

# RIDHAMA

environment & quality solutions

## Steps to get ISO certification

How? Appoint a consultant, Get your system ready, choose a certifier, apply, be audited, and get the certificate.

That's a quick overview of ISO certification process...

### **About the ISO certification process**

#### **Allocate resources: Appoint a Consultant**

It's going to take time and effort, so you'll need resources. A competitive and highly professional specialist must be consulted to achieve the desired goals for certification that can lead to the complete synchronization of system with desired standards.

#### **Commit to get ISO**

A commitment and a firm decision from top management (the decision-maker/s) are essential. And the commitment must be more than verbal or just 'paying the bills' - it must be supported by specific actions.

#### **Appoint an internal project manager**

You need someone to oversee things internally. Getting third-party certification to ISO is a project, so treat it as one and use project management disciplines. Also, you'll need to research to find out what is involved - there are many articles and links on this website to help.

#### **Establish your baseline status**

You must find out where you are now (the starting point or baseline) versus where you have to be for certification. You need to know what gaps you have and where by doing a gap analysis. Use the results of the gap analysis to create a plan and schedule. What is a gap analysis? (Search in [www.ridhama.webs.com/downloads/Documents](http://www.ridhama.webs.com/downloads/Documents))

#### **Develop the system**

Now develop the quality system. In most cases this means improving your existing system by filling in the gaps. It may mean developing some new processes, procedures, quality controls or even documents. It includes identifying your main processes (what you do and how you do it), documenting your system in a way that suits you, and making all the changes or improvements necessary to fulfill the requirements of the Standard. And of course, in doing this, you'll use the PDCA cycle to improve. What is PDCA Cycle? (Search in [www.ridhama.webs.com/downloads/Documents](http://www.ridhama.webs.com/downloads/Documents))

This is the biggest step and the one that takes the most time & effort. Make sure you involve people throughout, and ensure they understand and use the system.

#### **Audit the system**

You must internally audit your system (compliance and risk audit, not financial audit) to check that you are doing what the system requires - including ISO requirements of course. Find out if actual practice matches your quality manual and procedures. And when you find weaknesses or problems, you fix them using the formal processes for this that now exists in your system. Yes, I said 'when' not 'if' because you should be finding things to fix or improve if you're auditing properly.

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## Choose an auditor

Select an accredited certifier or 'registrar'. Make a formal application, pay the fee, and schedule the dates of the audit.

## Have the external audit

Your certifier audits your quality system against all of the specific requirements of ISO. It's a rigorous test of your quality management system.

## Get the certificate and celebrate!

Assuming you are successful, the certifier can award you the coveted certificate.

The formal certificate will arrive a bit after your audit. The 'look' of it varies according to your certifier (type of logo, etc). But it commonly states the scope of your certification (what it covers), the Standard (in this case, ISO) and that your company complies. Your certifier will also enter your company onto the official register of companies with certification - see Links for more info.

You can now say you are 'certified to ISO', 'registered to ISO' or 'has ISO certification'. All these terms mean the same thing.

## Maintain

Each certification is awarded for a 3-year period. During it, you continue to run your system, maintain it and of course improve it. Your auditor returns at scheduled intervals to check that you are doing so: these are shorter audits than the original one, but at least annual. At the end of 3 years, you have another full audit for recertification. And so it continues.

**Disclaimer:** The steps mentioned herein only provide a basic and close to actual outline of implementation of ISO standards & their certification. However, these steps may not be true or close to actual for certain rare, uncommon, new or product specific ISO standard's implementation & certification. These steps are based on RIDHAMA's own method of implementation and may vary from standard to standard, due to revision in standard(s) or due to customer's specific requirements. RIDHAMA reserves the right to change these steps for ISO standard implementation & its certification without prior notice, communication or intimation to viewers/ audience, website visitors & its customers.