

CERTIFICATION · QUALITY MANAGEMENT

ISO 9001: your ticket into the supply chain

In many European purchasing departments, ISO 9001 is the basic requirement just to be listed as a supplier. A new version has been available since September 2026.

CURRENT VERSION	PREDECESSOR	VALIDITY	MAINLY RELEVANT FOR
ISO 9001:2026 (since Sep 16, 2026)	ISO 9001:2015, valid during transition	3 years, annual surveillance audits	Manufacturing, packaging, chemicals, logistics

In brief

ISO 9001 sets out requirements for a quality management system. It does not say how good a product has to be. It requires you to know, control and improve your processes: from the customer's inquiry through purchasing and production to complaints. Being certified shows that your results do not depend on luck or on a few individuals.

On September 16, 2026, ISO published the sixth edition, ISO 9001:2026. It replaces the 2015 version. According to ISO, it puts more emphasis on quality culture and leadership and treats risks and opportunities separately. Existing ISO 9001:2015 certificates remain valid during a transition period. The exact end date is set by the accreditation organizations; certification bodies currently mention a period of three years. Ask your body by when you have to switch, and plan the transition into a regular surveillance or recertification audit.

ISO 9001 shares its basic structure with ISO 14001, ISO/IEC 27001 and ISO/IEC 42001. Clauses such as context, leadership, planning, evaluation and improvement follow the same layout. That makes it a good foundation: if you add environmental or security management later, you can share document control, internal audits and the management review.

Why EU customers ask for it

No EU regulation makes ISO 9001 mandatory for suppliers. Even so, it appears in almost every industrial supplier questionnaire. The reason is practical. A European machine builder that buys castings from São Paulo or packaging from Santiago is liable to its own customers for defects. A certified quality management system at the supplier lowers that risk and saves the buyer its own audits.

On top of that come EU rules your customer has to meet. Anyone placing products with software or electronics on the EU market needs documented development and defect handling processes under the [Cyber Resilience Act](#), including for supplied parts. Large companies ask about controlled supply chain processes as part of [CSRD and CSDDD](#), and a working management system is the basis for that. In public tenders in the EU, ISO 9001 is often required as proof of suitability.

What EU customers actually want to see usually goes beyond the certificate. Typical requests are a copy of the certificate with its scope, proof that the certification body is accredited, figures on complaint rates and on-time delivery, and a description of how you manage your own sub-suppliers. For initial samples, inspection reports and batch traceability are added. A supplier from Caxias do Sul that has these documents ready in English moves through the approval process much faster than one that starts looking only after the request comes in. If certificates, metrics and supplier evaluations are kept in one place, for example in [Sightadel](#), you can send the same set to every new customer.

Who needs it in South America

- Manufacturers of components, castings and assemblies, for example in São Paulo, Córdoba or Rosario, that supply industrial customers in the EU
- Packaging and plastics manufacturers producing for European food or consumer goods groups
- Chemical and pharmaceutical suppliers
- Logistics and freight forwarding companies with EU clients
- Service providers that take part in tenders in the EU

Some industries build on ISO 9001 and ask for more. The automotive industry expects IATF 16949, medical devices ISO 13485. If you supply those sectors, treat ISO 9001 as the first step.

Steps to certification

1. Define the context and scope: which products, sites and processes are included.
2. Describe your processes, with owners, metrics and interfaces. Only as much documentation as you need.
3. Assess risks and opportunities, set quality objectives.
4. Run the system in daily operations: record complaints, evaluate suppliers, carry out corrective actions.
5. Perform the internal audit and the management review.
6. Stage 1 and Stage 2 audits by the certification body. For a new certification, ask about ISO 9001:2026 now.

7. Certificate valid for three years, with annual surveillance audits.

Expect 6 to 12 months from start to certificate if the company already has orderly processes and senior management is on board. With many sites or barely documented processes it takes longer. Costs vary a lot with size and number of sites; compare quotes from several accredited bodies. Ask as well whether the body has auditors who speak Spanish or Portuguese, and whether the certificate is issued in English.

Accreditation: which body counts

An ISO 9001 certificate from a body that is not accredited does little for you with EU customers. Make sure the certification body is accredited for quality management systems by a body that has signed the international recognition arrangement. Until the end of 2025 it was called the IAF MLA; since January 1, 2026 it is the Global ACI MRA. Accreditations from before that remain recognized.

COUNTRY	ACCREDITATION BODY
Argentina	OAA, Organismo Argentino de Acreditación
Bolivia	DTA-IBMETRO, Dirección Técnica de Acreditación of the Instituto Boliviano de Metrología
Brazil	Cgcre (Coordenação-Geral de Acreditação) at INMETRO
Chile	INN, Instituto Nacional de Normalización
Colombia	ONAC, Organismo Nacional de Acreditación de Colombia
Ecuador	SAE, Servicio de Acreditación Ecuatoriano
Paraguay	ONA, Organismo Nacional de Acreditación (at CONACYT)
Peru	INACAL, Dirección de Acreditación
Uruguay	OUA, Organismo Uruguayo de Acreditación

Global ACI lists all nine bodies as signatories (as of October 11, 2026). The exact scope, that is whether quality management is included, is stated in the accreditation certificate. With many bodies you can check online whether a specific certificate is genuine and valid, for example through IAF CertSearch.

Common mistakes

- The manual was taken from a template and describes procedures that do not exist in the plant.

- Certification runs as a project of the quality department, with senior management barely involved. The 2026 version in particular puts more weight on leadership.
- Complaints from EU customers get resolved but never analyzed. The root cause stays, and the next defect follows.
- A new certification is still done under ISO 9001:2015, even though you will have to switch within a few years anyway.
- The scope excludes exactly the site that supplies the EU customer.
- Metrics are collected but never discussed. In the management review, auditors ask specifically which decisions followed from the numbers.

How Sightadel helps

With [Sightadel](#) you manage processes, risks, objectives, corrective actions and audit evidence on one platform, for several standards at once if needed. That makes the move to ISO 9001:2026 easier. With a consulting package, experienced consultants can guide you all the way to the certificate.

FAQ

Should we still certify under ISO 9001:2015?

For a new certification it pays to go straight to ISO 9001:2026 as soon as your certification body is ready for it. Ask them where they stand.

By when do existing certificates have to be transitioned?

The end date is set by the accreditation organizations. Certification bodies currently mention three years from publication. Have your body confirm the date.

Is ISO 9001 enough for the automotive industry?

Usually not. Carmakers and large suppliers require IATF 16949, and TISAX as well when confidential development data is involved.

Which tool helps with ISO 9001?

[Sightadel](#) supports ISO 9001 as a framework, with templates, tasks, evidence and supplier evaluation. What you build there can be reused for other standards such as ISO/IEC 27001. The certificate is issued by an accredited certification body.

Sources · Last updated: October 11, 2026

ISO: ISO 9001:2026: <https://www.iso.org/standard/9001>

ISO: press release on the publication of ISO 9001:2026: <https://www.iso.org/news/2026/09/ISO9001-2026>

Global ACI: recognized accreditation bodies: <https://global-aci.org/en/recognised-abs/>

IAF CertSearch: <https://www.iafcertsearch.org/>

General information, not legal advice. The official texts are authoritative.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE WITH TOOLS MADE IN GERMANY



Sightadel walks your team through ISO 9001: templates, tasks, evidence and audit preparation in one place. Built and hosted in Germany, with an optional consultant package.

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Which of these apply to your company?

The free EU Readiness Check shows you by industry and country in 10 minutes.

<https://www.mercoeu.com/en/eu-readiness-check>