

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A FU⁺UREPLUS GUIDE

WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY?

An Environmental Policy sets out an organisation's **environmental direction**, intentions and values. Raising awareness of environmental issues is vital to the success of any environmental policy. All employees can be involved in the development and implementation of the policy from the outset and should be given the **opportunity** to voice their concerns.

The International Environmental Management System (EMS) standard **ISO 14001** defines an Environmental Policy as:

“A statement of the overall intentions and direction of an organisation related to its environmental performance as formally expressed by top management. The environmental policy provides a framework for action and for the setting of environmental objectives and environmental targets.”

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY?

An Environmental policy can provide significant benefits to your business, including:

- helping you to stay within the law
- keeping employees informed about their environmental roles and responsibilities
- improving cost control
- improving your monitoring of environmental impacts
- improving the efficiency of your processes

WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM?

An Environmental Management System requires you to implement a program to systematically deliver your Environmental Policy in a strategic way.

External certification of your EMS will help you demonstrate to customers, investors, regulators and other stakeholders that the environmental claims you make in your policy are **credible, reliable** and have been **independently checked**.

On top of this, having your EMS certified by an external UKAS accredited assessment body publicly demonstrates your commitment to the environment and can give you a significant advantage when tendering for contracts.

If you don't choose to set up a formal EMS, it's a good idea to at least apply some of the steps to ensure your policy is effective. This can include assessing the environmental impact of your business, developing appropriate key performance indicators, setting objectives and targets and reviewing these regularly.

LEGISLATION



For UK-based companies, there are many pieces of environmental legislation, both domestic and European, that relate to the average business, even to a very small company. You will therefore need to carry out an assessment of which ones are relevant to your business and create a compliance register to capture this information.

A compliance register is a list of regulations *relevant to your organisation*, with references to said legislation and a record of who is responsible for ensuring compliance in each instance.

A compliance register not only helps you keep track of who is responsible for what, but will also assist with any auditing requirements.

- If you require help in understanding what legislations and regulations are relevant to your business, please let us know.
- If you would like a compliance register template, or guidance on how to implement the compliance process we can provide more information on this.

Get in touch: team@future-plus.co.uk

PREVENTION OF POLLUTION



Pollution is the introduction of materials that harm the environment. These materials are called pollutants.

Pollutants can be natural, for example volcanic ash, or man made, such as emissions produced as a result of burning coal to create electricity, pesticides used to kill weeds and protect crops, or plastic waste.

Types of pollution include, but are not limited to:

Air Pollution - caused by solid and liquid particles, and certain gasses that are suspended in the air all around us. These particles and gasses can come from car and truck exhaust, factories, dust, pollen, mould spores, volcanoes and wildfires, and can be harmful to all life on Earth, climate, or materials.

Water Pollution - is the contamination of water, such as lakes, rivers, the ocean. It can have a devastating effect on wildlife and human health. Human waste, toxic chemicals, rubbish, plus more, all contribute to water pollution.

Land Pollution - is the addition of substances that are foreign and toxic to the land or soil causing undesirable changes to the environment and its inhabitants. It is caused by garbage dumps and landfills, agricultural processes that destroy the quality of the soil, mining processes, unregulated chemicals, and more.

PREVENTION OF POLLUTION

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Light Pollution - is an excess amount of light in the sky at night time, mainly in urban areas. Light pollution can disrupt ecosystems by confusing the distinction between night and day.

Noise Pollution - is the continuous presence of loud and disruptive noise in an area. Noise pollution can cause mental and physical health issues for humans and affect animals such as birds and marine animals by impeding communications and preventing them from locating food.

Committing to the prevention of pollution from all of the above sources will involve taking a holistic view of your operations and supply chain and pinpointing any areas of concern.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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Your business must commit to **continuous improvements** in order to reduce the negative effects of its operations on the environment, including any actions and initiatives taken to help achieve this.

Write up any operational procedures that are required, and ensure that internal and/or external audits are carried out regularly (at least once a year), which include applying corrective and preventive actions for problems, and a process for your Management Team to review the system in order to ensure requirements are met and improvement plans are made.

The **ISO 14001** standard is the main set of requirements for this process, and is recognised world-wide. It defines and outlines all the typical policies, processes, procedures and records that are needed for a successful EMS.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

1

Introduce the business and state the overall aim of the policy, and ensure that the policy is signed, dated and endorsed by the Managing Director or CEO

2

Describe any significant positive and/or negative impacts you have identified that the business has on the environment

3

Affirm your organisation's commitment to environmental compliance and include an Appendix outlining which legislation is applicable to you

THINGS TO CONSIDER

4

Outline how your organisation mitigates any pollution issues you have identified

5

Explain how your organisation strives for continuous improvement and what steps it is taking now and in the future

6

Make the policy available to employees, customers, your suppliers and other stakeholders. State and ensure that you review the policy annually to make sure it is still relevant

THINGS TO AVOID

1

Setting aspirations or making claims that are open to misinterpretation, can't be substantiated, or can't be achieved

2

Making promises that cannot be kept and using non-committal language

3

Committing to underachievement to avoid failure

NEED MORE HELP?

Please let us know if you would like more information - we would be happy to provide a quote for any additional services you may need:

team@future-plus.co.uk

