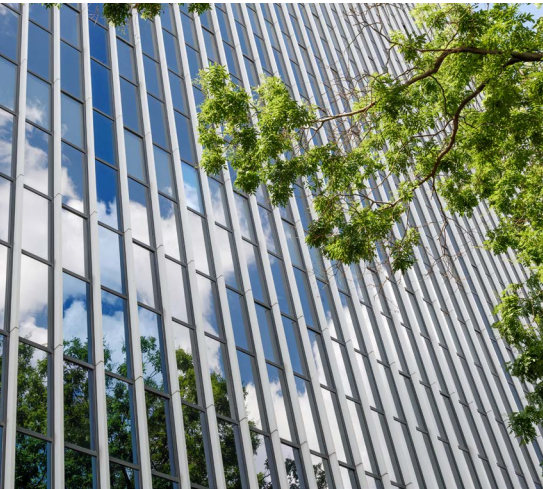


Environmental Management



The establishment of an environmental management system (EMS) is an effective way for organisations to demonstrate an ethical commitment to sustainable development, now a major part of corporate social responsibility (CSR) – a key element to maintaining a brand's reputation.

Businesses can operate in a sustainable manner by adopting social, economic and environmental standards that mean the needs of the present day are achieved without threatening those of future generations. In short, an EMS ensures that the impact an organisation has on the environment and their 'carbon footprint' can be minimised in a formalised and systematic way so that performance standards aren't negatively affected as a consequence.

Although it is possible to implement a 'home grown' EMS, many organisations prefer to have a system independently verified, for instance, by ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management System certification or through registration with the EU Eco Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS).

Some organisations can develop an EMS in a relatively short space of time, whereas others may need to space their initiatives over time and develop competence through external training and the use of external specialist advice.

Key actions when creating an EMS

- Consider building your EMS into an Integrated Management System, rather than as a standalone one, so that it's considered alongside the management of occupational health and safety, quality, environment, food safety and IT security, etc., reducing the chances of contradictions.
- Appoint a competent person (either internally or from an external company) to establish your EMS.
- Recognise and assess how your organisation has an impact on the environment and make a plan how to address and reduce those effects.
 - Typically these impacts would include waste, emissions, energy use, transport and consumption of materials. Develop methods to improve operational and process efficiency. It's likely that they will also result in savings in relation to resources and energy costs. Make sure that all legislative and regulatory requirements (including any specific to your industry) have been identified and factored into your EMS.

- Set out the organisation's goals and principles, and how the EMS has been developed to achieve these, in a written policy that is based on related assessments.
- Consider all past, present and proposed activities and the potential interaction with the environment.
 - Don't forget to think about temporary works, such as the construction of a new building on a site, or occasional events like an 'open day' where people who wouldn't usually be allowed access are allowed onto the premises.
- Have an environmental and ecological impact assessment completed through a tour of the premises, either by an in-house competent person or through an independent survey.
- Assess the adequacy of precautions and control measures, including spillage and emergency response arrangements, particularly during changes to the working environment or processes.
- Set up an action plan with timescales for improvements.
- Provide training for employees so that they're aware of the environmental policy, what they should be on the look-out for and who to report concerns to, and how to respond to an incident that has the potential to cause environmental damage.
- Carry out regular internal and independent audits to review progress and identify areas of development and improvement to encourage continuous improvement.