

EMAS - Factsheet



What is EMAS?

The Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is the EU's voluntary scheme designed for companies and other organisations committing themselves to evaluate, manage and improve their environmental performance.

EMAS is currently the most credible and robust environmental management system on the market, adding four pillars to the requirements of the international standard for environmental management systems ISO/EN ISO 14001:

- continual improvement of environmental performance;
- compliance with environmental legislation ensured by government supervision;
- public information through annual reporting;
- employee involvement.

Who can participate in EMAS?

EMAS is open to all types of organisations in the public and private sector which want to improve their environmental performance. It applies to all 27 Member States of the European Union, to the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and to the Candidate Countries for EU membership (Croatia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey).

EMAS can be introduced easily in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), even with few financial and human resources, or limited in-house expertise. Large and multi-site organisations can benefit from the standardisation of EMAS in all sectors EU-wide. For local authorities, EMAS can help to streamline environmental activities and requirements e.g. in administration, construction, health and education.

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 steppingstone 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 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
Status	Under legal bases (EU Member States and EEA countries). Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council under public law	Under no legal bases. (International: world wide) ISO standard under private law
Organisation	The entity to be registered shall not exceed the boundaries of the Member State, and it is intended to go towards entities and sites	Does not go towards entities or sites
Environmental policy	Included commitment to continual improvement of environmental performance of the organisation	Does not include a commitment to the continual improvement of environmental performance but of the performance of the system
Initial environmental review	Obligatory preliminary review, when is the first time that the organisation sets its environmental status	Initial review is recommended, but not required
Environmental aspects	Identification and evaluation of the environmental aspects (direct and indirect). Establishment of criteria for assessing the significance of the environmental aspects	Required only a procedure able to identify environmental aspects
Legal compliance	Obligatory to demonstrate it. Required full legal compliance. There is a compliance-audit	Only commitment to comply with applicable legal requirements. There is no compliance-audit
External communication	Open dialogue with the public. Public Environmental Statement (validated for verifiers)	Not open dialogue with the public. Only is required to respond to relevant communication from external interested parts. Control by public is not possible
Continual improvement	Required annual improvement	Required periodically improvement without a defined frequency
Management review	Is wider and requires an evaluation of the environmental performance of the organization, based in a performance-audit	Required an environmental performance in the management, but not through a performance audit
Contractors and suppliers	Required influence over contractors and suppliers	Relevant procedures are communicated to contractors and suppliers
Employees involvement	Active involvement of employees and their representatives	No
Internal environmental auditing	Includes: system-audit, a performance-audit (= evaluation of environmental performance) and an environmental compliance-audit (= determination of legal compliance)	Included only system audit against the requirements of the standard
Auditor	Required the independence of the auditor	Advised the independence of the auditor

	EMAS	ISO/EN ISO 14001
Audits	Check for improvement of environmental performance. Frequency required: 3 year cycle during which all areas are verified at least once	Check environmental system performance. No frequency required
External verification	Accredited environmental verifiers	No
Verification/Certification Scope	Verifiers accredited according to NACE codes	Certifiers accredited according to EAC code
Authorities are informed	Obligation by Validation of Environmental Statement	No obligation
Logo	Yes	No

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 and ISO/EN ISO 14001: differences and complementarities

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

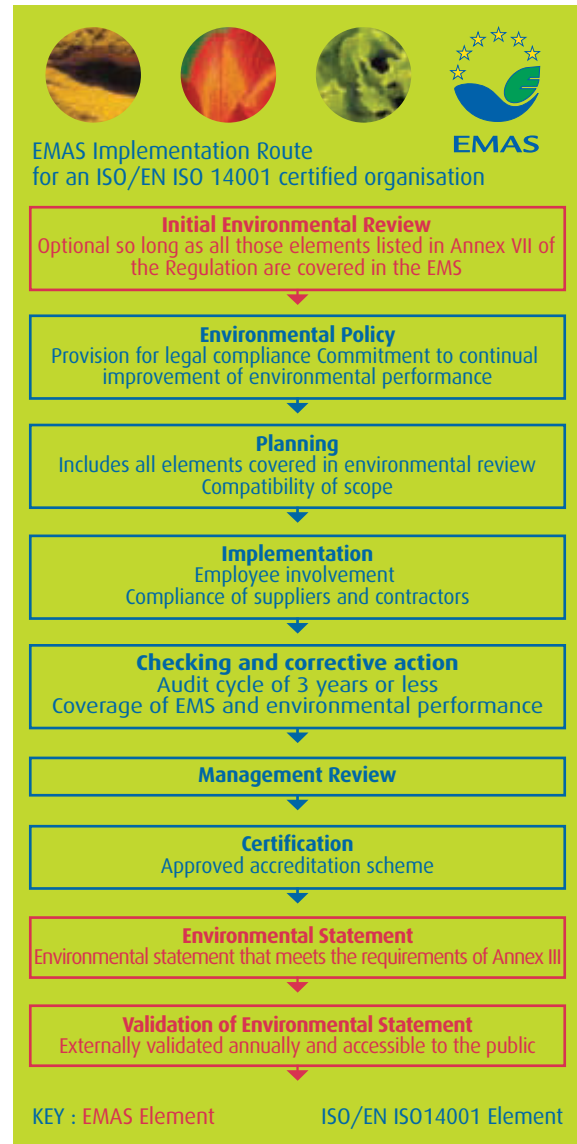
If your organisation is already ISO/EN ISO 14001 certified, the recent revisions have made it easier to register for EMAS. Minor modifications will need to be made to the core ISO/EN ISO 14001 elements as well as some additional steps specific to EMAS.

Additional steps for EMAS registration

- Initial Environmental Review** – EMAS requires an initial environmental review to identify an organisation’s environmental aspects. Organisations ISO/EN ISO 14001 certified do not need to conduct a formal environmental review when implementing EMAS, as long as specific environmental aspects in Annex VI, are fully considered in the certified EMS.
- Environmental statement** – EMAS requires an environmental statement, based on the outcome of the EMS. The environmental statement has to fulfil 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.
- Validation of the environmental statement and environmental performance** – The Environmental Statement must be validated independently. 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

- Environmental Policy** – 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.
- Planning** – 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 is 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. 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.
- 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, like for example: an environmental committee; suggestion book or environmental representatives. Your organisation should also take steps to ensure that any suppliers and contractors used also comply with your organisation’s environmental policy.
- Checking and corrective action** – 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.
- Certification of ISO/EN ISO 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.



Essential items regarding the process and the principles of EMAS, which go beyond ISO/EN ISO 14001

- Continual annual improvement of the environmental performance of the organisation
- Initial environmental review required
- Legal compliance is required and checked through out the whole process before registration
- Identification of all environmental aspects for the determination of the significant ones
- Internal environmental auditing includes: environmental manage system-audit, an environmental performance audit and an environmental compliance-audit
- Environmental Statement required
- Full legal compliance required: commitment included in policy, identification of legal and other environmental requirements, periodic evaluation, awareness and training, operational controls and emergency preparedness, monitoring, audits and management review and delivery of improvements