

## ISO 14001:2015

### **Information on the system**



At present, the widely understood “environmental protection” constitute a crucial factor for the economic growth of European countries. More and more entrepreneurs lower the costs of operation of their factories through implementing such processes during which lower amounts of energy, water, air and raw materials are consumed. Great emphasis is placed on minimising the waste that is produced during the manufacturing operations.

At the same time, the legal situation in the scope of environmental protection is still ambiguous. Tens of legal acts both national ones and those created by the European Union bodies, are strictly related to the environmental protection. In relation to the above, it is necessary for organisations to be able to correctly identify those legal acts which are related to their activity, implement them and strictly observe them.

The tool which allows for effective achievement of the objectives set in terms of the environmental protection is an environmental management system, based on the requirements of the ISO 14001 standard.

## Why ISO 14001?

The family of 14000-series standards was developed by a Technical Committee ISO/TC 207 and is dedicated to support an organisation in the improvement of the environmental activity. Among the 14000-series standards, only ISO 14001

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constitutes the basis for certification of an environmental management system. Other standards are a collection of guidelines and tools which can be used when creating and developing the system. ISO 14001 standard is an international standard which is implemented and certified by over 10,000 organisations, at a global level (since 1999).

For your enterprise, the implementation of an environmental management system based on the requirements of the above-mentioned standard means systematic and continuous improvement of any operations from the scope of environmental protection. Of course, the success of the system depends on a personal engagement of all employees and the management has a particular role in it, as during the evaluation of the system development, it assumes a key function.

This systematic evaluation and improvement of the effectiveness of activity in the scope of environmental protection may be documented by means of certification conducted by an accredited independent entity.

## Construction

An organisation that has determined, implemented and maintained the processes to meet the requirements of the ISO 14001:2015 standard may be certified.

### **An organisation should:**

- 1) Specify internal and external factors relevant for the purpose and strategic directions taking into account environmental conditions which the organisation has an influence on.
- 2) Specify:
  - a) the interested parties which are relevant to the environmental management system;
  - b) relevant needs and expectations (that is, requirements) of the interested parties;
  - c) which of these needs and expectations become their conformity obligations.
- 3) Specify the boundaries and possibilities of applying EMS in order to determine its scope and specify the risk and chances related to:
  - a) environmental aspects related to their activities, products and services they are able to supervise and/or affect, including aspects which may have a significant influence on the environment (also related to suppliers/contractors);
  - b) requirements concerning the compliance with the relevant environmental legislation and other relevant requirements, in order to determine how the requirements are applicable to the organisation's environmental aspects and how the information should be updated;
  - c) other factors and requirements which should relate to the assertion that the EMS:
    - meets the results assumed,
    - realises continuous improvement.
- 4) Periodically evaluate their compliance with the relevant legal and other requirements.
- 5) Establish and (if possible) check the procedures of conduct and response in the event of threat which may affect the environment.

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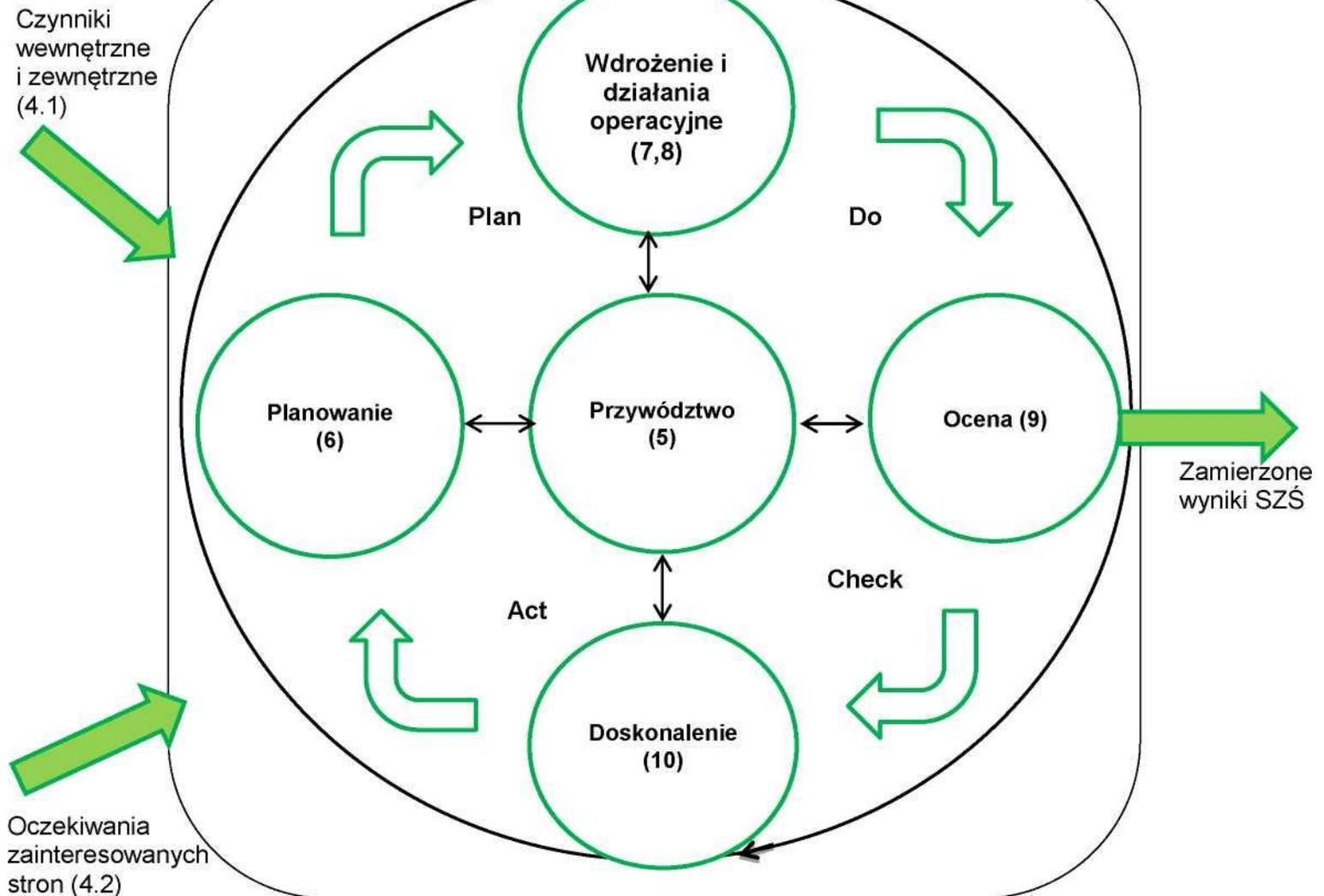
- 6) Maintain documented information on:
  - a) the risks and chances which must be solved;
  - b) processes required in planning in a way guaranteeing that they are conducted in compliance with the way they were planned;
  
- 7) Specify the environmental policy in conformity with the character, scale and environmental impact of their own activity, products and services.
  
- 8) Define measurable objectives and environmental tasks, if possible, taking into account the legal requirements and significant environmental aspects and have a program for achieving those objectives and tasks implemented.
  
- 9) Ensure that the persons working for or on behalf of the organisation are aware of the environmental management system requirements and competent for the performance of the tasks that could have a substantial impact on the environment.
  
- 10) Implement the procedures of internal communication and respond and communicate (if necessary) with external interested parties.
  
- 11) Ensure that the activities related to the significant environmental aspects are performed in specific conditions, and monitor and supervise key characteristics of their activities which may have a substantial influence on the environment.
  
- 12) Aim to prevent non-compliance and have the following procedures in place:
  - a) procedures for correcting any non-compliances that occur;
  - b) procedures for analysing the causes of any non-compliance and undertaking corrective actions in order to prevent their recurrence.
  
- 13) Implement the procedures for effective internal audit and management review.

It is, of course, necessary to conduct proper training for the staff and management, ensure documenting essential information.

Lastly, a series of internal audits should be conducted along with undertaking appropriate corrective actions, and the entirety of the activities undertaken should be ended with the organisation's management review.

The procedure described is based on the so-called Deming Cycle which, in terms of the Environmental Management System is presented on the below chart:

Kontekst organizacji (4)



## Benefits and their use:

The most important benefits related to the functioning of an environmental management system include:

- ✓ an increase in the enterprise competitiveness (compared to an organisation without any environmental management system implemented and certified);
- ✓ reduction of the amount of contamination and waste generated along with the reduction of their utilisation costs as a result of a continuous and systemic supervision over the organisation's environmental aspects;
- ✓ improvement of the organisation functioning;
- ✓ increase in the production profitability which is generated as a result of the optimisation of the consumption of energy, resources and materials;
- ✓ improvement of the environment condition around the enterprise e.g. as a result of a reduction of emissions and immission of pollution;
- ✓ improvement of relations between the organisation and local residents;
- ✓ increase in trust of clients and contractors;
- ✓ increasing legal security of the enterprise.

Moreover, by complying with ISO 14001, you gain other ad hoc benefits as presented in the following chart:



To sum up, if issues such as minimising the risk of civil liability, improving company's image and cost-saving are important for you, then the implementation of environmental management system should not be questioned.

The structure of the management system according to ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 is analogous. The differences concern mainly the criteria for setting objectives. Quality management systems are focused on clients' needs, while environmental management systems concern mainly issues being of interest to the society and other external parties.

## Certification

Environmental management system certification audit in accordance with ISO 14001 is conducted on site at the enterprise being certified, in two stages. The first stage of the audit covers the factory inspection and documentation check, and the second stage covers the actual certification.

The purpose of the first stage is an initial overview of the environmental management system to be performed by DEKRA audit team in the aspect of environmental protection and the enterprise's influence on the environment. On the basis of the results of the first audit stage, a plan for the second stage is developed.

Before conducting the certification audit in your organisation, the following conditions must be met:

- ✓ the environmental management system must have been in place for at least 3 months;
- ✓ the internal audit system must be effective and efficient;
- ✓ at least one system evaluation must be conducted by the company management.

In the second audit stage it is verified whether the environmental policy adopted is observed and whether the environmental management system is appropriate to meet the objectives of the environmental policy. In the case any inconsistencies are identified, their removal will be necessary before issuing a certificate.

The audit duration depends on the size of a given organisation, that is, the number of employees and locations where the company conducts its activity.

### **Supervision audits**

During the 3-year certification validity period, annual supervision audits are conducted.

The purpose of the first and second supervision audits is to check whether:

- ✓ the objections recorded during the previous audit were removed;
- ✓ organisational changes took place at the company;
- ✓ the environmental management system changed;
- ✓ DEKRA certificate and mark are used in accordance with their intended use;
- ✓ actions are taken in relation to changes in the reference standards, legal acts and provisions.

### **Renewal audit (recertification)**

Renewal audit is necessary to ensure the extension of the certification validity for another 3 years.

Renewal audit should be conducted before the certificate expires.

The requirements of the renewal audit are almost identical as in the case of a certification audit.