



What is ISO 20000 and how can it help you manage your IT services?

WHITE PAPER

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Executive Summary

ISO 20000 is the international standard for IT Service Management (ITSM), published by ISO (the International Organization for Standardization), and ICE (the International Electrotechnical Commission).

Due to the fact that IT services (with underlying technological architecture and application landscape) are increasing in complexity, organizations are striving to find a way to gain control of implementation and delivery of the services. Many of them found out that ISO 20000 makes an excellent match – it encompasses the whole lifecycle of the service(s), includes extensive guidelines (there are eight parts of the ISO 20000 standard), and is process based.

This white paper explains what the ISO 20000 standard is and its purpose to establish the Service Management System (SMS) by applying

Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) methodology. After providing more details about content and structure, the white paper focuses on benefits of the ISO 20000 implementation and related myths. Implementation, and possible certification, includes establishment of the SMS and implementation of all processes required by the standard. For smaller organizations this can take four to six months, and large organizations need much more time. Therefore, budget and resources must be well planned because the efficiency of the implementation has a direct impact on the organization itself, and the services used by the organization’s customers.

The first edition of ISO 20000 was published in 2005, but, like some other ISOs, originated in a British Standard: BS 15000. In 2011, the existing revision was published.

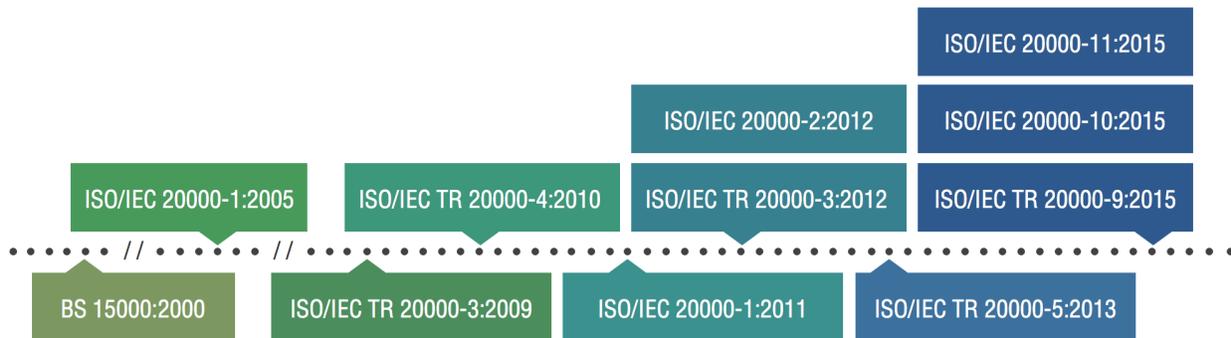


Figure: Development of the ISO 20000 series of standard



The basics of ISO 20000

The ISO 20000 standard describes methodology and a set of management processes designed to establish, maintain and improve Service Management System (SMS) in order to help you deliver effective IT services (both within your business and to your customers). ISO 20000 gives you the methodology and the framework to help you manage your ITSM, while allowing you to prove your company follows best practice. With the implementation of the standard's requirements organizations use best practice which help them to improve delivery of IT services. Written by leading experts in ITSM, ISO 20000 is applicable to any company size and any industry: big or small, for-profit or not-for-profit, private or government.

As an auditable norm, the 2011 version of the standard has 256 hard requirements that have to be met. It provides a full set of processes a company HAS to implement if aims to obtain a certificate. A bit more precisely, the standard has two main parts:

- ISO 20000-1 "Service management system requirement" – requirements, what SHALL be done
- ISO 20000-2 "Guidance on the application of service management systems" – code of practice, a guide as to HOW it should be done in more detail

Beside these two main parts, ISO 20000 at present has additional six parts:

- ISO 20000-3 "Guidance on scope definition and applicability of ISO 20000-1"
- ISO 20000-4 "Process reference model"
- ISO 20000-5 "Exemplar implementation plan for ISO 20000-1"
- ISO 20000-9 "Application of ISO 20000-1 to the cloud"
- ISO 20000-10 "Concepts and terminology for ISO 20000-1"
- ISO 20000-11 "Guidance on the relationship between ISO 20000-1 and related frameworks"



IT standard for the improvement of the business

ISO 20000 is an IT standard, but it has huge influence on your business as a whole. So, the question is – how is this possible? Here are few tips:

Improve your image and credibility – ISO 20000 is the only internationally recognized standard for IT service management. Its international adoption has been rapid in recent years, as organizations see it as a key differentiator in the marketplace. And, as a popular and proven standard, you can be sure of the efficacy and scalability of the processes.

Increased customer satisfaction – Whether it's your internal or external customers, you're able to deliver improved IT services that better meet their needs – while at the same time better protecting the company, its assets, shareholders and directors.

Gain a competitive advantage – Through more effective and efficient delivery of IT services, you can give your organization tangible advantages over your competitors. For example, you can reduce IT issues and respond to them faster, freeing up more of your time for strategic IT development in your organization.



IT SERVICE MANAGEMENT

What does ISO 20000 actually look like?

While consisting of eight parts, there are two that are most used - ISO 20000-1:2011 and ISO 20000-2:2012.

ISO 20000-1:2011 is the formal specification for IT Service Management. It clearly defines all the requirements you need to deliver managed IT services of an acceptable quality for your customers. It includes:

Service Management System requirements –

Discuss basic requirements to establish the SMS by applying PDCA methodology to all parts of the SMS and the services. Crucial elements of the SMS setup are the SMS Policy and, particularly, the SMS Plan. The SMS Plan defines the scope, how to fulfill different kinds of requirements, responsibilities and resources needed to run the services. Read the article [“How to define the scope of the SMS in ISO 20000”](#) to learn more.

Design and transition of new or changed services – This set of ISO 20000 requirements is

carefully derived from best practices, and it describes common denominators of introducing/changing services in a Service Management System. In practice, this chapter will help the provider to tidy up the system and to engage parts of the company that may be outside of the system scope (typically development, finance, etc.) to provide the required deliverables necessary for a smooth introduction of services into the operation. Read the article [“Design and transition of new or changed services in ISO 20000”](#) to learn more.

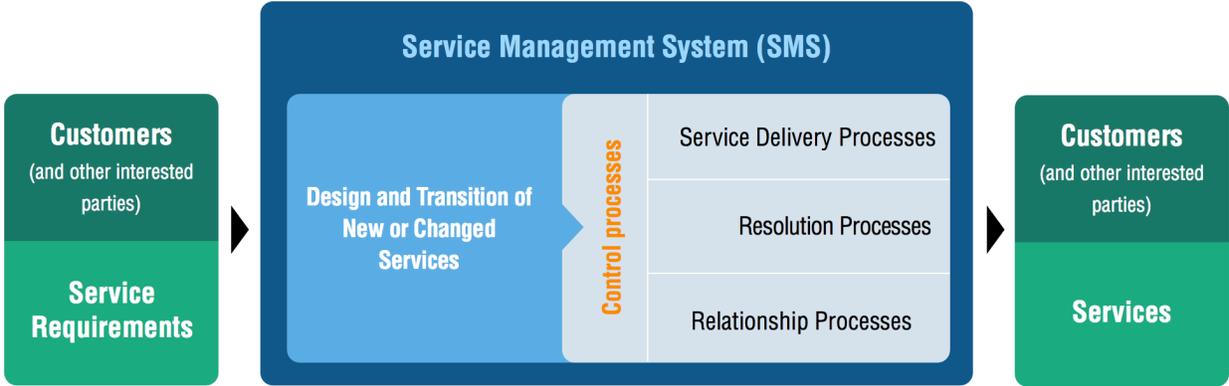
Service delivery processes – This group of processes is basic for managing delivery of IT. By managing delivery of the services, an organization directly influences customer satisfaction. To learn more about these processes, read the article [“ISO/IEC 20000 Service Delivery processes – The basis for IT management”](#)

Relationship processes – This group of processes offer the possibility to manage something as complex as the relationship with customers and suppliers, which may involve, if not properly managed, loss of customers, prestige and money. To learn more, read the article [“Taking care of relationships with ISO 20000”](#)

Resolution processes – Since there are no services that are faultless, this group of services enables fulfillment of contractual requirements (defined in Service Level Agreement – SLA) toward customers and manages any anomalies that may arise. Read the article [“How to avoid](#)

[unsatisfied customers by managing problems and incidents according to ISO 20000”](#).

Control processes – If an organization wants to improve its services, it has to control them; otherwise, the situation will come dangerously close to chaos. These processes help to control the configuration of the elements that make up the service (servers, software, etc.), help control changes occurring in the service (change server, change of an agreement, etc.), and enable control of deliveries that are sent to the customer. Read the article [“Using ISO 20000 to control IT services”](#) to learn more.



Service Management System (SMS)	Control Processes	Service Delivery Processes	Resolution Processes	Relationship Processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management Responsibility Establish the SMS Governance of processes operated by other parties Documentation management Resource management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Level Management Change Management Release and Deployment Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity Management Service Continuity & Availability Management Service Level Management Service Reporting Information Security Management Budgeting and Accounting for Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incident and Service Request Management Problem Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Relationship Management Supplier Management

Figure: ISO 20000 structure (source: ISO/IEC 20000-1)

The second part: ISO 20000-2:2012 is the code of practice for IT service management; it is the guidance of the application of Service Management Systems. In other words, it helps you to interpret the requirements of the standard. It defines the best practice management processes, and is very useful if you're preparing to be audited against ISO 20000 or planning service improvements.

It's important to note your company can get certified against ISO 20000-1:2011, but not against ISO 20000-2:2012 (this is a code of practice only).



ISO 20000 and ITIL

Although the ISO 20000 series of standards includes ISO 20000-2 (code of practice), it still does not include any usable methodology for implementation. [ITIL](#) makes for the perfect fit, i.e. provides best practice in ITSM.

The basic difference between ISO 20000 and ITIL is that ISO 20000 gives you the methodology and framework (providing you with the pieces with which to construct the ITSM jigsaw puzzle), while ITIL gives you the details (the best practices) on how to manage each and every IT process in your organization (i.e. how to put the jigsaw puzzle together).

A good way to think of it is that ISO 20000 says **WHAT** you need to do, while ITIL tells you **HOW** to do it.

ISO 20000 does not work in complete isolation. It can be implemented independently from ITIL, but they do go very well together.

As opposed to a standard, ITIL is a practical framework of best practices that focuses on aligning your IT services with the wider needs of your business. As a company, you can't become ITIL certified; you can only comply with the best practice guidelines.

ISO 20000 is based on the fundamental principles of ITIL, and is a standard that your company can certify against.

Individuals seeking excellence in ITSM and internationally recognized certification can become certified against ITIL and ISO 20000 (e.g. the foundation course discussed further below).

ISO 20000 certification for organizations is essentially the evidence that best practices have been implemented. ITIL is not required to gain certification in ISO 20000, but it is easier to achieve if you're following an ITIL approach to IT service management.

Read this free whitepaper [“ITIL vs. ISO/IEC 20000: Similarities and Differences & Process Mapping”](#) to learn more about relation between ITIL and ISO 20000.

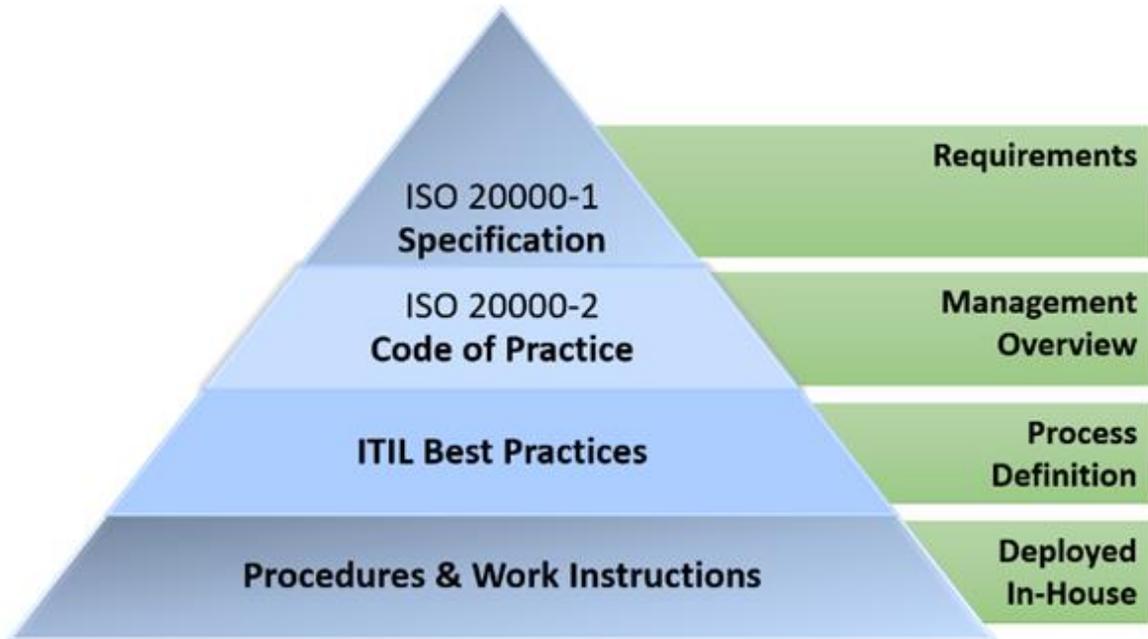


Figure: ITSM pyramid which describe position of ISO 20000 and ITIL



Getting to the heart of the benefits of ISO 20000

To understand the importance of ISO 20000, it's vital to understand the relationship between IT and the overall success of your organization. You use IT to overcome your competitors, to reach larger audiences, to become more productive and more efficient. In myriad ways, IT is vital to improving revenues, reducing costs and enhancing your reputation.

So, put simply, high-quality IT services and related IT service management standards are fundamental to your success. And gaining the ISO 20000 standard is a way to ensure that quality.

Therefore, the benefits of ISO 20000 (as the only IT service management standard) cannot be overstated; companies large and small have used this standard to great effect, discovering and securing tremendous cost and efficiency savings. Here are just a few of these benefits:

Become more productive – Gain a competitive advantage through increased efficiency and effectiveness due to more reliable IT services. With everybody clear about who does what and when, you'll reduce both the number of incidents and your ability to handle them.

Compliance – By your implementation of an ISO standard, your customers know what they should expect; i.e., there are clear evaluation criteria (e.g., by implementing ISO 20000 they know what to expect from the Change Management or Incident Management process). Additionally, ISO 20000 takes care that legal or other regulations (e.g., security/[ISO 27001](#)) and their requirements are considered.

Benchmark and improve – You can compare your organization's processes and activities against the international standard for ITSM (you can then easily identify and implement any necessary improvements). And, because an

independent certification body audits your company, you (and anyone interacting with your organization) can be sure you're meeting the required level.

Fully integrated processes – ISO 20000 helps you align IT services with the wider business strategy. You can ensure your company is focused on the IT service management solutions best suited to serving your customers and the needs of the business.

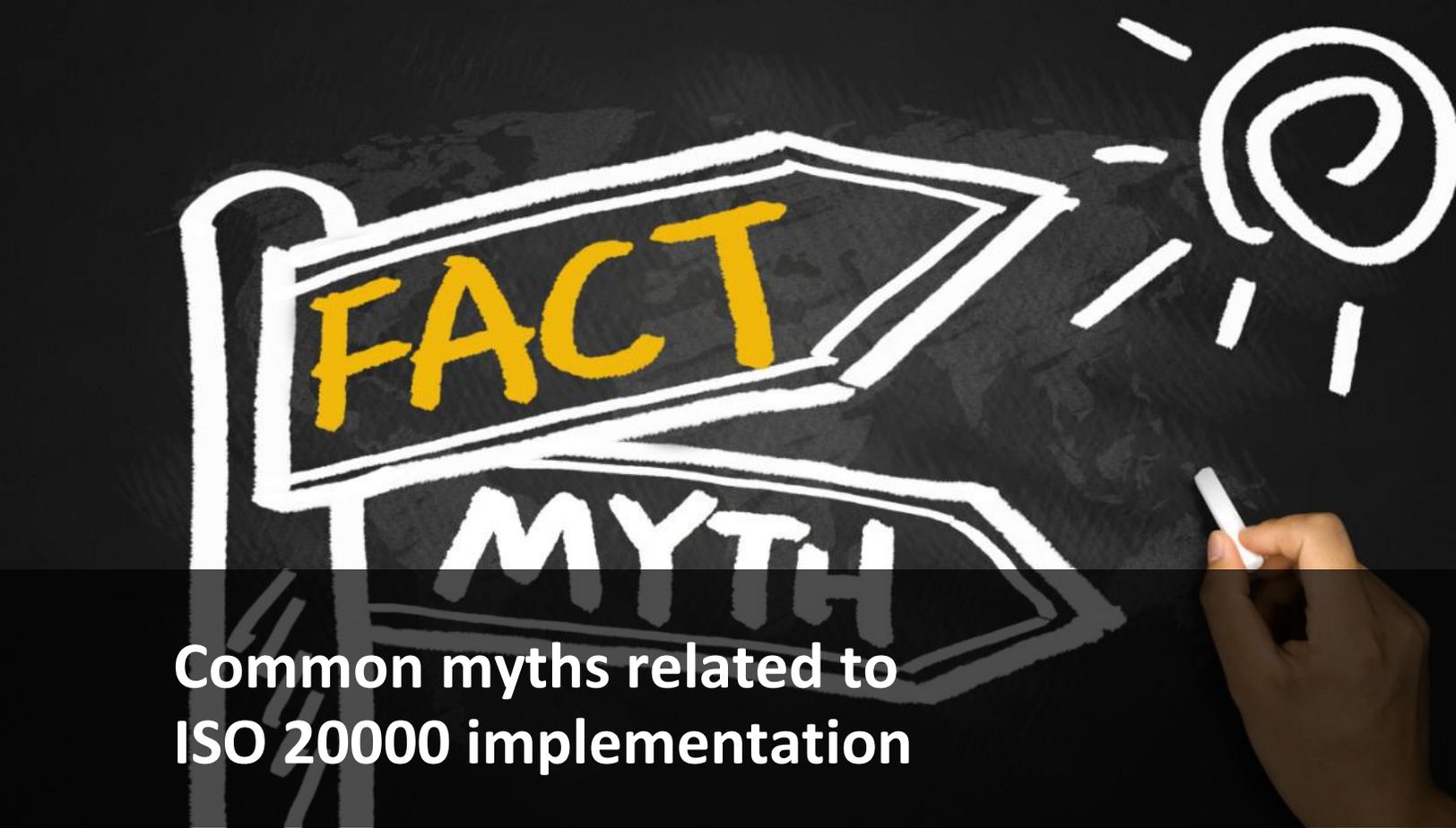
Reduce the cost of IT – Better understand and manage the cost of IT. Plan future financial costs with greater accuracy and clarity. With simpler processes and clear responsibilities, you can operate a leaner, more efficient service.

Create a culture of continual improvement – The business environment does not sit still, particularly in our age of digital and

technological innovation. Ensuring your organization is always improving processes in reaction to customer feedback is not just a nice-to-have; it's essential for a company's longevity. And this also extends to improvements identified internally, changing technology and developing business norms.

Become more agile and change quickly – ISO 20000 creates the solid framework of best practice that helps support innovation. Change in your organization can be handled more adeptly and with greater speed, meaning you reduce internal and external risk levels and are more likely to meet your organizational objectives.

To learn more, read the article [“5 key benefits of ISO 20000 implementation”](#).



Common myths related to ISO 20000 implementation

Implementing a standard is not an everyday job. Therefore, it requires a lot of activities before decision for “Go/No-Go” is made. One of the activities is to overcome myths related to ISO 20000 implementation. Here are some of them:

“ISO 20000 is only for big companies.” Simply put, that’s not true. It could be implemented in organizations of all sizes.

“The implementation scope is huge and we don’t have the resources for that.” Well, there are many other possibilities that give you the opportunity to implement ISO 20000 in a smaller company without many resources, e.g., consultants or using templates for implementation (see [ISO 20000 toolkit](#) page)

“We know our management; they are not interested in such projects.” I’m sure they are, but you have to get them. Management like to hear about (and is interested in) productivity increases, financial savings, or increased customer satisfaction.

“Tools to support the implementation are a huge cost factor.” There are many free-of-charge tools that can help you.

Read the article [“What are the most common ISO 20000 implementation myths?”](#) to learn more about myths related to ISO 20000 implementation.



Implementation of ISO 20000

Implementation of ISO 20000 can vary in complexity depending on the maturity of the organization itself, but also on already implemented processes. When starting from scratch, here are the most important implementation steps:

1. Initiation – here you will prepare the implementation as a project and get ready to present it. Use this free [“Project Plan for Implementation of the Service Management System according to ISO/IEC 20000-1”](#) to manage your project.

2. Obtain management support – in this phase you will present the project to your management and gain their approval. Use this free [“Project proposal for ISO 20000-1:2011 implementation”](#) to help you in this step

3. Select a certification body – here you will set the criteria for your certification body, send inquiries and do the selection

4. Define the scope – this is critical step. The [scope](#) is – where the ISO 20000 will be applied. Read the article [“How to define the scope of the SMS in ISO 20000”](#) to learn more.

5. Assessment and gap analysis – see what is the difference between what you have in your ITSM and what the standard requires? Use this [“Free ISO 20000 Gap Analysis Tool”](#) for the analysis.

6. Process and SMS documentation – there are a lot of required documents needed to implement the SMS. Prepare templates and generate required documents. And don't forget to keep them understandable and usable.

7. Training and awareness – once you are done with preparation, you have to get everyone involved in your SMS on the same level of understanding and [knowledge](#).

8. Implement the SMS and processes – that's where the majority of work is performed. If possible, use some of the ITSM tools to help yourself (read this article to get more

information on free tools: ["Free tools for ITSM – supporting IT Service Management for zero tool cost"](#)).

9. Implementation review – same as with any other project, it's recommendable to take a look backwards and see what was good or bad, what could be improved next time, etc. Read this article to see how Project Management can help: ["ITIL and ISO 20000 – What does Project Management have to do with it?"](#)

10. Certification – and, this is the step where you will see how good the implementation was.

11. Continual Service Improvement – once you are done, you will continually work on your SMS. Sometimes because you see what could be done better and sometimes business i.e. customer triggers [improvements](#).

Use [ISO 20000 Implementation Project Checklist](#) and [Diagram of ISO 20000-1:2011 Implementation Process](#) manage your implementation project.



How to become ISO 20000 certified

There are two types of ISO 20000 certifications: for companies and for individuals.

If your organization wants to become certified, you need to be formally assessed by an accredited certification body. You will need to demonstrate the quality of your company's IT processes against the ISO 20000-1 standard. Individuals, on the other hand, can become certified by passing exams (see below for further details).

But, merely creating ITSM process documentation is not enough (and will not solve your problems). To ensure certification, you have to integrate all the activities described in your documentation into your day-to-day business.

And, most importantly, you have to gain value. There is little point in creating the documentation and making all these changes if, at the end, your company has not realized the real-world value possible from ISO 20000. Otherwise, people within your organization will rightly question why you're bothering.

Mandatory steps for finishing implementation and getting certified

For an organization to obtain the ISO/IEC 20000 certification, it has to engage the services of a certification body. What is a certification body? That's a company that is responsible for issuing certificates to companies that request their services and comply with the requirements of the standard against which they want to become certified. Examples of certification bodies are: Bureau Veritas, BSI, SGS, etc.

The certification bodies must also comply with rules and requirements of another ISO standard – ISO 17021, and also must be audited and accredited by government entities that are known as accreditation bodies.

Each country has an accreditation body that is responsible for auditing certification bodies to ensure they meet the requirements of the reference standard.

Stages

Let's look at the steps that are necessary in the process of ISO/IEC 20000 certification, following the guidelines set in ISO 17021:

1. Request: The company that wants to certify against ISO/IEC 20000 requests a proposal. The request must contain information about the company: number of people involved in the scope, main lines of business, scope, etc. Based on this information, the certification body calculates the number of days required, and depending on the number of days, sets the price of the proposal. Finally, the certification body sends the proposal to the company.

2. Certification Audit: If the company approves the ISO/IEC 20000 certification proposal, it then carries out the certification audit. This audit is basically composed of two stages:

Stage 1: The audit team prepares an Audit Plan, which must contain all issues to be reviewed at this stage. It will also identify persons who will interview, and date and time of all activities to be undertaken during the audit. The activities carried out in this stage are basically the review of documentation generated by the company, i.e. mainly procedures, technical instructions, etc., and everything related to the Management System (PDCA). Also, the company will plan dates and activities that will take place in the next stage, stage 2. As a result of stage 1, the audit team will develop and deliver an audit report to the company, which reflects all the detected deviations. So, the purpose of the stage 1 audit, also called Documentation Review, is to check whether the documentation is compliant with ISO 20000.

Stage 2: As in stage 1, the audit team will prepare an [Audit Program](#) for this stage, which will contain all the things to do and all the people involved. In this second stage the audit team will review everything that has been pending management system and PDCA + operational implementation of all ISO/ 20000 processes. As a result of this stage, an Audit Report is generated, which will contain all deviations from stage 2, plus the deviations that have not been treated in stage 1. Therefore, we can say that this report will be the final report of the certification audit. So, the purpose of the stage 2 audit, also called the Main Audit, is to check whether the activities and processes in a company are compliant with the standard and with the documentation. In other words, to check whether the SMS works.

These two stages are needed only in the first certification audit, and therefore are not present in the surveillance audits and audits of recertification.

3. Obtaining the Certificate: If the company addresses all deviations of the report presented by the audit team and presents the necessary evidence to the certification body, the certification body then releases the Report, and finally approves the granting of the certificate to the company. In most cases the certificate is granted, but sometimes may be rejected, due to the immaturity of the system.

4. Surveillance Visits: An ISO certificate is valid for three years, during which time surveillance visits are conducted. That is, after the first certification audit, in the next two years the company will have to face further audits.

5. Recertification Audit: Finally, after three years, when the certificate expires, the company will have to face a recertification audit to maintain the certificate.

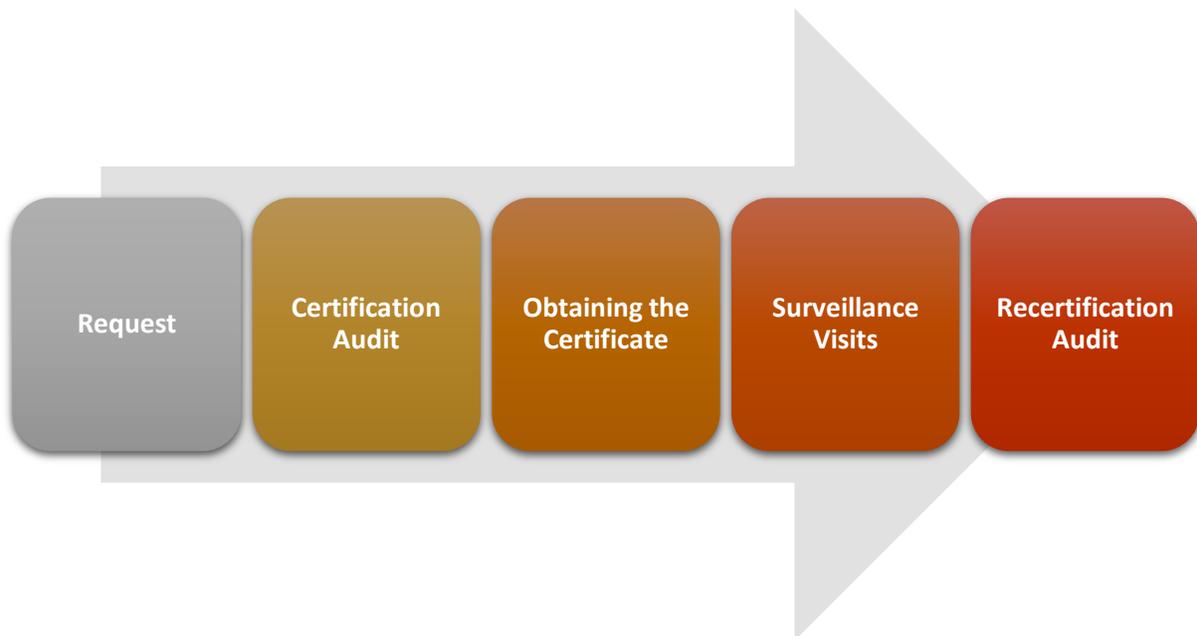


Figure: Gaining and maintaining ISO 20000 certificate for organizations

How do you get an ISO 20000 certificate if you're an individual?

If you are an individual, you can get certified in ISO 20000 if you pass, for example, the ISO 20000 Lead Auditor Course or ISO 20000 Lead Implementer Course. Many employers are keen to support this training, as qualified ISO 20000 practitioners are a great way to help an organization implement ISO 20000 (as well as being a valuable transferrable skill to include on a resume).

There is a range of course options for individuals to choose from:

ISO 20000 Foundation Certificate – If you're less familiar with ISO 20000, this is the course for you. You will gain an understanding of the content and requirements of the standard. In addition, you will be more able to assess the relevance of ISO 20000 to the specific IT service management activities within your organization.

ISO 20000 Lead Auditor Course – This is a very useful course for professionals implementing ISO 20000, because it gives you an excellent overview of the standard and provides in-depth

explanations of what the certification auditors will ask for at the certification audit. Therefore, it is useful for auditors and implementers. It lasts for five days and finishes with a written exam.

ISO 20000 Lead Implementer Course – This course is similar to the lead auditor course, except it focuses on implementation techniques rather than auditing ones. So, if certification is not your concern, this course may be more suitable.

ISO 20000 Internal Auditor Course – This course is a “light” version of the Lead Auditor Course, lasting about two or three days. With this condensed course, you would be unable to pursue a career as an auditor in a certification body. But, if you want a systematic introduction to ISO 20000 or you plan to be the internal auditor in your company, this course is perfect for you.

There are a number of accredited training organizations around the world where you can gain individual qualifications in ISO 20000.

Conclusion

Although ISO 20000 implementation seems complex, the benefits that certified organization achieve are significant. An SMS affects services, and therefore customers and users, directly. Well-managed services will be appreciated by customers, and their feedback will be beneficial for the organization (and, particularly, the organization's management). Continual improvement is a guarantee that, once implemented, the SMS increases the quality of delivered services and responds to the changing business environment efficiently.

Useful resources

These online materials will help you with ISO 20000 implementation:

- [Preparations for the ISO Implementation Project: A Plain English Guide](#) – short handbook containing expert guidance on preparation for ISO implementation.
- [Managing ISO Documentation: A Plain English Guide](#) – short handbook containing expert guidance on handling ISO documents.

References

ISO Organization: <http://www.iso.org/>

20000Academy: <http://www.advisera.com/20000academy/>



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