

From a Series of e-Books published by deGRANDSON Global

# THE FAQs ABOUT ISO 14001

The ISO Standard for Environmental Management System



From deGRANDSON Global – the e-Learning Company  
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# The ISO 14001 Standard

## *What is ISO?*

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The International Organization for Standardization (ISO for short) is the world's largest developer of voluntary International Standards. Their 21,000+ standards offer solutions and best practice guidance for all types of technology and businesses, helping companies and organizations increase performance while protecting consumers and the planet.

While most are product and technical standards, the ISO has developed 40+ management system standards.

The best known of these include [ISO 9001 \(quality\)](#), [ISO 14001 \(environment\)](#), [ISO 45001 \(health & safety\)](#) and ISO 27001 (information security management). The feature they all have in common is that they are auditable. They are written to facilitate auditing by an independent third party (e.g., CAB) to confirm compliance with the standards' requirements.

ISO 13485 is a quality management system standard based on ISO 9001, considered the parent of all the other standards.

For more, visit [ISO 9001 on the ISO website](#).

**Enjoy!**

## *What is ISO 14001?*

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**The ISO 14001 standard, defined in full as ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management Systems – Requirements with Guidance for Use, is an internationally recognized standard that sets out the requirements for an Environmental Management System (EMS).**

An EMS is a collection of business processes focused on a) minimizing how an organization's operations (processes, etc.) negatively affect the environment (i.e., cause adverse changes to air, water, or land), b) comply with applicable laws, regulations, and other environmentally oriented requirements, and c) continually improve in environmental performance.

It is aligned with an organization's purpose and strategic direction. It is expressed as the organizational goals and the environmental programs, policies, processes, documented information, and resources needed to implement and maintain it.

ISO environmental management system standards are not limited to ISO 14001. The requirements of ISO 14001 are an integral part of the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). With its eye-catching logo and flag, EMAS has expanded requirements for performance improvement (KPIs), legal compliance, and reporting duties.

Initially developed by the British Standards Institute and known as BS 7750, it became an international standard in 1996 when published under the auspices of the International Standards Organization (ISO). It has evolved through several iterations into a standard that demonstrates an organization's environmental commitment to its customers and other stakeholders. As such, it is now globally applicable to all kinds of organizations.

## What is the purpose of ISO 14001?

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The purpose of the Standard is to provide a framework for an organization to manage its environmental responsibilities in a systematic manner that will ...


1. **Enhance the organization's environmental performance**, that is, minimize the organization's environmental footprint,
2. **Fulfill compliance requirements** plus any voluntary schemes to which the organization subscribes and
3. **Continually improve** environmental performance based on an entire life cycle approach.

Fundamental to fulfilling achieving these objectives are two features ...

1. An **Environmental Policy** - the intentions and direction of an organization as formally expressed by its top management and consistent with the context of the organization and
2. **Environmental Objectives** – measurable targets, generally specified for relevant organizational functions, levels, and processes – focused on improvements.

External Auditors will persistently pay great attention to these four issues.

For more, visit [ISO 14001 – Key Benefits](#).



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## *What is an ISO 14001 Certification?*

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An ISO 14001 Certificate is recognition from a Certification Body – CAB (usually an accredited Certification Body) that an organization has implemented and is maintaining an Environmental Management system that meets the requirements of ISO 14001:2015.



## *Do You Need ISO 14001 Certification?*

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**Yes and No.**

In many cases, ISO 14001 certification can be a valuable tool to add credibility by demonstrating Your organization's commitment to operating with minimum adverse effects on the environment through an independent audit. For some sectors, ISO 14001 certification is a legal or contractual requirement.





## *Who needs an Environmental Management System or EMS?*

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An Environmental Management system (EMS) is a formalized system that provides organizations with a framework for better management control of environmental aspects of their operations, which can reduce their environmental impact.

So, you have an EMS, and the fundamental question is, do we need to formalize the system? Most organizations asking themselves this question say yes. And currently, more than 300,000 organizations in 171 countries have a formal EMS certified to ISO 14001.

## What are the benefits of a formal Environmental Management System or EMS?

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There are at least twelve benefits that all organizations certified to ISO 14001 by an accredited Certification Body can enjoy, such as:

1. **Improved environmental performance.** This includes higher conformance with legislative and regulatory requirements.
2. **Minimized risk of regulatory fines and environmental liability.** It also helps to improve an organization's reputation,
3. **Reduced waste.** It helps minimize the consumption of resources and operating costs,
4. **Eliminate the need for multiple registrations or certifications to ISO 14001.** This is applicable if the organization is operating internationally,
5. **Improved public perception of the organization.** Additionally, it adds to the attractiveness of the organization as an employer.
6. **Demonstrates an innovative and forward-thinking approach.** It helps with customers' and prospective customers' perceptions.
7. **Potentially reduce public liability insurance costs,**
8. **Qualify for pre-tender and tender opportunities.** This is especially true if you deal with the public sector,
9. **Performance of periodic internal audits.** Helps with monitoring compliance with requirements and highlighting deficiencies,
10. **Corrective actions to prevent the recurrence of errors.** Try to make mistakes only once, if at all,

11. **Informed Board of Directors.** It is reassuring to know that the organization is environmentally responsible and has a certificate to prove it.
12. **Management satisfaction** knowing that the organization is functioning in line with legal requirements.

For more, visit [OBJECTIVES in implementing ISO 9001 and other Management Systems.](#)



The banner features a blue background. On the left, there is a white document titled 'ISO 14001 Gap Analysis Tool' with a table and text. On the right, the text 'ISO 14001 Gap Analysis Tool for FREE' is displayed in white. Below this text is an orange button with the text 'Get it Now' in white.

## What are Environmental Aspects and Impacts about?

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The environmental management system requirements include [environmental aspects](#) and their impacts. An organization identifies its environmental aspects and associated environmental impacts and determines those that are significant and, therefore, need to be addressed by its environmental management system.

Changes to the environment, either adverse or beneficial, that result wholly or partially from environmental aspects are called environmental impacts. The environmental impact can occur at local, regional, and global scales and can be direct, indirect, or cumulative by nature. The relationship between environmental aspects and environmental impacts is one of cause and effect.

When **determining its environmental aspects**, the organization can consider the following:

- emissions to air,
- releases to water,
- releases to land,
- use of raw materials and natural resources,
- use of energy,
- energy emitted (e.g., heat, radiation, vibration (noise), light),
- generation of waste and/or by-products, and
- use of space.

In addition to the environmental aspects that it can control directly, an organization determines whether there are environmental aspects that it can influence.

Many techniques and data sources are used for **identifying and evaluating Environmental Impacts**. These include ...

- **Process Hazard Analyses:** Used to identify and assess potential impacts associated with unplanned releases of hazardous materials. Typically employs a team approach to identify and rank hazards.
- **Failure Mode and Effects Analyses:** Commonly used in the quality field to identify and prioritize potential equipment and process failures and potential corrective actions. It is often used as a precursor to formal root cause analyses.
- **Process Mapping:** (See link below for an example).
- **Environmental Impact Assessments:** Used to satisfy requirements of Environmental legislation regarding the evaluation of environmental impacts associated with proposed projects. Methodology in everyday use but not typically used to assess environmental impacts associated with existing operations.
- **Life Cycle Assessments:** Used to assess the full range of impacts from products, from raw material procurement through product disposal. Methodologies are somewhat subjective and can be resource-intensive. As described in ISO 14040, ISO 14044, ISO 14048 & ISO 14049.
- **Risk Assessments:** Assess potential health and/or environmental risks associated with chemical exposure – various qualitative and quantitative methodologies in everyday use.
- **Emission Inventories:** Used to quantify emissions of pollutants to the air. Based on EPA regulations and requirements, some data may already be available to the organization.
- **Pollution Prevention or Waste Minimization Audits:** Identify opportunities to reduce or eliminate pollution at the source and identify recycling options. Requires rigorous assessment of facility operations. Typically, it does not examine off-site impacts.
- **Environmental Property Assessments:** Used to assess potential environmental liabilities associated with facility or business acquisitions or divestitures. Scope and level of detail are variable. Typically, do not assess impacts related to products or services.
- **Environmental Cost Accounting:** Used to assess total environmental costs associated with activities and/or products. Emerging protocols require a comprehensive assessment to quantify costs.

- **Environmental Compliance Audits:** Used to assess compliance with national, regional, and local environmental regulations. Methodologies in common use. Scope and detail vary. It is not typically directed at examining environmental impacts (particularly for products).

For more, visit [ISO 14001 Requirements for Environmental Aspects](#).



The banner features a green background with a white dotted pattern. On the left, there is a photograph of a smiling woman with her hands clasped, with two other people blurred in the background. To the right of the photo, the text 'ISO 14001:2015 Internal Auditor' is displayed in white. Below this text, it says 'Click below for full details' in a smaller white font. At the bottom right, there is a blue button with the white text 'LEARN MORE'.

## *Is an Emergency Evacuation Plan sufficient to meet Preparedness and Response requirements?*

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The need to evacuate premises is only one of several foreseeable emergencies that must be dealt with. Each will need an Emergency Plan to determine the actions (or drill) required to deal with that emergency. That drill will need to be practiced or simulated to be confident that the appropriate actions will be undertaken quickly, effectively, and without panic should an emergency arise.

So, to answer the question: No, an Emergency Evacuation Plan is most unlikely to be adequate to meet requirements. Just three examples of topics about which emergencies often arise: power loss, storms, and racking or other indoor structure collapse.

# Certification to ISO 14001

## Who needs ISO 14001 Certification?

Organizations globally, in both public and private spheres, and from every economic sector can benefit from maintaining an ISO 14001-compliant Environmental Management System (EMS).





## What are the Benefits of having ISO 14001 Certification?

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There are at least sixteen benefits that organizations with an environmental management system in place can enjoy, such as:

1. **Legal and Regulatory Compliance:** As demonstrated by independent assessment by an accredited certification body,
2. **Reputation:** be taken seriously as a prospective supplier as the holder of ISO 14001 Certification,
3. **Qualify** for pre-tender and tender opportunities, especially from the public sector,
4. **Status:** On equal terms with the ‘big’ boys’ – the size of your organization won’t hold you back,
5. **Aspects and impact analysis** help engender a habit of quantifying threats of all kinds to the business and then proactively dealing with them and
6. **Objectives and improvement** obligations focus you on setting targets for improvement and then planning and implementing them in a timely manner.

You’ll find ten more benefits at [‘Why ISO 14001 Matters to SMEs’](#).

# How much does ISO 14001 Certification Cost?

The cost of ISO 14001 certification varies hugely based on the organization's size, geographical location, and economic prosperity.

Let's take the example of an SME with ten employees. Here are some typical prices from the UK for 2023, where we consider three scenarios ...

Scenario (1)	Do-it-yourself (2)	Minimum Consultancy Support (3)	Maximum Consultancy Support (4)
Develop EMS (5 days)	£500	£1000	£2500
Implement EMS (5 days)	£500	£1000	£2500
Maintain EMS (2 x 3 years)	£600	£600	£3000
Certification Year 1	£2500	£2500	£2500
Year 2	£1000	£1000	£1000
Year 3	£1000	£1000	£1000
<b>Total 3-year cost</b>	<b>£6100</b>	<b>£7100</b>	<b>£12500</b>
<b>Typical duration to Certification</b>	11 months	5 months	4 months

Notes:

1. It is necessary to examine a 3-year horizon as CABs play games with their quotations that can be confusing. What is a given, however, is that CAB Audits and the associated contract must, [under IAF rules](#), be based on a 3-year cycle.
2. No outside help. The project leader would need [ISO 14001 Lead Implementer Training](#). Avoid this option unless your experience is sufficient to ensure an effective environmental management system from the outset.

3. Four days of [consultancy](#) support are included here. Priced at £ 500 p.d., consultancy costs range from £300 to £700 per day. **Satisfactory references** must be obtained for previous ISO 14001 projects.
4. Maintenance here includes two days annually for [internal auditing](#) and Management Review support.

The best advice for [controlling costs](#) is to shop around. And to recheck the competitiveness of your chosen CAB regularly.

For more, visit the ISO 14001 Lead Implementer Certification Course. Also, see [29 steps to ISO 14001 Certification](#).



The banner features a green background with a halftone dot pattern. On the left, there is a photograph of several business professionals in a meeting, looking at documents and a laptop. On the right, the text 'ISO 14001:2015 Lead Auditor' is displayed in white. Below this, it says 'Click below for full details' and a blue button with the text 'LEARN MORE' is positioned at the bottom right.

## *What is the Latest ISO 14001 Version?*

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The latest ISO 14001 version as of writing is ISO 14001:2015 -- the revision of the previous ISO 14001:2004.



## *Who Issues ISO 14001 Certification?*

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The ISO develops International Standards, such as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, but is not involved in their Certification. ISO does not issue certificates, so **a company or organization cannot be certified by ISO**. This is performed by external certification bodies.

ISO 14001 certificates are issued by Certification Bodies (CABs) based on a comprehensive 2-stage audit (itself based on the [auditing standard, ISO 19011](#)). The CAB gathers and documents objective evidence of compliance with the requirements of ISO 14001. After a suitable review within the CAB, a Certificate is issued as is permission to use logos to publicize the fact.

For more, visit [Expected Outcomes for Accredited Certification... ISO 14001 ...](#)

# Getting an ISO 14001 Certificate?

## *How to Choose a Certification Body?*

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The choice of a CAB is important. An accredited CAB (e.g., BSI) should be used wherever possible, and with ISO 14001, one won't be difficult to find.

Accreditation, issued by a nationally recognized Accreditation Board (e.g., [UKAS](#)), is an important confirmation of the legitimacy of the CAB. To help ensure an international 'level playing field' for CAB auditing standards, National Accreditation Boards have their own international organization, the [International Accreditation Forum \(IAF\)](#), which oversees an ongoing program of witnessed self-assessment of IAF Members of each others' activities.

A Certificate from an accredited CAB will carry three logos. #1 the CAB's own logo, #2 the Accreditation Boards logo, and #3 the IAF logo. If you present an ISO 14001 Certificate to a customer or potential customer that does not carry all three logos, expect to be challenged. Without a plausible explanation, you can expect your approach to be rejected.

## *Are £375 ISO 14001 Certificates You Can Get Within 7 Days Legitimate?*

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Legally speaking, yes. But the Certificate is **worthless**. There are ‘cowboy’ CABs (whom you should ask to explain how an organization can create 3 months of records, the minimum needed to prove maintenance of an EMS, in 7 days) and even ‘cowboy’ Accreditation Bodies.

With ISO 14001 certificates, making sure you have the real thing fundamentally means choosing a CAB that will get you an IAF logo on your Certificate. Ask about it by name and accept nothing else.

## *Why is it Important to Get Certified by the Proper Certification Body?*

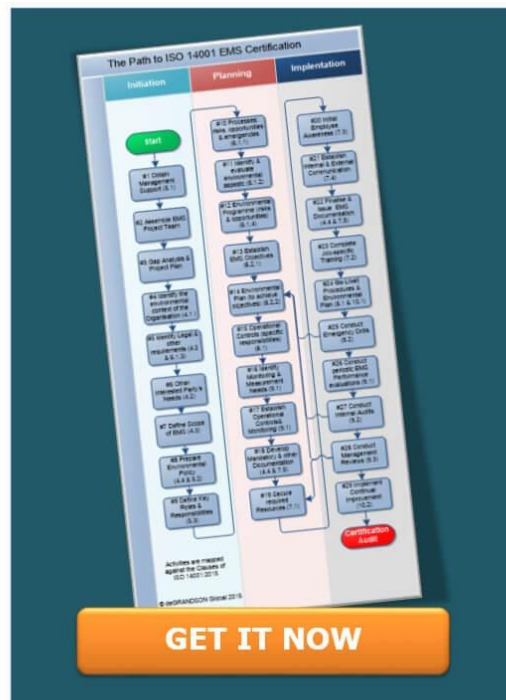
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Remember that those reviewing tender documents are unlikely to be inexperienced. They will recognize a phony Certification instantly. And your offering will go directly into the rubbish bin with the hard work you've expended to develop products and services you are proud of totally wasted. Most importantly, you wouldn't want an ISO Auditor to find such bogus Certificates when checking your evaluation of external providers (suppliers).

For more, visit [Is IAF Accreditation possible for all ISO Standards?](#) and [Your Accreditation Body must follow IAF Guidance.](#)



**Infographic**  
**The 29-step path to ISO 14001:2015 Certification**  
 Essential for those implementing, or migrating to, the revised Standard



**GET IT NOW**

## How do you get ISO 14001 Certification??

As you will have seen in the cost data above, there are two stages in securing ISO 14001 Certification:

- Stage 1. Develop, implement, and maintain a suitable EMS for your organization and
- Stage 2. Engage the services of a CAB to undertake the necessary evaluations and audits.

### Stage 1. Develop, implement, and maintain a suitable EMS for your organization:

Our Infographic shown here nicely illustrates the multi-step process of preparing for Certification (click on the infographic image to get a copy for yourself). Whichever of the

three approaches you choose (or variants thereof), you will benefit from our ISO 14001 Lead Implementer Course in managing and directing your ISO 14001 Project.

## **Stage 2. Engage the services of a CAB to undertake the necessary evaluations and audits:**

When choosing a certification body, you should:

- Evaluate several certification bodies.
- Check if the certification body auditing activities include ISO 14001:2015.
- Check if it is accredited. Accreditation is not compulsory, and non-accreditation does not necessarily mean it is not reputable, but it does provide independent confirmation of competence. To find an accredited certification body, contact the national accreditation body in your country or visit the [International Accreditation Forum](#).

Note: the terms [certification and accreditation cannot be used interchangeably](#), though it is not uncommon to do so. The difference between accreditation and Certification is:

**Certification** – the provision by an independent body of written assurance (a certificate) that the product, service, or system in question meets specific requirements.

**Accreditation** – the formal recognition by an independent body, generally known as an accreditation body, that a certification body operates according to international standards.

For more, visit the [International Accreditation Forum/about us/](#) and [10 Reasons to change your ISO Certification Body](#).



## *Can I get ISO 14001 Training Online?*

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Yes, you can. Some [certified online training providers like deGRANDSON Global](#) offer ISO 14001 training online, among other ISO standards. Schedules, course content, course materials, and course delivery mode may vary per provider.

For info on how deGRANDSON's online training system works, please refer to our [FAQ Directory](#).



## *How to check the ISO 14001 Certification of an organization?*

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The IAF, after struggling with the issue for many years, launched IAF CertSearch. This is an exclusive global database for accredited management system certifications. Other databases, irrespective of the organization publishing them, should be treated with skepticism or, better still, ignored.

Currently, CertSearch has over 400,000 valid certifications across more than 150 economies covering a range of sectors, 4,000 certification bodies, and 68 IAF MLA signatory accreditation bodies. While highly dependable, this database is a long way from being complete when one considers that there are one million-plus organizations certified to ISO 9001:2015 alone. Currently, there are over 300,000 organizations worldwide certified to ISO 14001:2015.

Businesses and governments can digitally validate an organization's Certification (s) to determine if a certificate is valid and if the Certification Body issuing the Certificate is accredited to issue certifications to that Standard.

The direct route is, of course, always open to you – ask the organization for a copy of their current Certificate. Many will have their Certificate on display on their website.

For more, visit [IAF CertSearch](#).

## *Do Management Representatives or others responsible for an Environmental Management System or EMS need training?*

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The training of a Management Representative or others with day-to-day responsibility to maintain an EMS is NOT mandatory. Training is implied as part of developing competence but not a specific stand-alone requirement. So, unless you are determined to outsource this support indefinitely (technically, that's not permitted), you must train your Management Representative. And you're in luck.

We've got precisely the Course you need.

For more, visit the [ISO 14001 Lead Implementer Course](#).

## *Do Internal Auditors need training?*

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Again, training here is not mandatory. However, [effective internal audits](#) are essential to doing a professional job in maintaining your EMS and avoiding nasty surprises at your next Certification Body audit. Also, if you don't train them, your auditors won't have any of the [skills necessary](#) to 'harvest' those improvement suggestions from the people in your organization who actually do the work.

For more, visit the [ISO 14001 Internal Auditor Course](#).

# Got a question we haven't answered?

We'd love to hear it and, if possible, answer it for you. Just use our Support Ticket System. You'll find a Knowledge Base there that might have an immediate answer for you. Otherwise, fill in a Ticket.

For more, visit [deGRANDSON Support Ticket](#).