

## EMAS and ISO 14001

The European born Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and the International Organization of Standards 14001 (ISO 14001), are both Environmental Management Systems standards that (EMS) strive for the same goal, but are born from different schools of thought.

ISO 14001 is generally considered the less demanding of the two. It consists of five continuous phases. The fundamental phase is to “outline a corporate environmental policy.” According to ISO 14001 guidelines, this policy must imply a commitment to continuous improvement in control, management, and prevention of pollution. This policy must be thoroughly documented, implemented, maintained, and communicated to the public. After the policy and its specifics are outlined, the “planning” phase identifies all environmental aspects of the business, keeps track of any legal and non legal requirements, formalizes documentation regarding objectives and targets, as well as lays the ground work for an environmental program to satisfy these goals. In the next “implementation and operation” phase, a company will formally define, document, and communicate the roles and responsibilities for executing what has been planned. This phase creates an internal group responsible for environmental conformity. With the EMS in place, the next step is the “checking and corrective action” phase. This entails the monitoring and measurement of organizations activities regarding pollution, as well as corrective action when non-conformities occur. This phase also sets a regular schedule for audits to determine the effectiveness of the EMS. The company must will perform management reviews to assess progress of the EMS and reevaluate environmental policy (phase one) and to round out the cycle and maintain continual improvement.

Outside of the European Union, ISO 14001 is the primary EMS option with relatively few alternatives. European countries, however, often have their own national EMS, each with different values. Partially in response to these differences, the European Union developed the Eco-Management Audit Schema (EMAS). This served as a continent wide standard from which multinational organizations could adhere. EMAS certification consists of five steps. The first involves a review of all activities, products, and services with relation to their effect on the environment, to show the scope of the company. The second requisite is the assessment and planning of those elements, to show how the company plans to implement the EMS. Then the organization is required to produce summary documentation of the environmental impacts of all

activities, products, and services produced by the company. This is to give perspective as to the importance of having an EMS. The next step is a description of the environmental targets and objectives in relation to each outlined element. This is to show the commitment of the company to environmental improvement. The final step is to provide public disclosure of the performance of the company regarding environmental aspects like waste-emission, compliance with legal limits, and consumption of raw material, among others. This is to hold the company publicly accountable to their own environmental goals. Continued certification in EMAS is dependent on the annual verification of third-party, certified auditors. The European system is similar to ISO 14001, yet different in several key ways.

Since EMAS was developed by governmental bodies rather than a third-party like the ISO 14001, it is written from a corporate outsider's perspective, rather than from another organization. This yields several key differences between the two systems. ISO 14001 focuses primarily on the internal infrastructure of an organization to effectively employ an EMS, whereas EMAS focuses on the direct effects like emissions and waste. EMAS auditing is done by certified third-parties as is ISO 14001 but EMAS does not focus as much on the elements routinely addressed by internal audits. Perhaps one of the most distinct differences is that EMAS outlines the organization's responsibility to the public, where ISO 14001 outlines the necessary internal corporate infrastructure. EMAS and ISO 14001 share the same objective and overlap on many levels but differ in the methods they employ to do so.