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Environmental management systems — Guidelines for a flexible approach to phased implementation

Systèmes de management environnemental — Lignes directrices pour une approche souple de la mise en oeuvre par phases

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 207, *Environmental management*, Subcommittee SC 1, *Environmental management systems*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 14005:2010), which has been technically revised throughout.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user’s national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

Organizations face a growing number of challenges caused by the deteriorating state of the natural environment due to human activities. For example, pollution is affecting the use of water, air and land; raw materials and energy costs are becoming more volatile because of the inefficient use and scarcity of non-renewable resources; and threats from storms, flooding or droughts are increasing as a result of rising global temperatures and climate change.

These challenges are causing significant effects on business and society. Regulators, consumers, clients, local communities and other interested parties demand assurances from organizations that their interactions with the environment are responsibly managed and that their activities, products and services are not inducing detrimental environmental impacts.

A systematic approach to environmental management provides the means for the management of business risk and demonstrates a high level of environmental commitment. This enables organizations to respond to the needs and expectations of interested parties. Business benefits of a formalized environmental management system (EMS) include more efficient use of resources, reduced negative effects on the environment, better compliance with legal requirements and improved customer relations.

Many organizations already benefit from a formalized EMS. But many more organizations, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), lack a formal system and therefore lose the benefits that an increased formality can bring. A systematic approach to environmental management can provide long-term success and enable sustainable development. This includes protecting the environment, mitigating the potential adverse effects of environmental conditions on organizations, assisting in the fulfilment of compliance obligations, enhancing environmental performance, preventing environmental impacts from being unintentionally shifted elsewhere within the life cycle, achieving financial and operational benefits, and supporting communication with relevant interested parties.

The full implementation of an EMS across the whole organization at the same time, however, might prove difficult and depends on the availability of staff and other resources. A phased approach allows organizations to develop their EMS gradually over time.

A phased approach offers several advantages. Organizations can readily evaluate how the time and money put into an EMS provide a return. They can develop a system that meets their needs, allowing them to implement it at their own pace, depending on the available human and financial resources. This approach can help organizations to see how improvements in environmental management can reduce costs, demonstrate legal compliance, improve community relations and help to fulfil the expectations of interested parties.

This document shows how organizations can implement an EMS, using a phased approach to ultimately meet the requirements of ISO 14001. Each phase incorporates six consecutive stages. The number of phases is flexible. This allows organizations to develop the scope, i.e. the activities, products and services included, and maturity of their EMS, in line with their objectives and available resources.

The phased approach could, for example, start with a project focusing on a specific environmental aspect, such as the use of energy or natural resources. It could also be used to address the needs of a certain interested party, such as a customer requirement, or to manage a specific issue, such as demonstrating legal compliance. The EMS can be expanded over time by progressing through more phases, e.g. to cover more environmental aspects, to systematically address all relevant needs and expectations of interested parties, or to improve environmental performance beyond legal compliance.

The maturity matrix in Annex A is a tool for measuring the progress of EMS implementation. This is useful to track the achievements of an organization's environmental objectives and associated benefits and to ensure the efficient use of financial and human resources.

The structure of the maturity matrix incorporates rows that correspond to the different EMS elements, as defined in the clauses of ISO 14001:2015. The columns represent five maturity levels. Each element

can be developed incrementally from maturity level 1 through to full maturity in level 5. At this point, the element will satisfy the requirements of the respective clause in ISO 14001:2015.

An assessment sheet that supports the maturity matrix can be found on the website of ISO/TC 207/SC 1, https://committee.iso.org/home/tc207sc1. It follows the same structure as the maturity matrix and helps organizations to determine their level of maturity for each element.

The ISO/TC 207/SC 1 website also provides examples, e.g. on how a company developed a full EMS using the phased approach.

