

International management system: ISO 14000 on environmental management

In brief

ISO 14001:2004 (hereafter referred to as ISO 14001) is by far the most widely used environmental management system (EMS) worldwide. It is part of the ISO 14000 series which addresses environmental management; ISO 14001:2004 provides the requirements for an EMS and ISO 14004:2004 gives general EMS guidelines.

The ISO 14001 standard can be implemented in all kinds of companies and organisations, regardless of size, public or private and sector. This broad scope is achievable because of the focus of ISO 14001, which is to provide a framework for a strategic approach to environmental policy, plans and actions, rather than specifying levels of environmental performance which would have to be product specific.

Market impact

The number of companies that are ISO 14001 certified is growing each year. The latest figures made available by ISO are for the year 2006, which show that almost 130 000 certificates had been issued in 140 countries and economies. This represented a growth of 16% compared to the year before.

The certified companies operate in a range of industry sectors and service sectors. In some sectors, ISO 14001 does no longer provide an added value, but has rather become a prerequisite for finding international buyers. In other sectors, ISO 14001 certification could still provide an advantage above competitors.

➔ [For more information](#) on the use of ISO 14001, please refer to the ISO survey for the year 2006 which you can find in the external links section.

Want to know more about the market impact in your sector?

➔ Check out the websites of large companies in your sector and see what they do. Most companies report about ISO 14001 and other management systems on their websites. If you can't think of companies in your sector, check out relevant buyer requirements and market surveys in this database!

Content

ISO 14001 provides a framework for introducing an EMS. An essential part is the aim for continuous improvement. It is a tool enabling an organization of any size or type to:

- **identify** and control the environmental impact of its activities, products or services, and to
- **improve** its environmental performance continually, and to
- implement a **systematic approach** to setting environmental objectives and targets, to **achieving** these and to **demonstrating** that they have been achieved.

➔ [For more information](#) on ISO 14001, please refer to the ISO website. You can find a link in the external links section.

ISO 14001 can be implemented in combination with other management systems such as ISO 9001 on quality and OHSAS 18001 on occupational health and safety.

➔ [For more information](#) on these management systems, please refer to the other documents in the database.

Monitoring

ISO does not require external certification, but in order to prove compliance to clients it may still be needed. In this case, the ISO 14001 system has to be certified by an authorised certifying body (such as Lloyd's, Veritas and SGS). A certificate is valid for three years. In order to maintain the certificate, regular audits, both internal (1-2 times per year) and external (2 times per year), are needed.

Costs

The cost of certification varies from one organisation to another, depending on factors such as the size and complexity of the organisation, the actual state of implementation of the EMS, the attitude and commitment of the top management, etc. If you are interested in knowing more about certification costs, it is advisable to contact a certification organisation for more information.

Organisation

ISO, International Organization for Standardization, is a network of national standards institutes from 157 countries. The central secretariat is based in Geneva. Its members are organisations from both the public and the private sector.

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