

ISO 14001:2015 Readiness & Gap Assessment Checklist

A practical checklist for assessing environmental management system readiness against ISO 14001

[ISO 14001](#) • [Environmental Management](#) • [EMS](#) • [ESG](#) • [GHG Protocol](#) • [Environmental Monitoring](#)

ISO 14001 certification depends on an environmental management system that demonstrably controls significant environmental impacts. This checklist sets out a practical sequence for assessing EMS maturity and closing gaps before certification or recertification audit.

A Context & Scope

- ☐ Define the EMS scope, including sites, activities, and processes covered
- ☐ Identify interested parties and their relevant environmental expectations
- ☐ Determine environmental conditions relevant to the organisation's context
- ☐ Confirm the EMS scope statement is consistent with certification intent

B Leadership & Environmental Policy

- ☐ Document an environmental policy approved and communicated by top management
- ☐ Assign environmental management roles, responsibilities, and authorities
- ☐ Set measurable environmental objectives aligned to significant impacts
- ☐ Confirm management commitment to compliance and continual improvement

C Environmental Aspects & Legal Compliance

- ☐ Maintain a register of environmental aspects and evaluate their significance
- ☐ Identify and maintain a compliance obligations register covering applicable legislation
- ☐ Evaluate compliance with legal and other requirements on a set frequency
- ☐ Track permits, licences, and authorisations with renewal dates monitored

D Operational Controls

- ☐ Establish operating criteria for activities associated with significant aspects
- ☐ Control environmental impacts across the value chain where relevant
- ☐ Maintain emergency preparedness and response procedures for environmental incidents
- ☐ Manage waste, effluent, and emissions in line with operational controls

E Monitoring, Measurement & Performance

- ☐ Monitor and measure environmental performance against defined indicators
- ☐ Calibrate or verify monitoring equipment used for environmental data
- ☐ Track energy, water, waste, and emissions data against targets
- ☐ Evaluate environmental performance trends ahead of management review

F Internal Audit

- ☐ Maintain an internal audit programme covering all EMS clauses and significant aspects
- ☐ Assign auditors who are independent of the area being audited
- ☐ Raise nonconformities with objective evidence and clear descriptions
- ☐ Verify corrective actions close the root cause, not just the symptom

G Management Review

- ☐ Hold management review at planned intervals with a defined agenda
- ☐ Review compliance status, audit results, and environmental performance
- ☐ Review the status of actions from previous management reviews
- ☐ Record decisions on resourcing, changes, and improvement opportunities

H Continual Improvement & Certification Readiness

- ☐ Investigate environmental nonconformities and determine root cause
- ☐ Assign corrective actions with clear owners and realistic due dates
- ☐ Reassess significant aspects after changes to operations or legislation
- ☐ Conduct a pre-certification readiness review ahead of the external audit

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