



Press Release

Ref.: 940, 15 November 2004

ISO publishes improved versions of ISO 14000 environmental management system standards

ISO today published revised, improved versions of its **ISO 14001** and **ISO 14004** standards and expects them to put the benefits of implementing an **environmental management system (EMS)** within the reach of an even greater number and variety of organizations worldwide.

"These standards represent the state of the art in environmental management practice," affirmed ISO Secretary-General Alan Bryden, "and are at the leading edge of ISO's comprehensive offering to help organizations address all three dimensions of sustainable development - social, economic and environmental."

ISO 14001:2004 specifies the requirements for an EMS which provides a framework for an organization to control the environmental impact of its activities, products and services, and to improve its environmental performance continually. ISO 14004:2004 provides guidelines on the elements of an EMS, its implementation and the principal issues involved.



For managers
with a strategic perspective

Oswald A. Dodds, who chairs ISO/TC 207/SC 1, the ISO technical group that developed the two standards, provided an executive summary of the improvements: "These revised versions take account of the considerable body of user experience since the standards were first published in 1996. ISO 14001:2004 is easier to understand and easier to use. The intent of its requirements has been made clearer, which will facilitate its translation and consistent implementation around the world. In addition, its compatibility with the ISO 9001:2000 standard for quality management systems, which is also used worldwide, has been increased.

"In turn, ISO 14004:2004 is more consistent and compatible with ISO 14001:2004, which will encourage their joint use and so enrich understanding of EMS. The



language of ISO 14004 has also been made more accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises. As these make up the vast majority of businesses in the world, it is very much in everyone's interest that they too implement the good environmental management practices distilled in ISO 14001:2004 and ISO 14004:2004."

ISO 14001 is the standard against which an organization may have its EMS audited by an independent certification body that then vouches for the conformity of the system to the standard's requirements by issuing an "ISO 14001 certificate". Certification is not a requirement of the standard, but many organizations have chosen this option because of the perceived credibility of an independent verification. Up to the end of December 2003, at least 66 070 certificates to ISO 14001:1996 had been issued in 113 countries and economies, over 34% more than the previous year and the largest annual increase so far recorded by The ISO Survey.

Alan Bryden announced: "Although ISO itself does not carry out certification, we wish to ensure a smooth transition to ISO 14001:2004 for organizations currently certified to ISO 14001:1996. We have therefore been cooperating to develop a joint policy for the transition with the International Accreditation Forum." [The IAF is an international association that represents national accreditation bodies set up in many countries to verify the competence of certification bodies.]

ISO and the IAF have agreed to set the period for making the transition from certificates of conformity to ISO 14001:1996 to the ISO 14001:2004 version at 18 months from the publication date of the latter. Beyond this period, the IAF will recognize only certificates to ISO 14001:2004. The technical details of this 18month transition policy, including instructions for certification bodies accredited by IAF members, are currently being balloted by the organization and are expected to be finalized in early December, when they will be announced in a joint ISO-IAF communiqué.

Delegations of experts from 61 countries participated actively in the development of ISO 14001:2004 and ISO 14004:2004 within Subcommittee (SC) 1 of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 207, *Environmental management*. Another 12 countries have observer status and 10 international organizations have liaison status.

The ISO/TC 207 Chair, Daniel Gagnier, commented: "Forward-looking business organizations need to commit to sustainable development as a strategic objective. That means implementing good environmental management practices, not polluting or depleting the environment, reducing waste and making efficient use of resources, and respecting the environmental concerns of customers, shareholders, employees, local communities, regulators and society as a whole. ISO 14001:2004 and ISO 14004:2004 provide a road map to this strategic objective."