

ISO 14001:2015 - Certificate of Environmental Management Systems

Introduction

ISO 14001 is an internationally agreed standard that sets out the requirements for an environmental management system. It helps organizations improve their environmental performance through more efficient use of resources and reduction of waste, gaining a competitive advantage and the trust of stakeholders.

An environmental management system helps organizations identify, manage, monitor and control their environmental issues in a "holistic" manner.

Other ISO standards that look at different types of management systems, such as ISO 9001 for quality management and ISO 45001 for occupational health and safety, all use a HighLevel Structure. This means that ISO 14001 can be integrated easily into any existing ISO management system.

ISO 14001 is suitable for organizations of all types and sizes, be they private, not-for-profit or governmental. It requires that an organization considers all environmental issues relevant to its operations, such as air pollution, water and sewage issues, waste management, soil contamination, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and resource use and efficiency.

Like all ISO management system standards, ISO 14001 includes the need for continual improvement of an organization's systems and approach to environmental concerns.

The standard has recently been revised, with key improvements such as the increased prominence of environmental management within the organization's strategic planning processes, greater input from leadership and a stronger commitment to proactive initiatives that boost environmental performance.

Scope

There are many benefits to implementing an EMS. These include a potential for:

- improved control and management of emissions, effluents and wastes;
- avoidance and safe handling of hazardous or potentially polluting materials;
- reduction in generated wastes;
- energy efficiency improvements and cost savings;
- conservation of natural resources, including water, land and precious minerals;
- a comprehensive approach to satisfying legal and other requirements;
- operational efficiency and cost savings;
- pursuing environmental initiatives that are aligned with business priorities.

There are many reasons why an organization should take a strategic approach to improving its environmental performance. Users of the standard have reported that ISO 14001 helps:

- Demonstrate compliance with current and future statutory and regulatory requirements
- Increase leadership involvement and engagement of employees
- Improve company reputation and the confidence of stakeholders through strategic communication
- Achieve strategic business aims by incorporating environmental issues into business management
- Provide a competitive and financial advantage through improved efficiencies and reduced costs
- Encourage better environmental performance of suppliers by integrating them into the organization's business systems.

Other benefits can include increased profitability, better access to markets and improved relationships with stakeholders (e.g. customers, regulators, investors, insurers, neighbours).