

ALLIANCE FOR ENVIRONMENT- EKOREIGIONS

Environmental management and auditing scheme - EMAS

In the most recent developments for business development, the good management of organizations is more frequently defined as “responsibility toward society”. The concern for environmental protection and decrease harmful impact upon it is part of this responsibility in global aspect.

Waste minimization, economical use of electrical energy and more efficient resource use leads to significant costs reduction for an organization and improves (minimizes) the impact of its activity upon the environment.

The Environmental management and auditing scheme – EMAS is a voluntary initiative, developed for promoting the diminution of the harmful impact upon the environment that the organization's activity has.

The EMAS directive 1836/93 is published for the first time in June 1993 as a tool for environmental policy of the EU, oriented towards sustainable development.

The new EC directive –761/2001 on EMAS is published in 2001 that replaces, the old one - 1836/93 and broadens the scope of EMAS for organizations of all type, including the state administration.

The EMAS goal is to stimulate enterprises to go beyond the minimum environmental legal requirements and to continuously improve their environmental management system.

EMAS requires that organizations publish and the so called “Environmental declaration”. It contains information about their achievements and results of the undertaken measures for lessening the harmful impact upon the environmental equilibria. Besides, the EMAS registered companies adopt the EMAS logo that permits them to announce their participation in the scheme.

The EMAS scheme is applicable to all organizations, regardless of their type, size and business activities. The EMAS regulation is applicable to all 25 EC member states, for the three countries within the frame of the European Economic Area – Norway, Lichtenstein and Island, as well as for all countries that are preparing their membership in the European Union.

In “Governmental newspaper”, issue 26 from 2003 /amended in GN issue 31 from 2003/ was published the regulation adopted by the Council of Ministers for National Environmental management and auditing scheme. It is adopted on the basis of art 136. From the Environmental Protection Act and brings the European Union Regulation 761/2001 for voluntary participation of organizations in the European Community EMAS scheme into the Bulgarian legislation.

The adoption of the regulation is part of the harmonization of the Bulgarian legislation with that of the EC.

EMAS and ISO 14001

EMAS and the international standard ISO 14001 have a common goal: provision of instructions for effective environmental management. The European Commission accepts the EN ISO 14001 as basis for registration according to EMAS.

EMAS exceeds the EN ISO 14001 requirements, since it contains a requirement for implementation of initial comprehensive review of the environmental issues, impact and performance related to the activities of the organization, active participation of the organization's employees in the process of compliance with the EMAS requirements and publication of information intended for the public and all interested from the organization parties.

The main differences between EMAS and EN ISO 14001 are as follows:

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- **Initial Review** – EMAS requires an Initial environmental Review while ISO 14001 does not contain such a requirement.
- **Public access** – according to EMAS the policy, programme and the environmental management system of the organization as well as details related to its activities for decreasing the harmful impact upon the environment, should be available to the society as part of the “Environmental Declaration”.
- **Suppliers and Contractors** – The EMAS scheme requires that the suppliers and contractors of the organization to comply with its environmental policy. Besides, the issues related to the suppliers, should be subject of the environmental management system. According to EN ISO 14001 the organizations should inform their suppliers and contractors for some procedures of the system.
- **Parameters** – The EN ISO 14001 standard does not set the level to

which the functioning of the environmental management system should be improved. EMAS indicates that that organization should decrease its harmful impact upon the environment to a level, which does not exceed the level, achieved in economically profitable application of the best available technology.

The new EMAS permits the certified according to EN ISO 14001 organizations to obtain an EMAS registration. In this case, they should undertake additional steps, to satisfy the EMAS requirements.

The Agency for Sustainable Development and Eurointegration, with the support of Ministry of Environment and Water and Ministry of Economy and in cooperation with Ministry of Environment of the province of Hessen has created the Bulgarian Alliance for Environment, based on the example of similar structures in Germany and Austria. We expect that the Ministry of Environment and Waters, the Ministry of Economics as well as the Sofia Municipality and other partners to participate in this initiative.

With the EA “BAS” the Alliance for Environment has a signed memorandum for cooperation.

The last on going initiative is the training course of EMAS for achieving sustainable development of the SME and the Bulgarian municipalities.

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