



# Cluett Consulting Management Alert

## Topic: ISO 14001- Environmental Management Systems 2015

In September 2015, the third revision of ISO 14001 was released. ISO 14001:2015 has a stronger focus on improved environmental performance, including an emphasis on the need for continual improvement that is consistent with the organisations Environmental Policy objectives. Improved environmental performance is one of the three main intended outcomes of the Management System, along with the fulfilment of compliance obligations (previously “legal and other requirements”) and achievement of environmental objectives. The other key changes are described below.

### Structure

ISO 14001:2015 has a revised structure that is aligned with the revised versions of other ISO standards to allow for ease of integration with these standards. Indeed, the ISO 14001:2015 standard may be used as a stand alone management system, may be integrated with the Health and Safety and/or Quality management systems or may be used with reference to documents used in those management systems. For example, referring to asbestos handling in the Health and Safety management system.

### Integration into Overall Planning of the Organisation

There is increased prominence of the role that the organisation’s environmental management system has in the organisations overall strategic planning processes. This includes the requirement to understand the organisation and its context in order to identify opportunities where both the organisation and the environment may benefit.

There is also a focus on the needs and expectations of interested parties and on environmental conditions, at the local, regional and global scale, that are relevant to the organisation and the incorporation of these into the management systems operational planning.

### Scope

The level of scope for the management system may be determined and defined by the organisation so that the system may focus on the entire organisation, a certain operation or a certain area of the organisation or operation. However, the top management at the determined level must undertake to develop and maintain the management system and this flexibility must not be used to exclude potentially difficult areas of an operation from the management system. It should be kept in mind that legal requirements are applicable regardless and that management systems should be viewed as a tool to help manage liabilities.

### Leadership

ISO 14001:2015 has an increased focus on the role of leadership, requiring that top management are accountable for the effectiveness of the management system regardless of whether they have delegated the responsibility for implementation. The standard also emphasises their responsibility to make the resources necessary for the management system available.

### Environmental Objectives

The requirement for setting objectives and targets has been changed to objectives being used as a tool to address identified risks and opportunities, and emphasis that environmental objectives must be consistent with the environmental policy, measurable (where practicable), monitored, communicated and updated as appropriate.

### Life Cycle Approach

The standard emphasises the life cycle approach (also referred to as the cradle to grave approach), including the requirement to include environmental impacts associated with their product use and





end-of-life treatment that they control or influence in their management system.

### **Protection of the Environment**

The standard describes the requirement for organisations to commit to proactive actions to protect the environment in their environmental policy. Recommendations for how to do this are described but not defined.

### **Communication**

The generation of a communication strategy, both internally and externally has been added and includes a requirement that communication is consistent and information is reliable.

### **Documentation**

“Documents” and “Records” are now referred to as “documented information”. The standard does not require that documented information is maintained or retained for all elements of the management system. However, certain documented information is required and we recommend that documented information is kept for all elements of the organisations environmental management system. The standard does not stipulate a required format of the documented information. Indeed, documents may be kept as sound or video recordings if deemed as the most appropriate format, this is at the organisations discretion.

### **Transition to ISO 14001:2015**

Organisations have until the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2018 to conform with the ISO 14001:2015 requirements, however they are not required to amend the terms used or the format of their documentation. If an organisation decides not to amend these items they must develop a bridging document that describes how the requirements of the 2015 standard are addressed by their system.

Organisations can assess their conformity with the standard through four pathways:

1. Making a self-determination or self-declaration;
2. Seeking confirmation of it's performance from parties with an interest in the organisation, such as customers;
3. Seeking confirmation of its self-declaration by an external party; or
4. Seeking certification or registration of the system by an external organisation.

### **Conclusion**

ISO 14001: 2015 has an increased focus on the improvement of environmental performance and the role of leadership in the development, implementation and maintenance of the operation, the alignment of this management system with other ISO management system and integration of ISO 14001:2015 in the operation's overall planning and strategy. We believe that these are important elements that will assist the organisation and its employees, including management, in achieving the intended outcomes as well as their policy goals and objectives

ASPASA is integrating this system into it's About Face program from 2016. An About Face manual will be published in the second half of 2016, with ASPASA About Face audits conforming to the standard by January 2018.

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