

The ISO 14001 standard

ISO14001 is designed for any organisation wishing to demonstrate to customers, insurers, regulators, the public and financial institutions, that the organisation is committed to effective environmental management.

In order to achieve certification to the standard, a robust Environmental Management System has to be implemented and operated. An independent third party certification body will then carry out a complete and thorough audit of the system to ensure that it meets the requirements of the standard, and check that it has been fully adopted.

Requirements of the standard include:

- An Environmental Policy.
- Definition of roles and responsibilities for Environmental Management.
- Comprehensive environmental training for all employees involved.
- Identification of environmental risks and environmental legislation.
- Preparing and implementing environmental objectives and targets, to demonstrate ongoing environmental improvement.
- Full operational control on all activities that can impact on the environment (from purchasing to waste management).
- Methodologies for effective control of the management system (for example control of records and other documents, management review).
- An internal audit programme.
- A system for identifying and control non-conformances.

The Benefits

Perhaps the biggest benefit of the programme to achieve certification to ISO 14001 is to the environment itself: the commitments made will ensure an ongoing improvement in environmental performance. Allison Connick, Director of Health, Safety and Environment states that "CB Richard Ellis anticipates that both they and their clients, the property owners, will experience other benefits from the project, including:

- **Reduction in exposure to non-compliance with environmental legislation.** The controls introduced by the system, and programme of internal and external audits will increase compliance.
- **Meeting customer demand.** As awareness of environmental issues increases so does the need for companies to address these public concerns. Tenants' existing and future environmental concerns will be met through certification, thus providing a competitive edge.
- **Publicity.** A limited number of organizations in the real estate sector have gained ISO14001 certification. Sites gaining certification, especially those obtaining it first, will benefit from an opportunity to publicise this achievement, locally and nationally, appealing to both the public and tenants.
- **Corporate Reporting.** It is now expected that companies prepare an annual Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Report. Environmental management forms a large part of this reporting and ISO14001 certification will provide an achievable and recognisable target that will demonstrate the company's commitment to its CSR policy.
- **Management** – Certification is assurance to the landlord and tenants that the managing agent is managing the property in a manner that maximises the efficiency of its running,

therefore minimising costs, and ensures compliance with legislation. For example costs can be reduced through effective waste management and energy efficiency.

However, as with all management systems; the success and potential benefits and savings achievable through the implementation of a management system are dependent on the commitment and resources made available within the organization.”

Practicalities of implementing an Environmental Management System to ISO14001 standard

It is important to commit resources to the development and implementation of ISO14001. It will be necessary to clearly identify each clause of the standard and develop an action plan to cover each in sufficient detail. This will generally be covered in the following areas:

Step 1 – Undertake an Environmental Review

This review, whether done by internal or external experts, should identify the environmental legislation that has been identified previously that affects the organization and what you need to do to comply. Depending on which areas of the business are being certified will largely determine which activities (both internally and externally) will apply and should cover as a minimum emissions to air, discharges to water and/or land, energy and consumption of raw materials and waste.

Step 2 - Environmental Legislation

An organization needs to ensure that they have identified and keep up to date an environmental legislation register. This needs to take into account of any future legislative requirements and the likely effects within the business. There are various ways of keeping up to date with legislation i.e. subscriptions to journals, trade associates or by using the services of an external consultant.

Step 3 Training and roles and responsibilities

Training is an essential element of the standard, and indeed the success of any new initiative, that employees at all levels have the appropriate knowledge and understanding of environmental issues. Depending on the structure of the organization it may be necessary to have differing levels of training and awareness for instance – site based managers would need more in depth knowledge of legislation and best practice than for instance a Director within the business. It should go without saying that records should be kept of all training at all levels.

Similarly, it will be necessary, in most organizations to ensure that specific tasks and responsibilities have been allocated either to specific functions within the organization or to individuals. This can be achieved in various ways but it is important that those involved need to know the standards and requirements put upon them and that these are documented.

Step 4 Aspects and Impacts identification

Once an environmental review and register of legislation have been completed you need to determine the environmental aspects and impacts. An aspect in terms of environmental is any business activity that may have an impact on the environment such as emissions, noise, energy use, transport, waste etc. The impact is what change takes place in the environment because of the aspects.

These aspects and impacts need to be scored as to quantify significance.

Step 5 Setting objectives and targets

After identifying the significant aspects and impacts of your business relating to environment it should then be relatively clear what objectives and targets should be set to reduce those impacts. It is important to ensure that all those employees involved in meeting these targets are actively

involved in the target setting exercise and that resources in terms of time and technical knowledge are available to ensure that staff have the necessary expertise to call upon if required.

For instance there are organizations, which are supported by funds made available by Government; that will undertake free energy and waste audits at site level.

Step 6 Policies, Procedures and Site instructions

In order that an organization is clear about how to comply with legislation, and indeed implement good practice measures, it is necessary to ensure that there are well defined, documented, policies, procedures and site instructions. These need to be relevant to the business and define who does what and when it is required.

Step 7 Internal Review/Audit

Internal auditing or review should be carried out at least six monthly by an individual/s that have sufficient understanding and technical knowledge to identify deficiencies or improvements that need to be made to the current compliance against the environmental management system. Irrespective of how this review is sourced it is important that the auditor is trained by a credible and capable environmental specialist.

Step 8 Management Reviews

Management reviews should be undertaken, as often as is necessary, to determine that:

- objectives and targets are being met;
- objectives and targets are still relevant;
- review of non-conformances and actions taken;
- forthcoming legislation and impacts on the business;
- external complaints or correspondence

Actions arising from internal and external audits.

Step 9 Getting ready for certification

Only when Steps 1-7 have been implemented will you be ready to have a certification audit. The scope of the certification audit is largely dependent on the certification body but would normally consist of two stages. The first stage audit – is generally conducted by the auditor and identifies areas of improvement and progress towards the standard. At this audit it not always necessary to undertake visits at every property/part of the business that is wishing to gain certification. The audit results should be used as an action plan within the organization to make improvements to the systems and processes before going for final certification.

Step 10 Stage 2 audits

When the organization is comfortable that all the sites are implementing the environmental management system and that the actions from the Stage 1 audit have been closed out and more importantly lessons learnt have been circulated to all concerned – then it is ready for the final certification audit. The scope of the audit and locations to be visited will be agreed in advance with the auditing body.

Step 11 Auditing, review and continual improvement

Organisations should not treat the Stage 2 Certification audit as “job finished”. It is necessary to ensure that operational control and objectives and targets are continually under review to demonstrate that there is continual improvement against environmental issues and that the organization is continuing to look ahead and keep abreast of emerging issues.

Conclusion – is ISO14001 beneficial?

It must be recognized that gaining certification to ISO14001 takes a real concerted effort from all levels of management. Indeed, to be successful, it requires the active support of all the senior management within the organization together with the willingness of staff to embrace all environmental impacts and look at ways of reducing their impact. Achieving ISO 14001

accreditation demonstrates a level of commitment within the organization but to be really beneficial should not, and indeed cannot be seen, as a one off exercise, where the boxes have been ticked and the files stored on the cabinet. Continuing with certification, year on year, entails being able to demonstrate positive engagement and improvement on all the organisations environmental liabilities – whether they be legal or best practice. With increasing pressure on all sectors of business to recognise their impact on the environment - how else will business clearly demonstrate their understanding and control without operating to an international standard.

CB Richard Ellis Limited (Asset Management) has launched a flagship project to achieve certification to the international standard for environmental management performance, ISO 14001. The project includes selected shopping centres, multi-tenanted offices and head office locations, through a phased implementation programme which will spread over an 18 month period.

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