



ECO-LIGHTHOUSE

Summary Brochure

From Eco-Lighthouse to EMAS



EMAS

Benefits of a step-up from Eco-Lighthouse to EMAS

As outlined below, a number of additional steps need to be taken by organisations that want to step-up from Eco-Lighthouse to EMAS, which can provide organisations with significant benefits. EMAS offers organisations, for example, increased legal security based on its strict requirements regarding legal compliance. Additional environmental benefits can also be expected as the indirect environmental impacts of the organisation will need to be taken into account under EMAS. Moreover, organisations can experience further financial benefits due to, for example, reduced use of resources, efficiency improvements and better risk management. An EMAS registration will also provide organisations with improved communication possibilities through a validated environmental statement. Further employee involvement and training under EMAS can lead to improved employee morale and a better implementation of the EMS. As Eco-Lighthouse is currently only implemented in Norway, organisations might also benefit from the larger geographic scope of EMAS. 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 Eco-Lighthouse programme emerged from a Local Agenda 21 pilot project in the Norwegian city of Kristiansand in 1996 and has since developed into a nation-wide initiative coordinated by an Eco-Lighthouse secretariat. Today, most of the local authorities in central and south Norway run Eco-Lighthouse programmes. Specific criteria have been developed for 63 industries in close co-operation with companies. The criteria cover environmental, health and safety legislation as well as energy use and emissions and set benchmarks for each industry. The Eco-Lighthouse certificate is awarded by the local authority once a company fulfils all industry-specific requirements.

A national board with seven representatives oversees the programme, approves industry criteria and reports to the Norwegian Ministry of Environment. The Eco-Lighthouse Office is responsible for marketing at the national level and for the continuous development of the programme. The municipalities recruit new companies, assign consultants to companies, oversee media coverage, conduct certification inspections, and award the certificates. Local consultants conduct environmental analyses with input from the environmental groups formed by company management and employees. A total of 187 local authorities are members of the network. Almost all local authorities in central Norway implement Eco-Lighthouse.

In 2005, 500 certificates were awarded and in 2007 there were 1120 valid certificates. The Eco-Lighthouse Programme is supported by the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment.

Objectives

The Eco-Lighthouse Programme helps SMEs and public administrations in Norway to meet environmental challenges. It is a tailor-made programme for environmental certification with the underlying strategy to systematically develop industry-specific certification criteria.

Closeness to EMAS

Eco-Lighthouse can be considered as a beginning step towards EMAS as a successful Eco-Lighthouse certification means that some important steps towards EMAS certification have been taken. However, its easier implementation also means that certain additional steps will have to be taken in order to register under EMAS. The most fundamental of these additional steps lie in the areas of commitment of top management, documentation, control of documents, emergency preparedness, control of records, and the management review.

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From Eco-Lighthouse to EMAS: Additional Steps

Please note that this document provides an overview of additional steps that need to be taken by an organisation to 'step-up' from Eco-Lighthouse to EMAS. For further details on each requirement, please see the EMAS website on www.ec.europa.eu/environment/emas.

Step 1 - Setting the Baseline

- **Commitment of top management**
All criteria related to the commitment of top management need to be fulfilled.
- **Environmental policy/guidelines**
An environmental policy is required but all other requirements related to the environmental policy/guidelines need to be fulfilled.

Step 2 - Planning

- **Environmental aspects and review**
Identification and evaluation of indirect environmental aspects is required.
- **Proof of legal compliance**
Procedures that enable the organisation to constantly meet requirements need to be implemented.
- **Definition of objectives, targets and programmes**
Objectives or targets need to be consistent with environmental policy and it needs to be proven that EMS and audit procedures are based on the current environmental performance.

Step 3 - Implementation

- **Roles and responsibilities**
Top management needs to assure that required resources are made available.
- **Employee involvement**
Employees need to participate in continuous improvement.
- **Training and awareness raising**
Training needs for individual employees need to be defined.
- **Communication**
Procedures for external communication are required.
- **Documentation**
All criteria related to documentation need to be fulfilled.
- **Control of documents and operational control**
All criteria related to the control of documents and operational control need to be fulfilled.
- **Emergency preparedness and response**
All criteria related to emergency preparedness and response need to be fulfilled.

Step 4 - Check and Act

- **Checking and corrective action**
Procedures for non-conformity and for taking corrective and preventive actions need to be established.
- **Control of records**
All criteria related to the control of records need to be fulfilled.
- **Internal audit**
All other criteria related the internal audit need to be fulfilled.
- **Management review**
All criteria related the management review need to be fulfilled.

Step 5 - External Recognition and Environmental Report

- **Environmental report/ statement**
Description of environmental policy and reference to legal requirements are required.