

ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 45001 Certificates From Indian Suppliers

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Published 17 Oct 2026 8 min read

An ISO 9001 certificate from an Indian supplier is only worth something if the certification body is accredited, and many are not. This guide shows importers how to tell the difference in five minutes using IAF CertSearch and the NABCB directory, what ISO 9001, 14001 and 45001 do and do not prove, and how an Indian manufacturer gets a certificate that buyers will accept.

The Short Version

- ISO does not certify anyone. Certification bodies do, and an accreditation body checks them. No accreditation, no real assurance.
- Look the certificate up on IAF CertSearch or the accreditation body's register. In India that body is NABCB.
- ISO 9001 proves a quality system exists. It does not prove your product meets your spec.
- Certificates run on a three-year cycle with yearly surveillance audits. A certificate with no surveillance date is a warning.
- IAF and ILAC merged into Global Accreditation Cooperation on 1 January 2026. Old IAF marks stay valid through the 2026 transition.

Here's a plain truth about ISO certificates in India. Almost every supplier you'll meet has one, and that is exactly why on its own it tells you so little.



The certificate isn't the problem. The problem is that nobody checks who issued it. India has a large market for "ISO certificates" from bodies that aren't accredited by anyone, and they look identical to the real thing on a PDF. This guide shows you how to tell them apart, and then how an Indian manufacturer gets one that holds up. It's part of our [certifications hub](#).

1. Who Does What in an ISO Certificate

Four parties sit behind every real certificate.

1. **ISO** writes the standard. It does not certify anyone, and an "ISO certified by ISO" line is a giveaway.
2. **The certification body** audits the company and issues the certificate.
3. **The accreditation body** audits the certification body against ISO/IEC 17021–1. In India that's NABCB, the National Accreditation Board for

Certification Bodies under the Quality Council of India. Elsewhere it's UKAS, ANAB, DAKkS, JAS-ANZ and others.

4. **The international network** lets an accreditation in one country count in another. IAF ran it for management systems until 1 January 2026, when IAF and ILAC merged into Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated. Existing IAF MLA accreditations and marks stay valid during the 2026 transition (IAF site, read 17 Oct 2026).

An unaccredited body skips step 3. Nobody checks its auditors, and a few will issue a certificate without visiting the site at all.

2. What ISO 9001, 14001 and 45001 Prove

Standard	Covers	What a buyer can read into it
ISO 9001	Quality management system	The firm has documented processes, handles complaints and corrective action, and reviews them
ISO 14001	Environmental management system	The firm knows its environmental impacts and legal duties and manages them
ISO 45001	Occupational health and safety	The firm runs a system to control worker safety risks

None of them proves your product meets your spec. ISO 9001 proves the firm has a system to meet its customers' requirements. If you haven't written your requirements down then the system has nothing to meet. And none of them is a social audit. ISO 45001 deals with safety, not wages or hours (for those see [social audits](#)).

The ISO 9001 revision is close. Certification bodies reported a 2026 edition expected in September 2026, with a transition period expected to run about three years (LRQA, as reported). Transition rules are set by the

accreditation network, not ISO, so check them with your certifier. A 2015 certificate stays valid during the transition.

3. When Your Market Asks for It

No border requires ISO 9001, 14001 or 45001. Customers do.

- **Engineering, automotive and industrial buyers** in the EU, UK and US usually require ISO 9001 as a minimum, and automotive buyers add IATF 16949.
- **Public tenders** in the UK, EU, Australia, New Zealand and the Gulf often score ISO 9001, 14001 and 45001.
- **Large retail and brand buyers** ask for 14001 more and more as part of supplier sustainability checks.
- **Medical devices** use ISO 13485, and **food** uses the schemes in food safety certifications, not ISO 9001.

4. What an Importer Should Check

This is the five-minute check I'd run on every new Indian supplier.

Step 1 – Get the certificate and read four lines. Company name and address, scope, standard and edition, certificate number and dates (issue, expiry, next surveillance).

Step 2 – Find the accreditation mark. A real certificate carries the logo of the accreditation body (NABCB, UKAS, ANAB, JAS-ANZ and so on) with an accreditation number. No mark means no accreditation.

Step 3 – Search IAF CertSearch. It's the global database of accredited management system certificates, and searching to check a single certificate is free. Search the certificate number or company name. If it isn't

there, it doesn't mean fake, because not every accredited body uploads every certificate, but it means you go to step 4. I couldn't load the site for this guide (it returned an error), so check its current access rules yourself.

Step 4 – Check the certification body. Search NABCB's directory of accredited bodies, and its lists of withdrawn and suspended bodies (NABCB home page). For a foreign accreditation, check that body's own directory. Make sure the body is accredited for that standard and for the supplier's industry sector, because accreditation is granted by sector.



Step 5 – Call or email the certification body. Ask them to confirm the certificate is valid. Real bodies answer this quickly.

Step 6 – Match the scope to your product. "Manufacture of stainless steel kitchenware" covers a pot. It doesn't cover the cutlery the supplier buys in from another workshop.

Red flags

- "Certified by ISO" or an ISO logo on the certificate. ISO doesn't allow that.
- An accreditation body you've never heard of, often with "International" or "Global" in the name and a website registered abroad. Look it up on the accreditation network's member list.
- Issue date and expiry three years apart with no surveillance dates.
- A scope that says "general trading" for a factory.
- Certificates for ISO 9001, 14001 and 45001 all issued the same day by the same small body, with no audit reports.
- A trader's certificate offered for a factory's work. Trading firms can rightly hold ISO 9001 for trading, but it says nothing about the plant.

When to ask

Before samples. It costs you nothing and filters out the weakest suppliers early. For a big order ask for the last surveillance audit report too.

5. How an Indian Exporter Gets Certified

This half is for Indian manufacturers and exporters.

Who is involved in India

NABCB accredits certification bodies in India under ISO/IEC 17021-1 and is part of the international network (NABCB home page). Many foreign-accredited bodies also operate in India. There's no government issuer. The certificate comes from a certification body you choose. Choose an accredited one, with your sector in its scope. Check the accreditation

yourself on the NABCB or foreign accreditation body's directory, not on the body's sales brochure.

Eligibility

Any operating business can apply. You need to have run the system for at least a few months, done one full internal audit and held one management review before the certification audit.

The steps

Step 1 – Decide the standards and the scope. ISO 9001 first for most exporters. Add 14001 and 45001 if your buyers or tenders score them. Write the scope as what you actually make at which address. One day.

Step 2 – Gap analysis. Compare how you work now with each clause. Two to four weeks.

Step 3 – Build the system. Context and risks, quality policy and objectives, process maps, document control, purchasing and supplier evaluation, production control, calibration, nonconforming product, customer complaints, corrective action. For 14001 add an aspects and impacts register and a legal register. For 45001 add hazard identification and worker consultation. About two to four months for a small plant.

Step 4 – Run it and audit it. Run the system for two to three months, then do a full internal audit and a management review, and keep the records.

Step 5 – Choose an accredited certification body. Get quotes from two or three. Check the current fee with each one, and check that each is accredited for your sector code.

Step 6 – Stage 1 audit. A document review and site readiness check, often one day. The auditor tells you what to fix before stage 2.

Step 7 – Stage 2 audit. The full certification audit on site. Duration depends on staff numbers and the number of standards.

Step 8 – Close non-conformities and receive the certificate. Usually two to six weeks after stage 2.

Step 9 – Check you're listed. Ask the body to upload your certificate to IAF CertSearch so buyers can find it.

Validity and renewal

A certificate runs for three years. Surveillance audits come every year (in years one and two), and a recertification audit comes before the end of year three. Miss a surveillance audit and the certificate can be suspended.

Common reasons for trouble

- Records created the week before the audit.
- Calibration certificates out of date for gauges on the shop floor.
- Corrective actions that name the problem but not the root cause.
- Customer complaints not logged.
- A scope that doesn't match what the plant makes.



What to send the buyer

The certificate, the accreditation body and number, the CertSearch link if listed, and the last surveillance report if they ask.

Writing a system is the easy part. Keeping it alive between audits is where small firms struggle. If you'd like help running it, [SourcingSync](#) supports Indian exporters through certification.

6. A Worked Example With Castings for a German Buyer

This example is an illustration built from the rules above, not a real firm.

Say you're a German buyer sourcing grey iron castings from a foundry in Rajkot or Kolhapur. The foundry sends an ISO 9001:2015 certificate.

You check four lines. The scope says "manufacture of grey and SG iron castings" at the foundry's address. The mark is NABCB with an accreditation number. You search the certificate on IAF CertSearch and find it, valid, next surveillance in March. You look up the certification body in NABCB's directory, accredited for basic metals. It passes.

Then you write your spec, tolerances and test requirements into the purchase order, because ISO 9001 promises a system that meets your requirements, and those requirements need to exist on paper. For a first order an independent inspection before dispatch is still worth it.

7. Frequently Asked Questions

Is an unaccredited ISO certificate illegal? Not in itself. It just carries no independent assurance, and many buyers and tenders refuse it.

Is IAF CertSearch still working after IAF closed? IAF agreed to move CertSearch to Global Accreditation Cooperation by 31 December 2025. Check its current status on the GAC site.

Does ISO 9001 replace factory inspection? No. It audits the system once a year. Inspection checks your goods.

Is ISO 14001 enough for EU green rules? No. It's a management system. EU rules on deforestation, carbon or packaging need their own evidence. See [EUDR due diligence](#) and [carbon footprint and carbon credits](#).

8. Next Steps

- All certificate guides in the [certifications hub](#).
- Food factories use [food safety certifications](#) instead.
- Labour and workplace checks in [social audits](#).

- Product safety marks in CE and UKCA marking.
- Checking an Indian supplier end to end in verifying Indian suppliers.