

Environmental management system

An EMS is a set of processes and practices that enable an organization to reduce its environmental impacts and increase its operating efficiency in a systematic and cost-effective manner.

The most widely used standard on which an EMS is based is **International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14001**.

Basic Elements of an EMS include the following:

- Reviewing the organization's environmental goals;
- Analyzing its environmental impacts and compliance obligations (or legal and other requirements);
- Setting environmental objectives and targets to reduce environmental impacts and conform with compliance obligations;
- Establishing programs to meet these objectives and targets;
- Monitoring and measuring progress in achieving the objectives;
- Ensuring employees' environmental awareness and competence; and,
- Reviewing progress of the EMS and achieving improvements.

EMS Model or steps:

An EMS follows a Plan-Do-Check-Act, or PDCA, Cycle. The model is continuous because an EMS is a process of continual improvement in which an organization is constantly reviewing and revising the system.

- **Plan:** Establish plans and processes for environmental performance improvement
- **Do:** Implement the processes as planned
- **Check:** Regularly check to ensure that processes are followed and effective
- **Act:** Take actions to continually improve

These spurs increased efficiency, positions you for growth and allows your organization to enjoy a number of other useful benefits.

Benefits of an EMS

Once implemented, an environmental management system will help your business achieve:

- **Real cost savings:** EMS programmes can not only reduce an organization's use of resources; they can also streamline your workflows and processes.
- **Scalable, sustainable growth:** Effective environmental management can have economic benefits, too.
- On top of the environmental benefits like reduced pollution and resource conservation, implementing an EMS has the following tangible business benefits:
 - An increase in efficiency
 - Reduction in costs, e.g. resources
 - Improvement in employee morale
 - Makes your organization more attractive to investors.

ISO 14001

- ISO 14001 is the internationally recognized standard for environmental management systems (EMS). It provides a framework for organizations to design and implement an EMS, and continually improve their environmental performance.
- By adhering to this standard, organizations can ensure they are taking proactive measures to minimize their environmental footprint, comply with relevant legal requirements, and achieve their environmental objectives.
- The framework encompasses various aspects, from resource usage and waste management to monitoring environmental performance and involving stakeholders in environmental commitments.
- ISO 14001 offers a structured approach for businesses to address these pressing concerns. By adopting this standard, organizations signal a commitment not only to regulatory compliance but also to ongoing environmental improvement. This proactive approach to environmental management can result in tangible benefits, such as reduced waste, energy conservation, and cost savings.

Benefits of ISO 14001

- Enhanced environmental performance
- Regulatory compliance
- Risk management
- Cost savings
- Operational excellence
- Stakeholder and customer trust