Supplier Background Check Checklist Before Placing an Order

Written by SourcingX Supplier Intelligence Team | Last reviewed Sep 23, 2026

Before placing an order, verify the legal seller, company status, supplier type, production site, product capability, compliance evidence, export experience, payment beneficiary, and order controls. Mark each item as Verified, Unresolved, Escalated, or Not applicable. Do not approve payment while a critical identity, product-safety, document-integrity, or beneficiary issue remains unresolved.

Decision labels

Verified	The item is supported by traceable evidence and no material inconsistency remains.
Unresolved	Information is missing, inconsistent, outdated, or not independently checked.
Escalated	The issue requires an audit, laboratory, issuer, legal adviser, financial control, or senior approval.
Not applicable	The item does not apply to this product, market, supplier model, or transaction.

A. Company identity and status

CHECK	ITEM	STATUS	EVIDENCE / NOTES
[ ]	Chinese legal name and Unified Social Credit Code obtained.		
[ ]	Current business license collected and readable.		
[ ]	Registration status checked in a traceable source.		
[ ]	Establishment date, registered address, legal representative, and business scope reviewed.		
[ ]	Contract and invoice use the correct legal entity name.		
[ ]	Website, email domain, marketplace profile, and sales contact are connected to the legal entity or their relationship is explained.		
[ ]	Abnormal-operation, revocation, cancellation, enforcement, or other material risk records reviewed where reliable data is available.		

Reference: National Enterprise Credit Information Publicity System (GSXT)

B. Supplier type and entity relationships

CHECK	ITEM	STATUS	EVIDENCE / NOTES
[ ]	Supplier identified as manufacturer, trading company, exporter, group company, or intermediary.		
[ ]	Contracting seller identified.		
[ ]	Factory-operating entity and production address identified.		
[ ]	Exporter identified where different from the seller or factory.		
[ ]	Certificate and test-report holder identified.		
[ ]	Bank beneficiary identified.		
[ ]	Relationship among the seller, factory, exporter, document holder, and bank beneficiary documented.		
[ ]	Outsourced production processes and subcontractors disclosed where material.		

C. Product and production capability

CHECK	ITEM	STATUS	EVIDENCE / NOTES
[ ]	Final product specification issued with a revision number or date.		
[ ]	Material, dimensions, tolerances, performance, intended use, packaging, and labeling confirmed.		
[ ]	Required manufacturing processes identified.		
[ ]	In-house and outsourced processes distinguished.		
[ ]	Production flow, equipment, and staffing evidence reviewed.		
[ ]	A pre-production, approval, or first-article sample has been evaluated against the final written specification, where applicable.		

CHECK	ITEM	STATUS	EVIDENCE / NOTES
[ ]	The Approved Sample / Golden Sample is identified, with its status, product version, approval date, and responsible parties documented.		
[ ]	Production acceptance criteria are tied to both the final written specification and the Approved Sample / Golden Sample, where applicable.		
[ ]	Any difference between the written specification and the Approved Sample / Golden Sample is documented and resolved before production acceptance criteria are finalized.		
[ ]	The approved reference sample is retained, labeled, dated, and traceable so the buyer and supplier are using the same approved version.		
[ ]	Incoming, in-process, and final quality controls reviewed.		
[ ]	Change-control scope covers changes to materials, components, dimensions, construction, production process, tooling, factory, or key subcontractors, where relevant.		
[ ]	Change-control scope also covers relevant changes to labeling, technical documents, certificates, test reports, or intended use.		
[ ]	Changes requiring buyer notification are distinguished from changes requiring the buyer’s prior written approval before implementation.		
[ ]	Triggers for re-sampling, testing, inspection, or compliance review are defined for material product, supplier, facility, document, or process changes.		
[ ]	Capacity and lead-time assumptions documented.		
[ ]	Tooling ownership, maintenance, storage, and transfer terms documented where relevant.		

D. Compliance documents

CHECK	ITEM	STATUS	EVIDENCE / NOTES
[ ]	Destination country, user group, sales channel, and product claims confirmed.		

CHECK	ITEM	STATUS	EVIDENCE / NOTES
[ ]	Applicable requirements identified by a qualified person or authoritative source.		
[ ]	Full certificates, test reports, declarations, labels, and technical documents collected as applicable.		
[ ]	Each document matched to the exact legal entity, factory, model, material, color, construction, and intended use.		
[ ]	Standard or regulation, test method, edition, issue date, scope, and result reviewed.		
[ ]	Laboratory or certification body checked.		
[ ]	Accreditation or notified-body scope checked where applicable.		
[ ]	Certificate or report number verified with the issuer or an official database where available.		
[ ]	Need for final-product testing confirmed.		
[ ]	Responsibilities for technical documentation, labels, warnings, traceability, and post-market action assigned.		

Reference: European Commission - CE marking

Reference: European Commission - Food Contact Materials

Reference: EUR-Lex - Regulation (EU) 2023/988

E. Export capability and logistics

CHECK	ITEM	STATUS	EVIDENCE / NOTES
[ ]	Supplier's claimed products and export markets documented.		
[ ]	Available shipment or trade records reviewed for the identified exporter and related entities.		
[ ]	Product descriptions or HS classifications compared with the intended product.		

CHECK	ITEM	STATUS	EVIDENCE / NOTES
[ ]	Shipment activity reviewed across a relevant period rather than one record.		
[ ]	Absence of data treated as inconclusive until coverage and entity-matching limits are considered.		
[ ]	Incoterms, customs classification, export documentation, and logistics responsibilities confirmed.		

Reference: World Customs Organization - Harmonized System

F. Payment and order controls

CHECK	ITEM	STATUS	EVIDENCE / NOTES
[ ]	Quotation is tied to the correct seller and current product specification.		
[ ]	Bank beneficiary matches the contracting seller or a documented, verified arrangement.		
[ ]	No payment is made to a personal or newly substituted account without independent verification.		
[ ]	Deposit, balance, inspection, testing, and shipment milestones are defined.		
[ ]	The need for a pilot order, first production run, or small initial production batch is assessed before scaling to the full order, where appropriate.		
[ ]	Pilot-order quantity, acceptance criteria, inspection or testing requirements, treatment of nonconforming output, and the decision required before scaling are documented where applicable.		
[ ]	A successful sample is not treated as sufficient approval for full production; required pilot-order results and production-stage checks are reviewed before scaling.		
[ ]	Tooling, samples, testing, inspection, rework, replacement, and refund responsibilities are documented.		

CHECK	ITEM	STATUS	EVIDENCE / NOTES
[ ]	Warranty, defect handling, intellectual property, confidentiality, and dispute terms are documented where relevant.		
[ ]	Any last-minute change to payment instructions is independently re-verified through a known channel.		

Common unresolved issues in SourcingX reviews

These issues are not proof that a supplier is fraudulent or unsuitable. They indicate that the available evidence is not yet sufficient for a decision.

- The English company name cannot be matched confidently to a Chinese legal entity. Ask for the business license and Unified Social Credit Code before relying on company-status or risk data.
- Addresses do not match. A registered office, warehouse, factory, and recently moved site may legitimately differ, but the supplier should explain which entity operates each location.
- No matching export record is found, or records appear under another company. Dataset coverage, export agents, intermediary traders, and name changes can explain the gap; map the exporter and request supporting shipment documents.
- The target market is not defined. Product-compliance requirements cannot be scoped reliably until the destination country, user group, sales channel, and claims are known.
- The final product specification is incomplete. Capability, testing, quality control, and compliance cannot be evaluated against an undefined product.
- The Approved Sample / Golden Sample is not tied to a controlled production specification. A good sample alone does not establish that mass production will use the same materials, components, process, or tolerances. Confirm the approved reference, production specification, and change-control requirements before scaling the order.

Stop Before Payment

Do not release funds if any of the following are true:

- The legal seller or bank beneficiary cannot be verified.
- The supplier cannot explain the relationship between the seller and the factory.
- A safety- or compliance-critical document does not match the product or cannot be traced.
- The factory or production process required for the product cannot be demonstrated.
- The supplier pressures the buyer to bypass verification, testing, inspection, or written terms.