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DIN EN ISO 14001 Revision 2015: Changes and implications

The ISO 14001 international standard for environmental management has been undergoing revisions since the beginning of 2012. The revision's publication in September 2015 permanently replaces the older version from 2004 and its 2009 corrections. For some 250,000 companies worldwide that are certified under this most popular of environmental norms, several questions arise: What are the changes? How does this affect my business?

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

The new revision was published in September 2015 following the ISO/FDIS 14001:2015 Final Draft International Standard (FDIS) from July 2015. One major change concerns the structure of **ISO 14001**. This revision adheres to a so-called "high-level structure", which works to ensure identical structures for all management systems as well as consistent use of core texts and terminology. This makes the standards easier to understand and renders combined certifications more efficient.

TRANSITION PERIOD FOR ISO 14001

ISO 14001:2015 was released on 15 September 2015, and

it is highly recommended to examine the implications of the newly revised standard. Organizations already certified under ISO 14001:2004 or its 2009 amendment are granted three years to migrate their environmental management system to ISO 14001:2015. Ultimately, by 15 September 2018 all ISO 14001:2004 certificates will be declared void and must be retracted.

THE TEN SECTIONS OF ISO 14001:2015

1. Scope
2. Normative References
3. Terminology
4. Organizational Context
5. Leadership
6. Planning
7. Support
8. Operations
9. Performance Assessment
10. Improvement

RECOMMENDATION FOR ORGANIZATIONS SEEKING THEIR FIRST CERTIFICATION UNDER ISO 14001

We no longer recommend to seek an older ISO 14001:2004 certification, since the certificates would only be valid until mid-September 2018. Instead, have your company certified under ISO 14001:2015 to take advantage of improved standards. We are at your service as a competent partner – [contact us to learn more!](#)

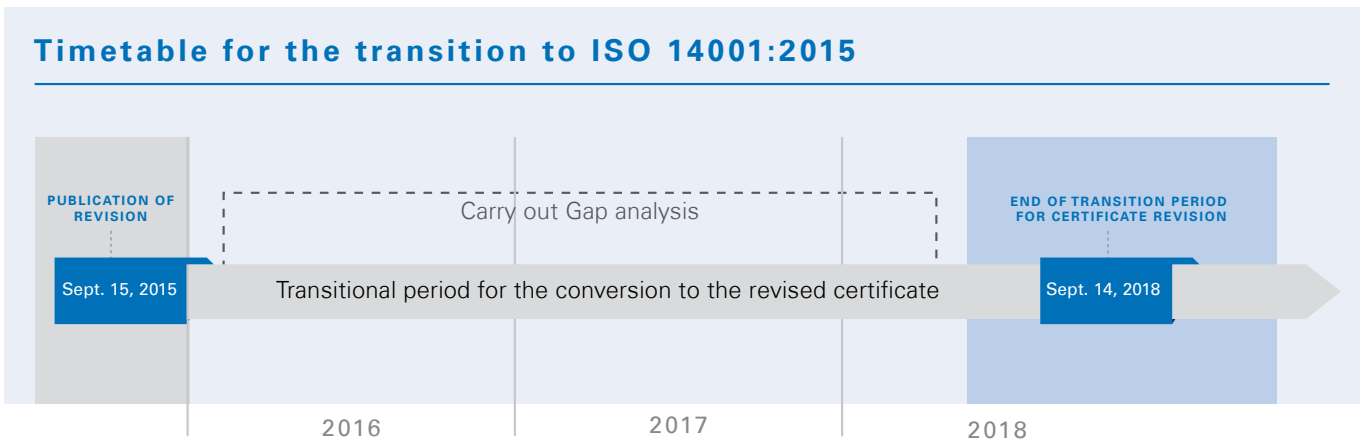
RECOMMENDATION FOR ORGANIZATIONS ALREADY CERTIFIED UNDER ISO 14001

We guide you through the transition phase by individually adapting our audit planning to the transition period in an effort to minimize the impact on your business. Our experts will inform you ahead of time if they anticipate any additional efforts and modalities during the transition. Our essential recommendations for previously certified organizations include:

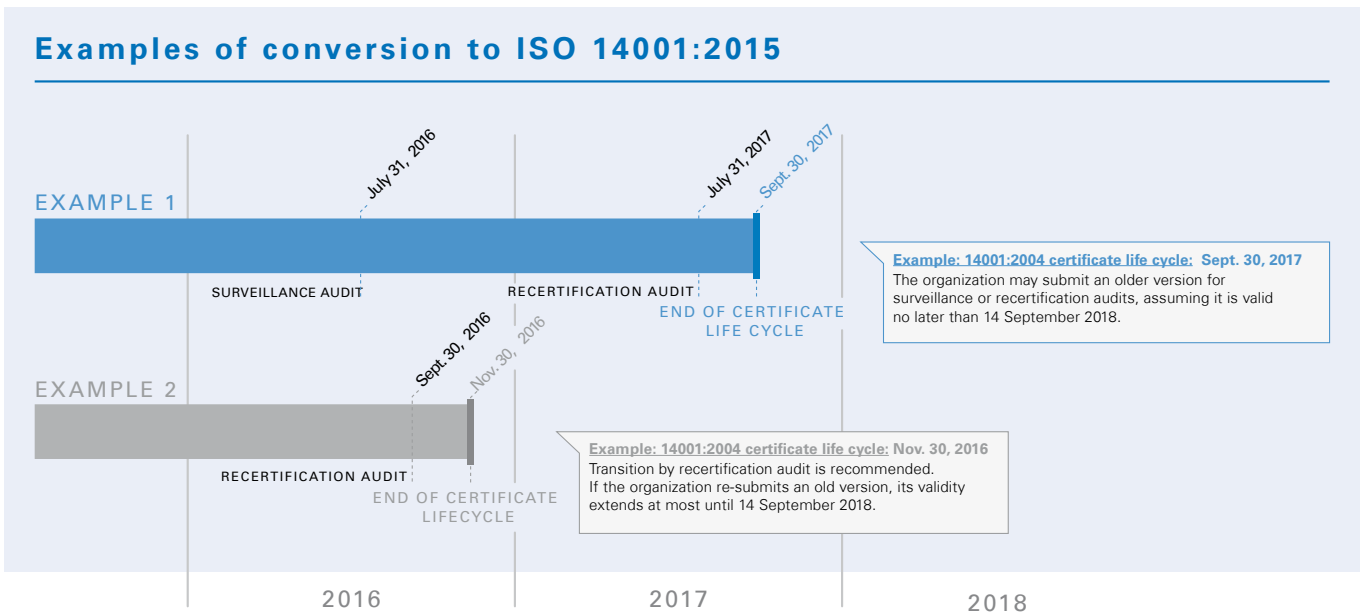
- Conduct a gap analysis to identify necessary changes in your organizations. Do your training courses have positive outcomes? Do essential documents or the management system documentation require any updates or adaptations?
- Engage in public debate about the new standard and how to interpret its requirements.
- Intensify your scrutiny of environmental impacts within the supply chain for your products, processes and services (e.g., production of raw materials, suppliers, customer utilization phase, and disposal).

Different procedures are available for switching to the new norm depending on your existing certificate’s life cycle. The following illustration uses two examples to indicate the most opportune time for companies to initiate their transition.

Timetable for the transition to ISO 14001:2015



Examples of conversion to ISO 14001:2015



Summary of important changes to individual chapters:

CHAPTER 4: ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

“More stakeholder management”

This new chapter encourages organizations to place greater emphasis on external interests and influences related to their environmental management system. The demands and expectations of “interested parties” should be better understood and evaluated with a view towards any specific requirements that may arise from them.

CHAPTER 5: LEADERSHIP

“Take responsibility and delegate meaningfully”

Accountability for the management system’s efficacy and for its integration into business processes now rests with executive management. Environmental policies are supposed to extend the mantle of environmental protection beyond the company itself. Instead of a designated officer, responsibilities and competencies should now be adequately spread across the organization.

CHAPTER 6: PLANNING

“Look at the big picture when assessing environmental risks”

The entire planning process for environmental management has been restructured in an effort to better cover the (positive and negative) environmental impacts of activities, products and services “from a life-cycle perspective”. While this does not necessarily include an explicit ecological accounting of products and services, it does evaluate important environmental aspects as well as additional responsibilities (legal, customer-specific, etc.) along with associated risks.

CHAPTER 7: SUPPORT

“Do good things and talk about it”

Compared to previous standards, newly introduced commitments to environmental protection should be

reflected more clearly in the field of communications.

External accounts and reporting have to be regulated. In terms of documents and records, the new standard simply uses the term “documented information” in order to account for modern recording media.

CHAPTER 8: OPERATIONS

“From cradle to grave”

If possible, operations scheduling and control should be expanded to include upstream as well as downstream – and above all outsourced – processes. This also comprises the environmental impact of products and services along the entire supply chain, from cradle to grave.

CHAPTER 9: PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

“Make environmental performance measurable”

Building on the extended environmental assessments (see chapter 6), demands on the evaluation of environmental performance have also increased. Already during the definition of ecological objectives (chapter 6), appropriate indicators should be used to measure the achievement of targets and environmental performance. To this end, the standard includes a cross-reference to ISO 14031 “Environmental Management – Environmental Performance Evaluation”. This makes it more important than ever to work with key figures. Monitoring and measuring now explicitly encompass any additional commitments and risks a company faces in their environmental management strategy.

CHAPTER 10: IMPROVEMENT

“Improve on all fronts”

Corrections due to deviations from the norm, as well as the improvement process itself, are now more firmly focused on organizational context and improving the overall environmental performance.

Five steps to your ISO 14001 certification

1. PRE-AUDIT / GAP ANALYSIS (OPTIONAL)

Auditors conduct a preliminary audit to determine which requirements for the DIN EN ISO 14001 standard have already been met in your company. ISO 14001:2004-certified companies are advised to conduct a gap analysis during their transition to ISO 14001:2015. The analysis helps to confirm the conformity of previously implemented processes and to identify systems, processes and documentation that still need improvement.

2. CERTIFICATION AUDIT

This is where you demonstrate the practical applicability of your environmental management system under ISO 14001. Our auditors test its efficacy.

3. ISSUING THE CERTIFICATE

Your company receives the certificate once all criteria have been satisfied. It attests to the standards compliance

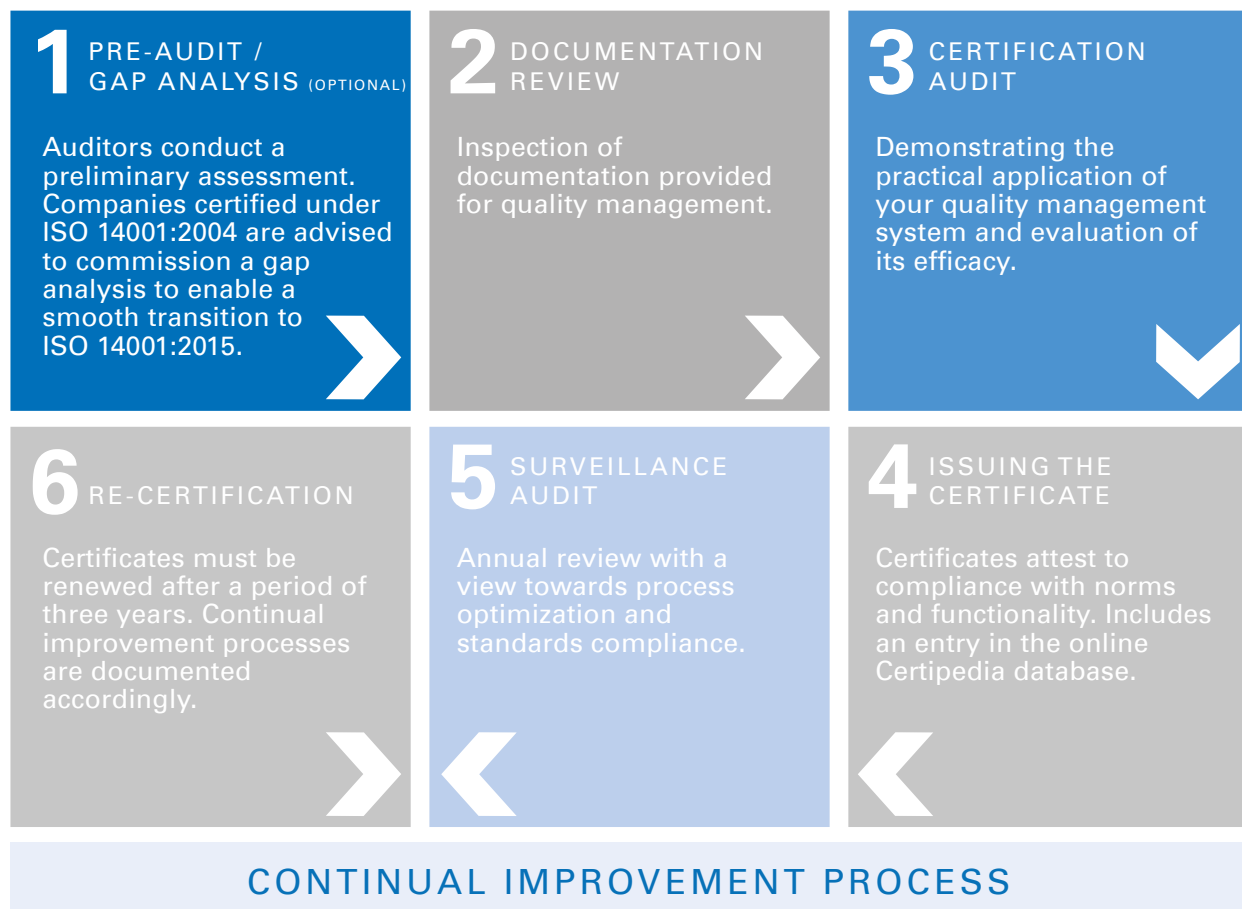
and functionality of your environmental management system in accordance with ISO 14001. Furthermore, your company is enrolled in [our online Certipedia database of certificates](#). Learn more about Promoting Your Business with TÜV Rheinland.

4. SURVEILLANCE AUDITS

Our annual surveillance audits support you in the continual improvement of your environmental management system.

5. RECERTIFICATION

Undergoing recertification after a period of three years sets you on a path of permanent improvement to your environmental management system. It represents thorough and lasting documentation of your commitments to a leaner ecological footprint.



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OUR EXPERTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS. CONTACT US ANYTIME!

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