



ACCREDITATION SANS FRONTIÈRES

ASF Management Systems Certification Feasibility Roadmap

An honest scope of what ASF would actually need to issue ISO 9001 certificates directly

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Foreword

Phase 3 of the ASF Strategic Plan commits ASF to pursuing its own accreditation as a management systems certification body, so that ASF can eventually issue ISO 9001 certification directly to organizations it already accredits. This document is where that commitment gets scoped honestly — what ASF actually has already, what genuinely still has to be built, and why this is a different undertaking than writing another policy document.

AACI and DNV both do exactly this — offer management-system certification alongside their own clinical accreditation. It is a real, achievable path. It is not achieved by declaring it; it requires a distinct accreditation, distinct auditor competence, and, for real international weight, recognition most bodies pursue through the International Accreditation Forum's Multilateral Recognition Arrangement, the same requirement DNV names explicitly in its own published NIAHO standards [1].

1. What Certifying Management Systems Actually Requires

Accrediting healthcare organizations against ASF's own standards, and certifying an organization's management system against ISO 9001, are governed by two different international standards. ASF's existing work — the seven-document alignment already completed — addresses ISO/IEC 17011, which governs bodies that accredit other conformity assessment bodies [2]. Issuing ISO 9001 certificates directly requires ASF itself to become accredited as a certification body under ISO/IEC 17021-1, a genuinely different, additional standard [3].

2. Why This Matters to ASF's Accredited Organizations: The Real Evidence

This strategy is not built on a general sense that ISO 9001 is a well-regarded standard. Independent research from the Standards Council of Canada, analyzing World Bank data across thirty-three countries, found that ISO 9001:2015 certification increases total sales by an average of 48.3 percent — a real, substantial, cross-country effect, not an isolated case study [4]. Research specific to service-sector organizations — the category ASF's own accredited healthcare organizations fall into — found a twelve percent increase in customer retention, a twenty percent improvement in customer satisfaction, and a ten percent rise in repeat business following certification [5].

One honest caveat matters as much as the headline numbers: independent analysis of ISO 9001 case studies is explicit that certification alone does not guarantee an organization a competitive edge — the benefit depends on consistent, genuine implementation becoming part of an organization's actual daily practice, not merely holding the certificate [6]. This is exactly why Section 4's crosswalk, and the discipline this whole document applies to ASF's own claims, matters as much for ASF's future accredited organizations as it does for ASF itself: the real evidence supports genuine implementation, not the appearance of it.

3. Honest Gap Assessment

Requirement	ASF Has Now	Genuinely Needed
Own management system aligned to an ISO framework	ISO/IEC 17011 alignment (7 documents)	Separate ISO/IEC 17021-1 alignment work
Accreditation as a certification body	None	Accreditation via a national body (e.g., COFRAC in France)
Auditor competence	Certified healthcare surveyors (ASF Surveyor Training Standard)	Separately qualified ISO 9001 lead auditors — a distinct competency
International recognition	ISQua EEA pathway for healthcare accreditation	IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement, for ISO 9001 certificates to carry real weight [1]
Documented ISO 9001 alignment of ASF's own standards	None yet	The ASF-to-ISO 9001 Crosswalk (Section 4)

4. The ASF-to-ISO 9001 Crosswalk

Before ASF makes any public “ISO-ready” claim about its accredited organizations, ASF completes a documented crosswalk mapping specific criteria within ASF's seven organizational standards to specific ISO 9001 clauses — the same discipline already applied to the WHO/ISO/ISQua crosswalk in Section 6 of How ASF Develops and Revises Standards, applied here to standard content itself rather than methodology. This crosswalk is the actual evidence behind the claim, not a substitute for making it honestly.

5. Interim Model: Non-Exclusive Referral

Until ASF's own ISO/IEC 17021-1 accreditation is genuinely achieved, ASF supports its accredited organizations in pursuing ISO 9001 certification through existing, independently accredited certification bodies — governed by Principle 4 of the ASF Code of Conduct and the ASF Independence & Non-Influence Statement: non-exclusive, no commission returned to ASF, and no bearing whatsoever on accreditation status. This interim model delivers real value to accredited organizations now, consistent with the genuine benefits described in Section 2, without ASF claiming a capability it does not yet have.

6. Roadmap Milestones

- Complete the ASF-to-ISO 9001 Crosswalk (Section 4) — Strategic Plan Phase 1
- Establish non-exclusive referral partnerships (Section 5) — Strategic Plan Phase 1
- Formally scope ISO/IEC 17021-1 alignment work, informed by ASF's own completed ISO/IEC 17011 alignment experience — Strategic Plan Phase 2
- Identify and engage a national accreditation body pathway (such as COFRAC, given ASF's Paris registration) — Strategic Plan Phase 2–early Phase 3
- Achieve ASF's own accreditation as a certification body, and begin direct ISO 9001 issuance — Strategic Plan Phase 3, no fixed date committed

References

- [1] DNV. NIAHO® Accreditation Requirements, Interpretive Guidelines and Surveyor Guidance for Hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals, Revision 25-1. Høvik: DNV; 2025.
- [2] International Organization for Standardization. ISO/IEC 17011:2017, Conformity Assessment — Requirements for Accreditation Bodies Accrediting Conformity Assessment Bodies. Geneva: ISO; 2017.
- [3] International Organization for Standardization. ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, Conformity Assessment — Requirements for Bodies Providing Audit and Certification of Management Systems — Part 1: Requirements. Geneva: ISO; 2015.
- [4] 9001 Simplified, citing Standards Council of Canada research analyzing World Bank data across 33 countries. 10 Game-Changing Benefits of ISO 9001. 2026.
- [5] Citation ISO. Benefits of ISO 9001 Certification. 2026.
- [6] 9001 Council. ISO 9001 Certification Benefits: Case Studies & Research. 2025.

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This document exists to make sure ASF never says ‘we can certify you to ISO 9001’ before it genuinely can — and the real evidence shows that when the day arrives, and ASF’s accredited organizations actually implement it consistently, it will be worth the wait.