ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management Systems

The local and global community, including consumers and organisations, are recognising the need to explore and implement operational behaviour that is aimed at reducing the impact of their activities on the environment.

The increasing global awareness of the impact of human activities on the environment has amplified the need for companies to demonstrate compliance with independently audited and accredited environmental management systems.

Locally, this is illustrated by the Johannesburg Stock Exchange's mandatory requirement for listed companies to disclose their financial statements, social and ethics committee reports and their environmental and sustainability report in terms of the renowned King IV Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa, 2016.

Whether implemented to ensure compliance with the principles of the King IV Report or to illustrate good corporate governance, environmental management systems effectively improve an organisation's operational structure, economic performance and environmental sustainability.

The globally recognised ISO 14001:2015 International Standard for environmental management systems, developed by the International Organisation for Standardisation, provides organisations with a uniform, comparable and industry recognised framework for the implementation of an environmental management system.
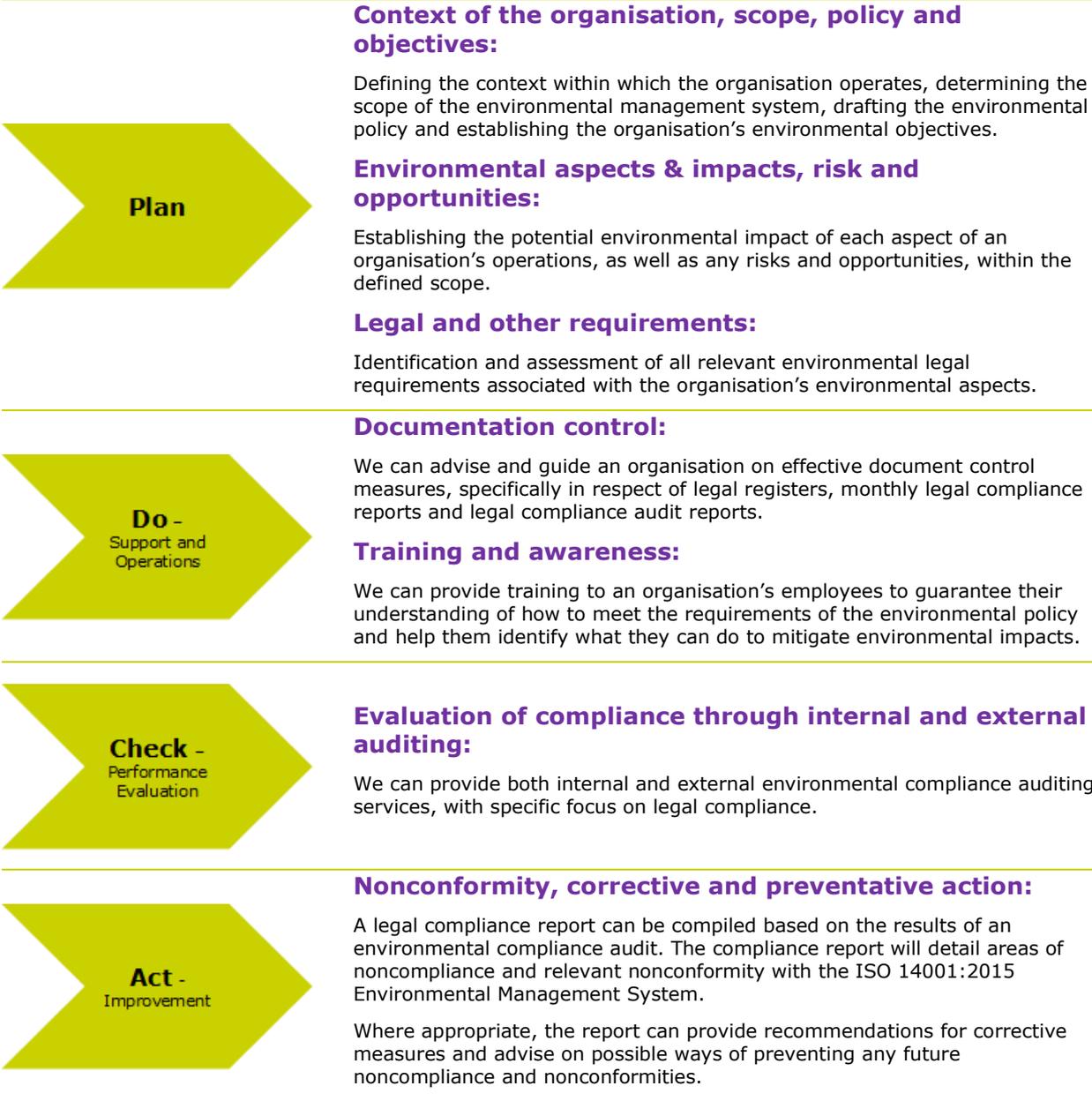
An environmental management system is a set of policies, processes and procedures developed and implemented to control the way in which an organisation interacts with the natural environment.

The ISO International Standards and related documents provide consumers, regulators and organisations in both public and private sectors with documented tools that are technically sound, credible, promote effective operational behaviour, fulfil stakeholder needs, support regulatory compliance and enhance investor confidence.

Eversheds Sutherland can assist at each stage of the PDCA cycle

The environmental team at Eversheds Sutherland can provide comprehensive advice on the implementation of the ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management System and are certified to independently audit the environmental management system from a legal perspective.

The Plan-Do-Check-Act ("PDCA") model underlies all ISO management system standards, including ISO 14001:2015. The PDCA model assists organisations to achieve continual improvement by providing an iterative process that can be applied to the environmental management system and each of the its individual components.

Plan

Context of the organisation, scope, policy and objectives:

Defining the context within which the organisation operates, determining the scope of the environmental management system, drafting the environmental policy and establishing the organisation's environmental objectives.

Environmental aspects & impacts, risk and opportunities:

Establishing the potential environmental impact of each aspect of an organisation's operations, as well as any risks and opportunities, within the defined scope.

Legal and other requirements:

Identification and assessment of all relevant environmental legal requirements associated with the organisation's environmental aspects.

Do - Support and Operations

Documentation control:

We can advise and guide an organisation on effective document control measures, specifically in respect of legal registers, monthly legal compliance reports and legal compliance audit reports.

Training and awareness:

We can provide training to an organisation's employees to guarantee their understanding of how to meet the requirements of the environmental policy and help them identify what they can do to mitigate environmental impacts.

Check - Performance Evaluation

Evaluation of compliance through internal and external auditing:

We can provide both internal and external environmental compliance auditing services, with specific focus on legal compliance.

Act - Improvement

Nonconformity, corrective and preventative action:

A legal compliance report can be compiled based on the results of an environmental compliance audit. The compliance report will detail areas of noncompliance and relevant nonconformity with the ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management System.

Where appropriate, the report can provide recommendations for corrective measures and advise on possible ways of preventing any future noncompliance and nonconformities.

Key Benefits of Implementing an Environmental Management System

Organisations of all types and sizes, in either public or private sectors, can implement an environmental management system

There are many key benefits of implementing the ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management System, including:

Improved cost control

Organisations can save money by streamlining processes, improving efficiency, reducing product loss, conserving input material and reducing the occurrence of incidents.

Enhanced Image and Satisfying Consumer Demand

By implementing an environmental management system an organisation recognises its consumer's demand for sustainable business practices, enhances its image and increases its consumer base.

Reduced occurrence of liability for legal non-compliance

Frequent legal compliance auditing and awareness of legal requirements enhances the organisation's compliance status and provides the organisation with the opportunity to reduce the occurrence of a legal non-compliance.

Effective Corporate Governance

The ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management System assists an organisation to demonstrate transparent and accountable behaviour to investors, shareholders, fellow organisations and customers.

Growth and Expansion

The organisation is placed in a better position to manage the challenges of expanding its market share or moving into new territories.

Organisations that can show conformity with the ISO International Standards are often considered for potential business transactions before those that cannot show conformity.

Protection of the Environment and Natural Resources

By preventing or mitigating adverse environmental impacts through the implementation of an Environmental Management System, an organisation will contribute positively toward protecting the environment and the benefits derived from natural resources.

Contact

Pascale de Froberville
Associate

T: +27 31 940 0501
M: +27 82 746 3218
pascaledefroberville@eversheds-sutherland.co.za

eversheds-sutherland.com