



ISO 20400 certification – The facts

The purpose of this note is to help buyers to make informed decisions about certification services related to ISO 20400. Our key message is; **ISO 20400 is for guidance. It cannot be subject to a certificate of conformity, so please do not ask your suppliers for one.**

Guidance standard features

According to ISO policy, conformity assessment is only possible when an ISO requirements standard contains specific provisions, written in a clear and auditable way, whereas a guidance standard contains only recommendations and so, does not provide a level of scrutiny sufficient to comply with certification requirements.

Buyers should be aware that **offers of certification against ISO 20400 have no value and that organisations offering them are at risk of punitive action.**

Certification and assurance facts

Any independent party can provide their own assurance scheme referring to the ISO 20400 standard and issue an assurance opinion, but **it is wrong to state that this represents certification against ISO 20400. Buyers should ensure the provider has integrity, is independent, experienced in working with the standard and employs appropriately qualified people. They should also ensure that the criteria and methods for providing assurance are suitable and disclosed.**

What to do if you see potential misuse

Cases of misuse should be reported to your National Standards Body (NSB). These can be found from the World Map on the home page of ISO20400.org. The NSB is responsible for evaluating whether a **certificate of conformity against an ISO guidance standard is misleading and therefore not allowed.** They should take appropriate action if the offer is deemed to be misleading.

About ISO20400.org

ISO20400.org has no official position or authority to challenge potential misuse other than in the court of public opinion. We are, however, interested in your experiences in this area, both positive and negative. Please contact us to let us know your story.

Thanks to our Steering Group members [Colin McKerracher](#), [Antonio Astone](#), [Shaun McCarthy](#) and [Staffan Soderberg](#) for providing their personal perspectives to help us to put this note together.