Certification can be a useful tool to add credibility, by demonstrating that your product or service meets the expectations of your customers. For some industries, certification is a legal or contractual requirement. We develop International Standards, such as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. ISO's Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO) has produced a number of standards related to the certification process, which are used by certification bodies.

Certification – the provision by an independent body of written assurance (a certificate) that the product, service or system in question meets specific requirements.

Accreditation – the formal recognition by an independent body, generally known as an accreditation body, that a certification body operates according to international standards.

Choosing a certification body

When choosing a certification body, you should:

- Evaluate several certification bodies

- Check if the certification body uses the relevant CASCO standard

- Check if it is accredited. Accreditation provides independent confirmation of competence. However, accreditation is not compulsory, and non-accreditation does not necessarily mean the certification body is not reputable. To find an accredited certification body, contact the national accreditation body in your country or visit the International Accreditation Forum's database CertSearch.

How to verify an accredited certification

When seeking to verify a certification issued by an accredited certification body, you can either:

- Use the International Accreditation Forum's global database, IAF CertSearch. CertSearch consolidates data from the IAF, accreditation bodies, and certification bodies, allowing you to confirm certification and accreditation status in one place. Certificates can be verified individually, in bulk, or via API; or

- Contact the relevant certification body, accreditation body, or IAF directly to confirm the respective statuses.

International organizations in cooperation with ISO for accreditation

The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) is the world association of Conformity Assessment Accreditation Bodies and other bodies interested in conformity assessment in the fields of management systems, products, services, personnel, etc.

ILAC is the international organization for accreditation bodies operating in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011 and involved in the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies including calibration laboratories (using ISO/IEC 17025), testing laboratories (using ISO/IEC 17025), medical testing laboratories (using ISO 15189), inspection bodies (using ISO/IEC 17020), and proficiency testing providers (using ISO/IEC 17043).

Rejection of certification

ISO does not perform certification or issue certificates, and it does not permit anyone to use the ISO logo in connection with certification. Certification is performed by external certification bodies; thus, a company or organization cannot be certified by ISO.

Making a complaint in relation to a claim of certification

ISO takes complaints related to the misuse of the ISO logo or false certification to ISO management system standards seriously.

Complaints should be addressed to the certification body that certified the organization. You can identify the certification body by examining the statement of certification, the certification mark used by the organization, or by requesting a copy of the certificate to the ISO standard.

If the above steps cannot be followed, please send us an email with full details of the issue and how we can contact you. While ISO cannot guarantee a resolution or assume any liability, it can help facilitate dialogue between the parties involved and work towards a positive outcome.

If you have identified a false claim of an accredited certification, including misuse of the IAF logo, you may inform the IAF Secretariat by email.

A response to your complaint will be sent to you within 14 days.

Process for ISO Certification in India

Create an application /contract

The applicant and the registrar should agree on a contract. This contract usually defines rights and obligations of both parties and includes liability issues, confidentiality, and access rights.

Quality Documents Review

The ISO auditor will view all your quality manuals and documents related to various policies and procedures being followed in the organization. Review of existing work will help the ISO auditor to identify the possible gaps against the requirements stipulated in the ISO standards.

Make an Action Plan

After the ISO auditor communicates the existing gaps in your organization, you should prepare an action plan to eliminate these gaps. Prepare the list of the required tasks to be performed to bring the desired changes in your organization. You may be required to give training to your employees to work efficiently while adapting to new procedures. Make all the employees aware of the ISO standards in terms of work efficiency and quality standards.

Initial Certification Audit

The initial certification audit is divided into two categories- **Stage 1 and Stage 2**.

Stage 1: The ISO auditor will audit the changes made by you in the organization. They will then try to identify the possible non-conformities in your systems and procedures to the desired quality management system. They will divide these non-conformities into minor and major

non-conformities. The applicant must carefully assess all these non-conformities and get it aligned as per the desired quality standards through modification in the techniques and processes used by the organisation.

Stage 2: After all the required changes are done in the organisation, the ISO auditor does the final auditing. The auditor will check whether all the non-conformities have been eliminated or not as per ISO quality standards. If the ISO auditor is satisfied, they will prepare the final ISO audit report and forward it to the registrar.

Completing the ISO Certification

After all non-conformities are addressed and all the findings are put in the ISO audit report, the registrar will grant you the ISO certification.

Surveillance Audits

Surveillance audit is basically conducted to ensure that ISO quality standards are being maintained by the organization. It is conducted from time to time.

Cost involved in the ISO Certification Process

Cost for getting ISO certification is not fixed and varies from organization to organization. The ISO certification agency calculates the cost of ISO certification separately for each organization after considering them on different parameters such as-

- Number of employees
- Number of Processes
- Level of risk associated with the scope of services of the organisation
- Complexity of the management system
- The number of working shifts etc.

Time involved in the ISO Certification Process

Time taken in completing the whole process of ISO certification also varies from organization to organization. The fair idea can be given by the ISO certification agency after assessing the size of the company. Generally, the time required to complete the process of ISO certification is approximate:

- Small organisations: 6-8 months
- Medium organisations: 8-12 months
- Large organisation: 12-15 months