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Enea, Constanta

Constantin Brâncuși University of Targu Jiu, Faculty of Economics

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ISO 14000 - Condition of Competition Romanian Firm on Foreign Market

Tănăsioiu Georgiana Lavinia,

assistant professor, „Constantin Brâncuși” University, Faculty of Economics

Enea Constanța,

Lecturer Ph.d, „Constantin Brâncuși” University, Faculty of Economics

ABSTRACT:

Every organization determined to embrace ISO 14000 should have a supporting policy manual, procedures, data collection forms, etc. ISO 14000 is actually a series of international standards on environmental management. It provides a framework for the development of both the system and the supporting audit program.

Concomitant with increasing the public interest on environment protection, it become more obvious the fact that companies attitude towards environment conditioned loyalty of the customers in confront of the company.

In the last years it could be observed the development and application of was it is known under the name of “generic standard form management systems”. “Generic” means that the same standards can be applied by any organization, no matter the size or specific of their activity, which realizes products and services in any field of activity, indifferent if it is a company, an administrative unit or a governmental department.

One of most known international standards, which enter this category, is series ISO 14000 for systems of soil management.

Issued and published by International Organization of Standardization (ISO) this series covers a large spectrum of subjects in the field of environment protection, for environment management systems (SMM), SMM audit, analyze of life cycle of the products, eco-labeling, environment performance. A SMM is that component of the general system of management of the organization realized by organizational structure, planning, responsibility, processes, practices, procedures and resources which facilitates construction, implementation, realization, inspection and maintenance of environment politics of the organization. Implementation of a SMM allows the organization the harmonization of expectation regarding its environment performance, costs control and conformity of organization to legislation and environment regulation.

ISO 14000 is an international standard which facilitates companies, generally, goods producers as well as services suppliers, research institutes, other juridical persons, knowing processes as part of the enterprises, minimization of negative effects on environment, especially environment factors (air, water, soil, etc). Standard measures degree of conformity of the environment management system of an organization in rapport with certain requirements, but is sufficiently flexible so that to allow companies to integrate business objectives in this Environment Management System.

Label which certifies the ISO 14000 authentication become omnipresent on labels of different products offered by a company with an implemented system of environment management. This series refers to a company, generally, to production process, to the modality in which organization knows and respects environment legislation, systematic, controlled reduction of impact on environment factors, especially by realization of some analyze and control instruments which will allow the organization to be in conformity with the principle of “Clean Production” and does not refer to a certain product or service.

Standards from ISO 14000 series represents and indicator of convenient practices of ecological management. They have as common objective promotion of efficient environment management and environment program aims the identification of environment aspect and of their social impact, contain measures that will be taken along the time interval.

Certification mechanisms involve efforts, from the stage of evaluation of the company and elaboration of procedures, as well as during the implementation of procedures and so-called certification.

Implementation advantages of this family of standards supposes the insurance of interested parts (partners, customers, authorities) that the organization is oriented; improvement of image; reduction of impact on environment; satisfaction of requirements of potential investors; increasing business safety; increasing profit by optimization of using resources (raw materials, energy), by improvement of wastes management and reduction of afferent costs to some eventual environment incidents; costs control by identification and elimination of loss; access to certain markets and customer influenced by problems connected to environment, facilitating obtaining authorizations mentioned by legislation; reduction of the cots of alignment to environment legislation; training personnel, etc.

In another expression, environment management systems bring organizations to a competition level and in the same time, correspond to requirements of European Union.

ISO 14000 certification is voluntary, allows the increase of the degree of competition, in the following sense: at present moment there are companies realizing contractual relations only with supplier possessing this certification, but, concomitantly, market mechanisms governs selection of products and/ or services suppliers. In the same time, ISO 14000 does not guarantee the increase of business figure or penetration on these markets in which the majority of companies are certified.

ISO 14000 contains several standards, namely:

- ISO 14000 Standard of management of environment for protection environment;
- ISO 14001: Environment management system - Requirements and directing lines used (NF EN ISO 14001);
- ISO 14040: Principles as part of series ISO 14040;
- ISO 14041: Definition of the objective, study field and inventory analyze;
- ISO 14042: Evaluation of the impact "life cycle";
- ISO 14043: Interpretation "life cycle";
- ISO 14048: Formats of exchanges of information data
- ISO 14049: Technical rapports on examples of analyze of inventories in conformity with ISO 14041

ISO 14001 represents reference standard for SMM from series ISO 14000. It describes requirements that an environment management system must fulfill. It explains the requirements of this standard that SMM should reflect organization type, activities realized by this and specific aspects of environment.

The standard - ISO 14001 (standard for Environmental Management System - SMM) allows the evaluation of the company. This SMM - Environmental Management System- of the organization determines environment politics, aspects and environmental impact of the products, activities and services of the organization, planning objectives regarding environment protection, establishing new quantifiable targets, implementation of politics and programs that are necessary for the fulfillment of the objectives, control and fee-back mechanisms, corrective measures, as well as the activity of monitoring and evaluation of management system. A SMM in conformity with ISO 14001 put at disposal of the organization a systematic and coherent frame and of prevention of non-conformities.

Certification represents the formal acceptance of the capacity of the organization to be in conformity with SMM requirements as it is defined by ISO 14001 standard.

ISO 14001 took over basic elements of a continuo system of planning and implementation and adapted to continuous improvement needs of the environment performance of the enterprises in entire

world. This standard has 52 very precise requirements of procedures, actions, resources of documentation and can be applied in about all organization, almost indifferent from place in Universe in which is it situated and dimensions are not essential conditions. ISO 14001 was realized on general verified model for a better management system that exists, to strengthen and introduce principles of good management where they exist

Chart 1.1. Standard stages of ISO 14001

Stage 1:	Diagnosis analyze of the organization and existent system	✓
Stage 2:	Training administration/ project team	✓
Stage 3:	Establishing politics and objectives	✓
Stage 4:	Elaboration of the documents	✓
	description of processes	✓
	identification of legal requirements	✓
	identification and evaluation of environment aspects	✓
	program of environment management	✓
	system procedures	✓
	operational procedures/ work instruction	✓
	formulation	✓
	manual of the system	✓
Stage 5:	Instruction of process owners/ chief of departments	✓
Stage 6:	Implementation of the documents	✓
Stage 7:	Verification and validation of the system	✓
Stage 8:	Internal audit	✓
Stage 9:	Selecting certification organism	✓
Stage 10:	Granting assistance during certification process	✓
Stage 11:	Granting post - certification assistance (optional)	
	analyze of non-conformity	
	corrective actions	✓
	internal audit	✓
	optimization of process parameters	✓
	periodical verification of the system	✓

Management system is what an organization does to realize processes or activities with the purpose that its products or services fulfill objectives that they propose. As the organization is bigger and has more employees, as higher is the possibility to be some written procedures, instructions or registration forms. These help the organization to realize activity in a methodic and structured manner, so that, time, money and other resources is used efficiently.

To be really efficient and efficacious, organization must systematize the modality of development of the activity. This thing ensures the fact that nothing important is omitted and each employee knows exactly what duties has to fulfill, when, in which type, why and where.

Standards for management systems supply to the organization a model that should be followed to establish and use the management system. This model includes characteristics regarding which, specialists in the filed have reached a consensus and which represents the actual stage of the engineering solutions. A management system which follows the model or which is “in conformity with standard” is realized on solid base of the engineering practices.

Environment Management System is realized of a series of steps, these interacting. With their aid, organization coordinates activities to realize a smaller impact on persons and environment.

The entire system must grant the improvement of the efficiency of environmental protection as well as the Environmental Management System. .

Respecting requirement of standard ISO 14001 supposes existence of a system which identifies the impact that a certain organization has on environment and minimization this impact, when possible.

In the last period of time, at world level the best sold new certifications from family ISO 14000 are ISO 14065 (2007) regarding gases with greenhouse effect and ISO 14971 (2007) regarding medical device.

Certification of the companies included the evaluation of the company, establishing a measures plan regarding the reduction of the impact on environment in the present or near future, their environmental audit, elaboration of procedures, preparation of personnel, designation of some persons responsible as part of the organization regarding problems connected to the environment, continuous evaluation of environmental processes as part of the enterprise, permanent actions regarding reduction of environment impact.

Purchasing decision of the final consumer is not determined by certification of the series ISO that products and /or services posses, as this does not have information regarding importance of these standards. Romanian companies having external customers are the fist encountering more and more pressures from these, for certification. This does not suppose the idea that products of the company are “environmental friendly” - friendly to the environment, the fact that producer or performer of services is consequent in its effort of diminishing the impact on environment, can convince customers to select him as supplier before other competitors.

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