

EMS Factsheet

Green Dragon



Overview

Origin and development

The Green Dragon Environmental Standard was originally set up by Groundwork Wales together with ARENA Network to help companies in Wales to develop an EMS in stages. The Green Dragon Standard quickly spread to Northern Ireland and there are now more than 1000 registered organisations throughout the UK and Ireland. The EMS has been recognised by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS). Groundwork Wales provides support to communities with the purpose to build sustainable communities through joint environmental action.

Objectives

The Green Dragon Environmental Standard aims to provide simple and progressive steps towards a formal EMS for any organisation, large or small in the UK and Ireland. This standard is a documented way for organisations to prove they are abiding by the legislation and that their activity is controlled to ensure the protection of the environment. There are five levels of the Green Dragon Standard and each level is certified. Should companies not achieve formal EMS registration, such as EMAS and ISO 14001, then the Green Dragon Standard will still provide them with certified recognition of their steps taken in that direction.

Implementation structure

Groundwork Wales works in partnership with the main agencies in Wales, e.g. the Environment Agency and local authorities. Companies can choose whether to implement the EMS using internal staff or outside consultants depending on the organisation's available resources. ANI Management, which is an independent inspection body accredited by UKAS, is responsible for all external auditing.

EMS in brief

Key characteristic

The Green Dragon is a standard recognised by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service.

Implementing institution

ARENA Network

Available since

2000

Geographical scope

UK and Ireland

Target group

All companies in the private sector

Size of targeted companies

All sizes

Total number of certifications

n/a

Number of participants in the process of certification

225

Most important drivers and barriers

Drivers

- Available marketing tools
- Customer/supplier demand
- Cost/resource savings
- Environmental benefits
- Legal security
- Political support/financial incentives
- Proof of corporate social responsibility

Other: n/a

Barriers

- EMS not widely recognised
- High implementation costs
- Little similarities to EMAS or ISO 14001
- Perceived complication/unattainability

Other: n/a

Yes

No

The EMS in detail (at Level 5)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Commitment of top management: Yes, required.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environmental review: A baseline audit is carried out of all activities and operations on site in order to identify environmental impacts and legal obligations.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environmental policy or guidelines: The organisation's environmental policy is established once results of the initial environmental review are available. The environmental policy acts as a guidance document for all future improvements.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Proof of legal compliance: Organisations should ensure compliance with identified environmental obligations.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Objectives and environmental management programme: Objectives and a plan of action for the environmental management programme is drafted after analysis of the organisation's initial environmental review and environmental policy.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Definition of organisational structure at company level: Requires the designation of an "Environmental Champion" to act as the coordinator for all environmental activities within the organisation and to be the driving force behind environmental improvements.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Training and education requirements: Courses are available for employees to help organisations implement the standard. Formal training procedures should also be developed by the organisation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication (internal and external): The EMS encourages transparency in communicating its environmental activities to employees. Depending on the level of the EMS achieved, companies may use the Green Dragon Logo on their corporate literature, or purchase the Green Dragon Plaque.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Documentation requirements: Monitoring and environmental records are required to obtain information on key environmental indicators and to ensure that adequate records are maintained.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Internal follow-up/ checking and corrective action/ continuous improvement: The organisation must periodically audit all elements of the EMS to ensure it remains effective. Continuous improvement is required and the scheme can therefore act as a stimulus for innovation.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Management review: Organisations should conduct a periodic comprehensive review of the EMS by their management.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environmental report/ statement or similar publication by the participants of the EMS: Organisations are required to publish a comprehensive report on their environmental activities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes/Required <input type="checkbox"/> Partially addressed <input type="checkbox"/> Not indicated or not required	

External audit/certification

Is an external audit required? Yes

Responsibility for the external audit and qualifications needed: The independent and UKAS accredited inspection body ANI Management is responsible for all external audits.

Audit period: Organisations need to be re-audited every year with the exception of small businesses in certain sectors that can be assessed every two years.

Certification: Organisations can receive certification at the completion of each level. All inspected organisations feature in a register on the Green Dragon Environmental Standard website. Companies achieving levels 3, 4, and 5 also receive a plaque and are able to display the Green Dragon logo on their stationery and marketing materials.

Similarities to EMAS

- Initial environmental review
- Environmental policy
- Legal compliance
- Employee involvement
- Planning
- Implementation
- Checking and corrective action
- Continuous improvement
- Management review
- Certification
- Environmental statement
- Validation of environmental statement

Relation of the EMS to EMAS: Very close
(Note: At level 5 of the EMS, most companies can register for EMAS)

For further information on the EMS, please contact:

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