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HOW AN INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CAN HELP BUSINESS TO PLAY THEIR PART IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

Environmental management system key to meeting sustainability targets

Businesses of all sectors and sizes should consider using an international standard to help the world tackle climate change, according to a business management systems specialist.

Russell Lawson, MD of the Cardiff-based company The Ideas Distillery, said that the ISO 14001 standard, which sets out a framework for a business' environmental management system, was one concrete way that firms could contribute to fighting the climate crisis.

He said: "The world has only until 2030 to stem catastrophic climate change - but can companies be part of the solution? And, if so, how?"

"The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society are needed to avoid disastrous levels of global warming.

"But whilst often seen as culprits, businesses can actually set a positive example. ISO 14001 enables companies to put in place an effective environmental management system and is designed to address the balance between a company's environmental impacts while maintaining profitability.

"Environmental issues are growing in prominence; energy efficiency, environmental compliance, environmental impact, and carbon footprint are widely discussed. In implementing an environmental management system, companies can effectively control these issues, and ensure that they are fully compliant with environmental legislation.

"They also join in the fight against climate change. Being ISO 14001 certified proves to stakeholders such as customers, suppliers and investors that you are taking your environmental obligations seriously," he said.

One of the major challenges that face us all is that of mitigating and adapting to climate change. Internationally, work has progressed from the formation of United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to the Paris Agreement which came into force on 4 November 2016.

Under the Paris Agreement countries agree to hold the global temperature increase due to increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, to below 2 °C, aiming at 1.5 °C. This commitment is realised through a commitment at national level to reduce national GHG



emissions. Additionally, countries agreed to support action to adapt to the consequences of climate change.

Mr Lawson continued: “For users of ISO 14001 the question is ‘How does ISO 14001 help organisation to mitigate and adapt to climate change?’ We’ve developed a model which shows the link between key areas of ISO 14001:2015 and climate change mitigation. It shows that businesses using ISO 14001 can address climate change challenges through their management system.

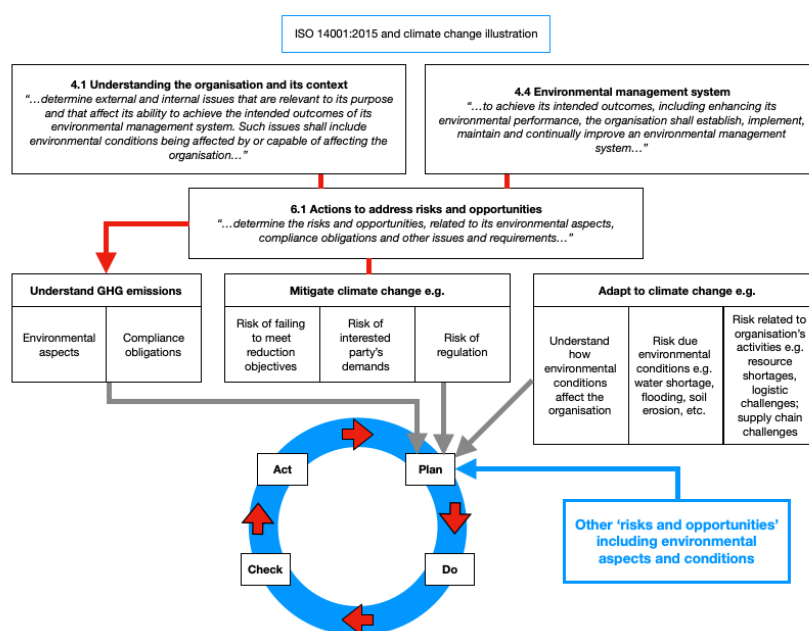
“Eight out of 17 of the United Nation’s sustainable development goals directly link to the focus of ISO 14001, such as those related to clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure; responsible consumption and production; climate action; life below water; and life on land.

“Which targets may be considered by a company using ISO 14001 will depend on many and diverse factors such as what the organisation does, its resources and its overall business aims.

“But what’s clear is that if you run a business and care about climate change and - more importantly - want to do something about it, then getting and effectively operating ISO 14001 is definitely for you,” he said.

Notes:

Model showing link between key areas of ISO 14001:2015 and climate change mitigation (contact us for better image):



About The Ideas Distillery: We help companies to implement quality, environmental, health & safety and information security management systems, often so ISO certification



can be achieved. As an ISO consultancy there is a big focus on taking a risk-based approach and the assessment of risk, evaluating effectiveness of control measures, complying with regulations, legislation, etc: www.ideasdistillery.co.uk

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