

## **The Impact of the Future Challenges requirements for the third revision of the 14001 environmental management system standard (Part 2 of a 6 part series)**

The flagship management system standards of the International Organisation for Standardisation, the environmental management system standard (ISO 14001) is currently being reviewed and revised. This standard was first published in 1996.

The 1996 version of the standard was editorially reviewed and revised in 2004. No new content was added to the 2004 revision of the standard. This means that the ISO 14001 standard reflects environmental management thinking of the early to mid-1990s. The new standard that is expected to be published in 2015 will have to be relevant to all the developments in the environmental management field since the mid-1990s and beyond to around 2025.

It is therefore clear that the contents of the third revision of the environmental management system standard will have to be expanded to provide for the latest thinking in the environmental management discipline. The ISO has established a Study Group to conduct research on and advise the working group tasked with the revision of the standard which developments need to be included in the new revision. The research outcome of the Study Group was published as Environmental Management Systems, Future Challenges. The terms of reference of the working group dictates that the new, revised standard must include provisions that will address the eleven themes of the future Challenges document.

Eight themes have been identified that need to be addressed in the new revision of the standard. The eight themes are:

- clearer linkages between the standard and sustainable development,
- environmental performance improvement,
- legal compliance,
- clearer linkages with strategic business management,
- eradication of obstacle and leveraging of opportunities faced by micro, small and medium enterprises,
- the expansion of the EMS to also cover value chain responsibility,
- the broadening of the concept of prevention of pollution, and
- The use of indicators to strengthen performance evaluation.

The working group has issued a Committee Draft 2 version of the emerging standard for voting by the end of 2013. The Future Challenges document has had a profound impact on both the nature and extent of the emerging revision, especially when compared to the 2004 version of the document.

Next month, I will explore the impact of the second mandatory influence on the new revision of the environmental management system standard, the so called ISO High Level Structure (HLS) for Management System Standards (MSS), covering identical text, common terms and core definitions issued by the Technical Management Board (TMB) Joint Technical Coordination Group (JTCCG).