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STANDARDS & GUIDANCE REPORT · INTERNATIONAL · CERTIFIABLE STANDARD

ISO 14001:2026

Environmental management systems — Requirements with guidance for use

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INDUSTRIES	General Manufacturing, Automotive, Consumer Products & Toys, Textiles & Materials	ONLINE	qesisbest.com/standard-iso-14001.html

NEW EDITION, 2026 Published on April 15, 2026. The accreditation community has signaled a transition of about three years for certificates to the 2015 edition. **Next:** Confirm your certification body's transition dates, and fold the transition into the next surveillance or recertification audit.

What It Covers

The requirements for an environmental management system that an organization uses to manage its environmental aspects, fulfill its compliance obligations and address risks and opportunities, with the aim of improving environmental performance.

Who It Applies To

Any organization that wants to manage its environmental responsibilities systematically, and increasingly any supplier whose customers ask for certification.

Key Requirements

- Context, including climate-related issues, and the needs of interested parties (clause 4).
- Environmental aspects and their impacts, considered from a life-cycle perspective (6.1.2).
- Compliance obligations identified, kept current, and evaluated (6.1.3, 9.1.2).
- Risks and opportunities, including emergency situations with environmental impacts, and planning of changes (clause 6).
- Operational control extended to externally provided processes, products and services, with emergency preparedness (clause 8).

Structure at a Glance

PART	TOPIC	WHAT IT ASKS FOR
Clause 4	Context of the organization	Issues including climate, interested parties, scope, the environmental management system.
Clause 5	Leadership	Leadership and commitment, environmental policy, roles, and responsibilities.

PART	TOPIC	WHAT IT ASKS FOR
Clause 6	Planning	Risks and opportunities, environmental aspects, compliance obligations, objectives, planning of changes.
Clause 7	Support	Resources, competence, awareness, communication, documented information.
Clause 8	Operation	Operational planning and control, externally provided processes, emergency preparedness and response.
Clause 9	Performance evaluation	Monitoring and measurement, evaluation of compliance, internal audit, management review.
Clause 10	Improvement	Nonconformity and corrective action, continual improvement.
Annex A	Guidance	Expanded guidance and examples on using the requirements.

What an Auditor Asks to See

- The register of significant environmental aspects and the criteria behind it.
- The compliance obligations register and the last evaluation of compliance.
- Environmental objectives with current performance data.
- How a recent change to the operation was assessed for its environmental effect.

Requirements Checklist

Work down the list with the evidence in hand; write where each item is evidenced in the right-hand column.

#	REQUIREMENT	EVIDENCE ON FILE
1	Internal and external issues determined, including climate-related ones (4.1).	
2	Interested parties' needs determined, and which become compliance obligations (4.2).	
3	Environmental aspects and impacts identified across the life cycle, with significance criteria (6.1.2).	
4	Compliance obligations identified and accessible (6.1.3).	
5	Risks and opportunities, including environmental emergencies, addressed with planned actions (6.1).	
6	Environmental objectives measurable and monitored (6.2).	
7	Changes that could affect the system planned and assessed before they are made (clause 6).	
8	Competence and awareness of people whose work affects environmental performance (7.2, 7.3).	
9	Operational controls cover externally provided processes, products, and services (8.1).	
10	Emergency preparedness tested, with lessons recorded (8.2).	
11	Compliance with obligations evaluated, with results retained (9.1.2).	
12	Management review considers environmental performance and decides on actions (9.3).	

Implementation Roadmap

1. Gap assessment	Compare the current system with the 2026 text and the transition rules of your certification body.
2. Context and aspects	Refresh the issues, including climate, and rework the aspects register with a life-cycle view.
3. Planning and change	Set up the planning-of-changes process and tighten risk and emergency planning.
4. Operations and suppliers	Extend operational control to outsourced processes and key purchased products.
5. Evaluate and transition	Evaluate compliance, audit, hold management review, then book the transition audit.

How It Fits With Other Requirements

ISO 14001 shares the Harmonized Structure with ISO 9001 and ISO 45001, so the three are often run as one integrated system. The 2024 climate amendment is now built into the 2026 text; ISO 19011 guides the internal audits.

Findings We See Most Often

- Evaluation of compliance not performed or not recorded (9.1.2).
- Significant aspects not reflected in operational controls (8.1).
- Emergency response procedures not tested (8.2).
- Objectives without monitoring data (6.2).

Where Systems Fall Short

- Aspects registers copied from a template rather than from the site.
- Compliance evaluations that list permits but never test them.
- Life-cycle perspective claimed but not visible in design or purchasing.

How QES helps. A gap assessment against the 2026 edition, run alongside ISO 9001:2026 when both transitions fall due. See the transition service: qesisbest.com/services.html#transition · +1 (401) 246-3204 · mweeden@qesisbest.com

Sources, checked October 24, 2026. ANAB — ISO 14001:2026 key changes and how to prepare — blog.ansi.org/anab/iso-14001-2026-key-changes-and-how-to-prepare; de Grandson — ISO management system revisions, 2026–2030 (September 2026) — www.degrandson.com/blog/iso-management-system-standards-revisions-2026-2030.

A summary for orientation, prepared by Quality Excellence Services. It does not reproduce or replace the standard or regulation: read the official text, which governs. Not legal advice.