



Summary Brochure

From BS 8555/Acorn Scheme to EMAS



Benefits of a step-up from BS 8555 to EMAS

BS 8555 is an EMS that is particularly close to EMAS as at phase 5 all EMAS requirements are met. However, a step-up from BS 8555 to EMAS can nevertheless offer organisations a scheme with a wider geographical scope than BS 8555. EMAS is operational Europe-wide with the possibility to be implemented and recognised in third countries under the new EMAS regulation. This might be of special interest to organisations with an international client base. Finally, EMAS offers the advantage of being legally recognised through a European Council Regulation and certified organisations are listed in a public register.

Introduction

Origin and development

The IEMA Acorn Scheme is an officially recognised EMS standard recommended by the UK government for evaluating organisations and improving their environmental performance. It is based on the British Standard BS8555 and is comprised of a step by step approach with 6 levels. The scheme was developed following the success of Project Acorn, an initiative funded by the Department for Trade and Industry, and the subsequent publication of the BS 8555 EMS standard. BS 8555 provides guidance on how to implement an EMS. It includes two different types of management guidelines. BS 8555 includes EMS (ISO 14001) and Environmental Performance Evaluation (ISO 14031) tools.

There are four principal bodies that are involved in the scheme. The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) is the scheme owner whose primary function is to set the scheme criteria and to operate a register of organisations that have been inspected. The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) is responsible for the development, implementation and maintenance of an accreditation service for inspection bodies participating in the scheme. Acorn inspection bodies undertake inspections according to the criteria defined in BS 8555 and in accordance with the requirements set out in the scheme's documentation. Finally, participating organisations implement the requirements set out in the different phases of BS 8555 and demonstrate to Acorn Inspection Bodies that the stage profiles and achievement criteria have been effectively met.

As of summer 2009, over 600 organisations are BS 8555 certified and approximately 300 participants are in the process of certification.

Objectives

The EMS scheme aims to encourage organisations to demonstrate that they are proactive in their approach to the management of their environmental impacts and are committed to improving their environmental performance. Thus, a key aspect of the scheme is that of environmental performance improvement and reduced environmental impacts of company activities, products and services over time.

Closeness to EMAS

At phase 6 of BS 8555 organisations meet all EMAS criteria.

For further information on the EMS, please contact:

James Thorne – Technical Adviser, IEMA

Tel: +44 (0)1522 540069

Email: j.thorne@iema.net

Website: http://www.iema.net/ems/acorn_scheme

For further information on these guidelines, please contact:

EMAS Helpdesk

Tel: +33 (0)1 53 90 11 75

Email: emas@biois.com

Website: ec.europa.eu/environment/emas



From BS 8555 to EMAS: Additional Steps

At phase 6 of BS 8555 organisations meet all EMAS criteria. At this level there are therefore no additional steps that need to be taken by an organisation to 'step-up' from BS 8555 to EMAS.