

Editor's Note: The Quality Infrastructure Reset

Coverage period: 29 June – 28 July 2026. Research cut-off: 28 July 2026.

International quality infrastructure is passing through its most consequential structural period in over a decade, and three threads converged in the last month.

First, ISO/FDIS 9001:2026 completed its Final Draft International Standard ballot on 9 July 2026, clearing the last technical hurdle before publication expected in September 2026. Second, the merger of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) into the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (Global ACI) has moved from legal formation into operational delivery, with its unified Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MRA) now the reference framework certification bodies must work under. Third, ISO released ISO/DIS 14060, the first draft international standard defining organizational “net zero” itself, for public consultation on 17 June 2026.

None of these are yet fully in force — ISO 9001:2026 is unpublished, ISO/DIS 14060 is a draft, and Global ACI's mark transition runs over three years — but each is close enough to implementation that certification bodies, accreditation bodies, auditors and certified organizations should be actively planning now.

What's inside this issue

- ISO 9001:2026 — FDIS ballot closed, publication imminent
- ISO 14001:2026 — already published, transition clock running
- Global ACI — unified accreditation MRA moving into delivery
- ISO/DIS 14060 — the first net-zero standard, in consultation
- ISO/IEC 17020:2026 and ISO/IEC 17024:2026 — conformity assessment revised
- ISO 45001 revision — still early-stage Committee Draft
- ISO/IEC 42001 — AI management systems entering the accreditation mainstream

ISO 9001:2026 — FDIS Ballot Closed 9 July 2026

What changed

The Final Draft International Standard completed balloting on 9 July 2026, following DIS approval by member bodies in December 2025 (reported 97% approval).

Status

Formally approved, not yet effective — ISO 9001:2015 remains the only certifiable version. Publication is expected September 2026, unconfirmed.

Who is affected

All ISO 9001:2015-certified organizations (reportedly over one million globally), certification bodies, auditors and consultants.

Transition

A three-year period is expected but not yet formally confirmed by Global ACI.

What it means

The revision is evolutionary — most additions sit in guidance (Annex A). Substantive changes include an explicit requirement to promote quality culture and ethical behaviour (Clause 5.1) and full integration of the 2024 climate-change amendment.

Action now

Begin auditor training and internal review of quality-culture and climate-context requirements ahead of formal publication.

Uncertain

Exact publication date and final transition length.

ISO 14001:2026 — Published, Transition Underway

What changed

ISO 14001:2026 was published 15 April 2026, replacing ISO 14001:2015.

Status

Published and effective — a confirmed requirement. A 36-month transition runs from 15 April 2026 to approximately April 2029.

Who is affected

All ISO 14001:2015-certified organizations and their auditors and certification bodies.

What it means

The standard adopts the Harmonised Structure, fully integrates the 2024 climate-change amendment into clauses 4.1 and 4.2, and adds a new Clause 6.3 on planning of changes — easing integration with ISO 9001 and ISO 45001.

Action now

Confirm transition audit scheduling with your certification body. UniCert clients can request an indicative transition slot at any time.

Uncertain

Some national accreditation bodies had not yet published their own formal timetables as of this writing.

Global ACI — Merged Accreditation Authority in Delivery

What changed

IAF and ILAC formally merged into the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (Global ACI), fully operational since 1 January 2026 with a unified MRA replacing the separate former IAF MLA and ILAC MRA. Its acronym, logo and website launched mid-April 2026, and its first full committee meetings were held in Prague, 20–26 April 2026, with over 300 representatives from accreditation bodies and regional cooperation groups.

Status

In force since 1 January 2026 as a legal matter; operational rollout ongoing. Legacy IAF MLA / ILAC MRA marks are expected to phase out over roughly three years, with the new mark's launch date expected to be set at the General Assembly in October 2026.

Who is affected

Every accreditation body, certification body, laboratory, inspection body and validation/verification body worldwide — and, by extension, every accredited certificate holder.

What it means

This is an administrative consolidation, not a re-accreditation event: existing accreditations continue to be recognized without interruption. Witnessed-assessment and surveillance cycles continue unchanged under ISO/IEC 17011 and the 17021-series.

Action now

Confirm with your national accreditation body when mark-usage guidance and certificate metadata updates will apply — do not update templates ahead of your AB's own schedule.

Uncertain

The exact mandatory date for the new mark, and the pace of expansion of Global ACI's endorsed management-system-standard list, which stood at only around nine standards as of April 2026.

ISO/DIS 14060 — The First Net-Zero Standard

What changed

ISO released the Draft International Standard for ISO 14060, “Net-zero aligned organizations”, for public consultation on 17 June 2026.

Status

Draft, consultation-stage only — not an effective requirement. Consultation is open to 10 August 2026; member-body voting closes 9 September 2026; final publication is expected late 2026 or early 2027.

Who is affected

Organizations making net-zero claims, sustainability consultancies, and GHG validation/verification bodies operating under ISO 14065.

What it means

This is the first single authoritative international definition of organizational net zero, arriving about a week after the Science Based Targets initiative's own Version 2.0 Corporate Net Zero Standard — signalling convergence in the net-zero standards landscape. The draft reportedly restricts the use of carbon credits for interim target progress and requires a front-loaded, cumulative GHG budget with a public transition plan.

Action now

Monitor the consultation; do not represent conformance to a draft as a settled claim. Validation and verification bodies accredited under ISO 14065 should scenario-plan against existing ISO 14064-3 and ISO 14068-1 assurance engagements.

Uncertain

Whether the carbon-credit restriction survives unchanged, and how ISO 14060 will ultimately sit alongside ISO 14068-1.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 and ISO/IEC 17024:2026

What changed

ISO/IEC 17024 (certification of persons) was published in March 2026 — its most significant revision since replacing the 1999 edition. ISO/IEC 17020 (inspection bodies) has also been recently revised, aligning terminology and structure with the wider ISO/IEC 17000-series family, including ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO/IEC 17021-1.

Status

ISO/IEC 17024:2026 is published. ISO/IEC 17020:2026's exact publication date should be confirmed against the ISO catalogue, as secondary sources differ on whether it is released or approaching release.

Who is affected

Personnel certification bodies, inspection bodies, and their national accreditation bodies (UAF, UKAS, TÜRKAK and equivalents).

What it means

Both revisions move from prescriptive language to outcome-based, CASCO-common-elements structures with simplified, more consistent impartiality classifications.

Action now

Request your accreditation body's transition timeline as soon as announced — historically these have been AB-specific rather than a uniform global window.

Uncertain

Formal transition period and start date for both documents.

ISO 45001 Revision and ISO/IEC 42001 Accreditation

ISO 45001 — Committee Draft

Unlike ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, ISO 45001 remains at Committee Draft stage under ISO/TC 283, well behind the other two Annex SL standards in its revision cycle. No DIS has been released and no effective date is confirmable. Organizations running integrated management systems across all three standards should expect staggered timelines.

Action now: do not begin transition planning; monitor for DIS release. Unofficial estimates point to 2027, unconfirmed by ISO/TC 283.

ISO/IEC 42001 — AI management systems

ISO/IEC 42001 (published December 2023) is now among the limited list of management system standards formally endorsed for accreditation recognition under Global ACI, alongside ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO/IEC 27001 and ISO 13485. The standard itself is stable; what is new is its formal inclusion on the endorsed-document list, reported as of April 2026.

This gives ISO/IEC 42001 certification a single, clear international recognition pathway rather than parallel legacy processes — relevant given growing regulatory reference to AI governance, including the EU AI Act and EU procurement requirements.

Action now

Confirm your accreditation body has active competence for the AI management scope before committing to an audit timeline.

Summary Table — Status at a Glance

Standard	Status	Date	Transition	Action now
ISO 9001:2026	FDIS ballot closed	Expected Sept 2026	3 yrs (expected)	Train auditors; review Cl. 5.1
ISO 14001:2026	Published	15 April 2026	To ~April 2029	Book transition audit
Global ACI MRA	In force	1 January 2026	Marks ~3 yrs	Await AB mark guidance
ISO/DIS 14060	Draft (consultation)	Vote 9 Sept 2026	Not applicable	Monitor; no claims
ISO/IEC 17024:2026	Published	March 2026	AB-specific	Request AB timeline
ISO/IEC 17020:2026	Revised/confirm	Confirm w/ ISO	AB-specific	Confirm status
ISO 45001	Committee Draft	Not confirmed	Not applicable	No action; monitor
ISO/IEC 42001	Published; endorsed	April 2026	Not applicable	Confirm AB competence

Note: statuses reflect publicly reported positions as at 28 July 2026. Draft-stage documents must not be represented as settled requirements.

Implications, Risks and Opportunities

For certification bodies

2026–2027 requires parallel workstreams: auditor training for the new ISO 9001 clauses, and administrative alignment with the new Global ACI mark and metadata regime.

For auditors

Unified Global ACI scope language covering management systems, products, personnel, inspection and testing should simplify cross-border recognition conversations, even though day-to-day witnessed assessments continue unchanged.

For consultants

The clearest opportunity is helping clients separate genuinely new obligations (ISO 14001:2026's already-running clock) from anticipated-but-unconfirmed ones (ISO 9001:2026's transition period, ISO 45001's eventual revision).

For certified organizations

No currently valid certificate is at risk from any of these developments — continuity of recognition is the explicit design principle — but forward planning now avoids compressed timelines later.

Risks

Waiting for ISO 9001:2026's final publication before engaging with its themes may compress the adaptation window. Referencing ISO/DIS 14060 publicly as though settled carries a greenwashing risk. Certification bodies slow to align mark usage with their AB's Global ACI timeline risk client confusion over certificate validity.

Opportunities

The IAF/ILAC unification is expected to reduce duplication and improve consistency in cross-border recognition of accredited certificates — a direct benefit for exporters and multinationals. Early, informed engagement with the ISO 9001:2026 and ISO 14001:2026 changes gives a credible basis to differentiate ahead of competitors who wait for mandatory deadlines.

Action Plan, Watchlist and Conclusion

Actionable recommendations

- Review ISO 9001:2026's quality-culture, ethics and climate-context requirements now — technically settled at FDIS stage even if not yet in force.
- If ISO 14001-certified, contact your certification body to schedule a transition audit within the 36-month window already running.
- Confirm with your accreditation body when Global ACI mark and metadata updates will affect your certificates before updating materials.
- Treat ISO/DIS 14060 as a signal, not a standard — continue relying on ISO 14064-1 and ISO 14068-1.
- Before pursuing ISO/IEC 42001 certification, verify your accreditation body has active competence for that scope.
- Hold off on ISO 45001 transition planning until a Draft International Standard is released.

30-60-90 day plan

First 30 days: map which clients hold ISO 9001:2015 and/or ISO 14001:2015 certificates and flag transition conversations; request written confirmation of the Global ACI mark-transition timeline from your national accreditation body.

Days 31–60: review net-zero or carbon-neutrality claims against the direction of ISO/DIS 14060 without committing to draft-based changes; scope ISO 9001:2026 auditor training content from the FDIS text.

Days 61–90: schedule an ISO 14001:2026 transition audit date if not already done; confirm accreditation timelines for any new scopes and begin internal competence-building.

Developments to watch

ISO 9001:2026 final publication and the accompanying Global ACI transition document (around September 2026) · ISO/DIS 14060 voting outcome (9 September 2026) · Global ACI General Assembly (October 2026) · ISO 45001 progression to DIS · confirmation of ISO/IEC 17020:2026's publication status.

Conclusion

The infrastructure underpinning global trade in accredited certificates is being rebuilt in real time, but deliberately and continuously rather than disruptively: existing certificates remain valid, existing accreditations remain recognized, and every major pending change carries an explicit transition mechanism. Organizations and certification bodies that engage with draft- and FDIS-stage material early — while never representing a draft as a settled requirement — will be best placed to act as the coming months bring further clarification.

Questions about your transition? Contact UniCert at info@unicertification.co.uk or visit unicertification.co.uk.