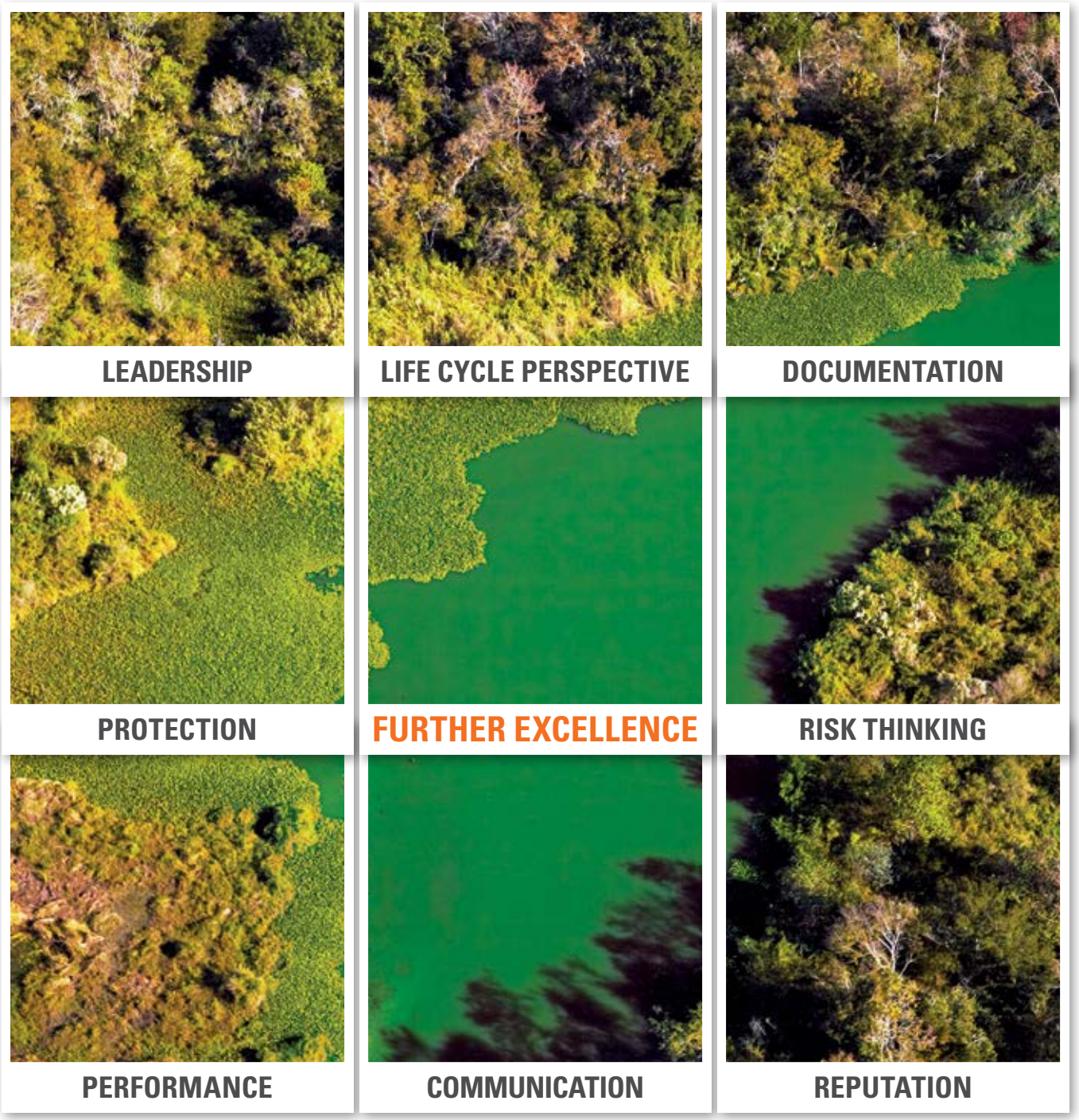

ISO 14001:2015 – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

HELPING YOU TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHANGES TO ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS IN ISO 14001:2015

JULY 2016

AUTHOR
Jesus Moya
Global Product Manager – ISO 14001
SGS

ABSTRACT

This document aims to provide an insight into the contents of ISO 14001:2015. It is not intended to be a full explanation of all the requirements of ISO 14001:2015, rather it provides an overview of the key changes to Environmental Management Systems (EMS) in the document.

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

The stated purpose of the International Standard ISO 14001:2015 is to provide organisations with a framework to protect the environment and respond to changing environmental conditions in balance with socio-economic needs. ISO 14001:2015 specifies requirements that enable an organisation to achieve the intended outcomes it sets for its environmental management system.

When an organisation installs an environmental management system (EMS), makes it work and then audits that system, real control and genuine ongoing improvement is obtained. This crystallises the purpose of ISO 14001. Not only does an effective EMS improve and establish control, it also installs and drives a system of continual improvement in environmental performance.

An ISO 14001 EMS provides a system of interlinking processes. It is an effective toolkit of mechanisms for managing environmental issues in any kind of organisation. It is only prescriptive in terms of what must happen, leaving the how to the organisation to decide or devise for itself. This approach means that ISO 14001 can be applied to any kind or scale of organisation. It also explains why, from time to time, there are misunderstandings of its intent and in its application. An ISO 14001 management system will mean that you understand:

- Your organisation and how it affects and is affected by the environment
- How your environmental credentials are perceived by stakeholders
- The importance of leading from the front
- The impacts your organisation has on the environment and how you manage them
- The importance of putting strategic environmental management into the future plans of your business
- The compliance obligations applicable to your organisation

The international ISO 14001 standard specifies a model for an EMS that may be applied to any type or size of organisation. It is based on an implementation model of PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT (PDCA) and follows a simple and logical sequence.

ISO 14001:2015 requires a thorough understanding of the organisation's context in order to better manage risk, with more emphasis on the responsibility for leaders within organisations to promote environmental management.

In addition, there is a requirement towards improving environmental performance, rather than improving the management system.

ISO has identified the following emerging changes as a result of the revision of the standard:

- Strategic environmental management
- Leadership
- Protecting the environment
- Environmental performance
- Life cycle thinking
- Communication
- Documentation

A brief explanation of the emerging changes:

- Strategic environmental management: There is a new requirement to understand the context of an organisation when determining external and internal issues relating to its activities and the environment. Actions to address these issues within the Environmental Management System (EMS) are also required.
- Leadership: A new clause has been added with particular responsibilities for top-level management to express their leadership and commitment to environmental management. Top-level management may assign this responsibility to others, but will retain accountability.
- Protecting the environment: Environmental policy must incorporate a commitment to the 'protection of the environment', this includes 'prevention of pollution' and 'other' commitments, such as sustainable resource use, climate change mitigation and adaptation, protection of biodiversity and ecosystems.
- Environmental performance: The key focus is on improving performance related to the management of environmental aspects. The organisation must decide on criteria to evaluate its environmental performance, using correct indicators.
- Life cycle thinking: The organisation will need to extend its control and influence over its environmental impacts, from raw material acquisition/generation to end-of-life treatment. This does not imply a requirement to perform a life cycle assessment (LCA). However, the organisation will need to carefully consider the stages of product/service that can be controlled or influenced.
- Communication: Emphasis on internal and external communication, and equal treatment of both, has been added. The decision to communicate externally is retained by the organisation while taking into account its compliance obligations.
- Documentation: The term 'documented information' is used instead of 'documents' and 'records'. The organisation has the flexibility to conclude when 'procedures' are required. Any format (paper, cloud, etc.) would be valid.

ISO 14001:2015 uses the Annex SL framework and adopts its high-level structure, core text and common terms and core definitions. However, ISO 14001:2015 also includes those additional requirements that are specific to 'environmental' management systems. One of the consequences of adopting the Annex SL, however, is that some of the requirements of ISO 14001:2004 which are unchanged in ISO 14001:2015 are now located under different headings in differently numbered clauses.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

All ISO standards are reviewed periodically to establish if a revision is required and to keep them relevant to the market. The latest milestone in the ISO 14001 process was reached in September 2015 with the release of ISO 14001:2015.

This document gives a brief introduction to ISO 14001:2015 and points out some of the common pitfalls for organisations in transition or implementation and preparing for third-party audit.

The 2015 version also now follows the Annex SL high-level structure. This will be common to all ISO management systems being published and should ease integration with other management systems e.g. ISO 9001.

The revised version also gives consideration to the ISO report 'Future Challenges for EMS' and makes enhancements on the principles and requirements of ISO 14001:2004.

III. ANNEX SL

There are many management system standards covering a wide range of areas such as quality, environment, occupational health and safety, etc. Over the years, organisations have tried to implement and gain certifications for multiple management system standards (MSS). Their attempts to combine them into one effective and efficient integrated system have not always been easy since the requirements, terms and definitions, etc. of the various ISO management system standards can be significantly different.

In recognition of this, the ISO Technical Management Board produced Annex SL of the Consolidated ISO Supplement of the ISO/IEC Directives in 2012 (Annex SL), previously ISO Guide 83. The stated aim of Annex SL is to enhance the consistency and alignment of ISO management system standards by providing:

- A unifying and agreed high level structure
- Identical core text
- Common terms and core definitions

Consequently, Annex SL provides a template or framework for all new and revised MSS. The high level structure (i.e. major clause numbers and titles) is fixed and cannot be changed, although discipline-specific sub-clauses may be added.

The intention is that all ISO management system standards (MSS) will be aligned and the compatibility of these standards will be enhanced. For example, the major clause numbers and titles in all future ISO management system standards will be identical. As a result, all MSS will look very similar. In addition, it is expected that this will lead to less inconsistency, as common terms will all have the same definition. This approach will be particularly useful for those organisations that choose to operate an 'integrated' management system that meets the requirements of two or more management system standards (see Figure 1).

Annex SL has already been used as the template for the new Business Continuity Management Standard, ISO 22301, which was issued in 2012 and for the 2013 revision to ISO 27001 – Information Security Management. It has also been used for the revisions to ISO 9001 and 14001 and will be used for the new Occupational Health and Safety Management standard, ISO 45001.

ANNEX SL AND ISO 14001:2015

ISO 14001:2015 uses the Annex SL framework and adopts its high-level structure, core text and common terms and core definitions. The list of main clauses is now as follows:

1. Scope
2. Normative references
3. Terms and definitions
4. Context of the organisation
5. Leadership
6. Planning
7. Support
8. Operation
9. Performance evaluation
10. Improvement

However, within sub-clauses to these main activity headings, ISO 14001:2015 also includes those additional requirements that are specific to EMS.

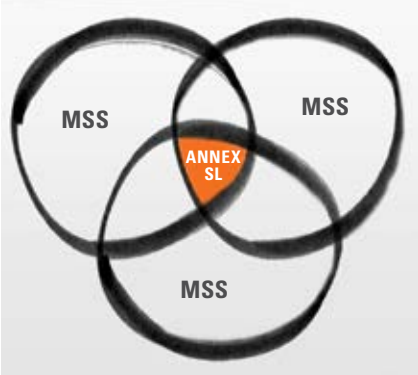

Figure 1

IV. THE CORE REQUIREMENTS OF ISO 14001:2015

CLAUSE 1 – SCOPE

The overriding aim or 'Scope' of ISO 14001:2015 is to specify the requirements for an EMS that can be used by an organisation that wants to enhance its environmental performance in a systematic manner, and helps an organisation to achieve the intended outcomes of its environmental management system, being consistent with the environmental policy.

The intended outcomes of an environmental management system include:

- Enhancement of environmental performance
- Fulfilment of compliance obligations
- Achievement of environmental objectives

The standard can be used in part to systematically improve environmental performance but claims of conformity, i.e. certification, are not acceptable unless all its requirements are included as there are no permissible exclusions.

CLAUSE 2 – NORMATIVE REFERENCES

As with ISO 14001:2004, there are no normative references within the 2015 version.

CLAUSE 3 – TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

All applicable terms and definitions are incorporated into the revised ISO 14001:2015. These terms and definitions will include all those from Annex SL.

Annex SL itself contains 22 terms and definitions which must be included in all management system standards. These are the terms and definitions which would naturally be expected to appear in any MSS, irrespective of the discipline addressed by the Standard itself; definitions of terms such as 'audit', 'corrective action', 'management system', 'measurement', 'objective', 'policy'. All of these terms and definitions are included in ISO 14001:2015.

CLAUSE 4 – CONTEXT OF THE ORGANISATION

This group of clauses is critical to the successful implementation of ISO 14001:2015. Implemented correctly, they will result in an effective EMS that is bespoke to the needs of that organisation. Although the standard does not specify an order in which to implement the clauses, when taken in isolation, it is hard to see how they can be implemented in any other order than 4.1 to 4.4 as each successive clause requires information from the preceding one.

CLAUSE 4.1 – UNDERSTANDING THE ORGANISATION AND ITS CONTEXT

The 'context' of the organisation (sometimes called its business environment) refers to the combination of internal and external factors and conditions that can have an effect on an organisation's approach to its products and/or services (see Figure 2).

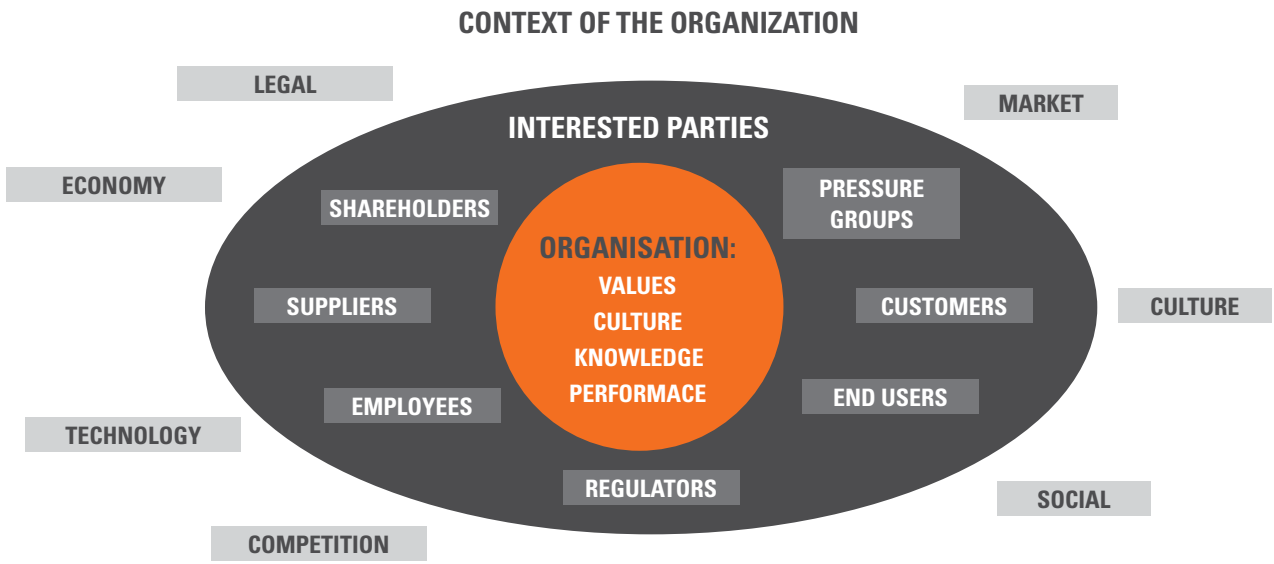

Figure 2

This can be stated and discussed. However, it can only be defined by those that really have a true understanding of the environment within which the organisation operates, as they must have existing knowledge of the issues that are relevant to the organisation (being cultural, social, economic, political, legal, local, international, etc.), as well as knowledge of the way the organisation affects and is affected by the environment.

CLAUSE 4.2 – UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF INTERESTED PARTIES

As an interested party is defined 'as person or organisation that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity'. The scale of this requirement cannot be underestimated, as this will inevitably be a source of a substantial amount of the management system requirement, be it either obligatory or self-imposed.

CLAUSE 4.3 – DETERMINING THE SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Building upon the knowledge and requirement gained from clauses 4.1 and 4.2, to fully encapsulate the management system, the organisation will now define that within the more tangible and recognisable parts of its organisation, such as products, services, assets, boundaries and supply chain. It is noted that this is the only documented information required by any part of clause 4 and it must be available to interested parties.

CLAUSE 4.4 – ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The organisation takes the component outputs of clauses 4.1 to 4.3 and establishes, implements and maintains a management system that demonstrates continual environmental improvement in line with its context.

To sum up, although there is little in the way of actual hard evidence regarding the context of the organisation, in so much as the standard only requires the scope to be documented, this is a substantial part of the 2015 standard as it 'sets the stall out' for the organisation. If this is done knowledgeably and correctly, the resultant management system should reflect the nature of the organisation and assist in ensuring that its environmental management is performed to meet legal, compliance, financial and moral obligations.

CLAUSE 5 – LEADERSHIP

This group of clauses are new to the 2015 version of the standard, but conceptually it is building on requirements already in ISO 14001:2004. Clause 5 places the emphasis on top management being seen to be actively involved in leading the management system from the front, with accountability being introduced, increasing the levels of direct responsibility and reducing the opportunity to delegate.

CLAUSE 5.1 – LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

This clause includes specific actions for top management and describes those activities in which top management will be personally involved. It does not mean that they have to perform all the activities themselves, but they are accountable for ensuring that they are performed.

The clause also establishes requirements to ensure that top management align the environmental management system with the strategic direction of the organisation, and that policy and objectives do not conflict with that strategy.

CLAUSE 5.2 – ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The environmental policy is considered to be a cornerstone and it can be argued that it is the single most important document within the management system.

Unfortunately, this is often an area where issues can occur. Organisations tend to create the policy early and in isolation from the rest of the management system. Having created a policy, it is all too frequently placed on a notice board or website and then forgotten about. As this is the document that must be accessible to interested parties, it is critical that what is included is relevant to the organisation and seen to be fulfilled. Organisations should aim to avoid using it to document overly ambitious commitments, or to create a shopping list of empty gestures.

CLAUSE 5.3 – ORGANISATIONAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Although this was a part of the 2004 standard, there are some subtle changes that organisations need to take note of. There is less of a 'thou shalt do' approach to this, indeed there is no requirement to have an environmental management representative anymore.

Top management must ensure that responsibilities and authorities for relevant roles are assigned and communicated within the organisation. What the organisation deems relevant is really up to them, but it does specify that there must be one person, or more, with responsibility and authority for management system conformity and reporting.

CLAUSE 6 – PLANNING

What is planning? This might be an easy question to answer, but it is worth considering here to ensure that any work undertaken to address these clauses relates back to planning and avoids straying into other areas.

So back to the question, depending on where you look you can find any number of definitions, but as a general consensus, planning is:

- Gaining understanding of a set of intended actions through which one expects to achieve an objective or goal
- Deciding upon and arranging in advance
- Identifying the steps for achievement with timing and resources

Organisations may notice that the clause 6 requirements act as a 'hub' for the system, in that they pull in outputs from elsewhere in the standard and lead to inputs into others. Given this flow of information is critical to successfully implementing these clauses organisations need to pay close attention to what exactly is being asked here.

A substantial number of requirements are covered in clause 6 and rightly so. Organisations should not underestimate this part of the standard. Any actions

taken as a consequence of the planning stage can only be as effective as the plan itself – you can only reap what you sow, so it must be considered an essential part of a successful environmental management system.

In summary, this is a group of clauses that an organisation needs to address and fulfil to ensure that it has planned a successful management system that is in alignment with strategy and business processes. It addresses risks and opportunities associated with aspect and compliance obligation, is capable of achieving policy commitments, objectives and targets and ultimately ensures continual improvement.

It is also here that concepts such as life cycle thinking and design are introduced to the EMS.

CLAUSE 6.1 – ACTION TO ADDRESS RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The standard makes allowances for an organisation to retain autonomy to determine the extent to which it needs to plan, but given that this clause draws upon knowledge gained from clauses 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, as well as placing requirement on establishing processes needed to assure that the system achieves intended outcomes to prevent or reduce undesired effects, achieve continual improvement and determines potential emergency situations, there is inevitably an economy of scale to consider.

It is logical to assume that the more environmentally complex an organisation is, the greater the need to plan and establish appropriate processes to fulfil the clause 6 requirements. It is anticipated that there will be a sliding scale for addressing risk and opportunities. Small and low complexity organisations are likely to have simple plans and conversely, large and complex organisations will have more detailed plans.

While there is no explicit requirement to document a procedure for risk evaluation, the output of the evaluation is to be retained and a documented process established, to the extent that it ensures that the clause 6 requirements are carried out as planned.

CLAUSE 6.1.2 – ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS

For those organisations already certified to ISO 14001:2004 there will inevitably be a sense of 'nothing new here' and for many organisations this may be true. Some organisations already have well-developed aspects and impacts procedures that account for some of the added content. For others it may be a significant undertaking to bring the environmental aspects evaluation up to speed.

As ISO 14001:2015 aims to be a pillar of sustainability, we are now seeing a slightly more prescriptive approach to aspects evaluation. Organisations must now consider life cycle perspective within their aspects evaluation process, directly addressing product and process design for the first time.

This does not mean that organisations must have a detailed life cycle perspective. In most cases, a simple consideration of the life cycle stages that they consider are under their control may be adequate.

What will be expected however, is that organisations will extend their sphere of control and influence to manage its environmental impacts from raw material acquisition to end of life use and final disposal/treatment.

CLAUSE 6.1.3 – COMPLIANCE OBLIGATIONS

This clause replaced legal and other requirements that organisations with ISO 14001:2004 will already be familiar with. It builds upon that clause and now includes:

- Mandatory requirements – including all RELEVANT legal requirements
- Voluntary requirements – those requirements that an organisation has elected to comply with

CLAUSE 6.1.4 – PLANNING ACTION

What the plan contains very much depends on the nature of the organisation (think clause 4 requirements) but it must address the risk and opportunities that the organisation has identified associated with its environmental aspects and compliance obligations.

There is no requirement for a documented plan.

CLAUSE 6.2 – ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES AND PLANNING TO ACHIEVE THEM

CLAUSE 6.2.1 – ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

Objectives are commonplace in all management systems and the requirements contained in this clause are unambiguous. Building on the themes of the management of environmental risk and opportunity, organisations will establish objectives that are:

- Consistent with the environmental policy
- Measurable (if practicable)
- Monitored
- Communicated
- Updated as appropriate

CLAUSE 6.2.2 – PLANNING ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

Based on the outputs of the risk and opportunity evaluation (which takes into account the aspects, impacts and compliance obligations), organisations will have established objectives to address those risk and opportunities. The requirements in this clause, if implemented successfully, ensure that organisations have the tools to achieve objectives and ensure continual improvement.

Unquestionably, ISO 14001:2015 places far greater emphasis on quantifiable improvement than ever before, introducing indicators to the standard to ensure that organisations have identified the effective metrics in place to monitor progress towards achievement.

CLAUSE 7 – SUPPORT

This is the group of clauses that define the supplementary 'soft' tools that assist in the delivery of an effective management system. Organisations that have already implemented management systems of any type will be familiar with these concepts as they cover the traditional areas of resources, training, communication, documents and records, but have been repackaged to meet the concepts and themes of the revised standard.

CLAUSE 7.1 – RESOURCES

The organisation shall determine and provide the resources needed for the establishment, implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of the environmental management system.

Time. Finances. People. Equipment. Assets. Technology. Skills. Knowledge. The list goes on and on.

Any quick search through the standard will soon highlight the elevated status being placed on resource provision:

- It expects the planning stages to identify what resources are needed
- It resides as a clear responsibility of top management to provide resources
- It expects an organisation to review the adequacy of its resources
- It even goes as far as to state that a lack of resources can be a specific risk to the management system

CLAUSE 7.2 – COMPETENCE

As defined by ISO 14001, competence is the 'ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results'. It is important to understand this definition, as there is a difference between someone who is trained and someone who is competent.

Competence has always been a part of ISO 14001, but the new standard strengthens its position with a few subtle differences that could give organisations pause for thought.

Training is now a component associated with competence. Training is, alongside education and experience, a means to an end in order to ensure the competence of an individual. This acknowledges that training alone (or ineffective training) may not result in competent individuals.

Organisations now must retain documented information as evidence of competence. Taking a step back from this, the question must first be asked 'What defines a person as being competent in the first instance?' It cannot be presumed that a file of records for training alone results in an individual being competent.

Organisations need to be mindful that this clause is equally applicable to persons working on its behalf.

CLAUSE 7.3 – AWARENESS

There is no expectation placed on an organisation that every staff member will be able to recite verbatim the content of the policy, or give a detailed and technical breakdown of all the aspects. What organisations can expect is that there will be increased questioning of the staff to confirm that individuals are aware of the overall aim of the policy, what sort of aspects are commonplace for the activity being undertaken and that individuals are aware of the repercussion of their own actions. It is a sense check of the culture, behaviours and attitude towards environmental management.

CLAUSE 7.4 – COMMUNICATION

There can be no doubt that the requirements for communication are more prescriptive, but organisations need only to take a proportionate response to this. Organisations must still demonstrate communication of policy, roles, responsibility and authorities, objectives, aspects and performance to its employees, but as these are explicit requirements of related clauses throughout the standard, this process could conceivably well look after itself with no further intervention needed.

The extent to which an organisation develops a communication process will be largely determined by the influencing factors: size, geography, environmental complexity, means and methods of communication, target audience and receptiveness of the audience.

What organisations must be aware of is that there is an expectation that there is equal emphasis on internal and external communication that information communicated must be reliable and that communication is a two-way process.

CLAUSE 7.5 – DOCUMENTED INFORMATION

The clause combines and simplifies existing clauses relating to documentation and control of documents. Organisations may find that ISO 14001:2015 reduces the extent to which an organisation creates and retains documentation, as it now introduces flexibility for organisations to determine the extent to which they need documentation. Some organisations may interpret and implement this as meaning 'no documented procedures needed'. While this may be acceptable, it can also introduce a certain level of risk. The management system still needs to function effectively, consistently and fulfil its intended outcomes in their absence.

CLAUSE 8 – OPERATION

This group of clauses will seem familiar to those organisations with an ISO 14001 management system already in place. This consolidates operational control and emergency preparedness, but also introduces life cycle perspective. Conceptually this is new territory for ISO 14001, bringing design into the environmental management system.

As this might be unfamiliar territory to some organisations, here we will look into the implications and understand what this may mean.

ISO defines life cycle perspective as 'consecutive and interlinked stages of a product (or service) system, from raw material acquisition or generation from natural resources to final disposal'. It further adds that 'the life cycle stages include acquisition of raw materials, design, production, transportation, delivery, use, end-of-life treatment and final disposal'.

As there is no explicit requirement for an organisation to undertake a full and in-depth life cycle analysis, it follows that auditors cannot demand or expect to see one, only that the organisation has considered it.

So, take something as familiar as washing up liquid and quickly apply life cycle perspective consideration. There are some obvious areas that organisations will already be considering for a product such as this: raw material use, utility usage in production, transport to wholesalers or retailers for example. When considering its full life cycle: Where are the raw materials coming from? How do they get here? What do consumers do with the packaging? What happens to the actual product? How is it consumed? Can it be used in cooler dishwater? How much treatment is needed on that product once it goes to drain?

For some organisations this may become a very significant part of the management

system, particularly as customers and consumers – being interested parties – become more demanding and vocal on matters concerning the environment and expectations on sustainability.

That said, organisations need to consider where they are in the 'food-chain' (once again relating back to context of the organisation) and consider the extent to which they can control or influence other organisations they engage with, as well as their own products, services and activities.

It may be for smaller organisations with limited influence over customers, consumer and suppliers that they cannot practically or realistically do more than they are already, but they need to demonstrate consideration of their options. Conversely, larger organisations which can exert influence and may have much greater input into the design of processes, products and services may find there are greater ramifications as a result of these clauses.

CLAUSE 9 – PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

There is a change in the continual improvement concept, now the emphasis is on enhancing environmental performance. The organisation must enhance its environmental performance and this performance has to be evaluated.

CLAUSE 9.1 – MONITORING, MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The new version of ISO 14001 recognises the importance of managing through the gathering and analysis of data, and there is increased requirement placed on the organisation to implement indicators. This is leading to a far more structured assessment of environmental performance and organisations will be expected to establish monitoring and measuring that is relevant and reliable and that the results are evaluated and analysed.

CLAUSE 9.1.2 – EVALUATION OF COMPLIANCE

Expanding on the clause within ISO 14001:2004, compliance evaluation now takes into account all of the compliance obligations to which the organisation subscribes. Although this was implied within the 2004 version, in practice this tended to be legislatively driven. As organisations must now derive compliance obligations from the views of interested parties, which include legislators, there may be added obligations to evaluate. Looking closely at the requirement under this clause, the frequency of evaluation must be determined and an organisation must maintain knowledge of an understanding of its compliance status, which could require an organisation to take a far more dynamic approach to compliance evaluation.

CLAUSE 9.2 – INTERNAL AUDIT

There is very little in the way of change here, but organisations should be paying close attention, however, to auditor competency.

The changes to the standard may prove challenging to auditors who are used to the 2004 approach.

CLAUSE 9.3 – MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Again, this is familiar territory to organisations that already have established management systems. The minimum agenda inputs and outputs have increased to fall in line with the requirements of the new standard. Organisations need to pay close attention to review outputs.

Commonly, inputs are well documented but the outputs are less so and the emphasis for retaining documented information in the new version is placed on results of management review.

CLAUSE 10 – IMPROVEMENT

Once more, there is little in the way of change in this group of clauses, but organisations will notice there is now an omission. Preventive action has been removed as a standalone entity with the view being that conformance and thorough application of the other clauses should result in a proactive management system that as a whole prevents underperformance.

CLAUSE 10.2 – NON-CONFORMITY AND CORRECTIVE ACTION

The new version of the standard gives the organisation the opportunity to apply some common sense to the way it reacts to incidents and non-conformity. In truth, it has probably moved towards what is going on in organisations already, where there is a tendency not to apply the full, prescriptive requirements of the corrective action clause to each and every incident that occurs.

Organisations must react proportionately to the issue, but they now have the freedom to evaluate and decide whether further action is needed.

CLAUSE 10.3 – CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

Through effective implementation of the management system, the organisation must demonstrate continual improvement.

V. CONCLUSION

The successful implementation of an EMS with ISO 14001:2015 requires an understanding of the context of the organisation by means of determining external and internal issues relevant to the organisation and the environment. Particular focus is on the needs and expectations of interested parties that can affect, or be affected by, the organisation. In this context, the organisation must identify risk associated with threats and opportunities, significant environmental aspects and compliance obligations, and determine actions to address them within the EMS.

Environmental Management System (EMS) requirements are now presented in a more consistent, rational manner, including updated terminology and definitions, some in common with other Management Systems Standards (i.e. ISO 9001). This is the consequence of adopting the high level structure specified in ISO Annex SL, which is now the required framework for all new and revised Management System Standards.

There are now enhanced or new requirements on:

- Leadership
- Protection of the environment
- Environmental performance
- Life cycle thinking
- Communication
- Documentation

It is very important to understand that requirements need to be viewed from a systems or holistic perspective. This means that a particular sentence or clause of the standard should not be read in isolation from other clauses of the standard. There is an interrelationship between the requirements in some clauses with the requirements in other clauses

The level of detail and complexity of the EMS, and the extent of documentation needed will depend on the organisation's context and complexity, and the success of the EMS will depend on commitment from all levels within an organisation, including leadership from top management.

VI. SGS SOLUTIONS FOR A SMOOTH TRANSITION

As the world's leading certification body and a professional learning and development organisation, we offer you a variety of solutions during the transition process.

ISO 14001:2015 COURSES

- ISO 14001:2015 – Environmental Management Systems – Lead Auditor Course (IRCA Approved CPD)
- ISO 14001:2015 – Environmental Management Systems – Foundation Course

ANNEX SL (IRCA APPROVED CPD)

We help you understand the high level structure of the new framework and how integration with other management system standards is becoming more efficient.

RISK-BASED THINKING

This course covers the principals that support the identification of risk and opportunities and the different techniques/methodologies needed to address them.

EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP

A training workshop designed to address the required leadership skills of those operating in Quality, Environmental and Health and Safety roles in line with the evolution of MSS within the Annex SL Framework and their related commercial impacts.

GAP ANALYSIS

Our experts can carry out a gap analysis against the new requirements to make your transition smooth and transparent.

This provides your organisation with structured assistance by highlighting the extent that your existing systems and controls cover the requirements of ISO 14001:2015 and by identifying an implementation action plan where you need it.

ISO 14001:2015 CERTIFICATION

SGS will, of course, now be offering ISO 14001:2015 certification to both new and existing clients.

To learn more about SGS Academy Learning and Development Solutions visit www.sgs.com/training or contact train.global@sgs.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jesus Moya
Global Product Manager
– ISO 14001:2015, SGS

More than 20 years experience in quality and environmental management systems, including consultancy, auditing and training. Member of the Global Technical Team within SGS CBE with specific responsibility for managing the SGS response to the revision of ISO 14001.

ABOUT SGS

SGS is the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company. SGS is recognised as the global benchmark for quality and integrity. With more than 85,000 employees, SGS operates a network of over 1,800 offices and laboratories around the world.

We are constantly looking beyond customers' and society's expectations in order to deliver market leading services wherever they are needed. We have a history of undertaking and successfully executing large-scale, complex international projects. With a presence in every single region around the globe, our people speak the language and understand the culture of the local market, and operate globally in a consistent, reliable and effective manner.

For an optimal transition towards ISO 14001:2015 contact certification@sgs.com or visit www.sgs.com/iso14001-2015transition

WWW.SGS.COM

WHEN YOU NEED TO BE SURE

SGS