



How to make the transition to ISO 14001:2015

All certified organizations will eventually have to make the transition to the new ISO 14001 standard. But when should you do it, and where do you begin? How is the new standard different and what does that mean for the organization? Wim Manshande, QSE manager at Smeding Groenten en Fruit, talks about the implementation process for the new ISO 14001:2015.



Smeding Groenten en Fruit supplies a complete range of over 1500 kinds of fruits and vegetables including unusual exotics, saline vegetables and specialty potatoes, pre-cut vegetables and ready-to-eat products. Smeding delivers to retailers and restaurants and caterers in the Netherlands as well as internationally. Smeding has about 350 employees.



What was the reason for such a quick transition to ISO 14001:2015?

The company was expanding, which meant we could incorporate some environmental improvements in the new buildings we were building. It was part of the picture. Of course we could have chosen to do it later, but it was nearing our time to recertify anyway. In two years the transition period would be over and then we would have had to switch. So we just did it!

In the autumn of 2015 we took the first concrete steps. We attended an open house for customers held by our certification body, where they explained the HLS (high level structure) and other things. That gave us some practical tips, so we could get an idea of what we already had and what still had to be done. The documentation from SCCM and the webinars also helped a lot.

First step: modify the environmental aspects inventory

Together with our advisor, we started over with a completely new environmental aspects inventory. Our inventory had become somewhat cumbersome over the years. Using our company processes as a basis, we looked at what risks they might have for the environment. Then we took the new elements from the standard: determining the context and determining the environmental risk. We put all the risks into an Excel sheet and ranked them using SCCM's formula (probability x consequences). We then indicated for each one if it was a strategic objective and what influence it has on our stakeholders, and linked each risk to the relevant legislation and regulations. Now we have everything on one Excel sheet, and that makes it easy to work with. We have a neat overview that shows us clearly if, and what if any, control measures are necessary.



What are the benefits?

- The more prominent role of upper management is a big advantage. It ensures broader support, which makes things easier. It's not just 'a detail for the QSE manager' any more.
- Involving the stakeholders gives a boost to your environmental management system, and ultimately has the goal of lowering the environmental pressure in the chain.
- The new standard helps you to be more transparent in communicating with your stakeholders, which results in better environmental performance.

Getting a new management system vs. adapting the old one?

We didn't develop a new management system, but the analysis at its foundation is completely new. Last year, we set a new mission, vision, strategy and core values for Smeding. That coincided nicely with the implementation of the new ISO 14001 standard. We want to find the best fruit & veg solutions, with sustainability as the basis of our work. For example, we motivate growers to work more sustainably, especially with pesticides. We now work with a lot of growers who have environmental labels. This way we're working permanently making our products and processes more sustainable. Sustainably dealing with people and resources is also part of it.

The scale of our company requires us to do an energy audit according to the EED (Energy Efficiency Directive). This audit is good to do anyway, because it gives you an understanding of your consumption and where you can make improvements. In the last few years we've calculated a couple of times whether it's feasible and profitable to put solar panels on our roof. As of 2016, it is, and the panels will be placed this year.

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WIM MANSHANDE

Stakeholder management

The standard requires us to identify our stakeholders. We did so both internally and externally, as well as companies near us. We determined ourselves which risks had an influence on our stakeholders, and to what degree, which is allowable under the standard. But in the near future, we're going to look, along with our stakeholders, at what their needs and demands are, so that we can make the proper changes. A start has been made, and soon we're going to work in more depth with it. We have to, because we have a diverse range of customers. For example, we have customers who only sell sustainably produced, organic products. That affects what products we supply to them. This kind of aspect has to be included in the risk assessment.

New procedures for external audit

The auditor used most of the first day for the transition. Without going too deeply into the system, it was used to determine whether it was worthwhile to testing the system using the new standard. And fortunately, it was. The atmosphere was very open, and that made it really nice! The new standard is organized in a more practical way, so where we used to be oriented to specific documents, now we look more at the context and how it works in practice. The importance of legislation and regulations, compliance with them, and how we monitor that internally are still priorities — that hasn't changed.

“This way we're working permanently making our products and processes more sustainable.”

WIM MANSCHANDE

Proces	Activiteit product onderhoud	Toelichting	Totale significante impact	Doelstelling	Doel informatie (Wat)	Doel KPI	Operationele Control (Wie)
Heest grondstoffen	Producten AGP grondstoffen	Gewasbeschermingsmiddelen	1019	Reductie gebruik gewasbeschermingsmiddelen	Verhogen van bestrijdingsrendement in water	2016-2017 Doelwaarde: 10% naar 10%	Deel van product
Heest grondstoffen	Producten AGP grondstoffen	Medicijnen	1019	Reductie gebruik van bestrijdingsmiddelen	Beveiligen gebruik van bestrijdingsmiddelen	2016-2017 Doelwaarde: 10% naar 10%	Deel van product
Heest grondstoffen	Producten AGP grondstoffen	Gewasbeschermingsmiddelen	1019	Reductie gebruik gewasbeschermingsmiddelen	Verhogen van bestrijdingsrendement op land	2016-2017 Doelwaarde: 10% naar 10%	Deel van product
Heest grondstoffen	Producten AGP grondstoffen	Medicijnen	1019	Reductie gebruik van bestrijdingsmiddelen	Verhogen van bestrijdingsrendement in water	2016-2017 Doelwaarde: 10% naar 10%	Deel van product
Heest grondstoffen	Producten AGP grondstoffen	Die (dierlijk, plantaardig, etc)	1019	Reductie gebruik natuurlijke bronnen	Concurreren met op regionale producten	2016-2017 Doelwaarde: 10% naar 10%	Deel van product
Heest verpakkingen	Transport verpakkingen	Stof	1019	Reductie CO2	Weg van bezwaren omtrent transport van producten	2016-2017 Doelwaarde: 10% naar 10%	Deel van product
Heest verpakkingen	Transport verpakkingen	Die (dierlijk, plantaardig, etc)	1019	Reductie CO2	Weg van bezwaren omtrent transport van producten	2016-2017 Doelwaarde: 10% naar 10%	Deel van product
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TIPS from Smeding

- Hire an outside advisor. The advantage of this is that they can hold a mirror up to you. Someone from outside the company looks at it critically from another perspective, and makes you think. An advisor also has examples and solutions that you didn't think of yourself, but that do help you along.
- Make use of the documentation from your certification body and SCCM and sign up for mijn.sccm. We got a lot out of it.

Resources we used

- Webinars and documentation from [SCCM](#) and [mijn.sccm.nl](#), and the document “[Making the transition to ISO 14001:2015](#)” with the table showing the differences between the old and new standard was especially useful!
- Input from DNV GL (our certification body) and the DNV GL open house for customers.
- Through our advisor, we joined the Network of Fruit and Vegetable Quality managers. They also provided information about the transition from the old to the new standard.
- It was great that the draft standard was available relatively soon through NEN, so we could read it early on.

Advantages and disadvantages of the new standard

The nice thing about the new ISO 14001 standard is that it requires more involvement and support from top management. Our middle and upper management took a training course, so that the new mission and vision will be part of new projects. So it won't just be something for the QSE manager any more, but more widely supported within the company.

Changing something takes time. Some elements of the standard do require a different approach than what we were used to. You're asking your employees to do something different and that means something extra. Then you do sometimes hear things like 'Here they go again!'. On the other hand, we also really want this certification. The certificate is the icing on the cake!