

IEMA Members Propose Changes to ISO 14001 to Achieve Significant Business and Environmental Benefits

ISO 14001 is the world's most successful voluntary approach to improving environmental performance in businesses and public sector organisations. With over 250,000 organisations in 155 countries certified against the standard's requirements, ISO 14001 is now being revised by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO).

"Growing at a rate of over 25,000 organisations per year, ISO14001 has proved both popular and effective at providing a framework through which organisations across the world manage their impacts on the environment. Environment professionals are ambitious and realistic. They want a revised standard that not only delivers greater environmental improvements and helps organisations to meet growing environmental challenges, but also enables more businesses to participate," said Martin Baxter, UK lead representative for the revisions of ISO 14001.

IEMA recently engaged over 400 environment professionals working in business and public sector organisations through a series of focus groups and then an indepth survey of 1,650 professionals in an online survey in April 2012 to gather their views on potential changes.

"The recommendation that achieved the strongest support from environment professionals was to require environment to be integrated into strategic decision making. Over 90% of professionals supported proposals for aligning environmental management systems with an organisation's strategy," commented Baxter.

IEMA members also show strong support for the following recommendations:

- Over 84% supported placing greater emphasis on reducing environmental impacts across the whole life-cycle of products and services including supply chains and in the development and use of products and services;
- 92% considered that ISO14001 needs to strengthen requirements on organisations to demonstrate their legal compliance and environmental performance improvements;
- 88.5% believe that ISO14001 should require organisations to consider impacts from a changing environment. Organisations face growing environmental risks from scarcity of natural resources to a changing climate, such as flooding. ISO14001 should provide a framework for organisations to manage the risks and maximize opportunities from a changing environment, helping them to safeguard the future of their business and deliver environmental improvements.

The next meeting to consider the revision to ISO 14001 will be held in Thailand at the end of June 2012. It is expected that a revised version of the standard will come into effect in 2015, and will operate well into the 2020s.

"For ISO14001 to maintain its relevance in a world where environmental challenges are growing, it's vital that the standard is strengthened, and growing numbers of organisations use it to manage their environmental risks and opportunities. Environment professionals recognise potential for the revised standard to support continued environmental improvements," said Martin Baxter.

To read IEMA's position statement on the revisions to ISO 14001 go to www.iema.net/iso14001.

To see IEMA's full archive of press releases, click [here](#).

21/06/2012