

Sustainability in Practice: monitoring and reporting

Appendix D. Management Approaches

The full copy of the Green Dragon Environmental Standard, which is available by contacting them, contains a very useful appendix which shows how the Green Dragon Standard, the British Standard 8555 (on which the Acorn Scheme is based), ISO 14001 and EMAS relate to one another.

PQASSO

www.ces-vol.org.uk

PQASSO is the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations. It is a straightforward, user-friendly quality system intended to help organisations to run more effectively and efficiently. It is built around twelve topics or quality areas, offering a flexible approach to quality that allows organisations to work at their own pace. PQASSO has been recently updated and its new 3rd edition has a greater focus on environmental and sustainability issues.

Changing the way we work

www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/guides/greenofficev1.pdf

Every Action Counts is a programme that 'provides advice and support to voluntary and community organisations which are looking to reduce their impact on the environment, tackle climate change and improve their local area.' They published a guide called 'Changing the Way We Work' in 2008 which addresses the environmental impacts of voluntary and community organisations under the headings of:

- Energy and climate change
- Waste and resources
- Shopping ethically and procurement
- Travelling wisely
- Caring for where you live and work
- Saving water

The guide looks at:

- why organisations should take action
- how environmental impacts relate to the VCS
- how to involve your organisation and developing a sustainability action plan
- how to take action
- further sources of information

One Planet Living

www.oneplanetliving.org

One Planet Living (OPL) is an expression of how to be sustainable: if globally we live within the resources of our single planet without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same, then we will be sustainable. OPL, which was developed by the BioRegional Development Group and WWF (UK), takes a holistic view of how to achieve sustainability by addressing areas of environmental impact alongside community involvement. OPL is founded on the belief that whilst human society has directly caused much environmental degradation, society also holds the key to rectifying those problems. In particular, OPL is founded on a belief that strong communities are founded on a sense of social and environmental responsibility.

OPL is set out in ten key, interrelated principles, around which actions are grouped:

1.	Zero Carbon	Achieve net CO ₂ emissions of zero
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2.	Zero Waste	Eliminate waste flows to landfill and for incineration
3.	Sustainable Transport	Reduce reliance on private vehicles and achieve major reductions of CO ₂ emissions from transport
4.	Local and Sustainable Materials	Transform materials supply to the point where it has a net positive impact on the environment and local economy
5.	Local and Sustainable Food	Transform food supply to the point where it has a net positive impact on the environment, local economy and peoples' well-being
6.	Sustainable Water	Achieve a positive impact on local water resources and supply
7.	Natural Habitats and Wildlife	Regenerate degraded environments and halt biodiversity loss
8.	Culture and Heritage	Protect and build on local cultural heritage and diversity
9.	Equity and Fairtrade	Ensure a positive impact on other communities
10.	Health and Happiness	Increase health and quality of life of community members and others

BioRegional Development Group have also developed a template Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) for small businesses: www.bioregional.com/take_action/take_action_bus.htm. This provides a wide range of actions in each of the ten areas shown above.

Green Dragon Environmental Standard

www.greendragonems.com

The Green Dragon Environmental Standard is a staged Environmental Management System (EMS), which gives organisations a manageable way to implement an EMS at the level that suits their organisation. There are five levels in the scheme, each of which leads to a UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) accredited EMS. Level four of the scheme puts organisations at the right level to apply for ISO14001 (see below) and level five enables application to EMAS (see below).

The standard incorporates five key principles:

1. Continual environmental improvement
2. Compliance with environmental legislation
3. Prevention of pollution
4. Communication of environmental issues
5. Environmental Management systems principles
 - a. Planning
 - b. Taking action
 - c. Checking progress
 - d. Reviewing achievements

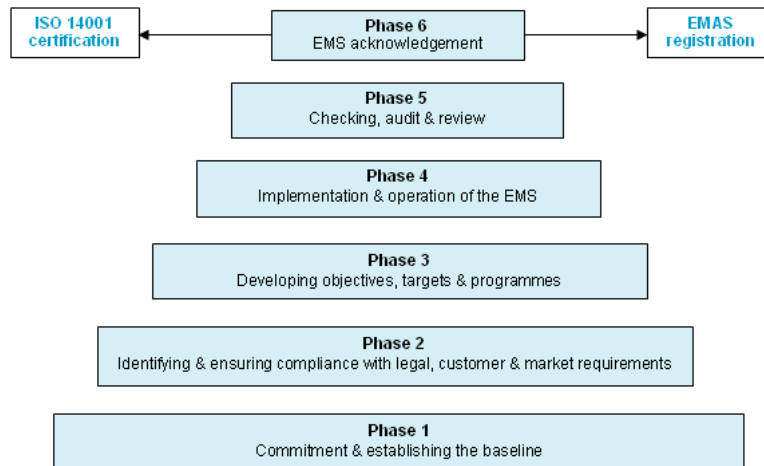
For a full copy of the standard, see the Green Dragon Standard website. The full copy includes not only detail on the principles and different levels, but a useful appendix showing how the requirements of the standard relate to ISO14001, BS 8555 (on which the Acorn Scheme is based) and EMAS.

The Acorn Scheme

www.iema.net/ems/acorn_scheme

The Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA) Acorn Scheme is an officially recognised EMS standard recommended by the government. It offers a convenient step by step approach to environmental management using the British Standard BS8555.ⁱⁱ Acorn breaks EMS implementation down into a series of five logical, pragmatic phases. Each phase is further subdivided into a number of individual stage profiles which correspond to the Acorn achievement criteria. On completion of all five phases an organisation has a functional EMS. A further phase (phase six) is available for organisations wishing to progress to ISO 14001 or EMAS.

The Acorn scheme is particularly flexible because it is structured to accommodate all types of organisation, a flexibility that is aided by a self-determined time frame for implementation and a linking of environmental improvements to 'business' competitiveness.



The Acorn Scheme phases

ISO 14001

www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/management_standards/iso_9000_iso_14000

The International Standardisation Organisation (ISO) created the 14000 environmental management standards, which are now the most rigorous and widely used standards across the globe for environmental management. ISO 14001 provides the requirements for an EMS, which means providing 'a framework for a holistic, strategic approach to an organisation's environmental policy, plans and actions.'ⁱⁱⁱ

ISO 14001:2004 'gives the generic requirements for an environmental management system. The underlying philosophy is that whatever the organisation's activity, the requirements of an effective EMS are the same... Because ISO 14001:2004 does not lay down levels of environmental performance, the standard can be implemented by a wide variety of organisations, whatever their current level of environmental maturity. However, a commitment to compliance with applicable environmental legislation and regulations is required, along with a commitment to continual improvement – for which the EMS provides the framework.'^{iv}

Eco-management and audit scheme

www.iema.net/ems/emas
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/toolkit/>

The Eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) is a voluntary initiative designed to improve organisations' environmental performance, through evaluation, reporting and continuous improvement. Since 2001 EMAS has required the EMS used to be ISO 14001; many organisations progress from ISO 14001 to EMAS and maintain certification to both.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (those with less than 250 employees) are encouraged to enter the scheme. 'Some deviations from the EMAS requirements to avoid administrative burden are allowed... to encourage higher participation in the scheme.'^v

To receive EMAS registration an organisation must comply with the following steps:

1. Conduct an environmental review considering all environmental aspects of the organisation's activities, products and services, methods to assess these, its legal and regulatory framework and existing environmental management practices and procedures.
2. In the light of the results of the review, establish an effective environmental management system aimed at achieving the organisation's environmental policy defined by the top management. The management

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system needs to set responsibilities, objectives, means, operational procedures, training needs, monitoring and communication systems.

3. Carry out an environmental audit assessing in particular the management system in place and conformity with the organisation's policy and programme as well as compliance with relevant environmental regulatory requirements.
4. Provide a statement of its environmental performance which lays down the results achieved against the environmental objectives and the future steps to be undertaken in order to continuously improve the organisation's environmental performance.

ⁱ www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/

ⁱⁱ BS 8555: guide to the phased implementation of an environmental management system including the use of environmental performance evaluation.

ⁱⁱⁱ www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/management_standards/iso_9000_iso_14000/iso_14000_essentials.htm

^{iv} Ibid.

^v EMAS website: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/about/participate/index_en.htm