XILINK

A XILINK FIELD REFERENCE

# THE SUPPLIER VERIFICATION HANDBOOK

How buyers confirm a Chinese supplier is who they say they are — from the checks you run at your desk, to the factory gate, to the moment before you pay.

| FIELD GUIDES | STAGES OF THE CHECK | EDITION |
|---|---|---|
| 38 | 5 | 2026 Edition |

Shandong XiLink International Trade Co., Ltd · The full library, kept current, is at xilinkglobaltrade.com/supplier-verification

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

# VERIFICATION IS A SEQUENCE, NOT A SINGLE CHECK

Most buyers treat verification as one action — ask for a certificate, glance at a website, wire the deposit. The suppliers who cause problems are built to survive exactly that.

This handbook runs the check in the five stages a real sourcing job follows, in order. Each stage is a printable checklist. Work down it, tick what holds, and note what does not.

> **The one rule behind every page:** the goal is never to find a reason to walk away. It is to turn a vague feeling into a score you can compare. A finding is a deduction, not a death sentence — the only thing you must never do is carry an unanswered doubt into a payment.


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 01 | **Before You Fly** | Entity, address & footprint from your desk |
| 02 | **The Visit** | The gate, the floor and the people |
| 03 | **When You Can't Go** | Verifying by video, done right |
| 04 | **The Goods** | Inspection, QC and spotting fakes |
| 05 | **Before You Pay** | The entity, the account, the money |

STAGE 01 OF 5

# 01 BEFORE YOU FLY

At your desk, before you book anything

- [ ] Get the supplier's **exact Chinese registered name** and the 18-digit Unified Social Credit Code — not the English trading name.
- [ ] Look the entity up on the national register: confirm it is **active**, not in the abnormal-operations list.
- [ ] Check the **business scope** — does it actually cover manufacturing, if they claim to manufacture?
- [ ] Compare four addresses: registered, office, production, and the one on your invitation. They are often different places.
- [ ] Drop the registered address into a map and satellite view — office tower, residential flat, or a real industrial footprint?
- [ ] Cross-check the satellite footprint and insured headcount against the capacity and workforce they claim.

THE 4 FULL FIELD GUIDES FOR THIS STAGE — TAP ANY TITLE TO OPEN IT


**China Company Due Diligence: 8-Step Workflow for Overseas Buyers** READ →

**Verify Chinese Counterparty: 12-Point Pre-Contract Checklist (2026)** READ →

**How to Verify a Real Chinese Factory Online Before Placing an Order** READ →

**Before You Book the Flight: Checking a Chinese Supplier's Addresses on a Map** READ →

STAGE 02 OF 5

# 02 THE VISIT

At the gate, on the floor, reading the people

- [ ] Arrive 5–10 minutes early and get out of the car **outside** the gate.
- [ ] Sign at the gate: is the name cut in stone and set in concrete, or a small board hung on hooks that lifts off in a minute?
- [ ] Count the electric scooters under the canopy — a free headcount estimate to cross-check against the register.
- [ ] Read wear, not tidiness: tyre tracks, chipped kerbs and oil staining at the loading bay take months to form.
- [ ] Ask your host something ordinary and unplanned — where the toilet is, or borrow a pen. Real staff answer without thinking.
- [ ] If your contact cancels at the last minute and someone else receives you, find out quietly who actually runs the plant.

THE 15 FULL FIELD GUIDES FOR THIS STAGE — TAP ANY TITLE TO OPEN IT


**Your Contact Can't Make the Factory Visit — and Someone Else Receives You** READ →

**The Sign Was Hanging on Hooks: Your First Sixty Seconds at the Factory Gate** READ →

**Borrow a Pen: How to Tell If the Person Showing You the Factory Works There** READ →

**Office Downtown, Factory a County Away: What That Distance Costs You** READ →

**China Factory Audit for Central Asia SMEs: Visible vs Invisible Red Flags (2026 Field Manual)** READ →

**How to Verify Suppliers in China: 2026 Red Flags Guide** READ →

**Pre-Contract Audit of Chinese Supplier: Legal Compliance + QC Walkthrough** READ →

**Central Asia SME Factory Audit in China: 1-Day Checklist for Solo Owners (2026)** READ →

**Factory Audit China: 2026 European SME Buyer Checklist** READ →

**Factory Audit in China for Non-Native English Speakers: What to Watch For** READ →

**Chinese Supplier Checklist: 15 Shop-Floor Signals (2026)** READ →

**Factory Audit in China: Kazakhstan Buyer Step-by-Step Guide** READ →

**Steel Structure Supplier in China: Audit Checklist for Contractors** READ →

**Building Materials Factory Audit in China: Contractor Checklist** READ →

**China Quality Auditor 2026: Where to Hire, How Much, What They Check** READ →

STAGE 03 OF 5

# 03 WHEN YOU CAN'T GO

Verifying by video, not watching a guided film

- [ ] Agree the rules before the call: **live not recorded**, no route sent in advance, working hours, camera held by workshop staff.
- [ ] Insist on one **continuous walk** — street, gate, yard, workshop, your line, work in progress, warehouse. Where the picture stops, the audit stops.
- [ ] Ask them to point the camera out of a window — does the daylight match the local time you agreed?
- [ ] Send them to a spot they did not prepare, and ask for one small physical action a recording cannot fake.
- [ ] Ask them to write a number you invent on the spot and hold it to the camera — proof it is live.
- [ ] Be honest about the limits: video filters out the obviously wrong; it does not verify capacity or whose goods you are seeing.

THE 3 FULL FIELD GUIDES FOR THIS STAGE — TAP ANY TITLE TO OPEN IT

**When You Can't Fly: Running a Video Factory Audit That Isn't a Guided Film** READ →

**China Remote QC for Central Asia Buyers: The 6-Tool Playbook for Video, Recording, and Third-Party Combos** READ →

**Remote Quality Control China: A Buyer's 6-Tool Playbook** READ →

STAGE 04 OF 5

# 04 THE GOODS

Inspection, quality control, spotting fakes

- [ ] A real company can still ship the wrong goods — verify the entity **and** the goods.
- [ ] Read the certificate's own trust chain: certification body → accreditation mark → verify the number on the issuer's own site, and on IAF CertSearch.
- [ ] Confirm the certificate's company name, scope and validity match your contract — not just that a certificate exists.
- [ ] For engines, plates and parts: check the nameplate, the emission label and the casting marks against the genuine article.
- [ ] Book pre-shipment inspection during production, not after — the cost belongs in your price comparison.
- [ ] A valid certificate proves a process, not this batch. Verify the certificate, then verify the goods.

THE 10 FULL FIELD GUIDES FOR THIS STAGE — TAP ANY TITLE TO OPEN IT


| | |
|---|---|
| **Agricultural Machinery Quality Control China: 8 Pre-Shipment Checkpoints for Central Asian Buyers** | READ → |
| **QIMA Inspection Pricing 2026: Per Man-Day Breakdown by Category** | READ → |
| **Prefab Building Components from China: QC Checklist Before Shipment** | READ → |
| **QC Protocol for Agricultural Machinery: What Smart Buyers Check** | READ → |
| **Construction Materials QA: Lab Tests, Certificates, and On-Site Verification** | READ → |
| **Chinese Diesel Engine for Kazakhstan: Counterfeit Risks & 7-Point Verification** | READ → |
| **How to Verify a Genuine Japanese Engine on a Chinese-Built Mini Excavator** | READ → |
| **Verify a Chinese ATV/UTV Real Factory: 5 Steps to Avoid the 1688 Trap** | READ → |
| **How to Read an Engine Plate — Real vs Fake Emission Labels on Used Mini Excavators** | READ → |
| **Fake Certificates: How to Verify CE, ISO, and EPA** | READ → |

STAGE 05 OF 5

# 05 BEFORE YOU PAY

Checking the entity and protecting the money

- [ ] Confirm the **bank account holder's name equals the contract / PI entity name** — a mismatch is a hard stop.
- [ ] Be alert to a payment account that changes at the last minute — verify any change by a phone number you already had, never one from that email.
- [ ] Watch the three-way structure: the party negotiating, the plant producing and the account receiving are often three companies.
- [ ] Understand the model before you judge it: manufacturer, assembler or trader — each is legitimate; hiding which one is the problem.
- [ ] For a first order or a large sum, send a small test payment first.
- [ ] If money has already gone to a wrong account: call your remitting bank to recall, report it, and contact the real supplier — within 24 hours it can still be stopped.

THE 6 FULL FIELD GUIDES FOR THIS STAGE — TAP ANY TITLE TO OPEN IT


**The Office, the Factory and the Bank Account Were Three Different Companies** READ →

**How to Avoid Scams from China Suppliers: 12 Real Patterns in 2026** READ →

**How to Avoid Scams Importing Machinery from China** READ →

**China Sourcing for European SMEs: Prepayment Trap and VAT Split-Settlement** READ →

**China Sourcing Agent for Agricultural Implements: Avoiding Duplicate Supplier Traps** READ →

**Factory vs Trading Company in China: 8 Signals to Tell Them Apart in 90 Seconds** READ →

REFERENCE

# THE OFFICIAL REGISTERS

Every claim in this handbook can be checked against a public source. These are the ones you will use most. Verify a certificate number on the issuer's own site, never the phone number printed on the certificate.

| REGISTER | WHERE | WHAT IT PROVES |
|---|---|---|
| **National Enterprise Credit Information Publicity System** | gsxt.gov.cn | Entity status, registered address, business scope, 18-digit code, insured headcount |
| **IAF CertSearch** | iafcertsearch.org | Whether an ISO / management-system certificate is genuine and current |
| **China Customs credit** | credit.customs.gov.cn | Whether the exporter is registered with Customs and its credit standing |
| **Supreme People's Court** | zxgk.court.gov.cn | Whether the company is on the judgment-debtor / dishonest-debtor list |

> **An absent certificate is a question. A forged one is an answer.** Not being able to verify something is a reason to ask — a small or new supplier may simply not have it. A certificate that fails verification is a different matter.

## Manufacturer, Assembler or Trader — Know Which You Are Buying From

A plant with few machines is not automatically a front. Many good suppliers are **assemblers**: their skill is selecting component suppliers and building the finished unit, often with a better price and more flexibility on small batches and spec changes. A **trader** is legitimate too — if it says so and names the real factory. The problem is never which type they are. It is whether they hid which type.

WHEN YOU'D RATHER HAVE IT DONE

# TWO WAYS TO USE THIS

This handbook is written so you can run the whole check yourself. When you would rather have someone on the ground who does it every week, that is what we do — the same method, on your behalf.

## SCORE THE SUPPLIER YOURSELF

Run the checks, then turn what you found into a comparable number with our scorecard, so you weigh suppliers on evidence, not on a feeling.

**xilinkglobaltrade.com/china-supplier-verification-scorecard/**

## HAVE XILINK VERIFY IT

Can't fly, or want it done properly the first time? Tell us the supplier and what you're buying. We verify the entity, the plant and the goods, and tell you straight — including when it checks out.

**xilinkglobaltrade.com/contact-us/**

## SCAN FOR THE FULL, ALWAYS-CURRENT LIBRARY

This handbook is a working summary. The 38 field guides behind it — updated as registers and rules change — live at **xilinkglobaltrade.com/supplier-verification**. Scan the code, or share this PDF freely: every buyer who checks a supplier properly is one fewer bad story about sourcing from China.

© 2026 Shandong XiLink International Trade Co., Ltd · info@xilinkglobaltrade.com · xilinkglobaltrade.com