



GUIDE 66

General requirements for bodies operating assessment and certification/registration of environmental management systems (EMS)

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work.

Draft Guides adopted by the responsible Committee or Group are circulated to national bodies for voting. Publication as a Guide requires approval by at least 75 % of the national bodies casting a vote.

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Introduction

Certification/registration of the environmental management system (EMS) of an organization is one means of providing assurance that the certified/registered organization has implemented a system for the management of the environmental aspects of its activities, products or services in line with the organization's environmental policy.

This Guide specifies requirements, the observance of which is intended to ensure that certification/registration bodies operate third-party certification/registration systems in a consistent and reliable manner, thereby facilitating their acceptance on a national and international basis. This Guide should serve as a foundation for the recognition of relevant national systems in the interests of international trade.

This Guide is intended for use by bodies, however described, which carry out the functions of assessment and certification/registration of EMS. For convenience of drafting, such bodies are referred to as "certification/registration bodies". This wording should not be an obstacle to the use of this Guide by bodies with other designations which undertake activities which it covers. Indeed, this Guide should be usable by any body involved in EMS assessment.

EMS certification/registration involves the assessment of an organization's EMS but does not imply achievement of specific levels of environmental performance of its activities, product(s) or service(s). Evidence of conformity to the appropriate EMS standard or other normative document and any supplementary documentation will be in the form of a certification/registration document or an EMS certificate.

While this Guide is intended for use by bodies concerned with recognizing the competence of certification/registration bodies, many provisions contained herein may be useful in second-party assessment procedures.

General requirements for bodies operating assessment and certification/registration of environmental management systems (EMS)

1 Scope

This Guide specifies general requirements for a third-party body operating EMS certification/registration to meet if it is to be recognized as competent and reliable in the operation of EMS certification/registration.

The requirements contained in this Guide are written, above all, to be considered as general requirements for any body operating certification/registration of EMS.

NOTE In some countries, the bodies which verify conformity of EMS to specified standards are called “certification bodies”, in others “registration bodies”, in others “assessment and registration bodies” or “certification/registration bodies” and, in still others, “registrars”. For ease of understanding, this Guide always refers to such bodies as “certification/registration bodies”. This should not be understood to be limiting.

2 Normative references

The following normative documents contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this Guide. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply. However, parties to agreements based on this Guide are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the normative documents indicated below. For undated references, the latest edition of the normative document referred to applies. Members of ISO and IEC maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996, *General terms and their definitions concerning standardization and related activities*.

ISO 8402:1994, *Quality management and quality assurance — Vocabulary*.

ISO 10011-1:1990, *Guidelines for auditing quality systems — Part 1: Auditing*.

ISO 14010:1996, *Guidelines for environmental auditing — General principles*.

ISO 14011:1996, *Guidelines for environmental auditing — Audit procedures — Auditing of environmental management systems*.

ISO 14012:1996, *Guidelines for environmental auditing — Qualification criteria for environmental auditors*.

ISO 14050:1998, *Environmental management — Vocabulary*.

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this Guide, the relevant definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2, ISO 8402, ISO 14050 and the following definitions apply.

3.1

organization

company, corporation, firm, enterprise, authority or institution, or part or combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private, that has its own functions and administration

NOTE For organizations with more than one operating unit, a single operating unit may be defined as an organization.

3.2

certification/registration body

third party that assesses and certifies/registers the EMS of organizations with respect to published EMS standards or other normative documents and any supplementary documentation required under the system

3.3

certification/registration document

document indicating that an organization's EMS conforms to specified EMS standards and any supplementary documentation required under the system

3.4

certification/registration system

system having its own rules of procedure and management for carrying out the assessment leading to the issuance of a certification/registration document and its subsequent maintenance.

4 Requirements for certification/registration bodies

4.1 Certification/registration body

4.1.1 General provisions

4.1.1.1 The policies and procedures under which the certification/registration body operates shall be non-discriminatory, and they shall be administered in a non-discriminatory manner. Procedures shall not be used to impede or inhibit access by applicants other than as specified in this Guide.

4.1.1.2 The certification/registration body shall make its services accessible to all applicants. There shall not be undue financial or other conditions. Access shall not be conditional upon the size of the organization or membership of any association or group, nor shall certification/registration be conditional upon the number of organizations already certified/registered.

4.1.1.3 The criteria against which the EMS of an applicant is assessed shall be those outlined in the EMS standards or other normative documents relevant to the function performed. If an explanation is required as to the application of these documents to a specific certification/registration programme, it shall be formulated by relevant and impartial committees or persons possessing the necessary technical competence, and shall be published by the certification/registration body.

4.1.1.4 The certification/registration body shall confine its requirements, assessment and decision on certification/registration to those matters specifically related to the scope of the certification/registration being considered.

4.1.1.5 The maintenance and evaluation of legal compliance is the responsibility of the organization. The certification/registration body shall restrict itself to checks and samples required in order to establish confidence that the EMS functions in this regard. The certification/registration body shall verify that the organization has evaluated legal and regulatory compliance and can show that action has been taken in cases of non-compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.