

The Impact of the Annex SL of the High Level Structure (HLS) for Management System Standards on the third revision of the ISO 14001 environmental management system standard (Part 3 of a 5 part series)

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

Management system standards issued by the International Organisation for Standardisation (IOS) have proliferated since the initial two standards were issued for quality management systems (ISO 9001) and environmental management systems (ISO 14001) respectively. These different management system standards were all developed by dedicated working groups and most of them were at most aligned or broadly compatible with one another.

Organisations that adopt and implement more than one management standard are increasingly challenged by these differences. Hence the initiative of the IOS to develop the high level structure (HLS) with text and definitions that will be standard, common to and shared by all new and revised management system standards.

When compared with the 2004 version of the EMS standard, the HLS document introduces a range of new concepts and requirements to the third revision of the ISO 14001 standard that is scheduled to be published in June or July, 2015.

These changes include:

- An entirely new structure for management system standards;
- New definitions;
- New words for familiar concepts; and
- New requirements.
-

The structure of the four principle clauses of the 2004 version of the standard is revised to nine principal clauses. The Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) structure of the previous version is also lost, but the new clauses and sub-clauses can still be related to the PDCA model. The eight new clauses are:

- Clause 1 - Scope
- Clause 2 - Normative references
- Clause 3 - Terms and definitions
- Clause 4 - Context of the organization
- Clause 5 - Leadership
- Clause 6 - Planning
- Clause 7 - Support
- Clause 8 - Operation
- Clause 9 - Performance evaluation

The biggest challenge to harmonizing the Annex SL version of the HLS with the new EMS standard is to provide for sound linkages and a coherent synergy between Clauses 4 and 6 and especially between the concepts of risks and opportunities that are introduced by the HLS text and the environmental impacts and aspects that come from ISO 14001¹.

The **new definitions** added to the third revision of ISO 14001 are:

- Requirement
- Effectiveness
- Risk
- Competence
- Documented information
- Process
- Outsource

¹ At the time of writing this note (March 2014 and after the WG meeting in Padova, Italy) this matter has not yet been resolved to the satisfaction of most participants.

- Monitoring
- Measurement

The HLS text also introduces new concepts to the new revision of the EMS standard such as:

- The determination of external and internal issues that are relevant to its purpose and that affect its ability to achieve the intended outcome(s) of its environmental management system; and
- Ensuring the integration of the environmental management system requirements into the organization's business processes.

The HLS also **introduces new words for familiar concepts** to the revised EMS standard, such as these listed in Table 1.

Table 1 New words for familiar concepts

New Concepts	Familiar Concepts
Maintain documented information	Maintain documents
Retain documented information	Retain records
Compliance obligations	Legal and other requirements, including the adopted requirements of interested parties.
Objectives and targets	Objectives
Corrective action	Corrective and preventive action
Continual improvement of the management system	Environmental performance improvement
Internal and external issues	New introduction
Requirements of interested parties	Needs and expectations of interested parties
Intended outcomes of the environmental management system	New introduction
The organization shall plan, implement and control the processes	Operational control
The organization shall control planned changes and review the consequences of unintended changes, taking action to	Previously a scant reference was made to the management of change.

mitigate any adverse effects, as necessary.	
---	--

The other parts of this series are:

Part 4: Key new requirements of the third revision of ISO 14001

Part 5: Understanding the relationship between Clauses 4 and 6 of the third revision of the ISO 14001 standard.

Please contact the CEM should you require information or an early-bird awareness presentation of what changes are expected.

