



TL 9000 Informational Alert

1. Originating Working Group:		2. Alert Number:	
Contact: Contact@questforum.org		25-001A	
3. Documentation Affected:		4. Issue Date:	
TL 9000 Measurements Handbook R5.7 Section 3.4.2 Customer Base		June 23, 2025	
5. Reason for Alert:			
To clarify the intent of Section 3.4.2 “Customer Base” with respect to submitting TL 9000 data for all customers (rather than a subset) that provide the necessary data to generate accurate measurements in an organization’s certified product category(s). The alert also provides actions and alternatives required by certified organizations if they find they are currently not meeting the intent, along with required Certification Body actions. Scenario examples are also provided.			
6. Description:			
Background QuEST Forum has received questions regarding the intent and correct interpretation of “Customer Base”. Requirement Clarification Section 3.4.2 “Customer Base” opens with the statement: <i>“Customer base refers to the defined group of customers that the organizations’ measurement data encompasses”</i> The next paragraph opens with: <i>“The organization should include data for all of its customers, regardless of the format in which it is received, except where the data has been determined to be incomplete or inaccurate”</i> The intent is that if an organization is certified in a specific product category(s), they “should” submit TL 9000 measurements data for all their customers that receive products in that category(s) that provide the necessary data to generate accurate measurements. For TL 9000, the word “should” is a preferred approach, and there must be rationale provided for alternative approaches, or for not providing data. Examples of where data for specific customers does not have to be provided, includes not submitting outage data because a customer(s) does not provide it, or field return data where a customer (s) may use a third party for repair that does not provide the organization with return data. The correct interpretation is that the organization must submit all valid data for their entire customer base in each certification product category(s). This includes all customers, whether or not they require			

TL 9000 certification through a contract or other agreement. Excluding valid and available data from customers not requiring TL 9000 is non-conforming.

Actions Required

TL 9000 Certified Organizations:

1. Review your TL 9000 data collection, validation and submission process(s) and verify that your organization includes conforming data for all customers receiving product(s) in your organization's certified product category(s). **Complete this review by July 31, 2025.**
2. If current processes are determined to be conforming, maintain documented information regarding the verification effort.
3. If it is determined that current processes exclude valid conforming data for some customers, the organization shall change their TL 9000 data collection, validation and submission processes to include all conforming customer data. This must be completed prior to your submission of November 2025 data. All subsequent data submissions must include all customers' valid conforming data. Since there has been significant confusion relative to this issue, to minimize the burden on organizations needing to make adjustments, TIA / QuEST Forum will NOT require that data be resubmitted for periods earlier than November 2025.
4. Effective date exceptions for an organization, requires Certification Body approval for additional time needed to address data and process changes. The organization shall provide the Certification Body justification to include what is changing. Organization changes to be documented, as applicable, shall include roles/responsibilities, measurement procedures, data collections tools and relevant documentation, training, and verification of new processes. Also, the timeline for these activities shall be provided to the Certification Body.
5. The organization shall "retain knowledge of the specific customer base" meaning documented information on customer base and product/s (including services) per TL 9000 scope.
6. Proposed scope changes require Certification Body approval per standard procedure.
7. Product Ramp Down: It is recognized that work and expenses are required to implement measurement reporting. Subsequently, if it is determined a customer base gap exists for product that is ramping down by end of 2026, that ramped-down product can be removed from the certification scope, resulting in the customer base being no longer relevant.

Certification Bodies:

1. At the next audit of each organization, review evidence that Actions 1, 2, 3 and 6 above were completed.
2. Document effective date exception justification and approval for organizational changes with timeline. The timeline shall be provided to the QuEST Forum Measurement Administrator.
3. As required in every audit, the Certification Body will review the organization's documented information on customer base and scope during the next audit.

Discussion and Possible Scope Change Alternative

The rationale for requiring all customer data is that this provides more input data to increase the completeness and accuracy of TL 9000 Performance Data Report industry statistic benchmarks. Also, the organization benefits from more complete trend data to help determine their competitive position and/or identify potential improvement opportunities. Action 3 above in the Organization Action is therefore the TIA QuEST Forum preferred approach in addressing cases where organizations may have found that they are nonconforming by only providing a subset of customer data.

However, it is recognized that there may be certification situations where a scope statement change may address this nonconformity.

TL 9000 MHB Section 3.4.1 “Product Selection and Aggregation of Products” states: *“If an organization registers a business unit or a location, the organization has the option to determine which products will be included within the scope of the registration.”* Therefore, an organization can specify in its scope, the products covered, and this is done by adding the product specifics in the TL 9000 scope statement.

There are situations where an organization offers many different products within a certified product category(s). However, for business reasons an organization may choose only a subset of the products in that category to be included in their TL 9000 scope. Examples of business reasons include a subset of products that are being supplied to customers that require TL 9000 certification or a subset is provided to network operators, while similar products go to enterprise customers. If an organization clearly states specific products in their TL 9000 scope statement, then they are only required to submit conforming TL 9000 measurements data for those products and all the customers of those products.

Scope Change Example

As an illustrative example, a single site certification may currently have a TL 9000 and ISO 9001 Scope statement that is the same: “Design and Manufacture of Optical Subassemblies” and is certified to TL 9000 Product Category 8.5.2.3 Optical Subassemblies. They currently offer 20 product codes in that category, and the QMS processes used to realize these products meet TL 9000 requirements. But upon investigation after receiving this alert, they identify that they are submitting data for only two customers, and these two customers are the only ones to receive product codes 123 and 456.

They have two options to become conforming:

1. Begin submitting data for all customers across their 20 products (preferred), or
2. Change their TL 9000 scope statement to read “Design and Manufacture of Optical Subassembly Products 123 and 456.” The ISO 9001 scope statement could remain as it was, since the entire site and its QMS processes met TL 9000 (including ISO 9001) requirements.

Option 1 is the preferred approach for the previously stated reasons, though Option 2 is permissible if the TL 9000 Scope Statement is changed and limited to only those two products. If not changed, the scope statement is misleading as it implies that all Optical Subassembly products are covered by the TL 9000 certification. Misleading scope statement would result in a nonconformity.

Other Examples

Below are additional examples to help clarify additional situations for services product categories and certified organizations that serve other industry sectors beyond ICT.

Example for Services Product Category (7.5.1 Customer Assistance and Technical Support) for a Multi-Site

Let us assume that sites A, B, and C are on the TL certificate with services category 7.5.1 (Customer Assistance and Technical Support) specified at each site. The teams in the A, B, and C locations are providing this support service to customers 1, 2, and 3. All other customers are receiving support from

different uncertified locations and are not served by the teams from the certified A, B, and C sites. The customer base of TL measurements reporting will then be limited to customers 1, 2, and 3. The support services delivered from the non-certified locations are not in the TL certification scope and subsequently, the TL measurements submissions should not include data from such customers. Subsequently, data from customers 4, 5, and 6, which are not served by certified A, B, and C sites would not be included because they get support from other sites that are not in the TL scope.

Example for Manufacturing Services (7.7.1 Small Assemblies and 7.7.2 Printed Circuit Board Assemblies)

An organization may provide contract manufacturing services for industry sectors other than ICT, such as automotive, aerospace or defense. The contract manufacturer may have different production requirements for the different industry sectors. Subsequently, assemblies manufactured only to the ICT sector production requirements are included in the customer base. The rationale is to avoid skewing Problem Report and Basic Return Rate BRR benchmarks resulting from assemblies produced with lower or typically more stringent specification and performance requirements in other industry sectors.

Example for Products Provided Across Multiple Industry Sectors

An organization may provide ICT products for industry sectors other than ICT, such as automotive, aerospace, or defense. Examples of such organizations include those certified to product categories 5.3 Power Systems and 8.5.2.3 Optical Subassemblies. The customer base should include all customers using the same exact products across all the industry sectors. However, products with the same functionality used across multiple industry sectors may have differing identification codes because they are designed to meet different specifications such as environment (e.g., temperature range, humidity, EMC).

Therefore, an organization could exclude from their TL scope those products, with unique identification codes that are not provided to ICT customers.

If there are situations where there are not differing identification codes across industry sectors, and the organization wishes to avoid providing measurement data for a product sold in different industries, the organization must remove the product from its TL 9000 scope. This is done by creating a new product identification code for different-industry products within the organization's system. This allows an organization to remove that product from the data reporting.

Also, refer to TL RHB Requirement 4.3.2 b): The TL scope shall include b) products/product lines covered by the registration. If not all products/product lines are included in the registration, then either the included or excluded products/product lines items shall be listed.

7. Comments:

If after the investigation as requested in this alert, an organization has any questions, they are encouraged to seek the advice of their CB and/or use the "Contact Us" feature on TL 9000.org.