

# Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service

Your local county voluntary council



## 2. Running your organisation

### 2.16 Environmental Sustainability management systems

#### **Introduction**

Legislation such as the Kyoto Climate Summit and Local Agenda 21 are effectively forcing governments and organisations around the world to become more environmentally conscious and responsible in their operations; therefore 'environmental management systems' (EMS) are becoming an increasingly important part of an organisation's policies.

Certification against Environmental Management standards (or certificates) such as ISO14001, EMAS and Green Dragon demonstrate an organisation's commitment to protecting the environment. An environmental certification is representative of good working practices and green awareness.

As well as signalling their environmental friendliness, environmental management systems give companies a chance to reduce waste, lower costs and increase efficiency. They are also increasingly a requirement (among other compliances) within procurement both from the public sector and in supply chains for the private sector. Therefore taking care of the environment benefits the company and the planet.

Your organisation may also be interested in carrying out a Social Audit on your organisation's activities and services. Social Auditing is a way of measuring and reporting on an organisation's social and ethical performance. An organisation which takes on an audit makes itself accountable to its stakeholders and commits itself to following the audits recommendations.

#### **Environmental Management Systems**

An Environmental Management System (EMS) is a structured framework for businesses and organisations to manage their environmental impacts. National and international EMS certification schemes emerged in the early 1990s and have since developed closely through to increasingly standardised and complimentary approaches.

Environmental Management Systems are now widely adopted offering a number of direct benefits to both public and private sector organisations:

- Helps achieve real cost savings -direct efficiencies in energy, water, waste, purchasing and transport .
- Management of environmental risk and ensuring legal compliance. Leading schemes have been structured to be compatible and complementary with other mainstream standards (e.g. ISO 9001 Quality Standard)
- Increasingly valuable as a pre-requisite for doing business – EMS certification needed to demonstrate your business’s compliance with supply chain requirements.Environmental Standards
- A valuable engagement process for staff and stakeholders.
- Effectively demonstrate commitment and responsibility to key clients, regulators and the public
- Qualifies an agency for publicly procured business.

There are a number of different Standards or Certifications; the main ones being:

### **ISO 14001**

ISO 14001 is the internationally recognised standard for the environmental management of businesses. It prescribes controls for those activities that have an effect on the environment. These include the use of natural resources, handling and treatment of waste and energy consumption.

Implementing an Environmental Management System is a systematic way to discover and control the effects your organisation has on the environment. Cost savings can be made through improved efficiency and productivity. These are achieved by detecting ways to minimise waste and dispose of it more effectively and by learning how to use energy more efficiently. It also verifies compliance with current legislation.

### **Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment**

This is the UK web portal for information, advice and support on Environmental Management Systems (EMS). Its pages are set out to introduce and guide you through the range of information now available, and is being developed to assist everyone from new users through to more advanced professionals.

In addition to these pages, further guidance about implementing an EMS and making your organisation more sustainable can be found on the government's main portal of practical advice for business - see Business Link Network under Further Links. IEMA has been designated by the Government as the Competent Body for the EU EMAS Regulation in the UK.

## **Smaller charities can use:**

### **The Acorn Scheme**

The IEMA Acorn Scheme offers UKAS accredited recognition for organisations evaluating and improving their environmental performance through the phased implementation of an EMS in accordance with BS8555. Acorn offers a unique feature whereby organisations can engage environmental performance indicator (EPI) reporting within the procurement process. This compliments the 'one size fits all' aspects of ISO14001 & EMAS and provides the opportunity to set environmental requirements in supplier contracts and monitor operational/product performance – a strength acknowledged by the Government in a recent EMS position statement published by DEFRA.

### **Green Dragon Environmental Standard**

Green Dragon is a manageable way of achieving a recognised UKAS Accredited and Independently inspected Environmental Management System (EMS).

With 5 Levels, organisations can get to the level that suits their needs, step-by-step. At every level, you achieve a fully recognised EMS, but each level takes you to a higher standard. If you wish, you can use Green Dragon to take you to a level where you can also achieve ISO14001 and/or EMAS.

### **One Planet Living<sup>®</sup> Programme**

The goals of the One Planet Living Programme are:

1. Build a world-wide network of One Planet Living Communities and other exemplary projects to demonstrate One Planet Living in action.
2. Establish One Planet Living Centres in each One Planet Living community as a focus for education.
3. Promote the imperative for One Planet Living and its guiding principles to catalyse change with governments, business and individuals.

### **What is the difference between Green Dragon and the other standards?**

An EMS that has been set up using the Green Dragon Standard will, at level 4, enable easy application for ISO 14001, and at level 5, application for EMAS. BS 8555 is also a staged EMS but is implemented slightly differently whereby organisations gain a verified EMS at stage 4 and above, whereas all stages of Green Dragon are verified as a full EMS.

Within the Green Dragon Standard there are five levels, with each step contributing towards achievement of the International and European environmental standards ISO

14001 and EMAS. During the appraisal and audit processes for the Green Dragon Standard, there is an evaluation of costs as well as environmental performance - this means that at each stage the company or organisation will have an outline environmental management system that relates to its bottom line.

## **Sustainability Management Systems**

The current main sustainability management standards in operation are BS8900 – ‘Guidance for managing sustainable development’.

### **BS8900 ‘Business tool for sustainable development’**

This is the world’s first standard for managing sustainable development. It is designed to enable organisations to develop an approach to sustainable development that will evolve and adapt to meet new challenges and demands.

It offers clear practical advice with which to make a meaningful contribution to sustainable development.

This standard guides organisations towards effective management of their impact on society and the environment, along the route to enhanced organizational performance and success.

BS 8900:2006 is designed to:

- Provide a framework so organisations can take a structured approach to sustainable development by considering the social, environmental and economic impacts of their organisation’s activities
- Be applicable to all organisations, in terms of size, type etc, including civil societies and trade unions
- Make it easier for organisations to adjust to changing social expectations
- Help organisations to connect existing technical, social and environmental standards, both formal (e.g. ISO 14000 series of standards) and private standards (e.g. the GRI and the AA1000 standards)
- Offer a maturity pathway for the development of the management of sustainable development issues and impacts
- Provide organisations’ stakeholders with a useful tool to assess and engage in improving organisational performance
- Contribute to international level dialogue in the international standard on social responsibility, currently under development.

## **Further information**

### **Green Consumer Guide**

[www.greenconsumerguide.com](http://www.greenconsumerguide.com)

### **Social Audit Network**

SAN's mission is 'to promote and support social accounting as the preferred means whereby organisations operating in the community, social economy and public sectors report on their social, environmental and economic performance and impact'.

Tel: 01392 666281

[info@socialauditnetwork.org.uk](mailto:info@socialauditnetwork.org.uk)

[www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk](http://www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk)

### **ISO 14001**

[www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)

### **Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)**

The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) is a not-for-profit membership organisation established to promote best practice standards in environmental management, auditing and assessment. The website is a good source of information on environmental management issues.

[www.iema.net](http://www.iema.net)

### **The Acorn Scheme**

[www.iema.net/acorn](http://www.iema.net/acorn)

### **Green Dragon**

Green Dragon is a manageable way of achieving a recognised UKAS and independently-inspected Environmental Management System (EMS). Green Dragon is managed by Arena Network. Green Dragon is a stepped Standard recognising effective environmental management. The Standard offers an environmental management system relevant to the specific needs of companies and organisations and rewards actions taken to achieve environmental improvements.

Tel: 01443 844866

[www.groundworkinwales.org.uk/greendragon](http://www.groundworkinwales.org.uk/greendragon)

### **One Planet Living® Programme**

<http://www.oneplanetliving.org/index.html>

### **BS8900 'Business tool for sustainable development'**

[www.bsi-global.com](http://www.bsi-global.com)

## **NetRegs - environmental guidance for your business**

NetRegs is a partnership between the UK environmental regulators – the Environment Agency in England and Wales, SEPA in Scotland and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) in Northern Ireland.

NetRegs provides free environmental guidance for small and medium-sized businesses in the UK. They will help you to understand what you need to do to comply with environmental law and protect the environment. They may even help you to save money by showing you ways to use your resources more efficiently.

Tel: 08708 506506 (Environment Agency National Customer contact centre)

[enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)

[www.netregs.gov.uk](http://www.netregs.gov.uk)

**Every Action Counts** provides advice and support to voluntary and community organisations who are looking to reduce their impact on the environment, tackle climate change and improve their local area.

By providing free access to information, action planning tools, publications and trained Community Champions they will enable a group to take simple and effective actions to:

- Save Energy
- Travel Wisely
- Save Our Resources
- Shop Ethically, and
- Care For Your Area.

[www.everyactioncounts.org.uk](http://www.everyactioncounts.org.uk)

## **Defra**

Defra, in partnership with Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), has published guidance on ***how to measure and report your greenhouse gas emissions*** on the Defra website. This includes two documents:

- *Guidance on how to measure and report your greenhouse gas emissions*
- *Small Business User Guide: Guidance on how to measure and report your greenhouse gas emissions*

[www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/reporting/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/reporting/index.htm)

## Welsh Government

[www.wales.gov.uk/walescarbonfootprint/home/business/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/walescarbonfootprint/home/business/?lang=en)  
[climate-change@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:climate-change@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

## Sustainability at work

[www.sustainabilityatwork.org.uk/](http://www.sustainabilityatwork.org.uk/)

## Environment Wales

Tel: 029 2043 1727

[info@environment-wales.org](mailto:info@environment-wales.org)

[www.environment-wales.org](http://www.environment-wales.org)

## Centre for Sustainable Energy

[www.cse.org.uk/pages/information/community-groups](http://www.cse.org.uk/pages/information/community-groups)

## Disclaimer

The information provided in this sheet is intended for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.

### For further information contact

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[www.wcva.org.uk](http://www.wcva.org.uk)