



Frequently Asked Questions about ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

1. What is Environmental Certification?

Organisations are increasingly concerned with demonstrating sound environmental performance by controlling the impacts of their activities, products and services on the environment. They do so in the context of stringent legislation and increased concern from stakeholders.

Although many organisations undertake environmental reviews and audits, these alone may be insufficient in providing assurance of meeting its legal and policy obligations. The International Standard ISO 14001 addresses this issue by specifying requirements for an Environmental Management System (EMS) that form a framework for organisations to design and implement an EMS to suit their own business.

EMS's that meet the ISO 14001 requirements can be externally audited and certified by an accredited Certification Body such as NCS International.

2. Who else is certified to this standard?

Initially, those organisations with a direct impact on natural resources adopted ISO 14001 such as power stations, water treatment works, and construction companies. Primary producers and mines soon followed using 14001 as a measure to contain and manage their environmental risks and liability. Manufacturing organisations (especially those with ISO 9001 Quality Systems) achieved ISO 14001 certification in response to rising corporate social responsibility, expectations as well as contractual requirements and supply agreements. More recently, government agencies and councils have implemented EMS's as demonstration that cost savings and a reduced environmental footprint are compatible goals for all organisations.

3. Why are they certified to this standard?

Organisations seek certification for many different reasons:

- Contracts which the organisation is pursuing may require certification to a particular Standard as a tender condition.
- Certification can provide customers confidence in the services provided by the certified organisation and can therefore be used as a marketing tool.
- Certification provides a verified demonstrated commitment by the organisation to continual improvement and effective customer focus.

- Certified Management Systems have been demonstrated to improve business outcomes and to assist in managing risks within the organisation.
- Certified Management Systems can increase the efficiency of business processes, and thereby reduce waste and rework.
- Sometimes, certification to a particular standard is a requirement for international trade.
- Many organisations believe that certification of their management system can help to increase sales, reduce staff turnover, improve morale and improve profitability.

4. What are the steps to certification?

While there are some variations in the process depending on the particular requirements of the standard to which the organisation is seeking certification, the following is a general guide.

- The organisation must apply to NCSI, to become a client.
- NCSI will appoint a Client Manager, usually an auditor with skills and experience in the relevant industry to assist the organisation on it's journey to certification.
- A preliminary assessment is conducted on site to determine the company's level of compliance with the Standard. This is usually done early in the development of the management systems to assist the company in developing a robust framework that will meet both the organisation's and the standard's requirements.
- A documentation review is conducted of the organisation's system documentation against the requirements of the nominated Standard and a detailed report on the level of compliance to the standard is prepared.
- A certification audit is conducted some time after the documentation review and preliminary assessment to allow the organisation to address any issues identified as likely barriers to certification. The length of time spent on the audit depends on a number of factors, including the number of employees and the level of risk identified for the organisation.
- The auditor makes a recommendation regarding certification which is reviewed by an independent member of the NCSI technical staff. If the recommendation is accepted, the organisation is then certified.
- The length of time from application to certification varies but often organisations take less than 12 months to achieve certification.

5. How much does certification cost?

The cost of obtaining certification varies, depending on the size and complexity of the organisation, its geographical location, and the number of standards to which the organisation wishes to be certified. To obtain a detailed quotation, please go to NCSI's home page and click on "free quote".

6. Where can I find out more?

You can:

- Request more information through the website at www.ncsi.com.au
- Call 1800 652 345
- Contact an NCSI staff member at the office in your state, listed on the NCSI Home Page under "NCSI Offices".

About NCS International

NCS International Pty Ltd (NCSI) assesses how well an organisation goes about its business, and whether its operations meet accepted International and National Standards.

Operating across a wide range of industries and government sectors, NCSI provides diligent and practical audits that cover an enterprise's systems and processes.

NCSI awards its **WorldStar** mark to organisations which meet the relevant standard to which they aim to be certified (see below). The **WorldStar** mark is the public proclamation that an organisation is certified and indicates its commitment to sound management systems and effective customer service.

Customers of organisations that display NCSI's **WorldStar** mark can be confident they're dealing with people committed to excellence and continual improvement in meeting their customers requirements.

NCSI's certification programs offer audit and certification to Standards for Quality Assurance, Environment, OH&S, Food Safety (HACCP), and Disability Employment Services, amongst many other programs.

NCSI was established in its own right in 1997. It is a subsidiary of the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA), which is Australia's national provider of laboratory accreditation and the world's first and largest association of accredited laboratories. NCSI is JAS-ANZ accredited, and is entitled to use the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) accreditation symbol on its certification.



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