



NSAI
Standards

NSAI/ISO Guide to
ISO 14001:2015

Environmental management systems

a practical guide

for SMEs

NSAI/ISO Guide to ISO 14001:2015

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a practical guide

for SMEs

ISO 14001:2015

Environmental management
systems

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Foreword

Awareness of environmental problems is growing in most countries and it is believed that current development patterns cannot be sustained in the long term. Governments are increasingly enacting legislation aimed at protecting the environment, and customers are requiring their suppliers to incorporate best practices and demonstrate compliance with environmental requirements.

The publication of the ISO 14001 standard for environmental management systems (EMS) has proved to be very successful, as it is now implemented in more than 159 countries and has provided organizations with a powerful management tool to improve their environmental performance. More than 324 000 organizations have been certified worldwide against ISO 14001 at the end of 2014, which is an increase of 7 % compared to 2013. Many companies have improved their operations by reducing the adverse impact their activities, processes, products and services have on the environment using a systematic approach embodied in ISO 14001.

The benefits of positively addressing environmental issues therefore not only cover the protection of the environment, but are also linked to business performance and profitability. These can include improving the corporate image, enhancing access to export markets, and improving relationships with customers, regulators, the public and other stakeholders, etc.

One major advantage of implementing ISO 14001 is that it can be done in an organization of any size or type, since the requirements of an EMS are the same for all – although the manner of implementing one will vary according to the size and activity of the organization.

Experience shows that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can implement an effective EMS and realize a variety of benefits. However, EMS implementation can present some challenges. This guide aims to help organizations understand the requirements for an environment management system and for them to identify areas for improvement. It will be of value in preparing the organization for third party certification of its EMS should the organization wish to do so.

We hope that this revised guide to help achieve the benefits of ISO 14001:2015 will be of practical use to small businesses whatever their activity and wherever they may be, but especially in developing countries and economies in transition.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'NFleury'.

Nicolas Fleury
Acting Secretary-General
ISO

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