

ISO 37301:2021 – Compliance Management Systems – Requirements with Guidance for Use

ISO 37301:2021 is the international standard for compliance management systems, with requirements and guidance for establishing, evaluating, maintaining, and improving a CMS.



What it is

ISO 37301:2021, Compliance management systems – Requirements with guidance for use, is the international standard for a compliance management system (CMS). It specifies the requirements and provides guidance for establishing, developing, implementing, evaluating, maintaining, and improving an effective and responsive compliance management system, so that an organization can identify its compliance obligations and demonstrate that it meets them.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) published the first edition in April 2021 through technical committee ISO/TC 309, Governance of organizations. It replaced ISO 19600:2014, the earlier guideline-only standard, and because it contains requirements rather than guidance alone, an organization can be certified against it. The standard is voluntary and applies to organizations of any size, type, and sector, in the public, private, and nonprofit spheres.

At a glance

PUBLISHER International Organization for Standardization (ISO)	TYPE Standard	VERSION 2021 (Edition 1)
EFFECTIVE April 2021	DOMAIN Risk Management	FAMILY ISO Management Systems
REGION International	ADOPTION MODEL Certification	IMPLEMENTATION COMPLEXITY Medium

Source: <https://www.iso.org/standard/75080.html>

Why it matters

- **Demonstrable compliance governance** Certification against ISO 37301 gives boards, regulators, and business partners independent evidence that the compliance program is designed, resourced, and reviewed.
- **One system for every obligation** The standard treats legal, regulatory, contractual, and voluntary commitments alike, so an organization keeps a single register of obligations instead of parallel programs.
- **Risk-based effort** Compliance risk assessment directs controls and monitoring to the obligations most likely to be breached and most damaging if they are.
- **A culture that reports and learns** Requirements for leadership, awareness, raising concerns, and investigation make compliance a shared responsibility rather than a back-office task.

How SmartSuite supports ISO 37301:2021

Compliance Obligations Register

Hold legal, regulatory, contractual, and voluntary obligations with their sources, applicability, and compliance risk ratings in one structured library.

Ownership, Cadence, and Accountability

Assign each obligation and control an owner and a review schedule, and route governing-body and management reviews through approval workflows.

Evidence Collection and Audit Trail

Attach policies, training records, and monitoring results to controls with timestamps and reviewers so the certification audit trail is always current.

Control Testing and Internal Audit

Plan Clause 9 monitoring and internal audits, record findings, and track nonconformities to closure.

Risk and Third-Party Alignment

Link compliance risks to enterprise risks and to the third parties whose conduct creates exposure, including due diligence records.

Compliance Reporting

Report compliance performance, open concerns, and corrective actions to the governing body and top management.

Common framework mappings

ISO 9001:2026

ISO 27001:2022

ISO 22301

ISO 42001

ISO 31000:2018

COSO IC 2013

COSO ERM 2017

SOX

Official resources

ISO 37301:2021 catalogue page

The ISO catalogue entry with the standard's status, edition, committee, and purchase and preview options.

iso.org/standard/75080.html

ISO/TC 309 Governance of organizations

The ISO technical committee responsible for ISO 37301, ISO 37001, and the wider governance standards family.

iso.org/committee/6266703.html

ISO 37301:2021 preview on the Online Browsing Platform

ISO's read-only preview of the standard's foreword, introduction, scope, and terms.

iso.org/obp/ui/en/#iso:std:iso:37301:ed-1:v1:en

ISO 19600:2014 (withdrawn)

The catalogue entry for the earlier compliance management guideline that ISO 37301 replaced.

iso.org/standard/62342.html

Frequently asked questions

What is ISO 37301?

ISO 37301:2021 is the international standard for compliance management systems. It specifies requirements and gives guidance for establishing, developing, implementing, evaluating, maintaining, and improving a compliance management system, so that an organization can meet its obligations and demonstrate that it does.

Can an organization be certified to ISO 37301?

Yes. Unlike its predecessor ISO 19600, which contained guidance only, ISO 37301 is a requirements standard, so accredited certification bodies can audit and certify an organization's compliance management system against it.

How does ISO 37301 differ from ISO 37001?

ISO 37001 addresses anti-bribery management systems specifically, while ISO 37301 covers the organization's full range of compliance obligations. Many organizations run both within one integrated management system.

What replaced ISO 19600?

ISO 37301:2021 replaced ISO 19600:2014, which has been withdrawn. The new standard kept the compliance management approach of ISO 19600 but turned it into auditable requirements with guidance in Annex A.

Who publishes ISO 37301 and who does it apply to?

ISO published it in April 2021 through technical committee ISO/TC 309, Governance of organizations. It is voluntary and applies to organizations of any size, type, and sector.

What does the standard require of leadership?

Top management must establish the compliance policy, provide resources, and demonstrate commitment, and the governing body must oversee the system. The organization must also appoint a compliance function with the independence, authority, and access it needs.

How does SmartSuite support ISO 37301?

SmartSuite holds the compliance obligations register, risk assessments, controls, evidence, concerns, internal audit findings, and management review actions in one connected workspace, so the certification audit trail is built as the work happens.

License included / downloadable: No ISO 37301:2021 is sold by ISO and its national member bodies, and its text is not included with the platform.

Full framework page and mappings: smartsuite.com/frameworks/iso-37301-2021-compliance-management-systems-cms