ABS Group

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS CERTIFICATION

ISO 14001 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

ISO 14001:2004 is an environmental management system (EMS) based on the continuous improvement principles and the PDCA cycle. Most EMS models stipulate that these objectives be developed, managed, tracked and communicated.

These objectives detail what an organization intends to do to improve its environmental performance and provide an objective measurement to insure that the goal is met.

This is important so that the system can demonstrate initial success, and the organization can practice and learn how to effectively manage environmental projects. Management can see these readily achieved goals as a stepping-stone to tackling the more complex or costly environmental issues that may face an organization.

ISO 14001 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The ISO 14001 standard requires that an organization consider a number of variables when establishing objectives and targets. In practice, the following questions should all be considered in the process used to establish objectives and targets:
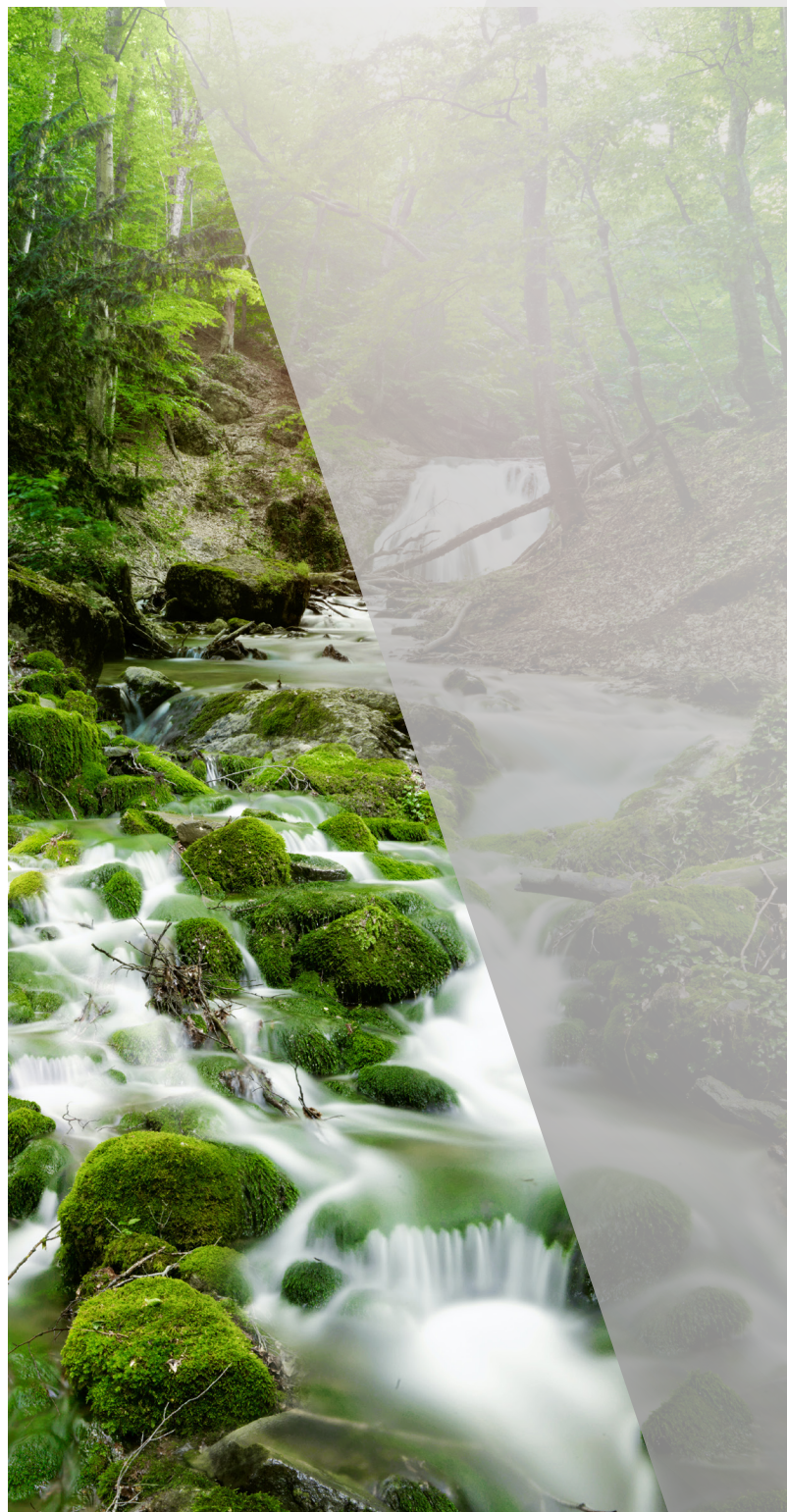
- Compliance Issues: Does the objective address an area that is not in compliance with regulations? Will it create a new compliance issue?
- Significant Environmental Impacts: Does the objective relate to an impact your system has determined to be significant?
- Technology: What are the technical options for modifying or replacing existing equipment or processes?
- Financial Limitations: Will the objectives fit into the operating budget of the organization?
- Personnel Resources: Does the organization have the people to implement and manage the project?
- Operational Requirements: Will the objective enhance (or decrease) productivity or streamline the environmental activities?

Another question that often arises is how many targets and objectives should my organization be pursuing at one time? The straightforward answer to that would be to base it on the resources of your company, especially when it comes to people. There is no strict requirement in the ISO 14001 Standard that all significant environmental impacts need to be simultaneously addressed by an objective and target in order to reduce them. Complex, long-term projects that don't necessarily involve the general population can potentially benefit the environment by reducing a significant impact, but the technical details are often not well understood and the extended time line typical of these projects could cause interest in the EMS to wane if these were the only types of objectives under consideration.

Who does the standard apply to?

ISO 14001 can be applied to any type of business, organization or industry. Interest in applying the standard is also coming from a wide range of industries, including agriculture, forestry & mining; petrochemicals & plastics, food, tobacco, textiles & wood products, electronics & instruments, manufacturing, metals & machinery.

Note: Registration to ISO 14001 has become a requirement for a number of customers, such as the automotive industry requirements for registration for manufacturing facilities.

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