

ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems

Revision

The revision of ISO 14001, one of ISO's most widely used standards, has now entered its last stage, with the new version due to be published by the beginning of October 2015.

Where are we at with the revision?

We are currently nearing the end of the enquiry stage, and, following a 92% approval rate of the latest draft, the experts responsible for the revision are now working through the comments, with a final draft due to be available in May.



Why is ISO 14001 being revised?

All ISO standards are reviewed every five years to establish if a revision is required in order to keep it current and relevant for the marketplace. The future ISO 14001:2015 will respond to latest trends and ensure it is compatible with other management system standards.

What will be the main changes to the standard?

The key changes relate to:

- Increased prominence of environmental management within the organization's strategic planning processes
- Greater focus on leadership
- Addition of proactive initiatives to protect the environment from harm and degradation, such as sustainable resource use and climate change mitigation
- Improving environmental performance added
- Lifecycle thinking when considering environmental aspects
- Addition of a communications strategy

In addition, the revised standard will follow a common structure, with the same terms and definitions as a number of other management system standards such as ISO 9001. This makes them easier, cheaper and quicker for those companies who use more than one, not to mention helping out the auditors.

Who is responsible for the revision?

The revision is being conducted by an ISO technical committee called ISO/TC 207/SC 1, which is comprised of experts nominated by their National Standards Bodies and liaison organizations. See the ISO/TC 207/SC 1 homepage for more details.

I am certified to ISO 14001:2004. What does this mean for me?

Organizations are granted a three-year transition period after the revision has been published to migrate their environmental management system to the new edition of the standard. After this transition period, companies that opt for third party certification will have to seek certification to the new version of the standard. The former version, ISO 14001:2004, and any certification to it, will be out of date. See further guidance from the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

Do I have to be certified to the new standard?

No, certification is not compulsory. For further information about certification and other types of third party assessment, this see our page on conformity assessment.

How do I find out more?

The draft version of ISO 14001:2015 is available for purchase. You can also contact your national member body for more information about how the revision is proceeding in your country. You can also view an information sheet on the technical committee's page.

References

1. http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/management-standards/iso14000/iso14001_revision.htm