



FAQs – ISO 14001 certification for environmental management systems

Our experts have answered frequently asked questions about ISO 14001 certification. If you can't find what you are looking for, [please contact us!](#)

1. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ISO 14001?

ISO 14001 regulates environmental protection and the avoidance of environmental pollution in line with socio-economic requirements. [The environmental standard ISO 14001](#) is the globally applicable instrument for establishing and implementing an environmental management system.

2. WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ISO 14001 CERTIFICATION?

You can have your company certified according to the environmental standard ISO 14001:2015, regardless of its size, sector or organizational form. However, there are some requirements for ISO 14001 certification that you must meet:

- You must undertake to establish, implement and maintain an environmental management system that meets the requirements of the DIN EN ISO 14001 standard.
- In order to be able to certify your environmental management system, you must first have introduced and tested a functioning environmental management system.
- The scope of the environmental management system (EMS) should be defined to include the organizational context and the expectations of interested parties.

3. WHO ARE "INTERESTED PARTIES"?

Examples of "interested parties" are customers, municipalities, suppliers, supervisory authorities, non-governmental organizations, investors and employees. There is no obligation to actively approach them, but rather to take into account those stakeholders who have actively expressed their interest and from whom relevant requirements and binding obligations arise.

4. WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT THE "LIFE CYCLE" OF ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS MUST BE CONSIDERED?

According to ISO 14001:2015, the environmental aspects and associated impacts that may originate from activities and products are to be considered, provided that these can be monitored and influenced. The "life cycle" of a product includes, for example, raw material extraction, development, manufacture, transport, application and disposal.

5. WHICH ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS ALONG THE VALUE CHAIN NEED TO BE CONTROLLED AND MONITORED?

In addition to direct environmental aspects in the manufacturing or service process, aspects of procurement, product development, delivery, use and treatment at the end of the life cycle must also be considered.

Suppliers and contract partners, especially outsourced processes, must also be controlled. This may include the need to provide appropriate information on significant environmental aspects of the product or service.

6. HOW ARE ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS IDENTIFIED AND EVALUATED?

The identification of environmental aspects and of significant environmental impact is a process that can be divided into four steps:

- Selection of activities, production processes, services.
- Determination of the environmental aspects that can be directly monitored as well as the indirect ones. These include, for example, goods and services used by the organization.
- Product and service-related determination of environmental impact and compilation of a register.
- Assessment of environmental impact (relevance).

7. WHICH ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS MUST BE ASSESSED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE?

Where possible and appropriate, environmental aspects must be evaluated for performance if they are related to

activities having a significant environmental impact and/or if they are governed by binding commitments and relevant process controls. Assessments of environmental performance should be carried out keeping in mind the measurability of progress towards environmental objectives.

8. WHEN MUST KEY FIGURES BE USED?

In order to assess the overall environmental performance, i.e. all significant environmental aspects considered in this respect, suitable indicators should be sought. In particular, the ISO 14001:2015 requires key figures to monitor progress towards achieving measurable targets. DIN EN ISO 14031 is helpful here.

9. HOW CAN "CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT" BE DEMONSTRATED?

According to ISO 14001:2015, an improvement in environmental performance, which can in most cases be demonstrated by means of established indicators, is desired. It is true that the improvement of individual system elements (e.g. training, communication) can also represent an improvement of the system. However, these elements are not, in themselves, the purpose of the management system and are therefore not sufficient to demonstrate continuous improvement in the long term.

10. WHAT DOES RISK ASSESSMENT MEAN?

Within the framework of the planning process, both environmental impact and risks are to be determined and assessed. Risks associated with environmental aspects include, for example, ignorance of dangers and opportunities. Assessing risk increases safety by providing an opportunity to initiate risk reduction measures, and it facilitates the achievement of objectives that have been set.

11. WHAT DOES A COMBINATION OF THE ISO 14001 AND ISO 50001 STANDARDS MEAN FOR MY COMPANY?

- Increase in efficiency
- Time and cost savings
- Harmonization
- Better cooperation between competent departments and bodies
- Higher acceptance and motivation of employees
- Unification of regulations
- Identification and optimization of interfaces to avoid duplication of work

12. WHAT DOES THE TERM "LEGAL COMPLIANCE" MEAN IN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW?

Legal compliance is adherence to the environmental rules and regulations set by authorities.

OUR EXPERTS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE FOR A FREE INFORMATIONAL MEETING. PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT US!

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