In certain cases (e.g. office locations may have a good internet connection, but the farming site is too remote), the audit may utilize applications like WhatsApp. Recordings are not considered adequate although in rare cases might be considered (with applications mentioned) using date, time and/or GPS stamps.

How long does a remote audit take vs onsite?

Currently remote audits take the same time as onsite audits. Typically costs associated with onsite audit travel costs are moved over to cover remote audit preparation and planning time for the certification body.

Is the audit recorded?

This is up to the certification body and facility as needed. Confidentiality and integrity of interviews are key elements for all audits.

What's the difference between accreditation and benchmarking?

Accreditation refers to the third-party certification bodies who perform BAP audits — in order to be recognized by BAP, certification bodies must be accredited under ISO/IEC Guide 17065 by an International Accreditation Forum-member accreditation body and a Multilateral Recognition Arrangements signatory to another internationally recognized scheme. When a BAP facility is "certified" by their CB as being in conformance to a BAP standard, the certificate carries the "accreditation mark" (logo) of the AB who accredited that CB. All types of BAP audits (onsite, remote and enhanced remote) for all of the GAA standards are fully accredited.

Benchmarking refers to the international third-party organizations that set global standards for the industry. When a BAP standard is "benchmarked," that means it has been recognized by one of these third-party organizations as meeting their requirements. The Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) benchmarking for the GAA Farm and Hatchery standards recognizes all types of BAP audits (onsite, remote or enhanced remote). However, the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) currently only recognizes onsite audits (full or partial) for any of the standards that it benchmarks globally (i.e. the GAA seafood processing standard v. 5.0).

Are facilities able to use the BAP logo if they pass a remote audit?

Yes, using the BAP logo is permitted for facilities that have passed a remote audit and have been issued a certificate.