Self-assessment. There is no accredited certificate for ISO 18404. The competency tables of the annexes are not included.

ISO 18404:2015 Quantitative methods in process improvement, Six Sigma and Lean

Competencies for process improvement

34 requirements. There is no accredited certificate for this standard. As of 07/2026.

ISO 18404 is a competency standard, not a management system standard. There is no accredited certification for it of the kind ISO 9001 has. All that exists is a private sector scheme run by the Royal Statistical Society, in pilot status since the end of 2016, and the number of organisations assessed under it worldwide is in the single to low double digits. This list covers the main body of the standard, clauses 4 to 6. The competency tables in annexes A to C are deliberately not included: they are not in the freely available preview, and we do not print a number we cannot back up. This list is a self-assessment, not a proof.

Company	Date	Prepared by

4 Competence of Key Personnel — 3

4.1 **For every person holding a process improvement role, the competence the role demands is defined, and that competence is evidenced by work actually carried out, not by training attendance alone.** Document

What proves it: A role profile per person listing the required knowledge, skills and behaviours, backed by competence records: completed projects stating the problem addressed, the methods applied and the demonstrated result, an assessment by a person of at least equal technical standing, plus training and examination certificates as supporting evidence. A small organisation keeps a one page competence file per person with a project list, the result in figures and the date of the last assessment. The standard places the individual competences in dedicated tables in its annexes, so this list covers the main body only.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

4.2 **On the Six Sigma side the Green Belt, Black Belt and Master Black Belt roles are distinguished from one another, every role that is filled is assigned to a named person, and that person commands the statistical and methodological tools to the depth their role requires.**

What proves it: An overview of the roles that are filled, giving name, role level and the date competence was confirmed, plus a project portfolio per person covering the problem statement, the data used, the analyses applied and the proven effect, together with the verdict of the assessing person. Without an in house Master Black Belt the top level can be bought in externally; what matters is that someone with sufficient experience reviews and supports the work of the lower levels on technical grounds.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

4.3 **On the Lean side the Lean Practitioner, Lean Leader and Lean Expert roles are distinguished from one another, every role that is filled is assigned to a named person, and that person can lead or support improvement work in the value stream to the extent their role requires.**

What proves it: A role overview with names and levels, and for each person evidence from practice: improvement cycles they supported, value stream maps with the before and after state, teams they led and the resulting effect on lead time, inventory or cost, together with an assessment by a more experienced person. A small organisation evidences this with the recordings and analyses from day to day operations, for example time studies taken before and after a changeover, and notes in one sentence who led the improvement.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

5 Organizational Capability — 16

5.1-a **The organization has stated in writing the scope for which it claims a process improvement capability, meaning which sites, functions, processes or product families are included and which are explicitly excluded.** Document

What proves it: A short scope statement listing the areas covered together with a justification for every exclusion, dated and approved by top management. A small company writes this on half a page and attaches an organizational chart plus a process map.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

Self-assessment. There is no accredited certificate for ISO 18404. The competency tables of the annexes are not included.

5.1-b **The organization has decided and justified which approach it pursues, meaning Six Sigma, Lean or a combination of both, and that decision fits the kind of problems it actually intends to solve.**

What proves it: A decision record or management review minutes stating the chosen direction and the reasoning, for example high process variation points to Six Sigma, while long lead times and excess inventory point to Lean. An organization running both records which approach applies to which class of problem.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

5.2-a **The organization maintains a documented process improvement strategy that links improvement work to the business objectives and states a time horizon for implementation.** Document

What proves it: A strategy paper or a dedicated section of the business plan covering objectives, timeline and the link between improvement projects and company goals. A small company handles this on one page: three business objectives, two improvement projects each, a due date and a responsible person.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

5.2-b **Top management visibly backs the improvement work, takes part in selecting and reviewing projects, and connects each project to the business result it is meant to deliver.**

What proves it: Minutes of regular management reviews on improvement, approval records for launched projects, participation in closure reports. In a small company a standing agenda item in the monthly operations meeting with brief minutes is sufficient.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

5.2-c **Improvement projects are selected and prioritized against traceable criteria rather than started on gut feeling or by whoever shouts loudest.**

What proves it: Selection criteria plus a maintained project pipeline showing expected benefit, effort, link to the business objective and the decision taken. A simple table with the columns problem, estimated benefit in euros, effort, priority and start date is enough.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

5.2-d **Improvement work is integrated with the existing management processes of the organization, meaning planning, objective setting and reporting, and does not run as a detached special programme alongside daily business.**

What proves it: Evidence of integration, such as improvement targets inside the annual plan, a fixed section in the monthly report, improvement topics in the objectives of managers. Small companies demonstrate this through the annual plan and the recurring agenda item in their regular meeting.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

5.3-a **Process improvement roles are anchored in the structure of the organization, filled by named people and known to the workforce, including who reports to whom.** Document

What proves it: An organizational chart with the improvement roles marked, role descriptions covering duties and authority, and a current list of names. In small companies one person holds several roles, which is acceptable but must be written down.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

5.3-b **For every improvement role it is defined how much working time is allocated to it and how that time is protected against the pull of daily business.**

What proves it: Time allocation per role in the role description, capacity plan or duty roster, plus time records from a running project. A workable rule is one day per week for improvement work, blocked in the roster.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

Self-assessment. There is no accredited certificate for ISO 18404. The competency tables of the annexes are not included.

5.3-c **Every improvement project has a named sponsor from management who confirms the objectives, removes obstacles and signs off the closure.**

What proves it: A project charter signed by the sponsor, notes from progress reviews and a sign-off record at the end. In a small company the owner is the sponsor; what matters is the written charter with objective, boundaries and due date.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

5.3-d **It is defined who provides technical guidance to the people in improvement roles and how a second opinion is obtained when a task exceeds their own competency level.**

What proves it: A guidance arrangement naming the mentoring person, plus records of coaching or review sessions. If the higher level is missing internally, a contract or agreement with an external specialist on an hourly basis shows who covers that role.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

5.4-a **The organization has recorded which process improvement competency levels are actually available in-house and which people hold them.** Document

What proves it: A competency overview or matrix listing person, role, level, evidence and the date of the last confirmation. Small companies keep this as a table with a handful of rows, reviewed and signed off once a year.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

5.4-b **Available competencies are compared against the need arising from the improvement strategy and the planned projects, and any open gaps are named.**

What proves it: A comparison of need versus availability with a list of gaps, each with an action, a due date and a responsible person. An organization with ten employees manages this in a table with three columns: needed, available, how to close.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

5.4-c **Missing competency levels are bridged deliberately, for example by training own staff or by buying in support, and the bridging arrangement is time-limited and tracked.**

What proves it: A training plan with dates, training agreements, invoices or consultancy contracts of external specialists together with a description of their contribution. What matters is the note stating by when the competency is to be built internally or why buying it in remains sensible permanently.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

5.5-a **Measures are defined for the deployment of the improvement work that show whether it is working, for example the number of completed projects, benefit achieved in euros, lead time or defect rate.** Document

What proves it: A measure definition sheet covering definition, calculation, data source, measurement frequency and a responsible person for each measure. Three to five measures are enough; what counts is that the calculation is fixed and the figures come from a source that is maintained anyway.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

5.5-b **The measures are collected at fixed intervals, compared against the targets set and reported to management.**

What proves it: A trend of the measures over at least two reporting periods, a target versus actual comparison and the minutes of the meeting in which the figures were discussed. A small company keeps this in a table with one row per month and discusses it in the monthly meeting.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

Self-assessment. There is no accredited certificate for ISO 18404. The competency tables of the annexes are not included.

5.5-c **Where the effect falls short of the target, named actions with a due date and an owner follow, and their completion is tracked.**

What proves it: An action list with trigger, action, due date, responsible person and completion record, linked to the measure report of the affected period. It helps to set a threshold that triggers action, for example target attainment <= 80 percent across two consecutive periods.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

6 Resource Management: Appointment, Resources, Maintaining Competence 15

6.1-1 **The resources that process improvement actually requires have been determined and are available. These include working time for the appointed people, a budget for training and projects, access to process data, and tools for analysis.**

What proves it: A resource overview listing names, time allocations, annual budget and tools, approved by top management. A small organisation can cover this on a single page: who spends how many hours per month on improvement, what amount is planned, which software or templates are used.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

6.1-2 **The share of time the appointed people have for improvement work is defined as a firm commitment and protected in day to day operations, rather than being left over as spare time alongside line duties.**

What proves it: A written release rule per role, for example a fixed weekday or a percentage of working time, visible in shift, deployment or capacity planning. A small organisation keeps the slot in the shared calendar and records it whenever it is cancelled, together with the reason.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

6.1-3 **Access to the data required for quantitative analysis is governed: which sources, which access rights, who maintains the data. The suitability of the measurements for the intended analysis has been verified.**

What proves it: A list of data sources with an owner and access right for each, plus an assessment of the measurement equipment and measurement variation for the metrics in use. A small organisation checks the measurement with a simple repeatability trial, several people measure the same activity, and records the deviation.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

6.1-4 **Suitable tools for statistical analysis and process mapping are available, and the appointed people are practised in using them.**

What proves it: Evidence of licences or of the open tools in use, plus sample analyses from real projects showing that the tools are genuinely applied. A small organisation manages with a spreadsheet and fixed templates for data collection, control chart and root cause analysis.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

6.1-5 **Missing resources that surface in ongoing improvement projects are escalated to top management and decided there, instead of remaining stuck at the working level.**

What proves it: A project list with a column for required resources and the decision date, plus minutes of the management review recording the decisions taken. A small organisation uses a standing item in the monthly conversation between the project owner and management.

○ Open ○ In progress ○ Met ○ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

Self-assessment. There is no accredited certificate for ISO 18404. The competency tables of the annexes are not included.

6.2-1 **For every role in process improvement, the person filling it is named, along with the associated duties and authority and the reporting line. The appointment is documented and known to those involved.** Document

What proves it: An appointment overview showing person, role, date and management signature, supported by a notice board entry or intranet page so the workforce knows who can be approached. A small organisation keeps this in a four column table with an approval date.

Open In progress Met Not applicable

Evidence / justification

6.2-2 **The requirements for each role are defined before a person is appointed: which knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours the role demands, and how fulfilment is recognised.**

What proves it: A role profile per level, for example Green Belt, Black Belt and Master Black Belt on the Six Sigma side, and Lean Practitioner, Lean Leader and Lean Expert on the Lean side, stating the required methods and the required extent of hands on project work. The standard also sets out the individual competencies in separate tables in its annexes; this checklist reflects the main body only.

Open In progress Met Not applicable

Evidence / justification

6.2-3 **For every appointed person there are records that demonstrate the required competence: projects delivered with their objective and outcome, methods applied, assessment, plus education and training as supporting evidence.** Document

What proves it: A competence file per person: project list with benefits in figures, assessment form with date and assessor, certificates or training records. A small organisation keeps one page per person and attaches the project closure reports, which is sufficient as a record.

Open In progress Met Not applicable

Evidence / justification

6.2-4 **Where a required competence level is not filled in house, there is a rule for how it is sourced externally. The external contribution is measured against the same requirements as an internal appointment.**

What proves it: A contract or work order with a statement of work, plus the competence evidence for the external person against the same role profile that applies internally. A small organisation buys the highest level in by the hour and records in the order which projects are supported and which internal people are developed in the process.

Open In progress Met Not applicable

Evidence / justification

6.2-5 **The appointed people have the authority to initiate changes in the processes concerned, and the interface with the process owners is clarified, so that improvements do not fail for lack of decision making power.**

What proves it: An authority rule in the role profile or in the project charter, stating clearly who approves which change, plus examples of implemented changes with an approval note. A small organisation states in the project charter up to which amount and which scope the person may decide alone.

Open In progress Met Not applicable

Evidence / justification

6.2-6 **Whoever assesses the competence of others is qualified to do so and does not assess their own work. Assessment and the project work being assessed do not rest with the same person.**

What proves it: Evidence of the assessor qualification, at least at the level being assessed, plus a short impartiality statement in the assessment form. A small organisation solves this through a peer exchange with another organisation or through an external specialist on an hourly basis.

Open In progress Met Not applicable

Evidence / justification

Self-assessment. There is no accredited certificate for ISO 18404. The competency tables of the annexes are not included.

6.3-1 **Competence counts as maintained only if it is applied. For each role it is defined how much practical project work is needed within which period for the appointment to remain valid.**

What proves it: A rule in the role profile, for example >= 1 completed project per year for the lower level and >= 2 for the higher one, plus the running project list per person as evidence. A small organisation checks this once a year against a single table: person, last project, date.

◯ Open ◯ In progress ◯ Met ◯ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

6.3-2 **People who have been away from improvement projects for a longer period are reassessed or refreshed before the next appointment, before they lead on their own responsibility again.**

What proves it: A refresher record or a repeat assessment with a date, triggered by the annual review of the project lists. A small organisation has the person lead the next project together with a currently active colleague and records this in the project charter.

◯ Open ◯ In progress ◯ Met ◯ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

6.3-3 **Training needs are planned, not awaited. Whatever learning need becomes visible from projects, from failures and from new methods feeds into a plan with dates and owners.**

What proves it: A training plan with person, topic, date and outcome, fed from project reviews and assessments. A small organisation adds two lines to the annual plan: who is to master which additional method by when, and how that will be recognised.

◯ Open ◯ In progress ◯ Met ◯ Not applicable

Evidence / justification

6.3-4 **Top management reviews at fixed intervals whether the resources provided and the competences available are sufficient for the improvement being pursued, and the result of that review is recorded.** Document

What proves it: Minutes of the review with deployment figures: number of running and completed projects, duration from charter to closure, number of cancellations and their reasons, benefit achieved against effort spent, open competence gaps together with the decision taken. A small organisation takes one hour every six months for this and records half a page.

◯ Open ◯ In progress ◯ Met ◯ Not applicable

Evidence / justification