

ISO 14001: 2004

Environmental Management Systems- Requirements with guidance for use

ISO 14001 2004 is a standard that specifies a set of environmental management requirements for an Environmental Management Systems (EMS). The purpose of this standard is to help all types of organizations protect the environment, prevent pollution, and to improve their environmental performance while meeting their customers requirements. All organizations in public, private or manufacturing services have an impact on the environment.

ISO 14001: 2004 was launched in 1996, revised in 2004 and has been implemented in one hundred and thirty eight (138) countries worldwide. ISO 14001:2004 is successful due to the fact that the standard only specifies the requirements for a robust EMS, however the standard does not mandate what any organization needs to do in order to fulfill the stated requirements. Due to the flexibility, the standard accommodates various types of users such as business, municipalities, industries, schools and communities.

The EMS structure provides a framework for an organization to systematically approach their environmental concerns by:

- Identifying the environmental impacts of the organization's activities
- Setting objectives and targets within the organization to reduce the environmental impacts
- Achieving the objectives stated by reaching the set targets
- Demonstrating a commitment to the environment to stakeholders and interested parties
- Continually accessing the system to facilitate improvement in the organization

Implementing ISO 14001:2004 can lead to reduction in pollution, reduction in cost of waste management, saving cost in consumption of energy and raw materials and alignment to legal requirements.