

What is ISO?

ISO, short for the International Organization for Standardization, is an independent, non-governmental international organization that develops and publishes global standards. These standards ensure products, services, and systems are safe, reliable, and of high quality.

What is a Standard?

An ISO standard is a documented agreement providing guidelines, specifications, or criteria. Standards cover everything from product dimensions and testing methods to environmental management and safety. In cosmetics, examples include:

- ISO 22716: Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) for cosmetics
- ISO 16128: Guidelines on natural and organic cosmetic ingredients

Why ISO Matters

ISO standards help ensure:

- Consistency – Customers receive the same quality every time.
- Safety – Products meet established safety benchmarks.
- Efficiency – Reduces waste, improves processes, saves costs.
- Global compatibility – Easier international trade and compliance.

Why Cosmetic Formulators Need to Know About ISO

Cosmetic formulators must understand ISO standards because:

- Compliance: Many regions require adherence to ISO 22716 (GMP) to sell legally.
- Product Safety: Ensures stable, hygienic, and reliable formulas.
- Market Access: ISO compliance builds credibility and allows international trade.
- Brand Trust: Shows professionalism and increases consumer confidence.
- Professional Credibility: Knowledge of ISO sets formulators apart as skilled and industry-ready.

ISO Certification

ISO itself does not certify companies. Certification is performed by external, accredited bodies that audit organizations. For example, a company may be certified to ISO 22716 after passing an audit. This demonstrates compliance with international standards and helps build trust with clients, regulators, and consumers.

Conclusion

ISO standards play a vital role in cosmetics by ensuring safety, quality, and compliance. For cosmetic formulators, understanding and applying ISO guidelines is an essential step toward building trust, meeting regulations, and succeeding in global markets.