



EMAS

Performance, credibility,
transparency.

What is EMAS?

The aim of the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is to promote continuous environmental improvements. It is a voluntary scheme for organisations willing to commit themselves to evaluate and improve their environmental performance.

The scheme was launched in April 1995 and revised in 2001 to incorporate ISO/EN ISO 14001 (International/European Standard for Environmental Management Systems) as its environmental management system component. EMAS goes beyond ISO/EN ISO 14001 in a number of ways. It requires organisations to:

- undertake an initial environmental review;
- actively involve employees in implementing EMAS;
- make available relevant information to the public and other parties.

Who Can Participate in EMAS?

EMAS is open to any organisation in the public and private sector committed to improving its environmental performance. It is open to Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). An increasing number of candidate countries are also implementing the scheme in preparation for their accession to the EU.

Factsheet

EMAS and ISO/EN ISO 14001: differences and complementarities

Compatibility of EMAS with international standards.

EMAS and ISO/EN ISO 14001 share the same objective: to provide good environmental management. Yet, they are too often seen as competitors. Back in 1996, the Commission recognised that ISO/EN ISO 14001 could become a stepping-stone for EMAS. In such a way, the adoption of ISO/EN ISO 14001 as the management system element of EMAS allows your organisation to easily progress from ISO/EN ISO 14001 to EMAS without duplicating your efforts.

What is the difference between ISO/EN ISO 14001 and EMAS?

While EMAS and ISO/EN ISO 14001 share the same objective, they are different in a number of ways. These differences are illustrated below showing in particular where EMAS goes beyond the ISO/EN ISO 14001 requirements.

	EMAS	ISO/EN ISO 14001
Preliminary environmental review	Verified initial review	No review
External communication and verification	Environmental policy, objectives, environmental management system and details of organisation's performance made public	Environmental policy made public
Audits	Frequency and methodology of audits of the environmental management system and of environmental performance	Audits of the environmental management system (frequency or methodology not specified)
Contractors and suppliers	Required influence over contractors and suppliers	Relevant procedures are communicated to contractors and suppliers
Commitments and requirements	Employee involvement, continuous improvement of environmental performance and compliance with environmental legislation	Commitment of continual improvement of the environmental management system rather than a demonstration of continual improvement of environmental performance

How to implement EMAS if ISO/EN ISO 14001 already exists?

If your organisation is already ISO/EN ISO 14001 certified, the recent revisions have made it easier to register for EMAS. Minor modifications will need to be made to the core ISO/EN ISO 14001 elements as well as some additional steps specific to EMAS.

Additional Steps for EMAS registration

1. **Initial Environmental Review** – EMAS requires that an initial environmental review be performed to identify an organisation's environmental aspects. If your organisation already has an Environmental Management System (EMS) that is ISO/EN ISO 14001 certified, it does not need to conduct a formal environmental review when implementing EMAS (so long as specific environmental aspects in Annex VI are fully considered in the certified EMS).
2. **Environmental Statement** – Your organisation will need to prepare an environmental statement, based on the outcome of the EMS. At this point, you will need to check that the environmental statement fulfils the requirements of Annex III and examine all the data generated by the environmental management system to ensure it is represented in a fair and balanced way in the environmental statement.

EMAS and ISO/EN ISO 14001: differences and complementarities

3. **Verifying the Environmental Statement and environmental performance** – For your organisation to attain EMAS registration, the Environmental Statement must be independently validated. This process will check that the statement meets the requirements of Annex III and is publicly available.

Modifications to ISO/EN ISO 14001 to meet EMAS requirements

1. **Environmental Policy** – ISO/EN ISO 14001 includes a commitment, but not a provision, to comply with relevant environmental legislation. Your organisation must strengthen its statement of commitment included in its environmental policy to make provision for regulatory compliance.
If more than one site is registered under EMAS then continual improvement must be demonstrated on a site-by-site basis.
2. **Planning** - EMAS has very specific requirements on the type of environmental aspects that may need to be addressed within the environmental management system, while ISO/EN ISO 14001 is less prescriptive in this area. Your organisation should ensure that in identifying its environmental aspects in the planning stage of ISO/EN ISO 14001, it has addressed the items listed in Annex VI which are applicable.

Your organisation should also ensure that all the elements of the initial environmental review, detailed in Annex VII, have been considered and incorporated where necessary in the ISO/EN ISO 14001 process.

It is possible that the areas and the scope covered by ISO/EN ISO 14001 and EMAS may be different. Your organisation should take steps to ensure that the scope to be covered by the EMAS registration is covered by the ISO/EN ISO 14001 certificate.

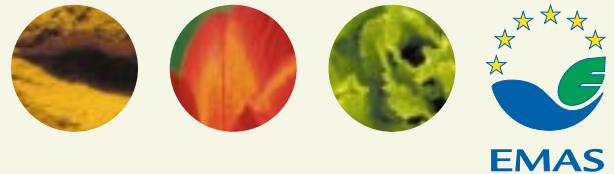
3. **Implementation** – One of the requirements of EMAS is the active participation of employees in the environmental improvement programme. This may be achieved in a variety of ways: - an environmental committee;
- suggestion book;
- environmental representatives.

Your organisation should also take steps to ensure that any suppliers and contractors used also comply with your organisation's environmental policy.

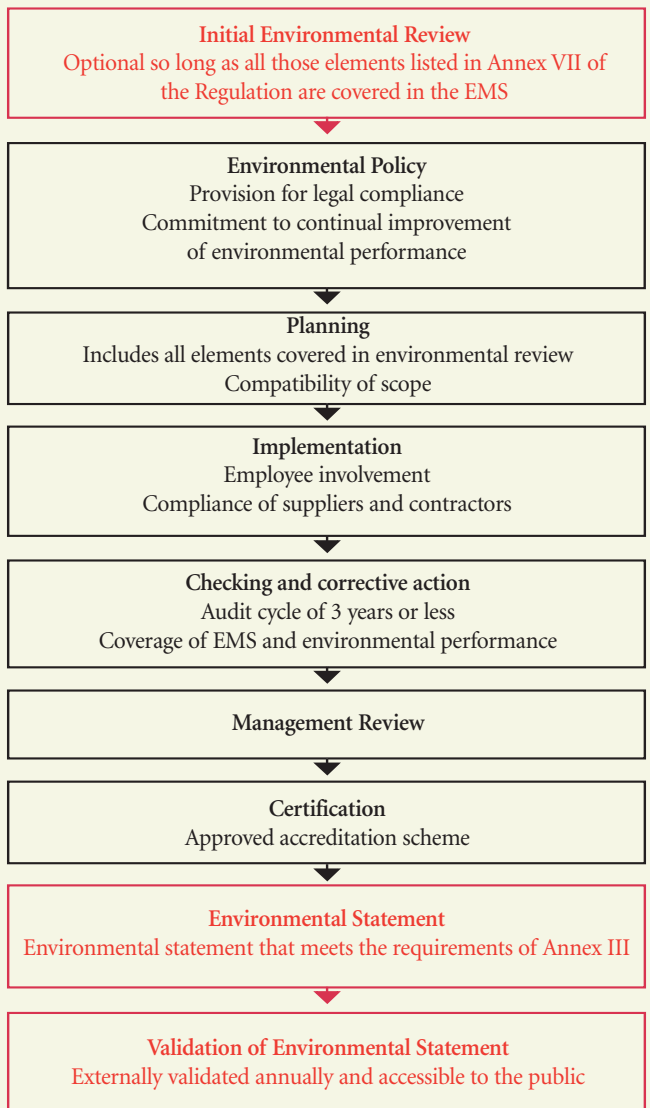
4. **Checking and corrective action** - Since the frequency of the audit cycle is not specified in ISO/EN ISO 14001 it is necessary for your organisation to check that the frequency of the audit cycle is in compliance with Annex II of the EMAS Regulation and takes place at intervals of no longer than 3 years. In addition to the EMS being audited, your organisation's environmental performance must also be addressed annually to demonstrate continual improvement.
5. **Certification of ISO/EN 14001** – In order to comply with the requirements of EMAS, the ISO/EN ISO 14001 certificate must be issued under one of the accreditation procedures recognised by the European Commission.

The emergence of ISO/EN ISO 14001 has helped EMAS in terms of raising general awareness of environmental management schemes. The two systems are complementary but EMAS is more rigorous in some areas. EMAS continues to be seen as more prestigious than ISO/EN ISO 14001 in many Member States.

Make a difference! Join the EMAS club.



EMAS Implementation Route for an ISO/EN ISO 14001 certified organisation



KEY

EMAS Element

ISO/EN ISO 14001 Element



European Commission
Environment Directorate-General