



Case Study

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Unique AG: Pioneer in responsible AI now with ISO/IEC 42001 certification

The provider of AI solutions to the financial services sector now holds ISO/IEC 42001 certification from TÜV SÜD for its AI management system. The qualification elevates Unique to a pioneering role in Responsible AI—and provides competitive edge.



The challenge

“Responsible AI and explainability are increasingly frequent topics in our conversations with clients from the financial industry,” explains Dr. Sina Wulfmeyer, Chief Data Officer at Unique. The Zurich, Switzerland-based startup provides financial services companies with a platform for advanced responsible AI solutions. The software-as-a-service (SaaS) provider, which recently raised US\$30 million in Series A funding (February 2025), also operates branches in Berlin, London, Singapore, and New York and already holds ISO 9001, ISO/IEC 27001, and SOC 2 Type 2 certification. Now the EU AI Act is moving the topic of responsible AI more firmly into centre stage. “To ensure implementation of these industry regulations and standards is feasible, we worked with our clients to develop our own AI governance framework,” says Dr. Sina Wulfmeyer.

With the goal of becoming a pioneer in the field of responsible AI, Unique aims to prepare optimally for the requirements imposed by the EU AI Act and similar international standards. “At Unique, we naturally live and breathe our standards. We wanted external confirmation that our AI processes are sophisticated and sound,” says

Overview

Client name	Unique AG
Sample Industry	AI solutions for the financial services industry
Profile	Unique is a B2B SaaS startup with risk capital funding. The company’s platform is a base for developing advanced responsible AI solutions for the financial services sector.
Business challenge	Gain essential international certification for trustworthy AI.
Our solution	Implement an AI management system certified by TÜV SÜD
Business benefits	Structured, documented AI-related processes and sound proof of responsible AI as competitive edge



Dr. Sina Wulfmeyer. With this in mind, Unique brought in software provider Trail-ml to support the company with its AI governance platform.

The solution

Unique wanted certification that had a clear focus on AI processes and was internationally recognized. The sole option was the ISO/IEC 42001 standard, published in December 2023. This international standard defines how companies establish, implement, maintain, and continuously improve an artificial intelligence management system (AIMS). It serves as a guide for addressing AI in all its complexity, from data-driven approaches to responsible practices throughout the AI life cycle. The goal is to create transparency and establish trust by using verifiably accountable AI practices while also fulfilling ethical and regulatory requirements.

Supported by plentiful experience with international certification, the Unique team immersed themselves in the standard. “Parts of ISO 42001 are worded rather cryptically, so we used AI to clarify individual paragraphs,” recalls Michael Dreher, Unique’s CISO. The team used AI-driven tools such as retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), including Confluence pages, Teams, SharePoint, and emails to establish a broadly based starting point, enhancing understanding by combining external data sources with internal systems to generate transparent, traceable, and context-aware outputs. Additionally, an innovative tool-based method was employed for gap analysis:

Using Trail-ml’s software platform, Unique compared its AI governance, structures, and processes against the requirements of the standard. “This fast and targeted procedure enabled us to identify any missing aspects, assign existing elements to individual standard requirements, and establish how to implement the remaining requirements efficiently,” says Nikolaus Pinger, Managing Director at Trail-ml. The analysis revealed that the team needed to hone its already strong AI governance and redevelop various processes. “At our AI-first company, artificial intelligence is naturally embedded throughout our processes. That includes all AI-related risks in our information security management system. As we worked towards ISO 42001 certification, we highlighted the role of AI in relation to areas such as hallucinations and bias,” explains Michael Dreher. Beyond that, the team drew up a new AI policy and reworked the lifecycle management process and impact assessment, all in compliance with the standard requirements. To complete the certification process, Unique finally called in TÜV SÜD, one of only a few companies to offer certification of this kind.

Dr. Sina Wulfmeyer, Chief Data Officer at Unique

“Today, offering AI features alone is not enough. What matters is proving responsible and ethical use of AI – this distinction positions us as pioneers in the field.”



After the initial contact, it was soon clear that Unique was in good hands with the leading certification provider and its AI specialists.

The one-week hybrid audit was held partly on site and partly remotely. “After an introduction to our company and our portfolio, we addressed the individual standard requirements in the audit sessions,” reports Dr. Sina Wulfmeyer. After an intense week in a constructive and warm working atmosphere, the audit was completed.

Benefit to the company

Unique is now one of the first companies in Europe to hold ISO/IEC 42001:2023 certification, and can build on its pioneering role in responsible AI for the financial sector. The certificate is displayed in a prominent position in the Swiss headquarters and is clearly visible on the website. “Our aim is not only to achieve excellence, but also to demonstrate and model our excellence,” sums up Dr. Sina Wulfmeyer. By implementing the ISO/IEC 42001, Unique has consistently structured, documented AI processes, an ideal position for companies in a growth phase. “When clients ask how we manage risks, conduct tests, and verify use cases, we can point to features including our impact assessment. This delivers convincing arguments and establishes transparency,” notes Michael Dreher.

While the Compliance and IT Security departments will benefit most from the new processes, Marketing and Sales will also reap major advantages from the new TÜV SÜD certification. “Today, providing an AI feature is no longer sufficient. It is vital to demonstrate responsible use of artificial intelligence. That is a critical distinction, and we are now pioneers in this field,” says Dr. Sina Wulfmeyer with satisfaction. “Now we aim to pass on our knowledge and experiences to the community.”

Dr. Sina Wulfmeyer has some advice for companies likewise looking to apply for ISO 42001 certification: “Ensure management is on board, appoint an interdisciplinary team, and engage in dialogue with the community. We also found Trail-ml’s tool was extremely helpful in working systematically through the requirements and checking whether we had interpreted them correctly,” she stresses. “This certification places us at the cutting edge of innovation, and we can grow more easily thanks to our structured processes. We are very happy that we had TÜV SÜD at our side as our constructive certification partner, and the appreciation was mutual.”

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