



**Certified Once  
Accepted Everywhere**

# Expected Outcomes for Accredited Certification to ISO 14001



## Introduction

The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) have jointly produced a concise statement of outcomes that are to be expected as a result of accredited certification to ISO 14001. The intent is to promote a common focus throughout the entire conformity assessment chain in order to achieve these expected outcomes and thereby enhance the value and relevance of accredited certification.

ISO 14001 certification is frequently used in both private and public sectors to increase the confidence level of interested parties in an organization's environmental management system.

### About ISO

ISO is the developer and publisher of ISO 14001, but does not itself carry out auditing and certification. These services are performed independently of ISO by certification bodies. ISO does not control such bodies, but does develop voluntary International Standards to encourage good practice in their activities on a worldwide basis. For example, ISO/IEC 17021 specifies the requirements for bodies providing auditing and certification of management systems.

### About IAF

The IAF is an international association whose membership includes the national accreditation bodies. Certification bodies wishing to provide further confidence in their services can apply to be accredited as competent by an IAF recognized national accreditation body. ISO does not control such bodies, but does develop voluntary International Standards such as ISO/IEC 17011 which specifies the general requirements for carrying out accreditation.

## Expected Outcomes for Accredited Certification to ISO 14001

(from the perspective of interested parties)

"For the defined certification scope, an organization with a certified environmental management system is managing its interactions with the environment and is demonstrating its commitment to:

- A. Preventing pollution.
- B. Meeting applicable legal and other requirements.
- C. Continually enhancing its environmental management system in order to achieve improvements in its overall environmental performance."

## What accredited certification to ISO 14001 means

The accredited certification process is expected to ensure that the organization has an environmental management system, suitable for the nature of its activities, products and services, that conforms to the requirements of ISO 14001, and in particular can demonstrate for the defined scope that the organization:

- A. has defined an environmental policy appropriate to the nature, scale and environmental impacts of its activities, products and services
- B. has identified the environmental aspects of its activities, products and services that it can control and/or influence and determined those that can have a significant environmental impact (including those related to suppliers/contractors).
- C. has procedures in place to identify applicable environmental legislation and other relevant requirements, to determine how these apply to its environmental aspects and to keep this information up to date.
- D. has implemented effective controls in order to meet its commitment to comply with applicable legal and other requirements.
- E. has defined environmental objectives and targets that are measurable, where practicable, taking into account legal requirements and significant environmental aspects, and has programmes in place to achieve these objectives and targets
- F. ensures that people working for or on behalf of the organization are aware of the requirements of its environmental management system and are competent to perform tasks that have the potential to cause significant environmental impacts
- G. has implemented procedures for communicating internally, as well as responding to and communicating (as necessary) with interested external parties
- H. ensures that those operations associated with significant environmental aspects are carried out under specified conditions and monitors and controls the key characteristics of its operations that can have a significant environmental impact
- J. has established and (where practicable) tested procedures to address and respond to emergencies that can have an effect on the environment
- K. periodically evaluates its compliance with applicable legal and other requirements
- L. aims to prevent nonconformities, and has procedures in place to:
  - 1. correct any nonconformities that do occur
  - 2. analyze the cause of any such nonconformities and take corrective action to avoid their recurrence
- M. has implemented effective internal audit and management review procedures

## What accredited certification to ISO 14001 does not mean

- 1) ISO 14001 defines the requirements for an organization's environmental management system, but does not define specific environmental performance criteria.
- 2) Accredited certification to ISO 14001 provides confidence in the organization's ability to meet its own environmental policy, including the commitment to comply with applicable legislation, to prevent pollution, and to continually improve its performance. It does not ensure that the organization is currently achieving optimal environmental performance.
- 3) The ISO 14001 accredited certification process does not include a full regulatory compliance audit and cannot ensure that violations of legal requirements will never occur, though full legal compliance should always be the organization's goal.
- 4) Accredited certification to ISO 14001 does not necessarily indicate that the organization will be able to prevent environmental accidents from occurring

This document reflects the Communiqué that was agreed jointly between ISO and IAF and issued in July 2009.