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## Environmental Management Systems

Environmental Management Systems (EMS) provide a structured, practical framework within which environmental issues and impacts can be managed. They are used to provide an organisation's management with a structured framework for identifying, evaluating, managing and improving its environmental performance.

A core principle of any EMS is that of continual improvement, thereby leading to better environmental performance by the organisation on a sustained basis. Developing an EMS will take time and effort but it will bring about major improvements to your performance.

You can quite easily set up your own EMS as an informal internal management tool. Alternatively, there are recognised national and international standards against which your EMS can be externally assessed and certified. A new British Standard, BS 8555, was launched in 2004 to help organisations put in place a full EMS by taking a phased approach which breaks the implementation process down into five manageable stages. A sixth level allows organisations to develop their systems further, with the potential of seeking recognition against ISO 14001 or EMAS. ISO 14001 specifies all the requirements necessary for a robust environmental management system. EMAS (EU Eco Management and Audit Scheme) is a voluntary EU wide scheme which gives recognition to organisations who have implemented ISO 14001 and produced a public statement about their performance.

The choice depends on what is right for your organisation and the resources you can put into it. There are many organizations that can help you decide what is best for you. See the further information section below.

### Further information:

[www.envirowise.gov.uk/ems](http://www.envirowise.gov.uk/ems)

<http://www.iema.net/>

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/scp/actions/ems.htm>