

Review: *ISO 14001: An Executive Report*

By Gordon A. West and Joseph G. Manta

Reviewed by Richard Simon
The University of Greenwich

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West, Gordon A. and Manta, Joseph G. *ISO 14001: An Executive Report*.
Rockville, Maryland: Government Institutes Inc., 1996. 106 p. US
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Of the many publications now available that deal with the subject of environmental management standards, *ISO 14001: An Executive Report* stands out in providing a clearly written and comprehensive account of the subject.

The report is clearly targeted at the upper echelons of management within organizations of all sizes, although the authors do make the valid point that the ISO 14001 specification is not relevant to organizations having inconsequential impacts on the environment, nor to those with an uncomplicated management structure. The stated purpose of the report is to summarize what the new standard means and how it may benefit an organization; to analyze the legal implications; and to indicate how an organization might follow up any interest in the standard.

The Executive Summary (although not really a summary of the report) provide a useful background to the development of the ISO 14000 series, and in particular examines the links to the earlier precursor standards on quality management systems, namely the ISO 9000 series.

The ISO 14001 provisions are set out in a clear and well-structured fashion and each is accompanied by telling comments from the authors, as are the benefits to be derived from registration to the specification.

Section III provides an in-depth coverage of the legal implications that could arise in terms of the confidentiality of information generated in complying with ISO 14000. Protecting this information from third parties is essential to an organization, and the authors discuss in some detail the legal privileges that can be used in this area. An extensive reference list of case material is included to illustrate the importance of this section.

The authors also include a section offering guidance to those organizations that have in place some environmental management system, but are unsure whether registration to ISO 14001 is desirable, or indeed how far their system falls within the ISO 14001 framework. Section V provides an easy to follow guide to an assessment of an organization's environmental management system which will enable it not only to determine what is required to achieve ISO 14001 compliance, but also to make significant improvements in its overall performance.

For organizations that are more aware of developments such as the Responsible Care Program (Chemical Manufacturers Association) or the Principles for Environmental Management (International Chamber of Commerce: Business Charter for Sustainable Development), the Appendix provides a tabular summary comparison with the provisions of ISO 14001.

The report is very successful in meeting its stated purpose. While the main geographical focus is quite naturally the United States market, there is no reason why, given a revised section on the legal implications, it could not be translated for the European or Far East markets. In my opinion the report is of great value not only to those in environmental management looking to investigate the merits of ISO 14001 registration, but also those with an academic interest in the subject area. I fully recommend this book.

Richard Simon, <r.simon@gre.ac.uk> is Senior Lecturer at the School of Earth & Environmental Sciences, The University of Greenwich, Medway Towns Campus, Pembroke, Chatham Maritime, Kent ME4 4TB UK.