



# ISO 14001 EMS IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

Written by



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## 1. Background

With rising public awareness of the need to protect our environment, governments and businesses are under increasing pressure to minimize their environmental footprint and promote sustainable development. The ISO 14001 - Environmental Management Systems (EMS) Standard has been developed to help organizations identify, manage and control the activities that have an environmental impact.

Industrial companies, service organizations, utility and public bodies worldwide have embraced ISO 14001 as the preferred model for environmental management and for improved performance. The standard, which was published by ISO in 1996 was revised in 2004, 2015 and is compatible with other management standards particularly the widely used ISO 9001 Quality Management Standard.



## 2. Steps to establishing and implementing an EMS

- Obtain commitment from top management.
- Define responsibilities, establish EMS steering committee, develop implementation plan, and undertake initial training on EMS.
- Undertake an initial environmental review.
- Identify environmental aspects & legal & other requirements; determine significant aspects; formulate environmental policy; establish environmental objectives, targets & programs.
- Implementation & operation—develop documentation & processes.
- Develop processes for monitoring, measurement & corrective & preventive action.
- Develop and deliver EMS training within the organization.
- Establish an internal audit program, including training; conduct initial internal audit to evaluate conformity to requirements of ISO 14001, including evaluation of compliance.
- Follow up internal audit with improvements to system.
- Conduct initial management review of EMS.
- Implement improvements from management review.

## 3. Initial environmental review

Provides benefit to an organization looking at environmental management for the first time and usually covers the following:

- Identification of environmental aspects.
- Identification of legal requirements and other requirements to which the organization subscribes.

- Examination of existing environmental management activities, controls and procedures, including those associated with procurement and contracting.
- Evaluation of previous emergency situations and accidents.

#### 4. Benefits for your organization in implementing an EMS

- Strengthens stakeholder confidence – ISO 14001 reduces risk of liability, keeps the organization of legislative and regulatory developments and reduces the environmental burden through elimination and reduction.
- Greater competitive advantage – your organization will achieve improved cost control, improved organizational effectiveness and attain a better organizational image.
- More secured long term viability – environmental management standard facilitates effective management, demonstrates environmental focus and introduces changes in a controlled manner.
- Employee involvement and motivation – ISO 14001 demonstrates innovation and forward thinking approach to customers and prospective employees. It clearly defines employees' functions and establishes environmental awareness and clear methodologies.

#### 5. Planning

##### *Environmental aspects*

Before an organization can manage its environmental issues, it needs to identify how it interacts with the environment. The standard uses some specific terms in this process:

*Environmental aspects* are elements of an organization's context activities, products and services that can interact with the environment, that is, have a negative or positive environmental impact.

A *significant* environmental aspect is one that can have a significant environmental impact.

The identification of environmental aspects is best done in a systematic way designed to capture all actual and potential impacts. The process typically involves:

- Systematic identification of all activities undertaken by the organization, and all products and services provided. Activities include those that are infrequent, supporting activities such as administration and maintenance, and services provided by contractors.
- Identification of the ways those activities, products and services can interact with the environment, that is, identification of environmental aspects.
- Identification of the environmental impacts associated with the environmental aspects.
- Analysis of the risks to determine risk levels.
- Evaluation of the risks to determine which environmental aspects and impacts are *significant* risks to the environment and/or the organization.

## 6. Legal and other requirements

The environmental policy must include a commitment to comply with legal and other requirements in order to meet the requirements of the standard.

Organizations are usually subject to a number of environmental legal requirements through legislation, regulations, permits, licenses and contracts. These requirements must be thoroughly identified and understood so that they can be included in the environmental management system.

Organizations also commonly subscribe to a number of other non-legal requirements relating to environmental issues. These could include internal policies, government policies and programs, requirements of industry or professional bodies, agreements with industry associations, and agreements with local communities. These commitments can be as important as legal requirements. Therefore, they need to be identified and referenced in the environmental management system.

## 7. Environmental policy

An environmental policy set the direction for management of the environment. By providing a framework for setting and reviewing environmental objectives

and targets, it describes the expectations of top management (and the rest of the organization) for environmental performance.

Development of the policy requires top management to make critical decisions on what the organization aims to achieve in environmental management, such as reducing the use of natural resources, increasing the use of renewable energy, or initially just measuring its contribution to the emission of greenhouse gases. The policy is intended to guide the organization to focus its effort and resources

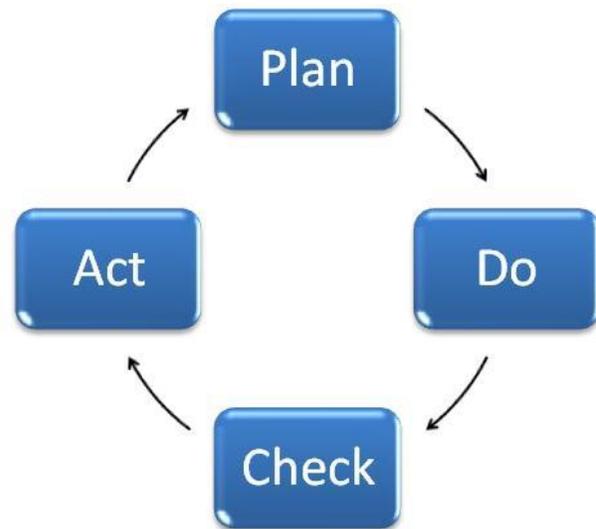
## 8. PDCA Approach to EMS

**Plan** – establish the objectives and processes necessary to deliver results in accordance with the organization’s EMS policy.

**Do** –implement the process.

**Check** –monitor and measure performance against EMS policy, objectives, legal and other requirements, and report results.

**Act** – take actions to continually improve EMS performance.



The standard can be implemented to your whole organization. The best results come when the whole organization is working on the same system and EMS policy is integrated into other management systems and into the culture of the organization.



## 9. Key Steps to Getting Certified

### (a) Applying

Your Organization can apply for certification through online quotations from a number of Certification Company's and they will review all the information and provide you with a specific quotation. Quotations cover a three-year period corresponding to the certification cycle and are calculated to make sure that every customer receives the certification service best suited to their needs (scope of application).

### (b) Gap Assessment

Companies can proceed at their own pace by using their internal team or hire a qualify consultant or consulting firm to conduct the assessment of readiness for certification, with assessment dates arranged to suit your time lines. Consultant or consulting firm assessment in areas which are:

- Conduct an on-site analysis of your current system
- Assess this against the relevant standard
- Prepare a report highlighting the gaps between your current system and the standard.

### (c) Preliminary assessment – stage 1

The Preliminary Assessment involves an inspection of your documentation and a review ranging over various areas including:

- The proposed scope of your Certification
- The status of implementation of your management system
- The appropriate regulatory requirements
- Your management policies and objectives
- Whether the system addresses the key areas of your business
- Your site-specific activities – top level process review
- Your key management elements, e.g. internal audits, reviews and complaints procedures
- You're ready to move onto Stage 2 of the assessment, the Certification Assessment.

The Preliminary Assessment normally takes place on-site. We recommend an interval of (12) twelve weeks between the Preliminary Assessment and the Certification Assessment to allow time to resolve any issues arising from the Preliminary Assessment.

After the Preliminary Assessment is completed, a brief report is produced for evaluating your readiness to proceed to the next stage and identifying any areas that needs to be improved before moving to Stage 2.

If the Preliminary Assessment finds that your organization is not ready for full Certification Assessment, it becomes, in effect, a Gap Assessment. That means that a second Preliminary Assessment will have to be carried out.

### (d) Certification assessment – stage 2

The Certification Assessment (Stage 2) involves a full review of your management system, including relevant records and documents. Its purpose is to confirm that your management system is properly controlled and has predictable outcomes.

At the end of the Certification Assessment, Certification Auditor issues a detailed report, together with the outcome (Whether to recommend Certification or not). Certification Body will identify any issues found during the assessment. Your organization shall be expected to

submit an action plan detailing what changes planned to be made to the management system to eliminate or reduce the risk of the same issues re-occurring.

#### (e) Surveillance and re-assessment

At least once a year, your Certification Company shall visit your Organization to ensure the management system is being maintained and is achieving its expected outcomes. During each visit, part of the management system is reviewed in depth.

Certificates expire every three years, with the expiry date indicated on the certificate. Before that date, your Certification Company must undertake a detailed reassessment, reviewing the performance of the whole management system to make sure every element is performing satisfactorily. The results of the previous visits are taken into account.

During the period of re-Certification, changes are inevitable. The Certification company works with each certified organization to make sure the management system remains sound. Normally, changes can be reviewed and assessed during routine surveillance visits. In cases where change leads to the breakdown of the system, reserves the right to suspend or revoke certification.



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