

FROM ISO 9001:2015 TO ISO 9001:2026: TURNING TRANSITION INTO AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Zylloo Consult
Etudes & Conseils

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Executive Summary

From ISO 9001:2015 to ISO 9001:2026: Turning Transition into an Opportunity for Organisational Excellence

Zylloo Insights | Quality Management, International Standards & Institutional Development | November 2026 | by ***Cezzy K. Kanionga***

The transition from ISO 9001:2015 to ISO 9001:2026 represents an important opportunity for organisations to reassess the relevance, effectiveness and strategic contribution of their Quality Management Systems (QMS).

The revised edition builds upon the established foundations of quality management while reinforcing important dimensions such as leadership, quality culture, ethical behaviour, employee awareness and the management of risks and opportunities.

For organisations already certified to ISO 9001:2015, the transition should extend beyond maintaining certification or updating documented information. It should provide an opportunity to review organisational context, quality policies and objectives, operational processes, governance arrangements and performance monitoring mechanisms.

This white paper examines the principal developments associated with the revised standard, their implications for organisations and certified professionals, and the potential benefits of a structured transition.

Drawing on its expertise in quality management, institutional development and professional capacity building, Zylloo Consult proposes a six-stage transition roadmap: Understand, Assess, Plan, Implement, Evaluate and Improve.

The proposed methodology provides a practical framework for identifying gaps, updating management systems, strengthening professional competencies and preparing organisations for independent certification.

The central recommendation of this white paper is that organisations should begin assessing their transition readiness early and approach the revision not merely as a compliance obligation, but as a strategic opportunity to strengthen governance, customer satisfaction, operational effectiveness and sustainable organisational performance.

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Why has ISO 9001 evolved?

Since the publication of ISO 9001:2015, organisations have experienced significant changes in their operating environments. Digital transformation, evolving customer expectations, climate-related challenges, increasingly complex supply chains and the growing importance of organisational resilience have reshaped the way institutions and businesses operate.

The 2026 edition responds to this changing environment while preserving the established foundations of quality management.

For organisations, the challenge is to ensure that their Quality Management System (QMS) remains relevant to their current operating context, strategic ambitions and stakeholder expectations.

What are the main changes in ISO 9001:2026?

According to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the revised edition reinforces several important dimensions of quality management.

1. Leadership, quality culture and ethical behaviour – Clause 5.1

Greater attention is given to leadership responsibilities, organisational values and ethical conduct.

This provides an opportunity for top management to strengthen employee engagement, accountability and collective responsibility for quality.

2. Quality policy and strategic alignment – Clause 5.2

The revised standard reinforces the relationship between the quality policy, organisational context and strategic direction.

Organisations can use this opportunity to review whether their quality policies and objectives remain relevant to their business priorities and institutional mandates.

3. Risks and opportunities – Clause 6.1

The revised edition distinguishes more clearly between addressing risks and pursuing opportunities.

This encourages organisations to extend their planning beyond preventive measures and actively identify opportunities for innovation, improved performance and sustainable growth.

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4. Awareness and employee engagement – Clause 7.3

The reinforced awareness provisions recognise the importance of employees' understanding of quality culture and ethical behaviour.

Organisations should therefore consider reviewing their internal communication, awareness programmes and capacity-building arrangements.

5. Improved guidance for implementation – Annex A

Additional explanatory guidance supports a better understanding of the standard and the consistent application of its requirements.

The revised edition also retains the consideration of climate change introduced through the 2024 amendment to ISO 9001:2015.

These developments do not require organisations to rebuild effective quality management systems from the beginning. Instead, they encourage targeted improvements that increase the relevance and effectiveness of existing systems.

While ISO 9001:2026 builds upon the established foundations of the 2015 edition, its revised and reinforced provisions provide organisations with an opportunity to reassess the relevance and effectiveness of their Quality Management Systems.

Table 1 presents a comparative overview of the principal developments associated with the revised standard, highlighting their practical implications and potential benefits for organisations. The analysis distinguishes between new provisions, reinforced existing requirements and developments retained from previous amendments.

Table 1: Key developments from ISO 9001:2015 to ISO 9001:2026 and their practical implications

Area of development	ISO 9001:2015	ISO 9001:2026 – Developments	Practical implications for organisations	Expected benefits
Leadership, quality culture and ethical behaviour (Clause 5.1)	Emphasis on leadership commitment, accountability, customer focus and the integration of QMS requirements into business processes.	Greater emphasis on promoting a quality culture and ethical behaviour through leadership.	Review leadership practices, organisational values, codes of conduct and employee engagement mechanisms.	Stronger governance, accountability, employee engagement and organisational culture.

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Area of development	ISO 9001:2015	ISO 9001:2026 – Developments	Practical implications for organisations	Expected benefits
Quality policy and strategic alignment (Clause 5.2)	Quality policy aligned with the organisation's purpose, context and strategic direction, providing a framework for quality objectives.	Continued emphasis on the strategic relevance and effectiveness of the quality policy.	Review the quality policy and objectives to ensure their continued alignment with organisational priorities and stakeholder expectations.	Improved strategic coherence and contribution of the QMS to organisational performance.
Risks and opportunities (Clause 6.1)	Risk-based thinking and planning of actions to address risks and opportunities.	Clearer distinction between addressing risks and pursuing opportunities.	Review risk and opportunity assessment tools, planning mechanisms and performance monitoring arrangements.	Improved decision-making, proactive risk management, innovation and organisational resilience.
Awareness and employee engagement (Clause 7.3)	Personnel awareness of the quality policy, relevant objectives, individual contributions to QMS effectiveness and implications of nonconformity.	Reinforced attention to awareness of quality culture and ethical behaviour.	Update awareness programmes, internal communication, induction processes and professional development plans.	Greater employee ownership of quality, improved compliance and collective responsibility.
Implementation guidance (Annex A)	Informative guidance clarifying the structure, terminology and concepts of the standard.	Enhanced explanatory guidance to facilitate understanding and consistent application of requirements.	Review existing interpretations, implementation practices, documented information and internal audit tools.	Reduced ambiguity, more consistent implementation and improved QMS effectiveness.
Climate change and organisational context	Climate change considerations introduced through	Retention of climate change considerations within the assessment of	Assess the relevance of climate change to the QMS and review relevant interested-party	Improved adaptability, environmental awareness and

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Area of development	ISO 9001:2015	ISO 9001:2026 – Developments	Practical implications for organisations	Expected benefits
(Clauses 4.1 and 4.2)	ISO 9001:2015/Amd 1:2024.	organisational context and relevant interested parties.	requirements, risks and operational arrangements.	organisational resilience.

***Source**: Zylloo Consult, comparative analytical synthesis based on ISO 9001:2015, ISO 9001:2015/Amd 1:2024 and ISO's communication on the 2026 revision.*

The comparative analysis demonstrates that the transition to ISO 9001:2026 is not simply a matter of updating documented information or maintaining certification. It calls for a broader assessment of the organisation's management practices, leadership engagement, strategic alignment and operational effectiveness.

The extent of the adjustments required will depend on the maturity of the existing QMS, the organisation's operating context and the effectiveness of its current implementation arrangements. Organisations with well-established quality management practices may require only targeted adjustments, while others may benefit from a more comprehensive review of their management systems.

A structured gap analysis therefore represents an essential starting point for identifying transition priorities, determining resource requirements and developing an appropriate implementation roadmap.

What does the transition mean for organisations?

For organisations already certified to ISO 9001:2015, the transition provides an opportunity to evaluate whether their existing QMS remains aligned with their current needs and future ambitions.

Rather than simply updating references from 2015 to 2026 in existing documents, organisations should assess the effectiveness of their processes, the relevance of their quality objectives, the adequacy of their documented information and the level of engagement of their leadership and employees.

For organisations that have not yet implemented ISO 9001, the new edition provides an appropriate foundation for developing a QMS adapted to their strategic direction, operating environment and customer requirements.

The potential benefits include:

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- Improved alignment between strategic planning and quality management;
- Stronger leadership, accountability and organisational culture;
- More effective management of risks and opportunities;
- Improved operational efficiency and process effectiveness;
- Enhanced customer satisfaction and stakeholder confidence;
- Greater organisational adaptability and resilience;
- Stronger foundations for continual improvement and sustainable performance.

These benefits depend on effective implementation rather than certification alone.

How Zylloo Consult can support your transition to ISO 9001:2026

Drawing on its expertise in quality management, institutional development, strategic planning and professional capacity building, Zylloo Consult offers structured and tailor-made support to organisations preparing for the transition or implementing a QMS for the first time.

1. Initial assessment and transition planning

We assist organisations in determining their current level of readiness for ISO 9001:2026 through:

- Review of the existing Quality Management System;
- Gap analysis against the revised requirements;
- Identification of areas requiring improvement;
- Assessment of transition priorities and resource needs;
- Development of a structured transition roadmap with responsibilities, milestones and timelines.

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2. Review of organisational context and QMS scope

An effective QMS must reflect the organisation's actual operating environment.

Zylloo Consult supports clients in:

- Identifying relevant internal and external issues;
- Reviewing the needs and expectations of relevant interested parties;
- Assessing the relevance of climate change to the QMS;
- Clarifying the organisation's strategic direction;
- Reviewing and defining the scope of the QMS;
- Assessing the applicability of the standard's requirements.

3. Development and updating of QMS documented information

We support organisations in developing, reviewing and updating relevant documents, including:

- Quality policy;
- Quality objectives and associated action plans;
- QMS scope statement;
- Process maps and process descriptions;
- Procedures and work instructions, where necessary;
- Risk and opportunity assessment tools;
- Performance indicators and monitoring tools;
- Internal audit programmes and checklists;
- Management review tools;
- Corrective action and continual improvement records.

Our approach prioritises useful and effective documented information rather than unnecessary administrative complexity.

The nature and extent of documentation will be determined according to the organisation's needs and the applicable requirements of ISO 9001:2026.

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4. Process review, implementation and performance improvement

Zylloo Consult assists organisations in translating the revised requirements into operational practices through:

- Review and optimisation of existing processes;
- Clarification of process ownership, responsibilities and interfaces;
- Integration of risks and opportunities into operational planning;
- Development or improvement of performance measurement mechanisms;
- Support for the implementation of updated processes;
- Identification of opportunities for continual improvement.

5. Leadership engagement and professional capacity building

Successful QMS implementation requires the involvement of management and employees at all relevant levels.

Zylloo Consult offers tailored awareness sessions, workshops, coaching and professional training to help management teams, quality managers, process owners and employees understand the revised requirements and their respective responsibilities.

6. Internal audit and certification readiness

To support organisations in evaluating their readiness for transition or initial certification, Zylloo Consult provides assistance with:

- Internal audit planning and implementation support;
- Identification and assessment of nonconformities;
- Root cause analysis and corrective action planning;
- Management review preparation;
- Pre-certification or transition readiness assessment;
- Preparation for engagement with an independent certification body.

Our consultancy activities support implementation and readiness. The decision to grant or renew organisational certification remains the responsibility of the independent certification body.

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What does ISO 9001:2026 mean for certified professionals?

The transition is equally relevant to quality management professionals, including certified implementers, auditors, quality managers, consultants and trainers.

Professionals whose competencies and qualifications are based on ISO 9001:2015 should familiarise themselves with the revised requirements and assess any implications for their professional development.

Zylloo Consult can support professionals through:

- ISO 9001:2026 transition awareness workshops;
- Comparative analysis of the 2015 and 2026 editions;
- Practical implementation and documentation workshops;
- Internal audit methodology updates;
- Professional coaching and capacity development;
- Guidance on applicable PECB training and professional certification pathways.

Existing professional credentials should not be assumed to become invalid automatically. Professionals should consult their respective personnel certification bodies for applicable transition, examination or credential maintenance requirements.

As a PECB partner, Zylloo Consult will communicate relevant PECB-specific transition training and certification arrangements as they become available and are officially confirmed.

A structured approach to a successful transition

To facilitate a structured and results-oriented transition, Zylloo Consult has developed a six-stage implementation roadmap covering the assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of the Quality Management System.

The methodology identifies key activities and expected deliverables at each stage, enabling organisations to progressively address gaps, strengthen their management practices and consolidate their readiness for independent certification.

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This approach can be adapted to the size, sector, operational context and QMS maturity of each organisation. It constitutes Zylloo Consult's proposed consultancy methodology rather than a mandatory implementation sequence prescribed by ISO.

Figure 1: Zylloo Consult ISO 9001:2026 Transition Roadmap – A structured approach to sustainable organisational excellence.



***Source**: Zylloo Consult, proposed consultancy methodology, 2026. Adaptable to organisational context and QSM maturity; not an ISO-mandated sequence.*

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When should organisations start preparing?

ISO has indicated that organisations certified to ISO 9001:2015 will have a three-year period to transition to the new edition.

However, organisations are encouraged to begin assessing their readiness early rather than waiting until the end of the applicable transition period.

Early preparation allows organisations to distribute implementation efforts, allocate resources effectively, develop employee competencies and integrate improvements into their normal operational planning cycles.

Specific certification transition arrangements and deadlines should be confirmed with the organisation's certification body.

Transform your transition into a strategic advantage

The publication of ISO 9001:2026 provides an opportunity to reconsider how quality management contributes to the broader performance of an organisation.

For businesses, public institutions and professionals, the real value lies not simply in adopting a revised standard, but in developing management practices that support better decisions, stronger governance, customer satisfaction and continual improvement.

Whether your organisation is already ISO 9001 certified, currently developing its QMS, or preparing for initial certification, Zylloo Consult is available to support you throughout your quality management journey.

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Is Your Organisation Ready for ISO 9001:2026?

Request a Transition Readiness Assessment

Understanding your organisation's current level of preparedness is the first step towards a successful transition to ISO 9001:2026.

Zylloo Consult offers a structured ISO 9001:2026 Transition Readiness Assessment designed to help organisations:

- Determine the current level of alignment of their Quality Management System with the revised standard;
- Identify gaps and areas requiring improvement;
- Assess the relevance of their organisational context, QMS scope, quality policy and quality objectives;
- Identify processes and documented information requiring revision;
- Determine resource and capacity-building needs;
- Establish transition priorities and develop a tailored implementation roadmap.

Whether your organisation is already certified to ISO 9001:2015, currently implementing a Quality Management System or preparing for initial certification, our experts can help you establish a clear and practical way forward.

Do not wait until the end of the transition period. Start preparing today.

Contact Zylloo Consult to explore professional training opportunities and to discuss your organisation's needs and request a tailored assessment proposal.

Request your ISO 9001:2026 Transition Readiness Assessment today.

Email: info@zylloo.com
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Zylloo Consult – Your Partner in Sustainable Organisational Excellence.

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Official reference

International Organization for Standardization (ISO), *ISO 9001:2026 — What businesses need to know*. https://www.iso.org/quality-management/iso-9001-2026

***Disclaimer**: This document provides general information and professional guidance. It does not replace the official ISO 9001:2026 standard or applicable certification-transition requirements.*

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