

Understand the basics

## ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 - in brief

The ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 families are among ISO's most widely known standards ever. ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 standards are implemented by some 887 770 organizations in 161 countries. ISO 9000 has become an international reference for quality management requirements in business-to-business dealings, and ISO 14000 is well on the way to achieving as much, if not more, in enabling organizations to meet their environmental challenges.

The **ISO 9000** family is primarily concerned with "**quality management**". This means what the organization does to fulfil:

- the customer's quality requirements, and
- applicable regulatory requirements, while aiming to
- enhance customer satisfaction, and
- achieve continual improvement of its performance in pursuit of these objectives.

The **ISO 14000** family is primarily concerned with "**environmental management**". This means what the organization does to:

- minimize harmful effects on the environment caused by its activities, and to
- achieve continual improvement of its environmental performance.

The vast majority of ISO standards are highly specific to a particular product, material, or process. However, the standards that have earned the ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 families a worldwide reputation are known as "generic management system standards".

- "Generic" means that the same standards can be applied:
  - to any organization, large or small, whatever its product
  - including whether its "product" is actually a service,
  - in any sector of activity, and
  - whether it is a business enterprise, a public administration, or a government department.

"Generic" also signifies that no matter what the organization's scope of activity, if it wants to establish a quality management system or an environmental management system, then such a system has a number of essential features for which the relevant standards of the ISO 9000 or ISO 14000 families provide the requirements.

- "Management system" refers to the organization's structure for managing its processes - or activities - that transform inputs of resources into a product or service which meet the organization's objectives, such as satisfying the customer's quality requirements, complying to regulations, or meeting environmental objectives.

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