

An Introductory Guide to EMAS

# Scaling the heights of environmental management



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Institute of Environmental  
Management & Assessment

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Department for Environment  
Food and Rural Affairs



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# What is EMAS?

The EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is a voluntary Scheme which allows all types of organisations to improve their environmental performance. It provides a process for organisations to communicate the results of their work to stakeholders and the wider public.

EMAS can assist businesses, by focusing attention on their operational activities and identifying areas where consumption can be reduced and efficiencies in processes can be made, establishing procedures for making improvements. Making such changes can provide real value to business through cost savings and establishing more sustainable ways of working.

EMAS is one of three types of environmental management system (EMS) recognised in the UK; the other two are the BSI BS8555 British Standard and the International Environmental Management Systems standard ISO 14001. EMAS is compatible with the requirements of ISO 14001, but goes further in its requirements for legal compliance, environmental performance and employee involvement. In particular, it requires the publication of an Environmental Statement, which is independently verified and made publicly available.

## Key points from the Regulation


There are some features in the EMAS Regulation that distinguish it from previous versions. Organisations seeking renewed registration to the Scheme are now required to:

- Produce an Environmental Statement documenting their environmental performance.
- Report as appropriate against a set of core indicators – Energy Efficiency, Material Efficiency, Water, Waste, Biodiversity and Emissions (Guidance in Annex IV of regulation).
- Meet legal requirements regarding environmental protection.
- Use only one version of the EMAS logo (Guidance in Article 10 and Annex V of the Regulation).
- Not to use the EMAS logo on products and their packaging, as this might result in confusion with the European Eco-label (which is covered by a separate Regulation). In effect, the EMAS logo is a seal of reliability of the information, whereas the Eco-label indicates an environmentally superior product.

The Regulation provides flexibility in the periods for which small organisations are required to publish their environmental statement and the frequency of the renewal process. Further details are given in Article 7 of the Regulation. The full text of the Regulation is available on the IEMA website <http://www.iema.net/ems/emas/regulation>.

## Who can participate?

EMAS is open to all types of organisations from all economic sectors. Small companies, large companies, local authorities, multi-national companies are all able to participate in EMAS. However, the UK does not currently allow registration by third country organisations from outside the European Union.



EMAS can be applied corporately to the whole of an organisation; just to the headquarters; or to specific sites. EMAS can be adapted to the way an organisation does business or to the way the organisation is structured. This flexibility is important, as the system can be used to deliver maximum benefit in the most effective way.

## Why Choose EMAS?

### Organisations receive benefits

In 2009, the European Commission carried out a study into the cost and benefits of EMAS. Organisations registered to the scheme identified a wide range of benefits, including savings in energy usage, resource consumption and also a reduction in negative incidents, leading to improved relations with regulatory authorities.

EMAS provides a systematic framework for setting targets, and measuring, monitoring and reporting on performance, embedding a process of continuous environmental improvement.

#### CASE STUDY 1 – Lafarge Cement UK

Lafarge Cement UK has registered all its operational sites in the UK for EMAS for almost ten years.

The benefits realised by Lafarge of using EMAS over this time have included:

- Improved environmental performance – the enhanced focus on environmental management systems helps drive continuous performance
  - i.e. greater than 70% reduction in particulates.
  - greater than 60% reduction in both oxides of nitrogen and sulphur dioxide.
  - over 15% relative reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
  - over 86% reduction in waste manufactured.
- Greater transparency and confidence for stakeholders, which includes both the publication of an environmental statement within the company sustainability report and the use of stakeholder meetings to debate the performance of the Lafarge operations, reflecting Lafarge's established commitment to open communications.
- Using an established environmental reference for customers and stakeholders – giving assurance that Lafarge Cement products are made to transparent environmental standards.
- EMAS certification helped to provide the framework for Lafarge Cement to become the first UK cement manufacturer to achieve the responsible sourcing standard BES 6001.



## Improvement in Efficiency

EMAS can help improve efficiency through reducing the consumption of energy, raw materials and minimising waste outputs, providing both environmental and economic benefits.

Internal action on environmental performance can generate new initiatives. New insights may lead to innovation, resulting in better products and services. EMAS helps to move organisations away from end-of-pipe thinking and integrates principles of environmental protection at the initial design stage.

## Meeting the challenges of climate change and the transition to a low carbon economy

Climate change represents one of the major challenges facing organisations in the UK, and developing clear methods for measuring and reporting on greenhouse gas emissions has become a priority. See Guidance on how to measure and report your greenhouse gas emissions – Defra September 2009 ([www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/reporting/pdf/ghg-guidance.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/reporting/pdf/ghg-guidance.pdf))

EMAS provides a framework in which organisations are able to measure and report publicly on their greenhouse gas emissions.

### CASE STUDY 2 – Leeds City Council

With 34,000 employees providing 600 services to over 760,000 people, Leeds City Council has maintained EMAS registration for eight years.

Under EMAS, the Council has:

- Provided smarter driving training to staff that do the most miles.
- Banned the use of bottled water in Council buildings, saving thousands of pounds and materials, storage, fuel and transport emissions.
- Encouraged staff to be energy conscious with “Big Switch Off” awareness events, saving up to 30% in energy use outside normal working hours.
- Improved recycling facilities in Council buildings so staff can recycle more materials.
- Worked closely with Trees for Cities by planting nearly 19,000 trees in Leeds since 2007.
- Provided 22 libraries throughout Leeds with energy monitors for anyone to borrow, so they can find out how much energy they are using.
- Trialling and promoting the use of low carbon vehicle technology, including biomethane, hybrid and electric technologies within our fleet.





## Legal Compliance

EMAS helps organisations to demonstrate their compliance with relevant regulations and with voluntary or contractual agreements. EMAS registered organisations, which submit EMAS validated climate change levy (CCL) agreement data, do not need to have their site data rechecked by Government appointed climate change agreement auditors.

To ensure that organisations have good access to relevant environmental legislation for their operations, the UK government has established the NetRegs website, which provides free access to help ensure legal compliance can be achieved. <http://www.netregs.gov.uk/>

## Improve relations with environmental regulators

Through implementing EMAS, organisations can build a better relationship with regulators, establishing a level of trust, which can bring real benefits to the organisation.

The Environment Agency gives the highest level of recognition to EMAS, more than ISO 14001, in its Operational Risk Assessment (OPRA) scheme under the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control regime. OPRA is linked to the fees and charges levied on industrial sites, so achieving a better OPRA score means that companies pay lower fees and charges to the regulator.

An equivalent to the OPRA scheme is also established under the Local Authority Pollution Control (LAPC) regime in 2004 – the so-called Part B installations. Defra's Air Quality and Industrial Pollution team operate a risk-based regulatory system, which gives a positive score if some form of environmental management system is present. The score given, in turn, has impacts for the level of annual charges paid by businesses.

DECC Guidance requires operators of Seward Licences to have an EMS for securing compliance with OSPAR Recommendation 2003/2005 to "promote the use and implementation of Environmental Management Systems by the Offshore Industry". The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (the "OSPAR Convention") is a legal instrument guiding international co-operation on the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. DECC will not award a licence to operate without an EMS in place.

### CASE STUDY 3 – EADS Astrium

Astrium Ltd is Europe's leading space company and manufactures a broad range of communication and navigation products.

Astrium chose to implement EMAS because of its uncomplicated approach.

Astrium says: "Just keep it simple and think lateral".

By implementing EMAS, Astrium has:

- built trust and co-operation with Regulatory Authorities
- enhanced its company image in the local community by supporting, sponsoring, and assisting local environmental initiatives
- minimised potential liabilities due to accidents and incidents
- introduced many new waste streams to reduce waste being sent to landfill
- reduced energy consumption
- reduced carbon emissions
- reduced travel costs
- increased use of video conferencing.



## Modernise Management and motivate staff

EMAS provides an efficient means for ensuring that organisations are fully up to date with environmental issues. It provides a tool for gathering all the necessary environmental data and the information that auditors need to check. EMAS can help management widen their understanding of the company's environmental performance. Environmental protection concerns everybody from the shop floor to the top floor. EMAS helps organisations involve employees and give them responsibilities. Everyone has a role to play in EMAS. The scheme can empower people in different departments to work and communicate environmental issues, and contribute to improving the company's environmental performance.

An environmental management system that operates on the basis of active involvement is stimulating and enriching for all employees. Staff motivation and employee morale are among the most frequently named benefits from EMAS. People working in EMAS registered organisations are proud to work in companies demonstrating environmental excellence. EMAS can help to unlock the potential of employees.

#### CASE STUDY 4 – The Environment Agency

The Environment Agency is the leading organisation for protecting and improving the environment in England and Wales. We make sure that air, land and water are looked after by everyone in today's society, so that tomorrow's generations inherit a cleaner and healthier world. We employ around 12,000 people.

We have three main environmental roles – as regulator, operator and adviser – and are committed to improving environmental performance and reducing negative environmental impact. It is essential that we are leaders in delivering sustainable outcomes.

The main benefit we gain from our EMAS registration is the public demonstration of our own commitment. Our EMAS registration confirms that we take our own environmental improvement with the seriousness we expect from others.

- We have had wide-ranging success in reducing our own environmental footprint, by addressing our use of vehicles, energy, waste, water and office space.
- We assess the environmental impact of activities and materials throughout all stages of construction.
- We buy all our timber from legal and sustainable sources.

We encourage our suppliers and other organisations to embed sustainable procurement practices as routine.



## Supply Chain

Increasingly, organisations are being required to provide evidence on their environmental performance when tendering for new business, with the requirement for an EMS often being included within tender documentation. By implementing EMAS, organisations provide robust, independently verified evidence that they are working to improve their environmental performance on a continuing basis. Such evidence can potentially be a key factor in winning new contracts.

# EMAS can help promote and communicate environmental achievement

EMAS publicly recognises organisations that are registered to the scheme with publicly available online registers and an EMAS logo, which provides a clearly identifiable badge of environmental achievement. Further details of an organisation's performance is provided through the environmental performance statement.

## EMAS logo a badge of credibility

Organisations that display the EMAS logo are demonstrating that they:

- have correctly implemented EMAS
- are committed to continuous environmental improvement
- have active involvement of employees
- produce independently validated evidence of their environmental performance.

The logo can be used on letterheads, websites, in promotional literature and advertisements to help registered organisations differentiate themselves in the marketplace.

The logo cannot be used in products or their packaging, to avoid confusion with product labels, and cannot be used in conjunction with labels for services or for products.

## Environmental Statement

Communicating information on environmental performance can add considerable value and improve market reputation. The fact that this information is reliable, and has been independently verified, will be appreciated by customers, suppliers, employees, regulators and the local community.

EMAS requires organisations to produce an environmental report (EMAS refers to this as an environmental statement). It doesn't need to be expensive or be produced as a glossy brochure. It can be published on a website and made available electronically.

The environmental statement needs to include:

- A clear and succinct description of your organisation and its activities, products and services.
- A copy of your environmental policy and a brief description of your EMS.
- A description of your significant environmental aspects and impacts, and your objectives, targets and programmes for improvement.

- Summary data and information on your actual environmental performance (including the core indicators), and a comparison with previous years, where appropriate, and performance against relevant legal requirements.
- Name of the verifier who has checked all of the information, and the date this was done.

## Core Indicators

The statement should include core indicators, which help organisations to focus on performance in key environmental areas:

- Energy Efficiency
- Material Efficiency
- Water
- Waste
- Biodiversity
- Emissions.

The inclusion of these core indicators will allow organisations to clearly report performance on a year-on-year basis. It will also allow for comparison with sector, national or regional benchmarks. Annex IV of the EMAS Regulation provides guidance on how the core indicators should be reported.

### CASE STUDY 5 – Shields Environmental

Shields Environmental provides a range of asset management, spares management and recycling services for major networks, telecommunication manufacturers, large retailers and a number of corporate organisations.

EMAS played a significant role in establishing the green credentials of the business, facilitating new growth and expansion, and engaging major players within the telecoms sector, fully meeting expectations for reliability, credibility and transparency by business partners such as Vodafone, Orange, O<sub>2</sub>, T-Mobile and Dixons.

EMAS continues to provide an ideal platform for the company to make public statements about their environmental policies and performance via an independently verified document and, in doing so, has helped to crystallise their vision and values.

The EMAS Statement is a key policy document, which is used in marketing campaigns, for training purposes and to highlight commitment to continuous improvement of environmental performance.



# How to Participate

The main requirements of EMAS – to establish an environmental management system; carry out audits to demonstrate that the system is working effectively; and report publicly on performance – should help companies to integrate more and more environmental considerations into their daily management.

The compulsory independent verification of the environmental management system and the quality of environmental information give credibility to the EMAS Scheme and to companies that participate.

Organisations will need to implement an environmental management system which meets the requirements of ISO 14001 in order to be eligible to apply for the scheme. This could be achieved by adopting the British Standard BS 8555 (Guide to the implementation of an environmental management system including environmental performance evaluation).

## Small, Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

For small, micro and medium sized enterprises that wish to participate in EMAS there are schemes that facilitate the process towards registration.

**EMASeasy** – This scheme is based on the Eco-mapping® concept, which maps both the location and processes of the organisation in order to identify its environmental impacts. The scheme uses the slogan “in 10 days, with 10 people, on 10 pages, in 30 steps” and can be implemented using the cluster approach, which allows groups of SMEs to work through the process, sharing resources and reducing the cost of implementing EMAS.

**IEMA Acorn Scheme** – The Acorn Scheme is owned by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), and is based on the BS 8555 standard. It provides a phased approach to implementing an EMS and offers organisations the flexibility to work at their own pace and receive public recognition for their progress. Once an organisation has successfully worked through all the phases of the scheme, they would be in a position to apply for EMAS registration.



## Independent verification and validation of the EMS and environmental information

When the environmental management system has been implemented and the environmental statement has been prepared, they must be validated by an independently accredited verifier. This is a unique feature and will give credibility to the management system.

Verifiers are environmental auditors who have been accredited by the Government appointed United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), to ensure that they are competent. They are experienced in the environmental problems and solutions of specific business sectors. UKAS maintains a list of environmental verifiers who are accredited in the UK. Details can be viewed on the UKAS website at [www.ukas.com](http://www.ukas.com)

The verifier has to audit and verify that the organisation's EMS and environmental statement conform to the EMAS Regulation's requirements. The verification is carried out by examining documents, visiting the organisation and interviewing personnel. The verification programme will be mainly focused on:

- Demonstrating compliance with environmental laws and regulations
- Significance of the organisation's direct and indirect aspects and impacts
- Environmental policy and performance
- Involvement of workers
- Reliability of information in the environmental statement
- Effective operation of the EMS.

# The application for registration process



The EMAS registration process is simple. Once the EMS and environmental statement have been validated, applications for registration should be submitted to the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), who are the EMAS Competent Body in the UK. The application should include the following documents: the organisation's validated environmental statement; the environmental verifier's signed declaration on verification and validation activities; a completed registration form; and evidence of payment of application fees.

The EMAS application form is available from the EMAS website <http://www.iema.net/ems/emas>. On receipt of the application, IEMA will:

- check the application to ensure that it is complete
- ensure with UKAS that the verifier is accredited for the type of organisation being registered
- contact the environmental regulators (both the national regulators, such as the Environment Agency or Scottish Environment Protection Agency, and the local authority) to ensure that they are satisfied with the organisation's performance against its environmental legal requirements (see EMAS Guidance on Breaches for further information)
- issue a certificate of registration when it is satisfied that the organisation is in legal compliance
- enter the organisation's details on the EMAS register and notify the European Commission.

Organisations are required to renew their registration annually, although in exceptional circumstances for small organisations this renewal period can be extended with the agreement of the verifier.



## Fees

The EMAS Competent Body, IEMA, sets registration charges in agreement with Defra. The scale of charges include lower fees for companies and/or organisations with fewer than 250 employees (SMEs), and lower fees for companies and/or organisations who apply to renew their registration. A separate scale of charges applies to companies and/or organisations who apply for multi-site registration. Further information on the fees is available from the EMAS website <http://www.iema.net/ems/emas>.

# Help Available

There are a number of sources of information that can help organisations to implement EMS and meet the requirements of EMAS.

Further general information on EMAS, including how to apply for EMAS and a copy of the EMAS Regulation, is available on the UK Competent Body website <http://www.iema.net/ems/emas>

Advice and information on the latest environmental legislation is available on the NetRegs website <http://www.netregs.gov.uk/>

Advice and tools for implementing an EMS are available from the Businesslinks website <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/> and that of Envirowise: <http://www.envirowise.gov.uk/>

Information on assistance and funding opportunities for organisations wanting to implement an EMS is available through the WRAP website [www.wrap.org.uk/](http://www.wrap.org.uk/)

# Useful Contacts

UK Competent Body website  
<http://www.iema.net/ems/emas>

DEFRA  
[www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

Environment Agency  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

European Commission  
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/emas>

Acorn: Guidance on the phased implementation of environmental management systems  
[www.iema.net/ems/acorn\\_scheme](http://www.iema.net/ems/acorn_scheme)

British Standards Institution  
[www.bsi-global.com](http://www.bsi-global.com)

UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service): includes a full list of UK UKAS accredited EMAS verifiers  
[www.ukas.com](http://www.ukas.com)

SEPA (Scottish Environment Protection Agency)  
[www.sepa.org.uk](http://www.sepa.org.uk)

Northern Ireland Environment Agency  
[www.ni-environment.gov.uk/](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/)

Business Link  
<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/>





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