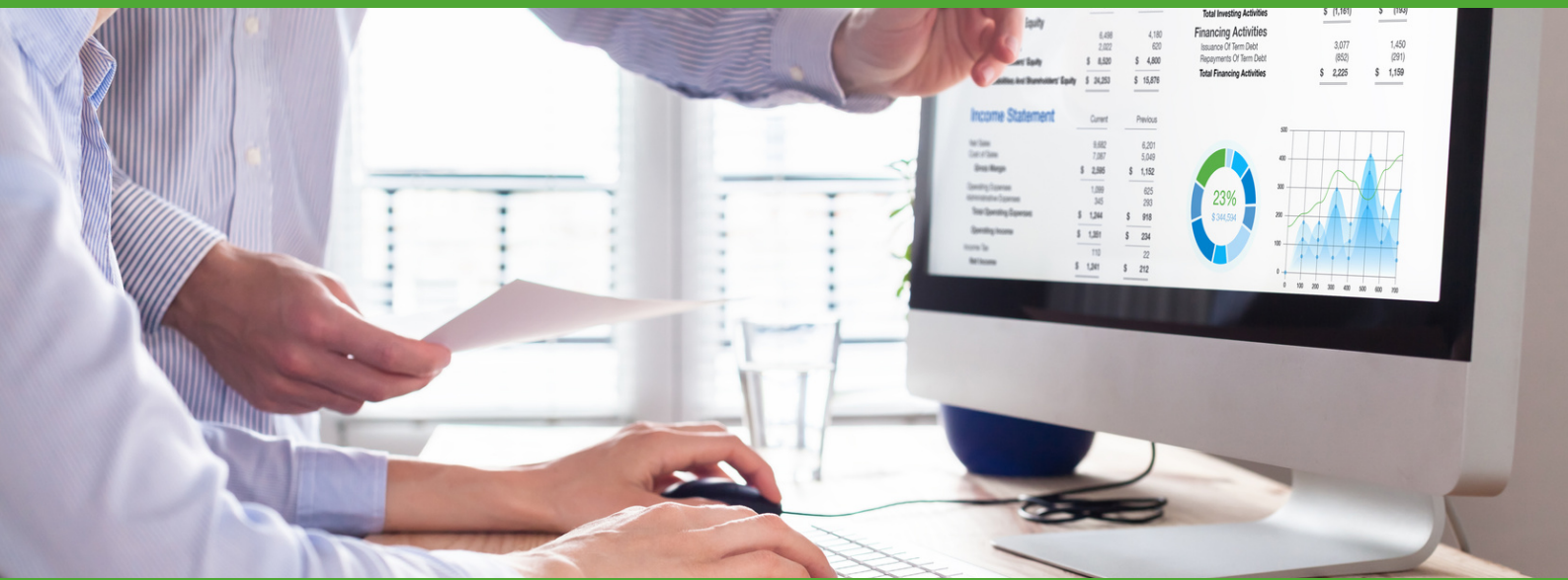


PODCAST 3

EMAS ECO-MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT SCHEME



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EMAS

In today's episode we will look at the environmental management system. Environmental Management Systems (EMS) are practical tools designed to implement and make real the concept of environmental management within enterprises. Many enterprises, already having a quality management system, decide to expand it with an environmental management system, creating an integrated system covering quality and environmental aspects.

The most frequently used environmental management systems are those consistent with the ISO 14001 standard and the EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) management system. The implementation of these systems becomes an integral part of the strategies of companies that strive for a harmonized approach to quality and environmental responsibility. Thanks to them, organizations not only meet the requirements of environmental protection standards and regulations, but also effectively minimize the negative impact of their activities on ecosystems and the local community.

Today we will take a closer look at the Environmental Management and Audit Scheme, or EMAS (Environmental Management and Audit System). The first version of the EMAS regulation was approved by Decision of the Council of the European Union No. 1836/93 on 29 June 1993. Currently, the amended version is in force, introduced by Regulation No. 1221/2009/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of November 25, 2009, regarding voluntary participation in the environmental management system. This amended version entered into force on January 11, 2010, replacing Regulation No. 761/2001/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

EMAS is addressed to organizations that voluntarily integrate environmental protection strategies and systematically improve them, thus going beyond the minimum specified in applicable law. It is extremely important that EMAS is legally binding in the European Union, while the ISO 14001 standard is international and does not have this legal dimension.

EMAS is addressed to all types of organizations interested in implementing comprehensive solutions in the field of environmental protection, both representatives of companies and non-commercial institutions.

It is a useful tool for building a culture of sustainable development in organizations and effectively managing available resources and energy. EMAS requirements provide guidelines for organizations to organize their responsibilities in the area of environmental protection, optimize costs and effectively manage energy and resources. EMAS is also a reliable system for reporting the organization's impact on the environment, which enables open dialogue with stakeholders.

Registration in EMAS means that the organization meets the most stringent environmental protection requirements. It is the prestige of being among companies that conduct their activities in accordance with the idea of sustainable development. Prestige confirmed by a certificate issued by the General Director for Environmental Protection (in the case of Polish enterprises).

EMAS system requirements:

1. The organization is obliged to review all environmental aspects, including activities, products, services and methods of assessing them. This review must take into account the relevant legal framework, regulations and existing environmental management practices and procedures.
2. The organization should adopt an environmental protection policy that commits not only to compliance with all applicable environmental regulations, but also to continuous improvement of the environment.
3. An environmental protection program should be developed, containing specific environmental goals and tasks. This program serves as a tool supporting the organization in its daily work when planning and implementing improvements.
4. Based on the results of the review, the organization must establish an effective Environmental Management System with the aim of achieving a stable environmental policy.
5. The organization is obliged to conduct an environmental audit, assessing the operation of EMAS in accordance with the organization's policy and program, as well as compliance with relevant legal requirements relating to the environment.
6. An environmental declaration should be made publicly available, informing interested parties about the impact of the organization's activities on the environment and the effects of its activities.
7. The environmental review, EMAS, audit procedure and declaration must be approved by an accredited environmental verifier, ensuring credibility and compliance with the requirements of the EMAS standard.

EMAS requirements help organizations implement system solutions that ensure the achievement of their business goals in accordance with environmental protection requirements. EMAS is also a reliable system for reporting the organization's impact on the environment, which enables open dialogue with stakeholders.

Organizations registered in EMAS indicate 6 key areas in which the benefits of registration are the greatest:

1. Sustainable resource management By meeting EMAS requirements, organizations optimize the use of resources and energy by systematically reducing the negative impact on the environment. Enterprises identify the greatest savings in waste management, water and sewage management and energy consumption.

2. Compliance with legal regulations By registering in EMAS, organizations demonstrate that they consistently meet legal requirements regarding environmental protection, for this purpose they must sort out all obligations in this regard and introduce procedures to guarantee the fulfillment of these obligations. Companies carefully analyze legal requirements and try to ensure compliance with them. In this way, they minimize the risk of being fined for non-compliance with complex environmental protection law.

3. Meeting the challenges related to climate change EMAS requires entities to implement comprehensive solutions in the area of environmental protection, focused on achieving measurable results and continuous improvement. The key indicators for assessing the functioning of an enterprise are its energy efficiency.

4. Competitive advantage The market is increasingly forcing companies to take pro-ecological activities. Customers pay more and more attention to ecological products and environmentally friendly behavior of companies, thanks to EMAS, companies have proven instruments ensuring the highest level of environmental protection.

5. Employee involvement The success of any organization also depends largely on the coordination of its team and cooperation. By complying with EMAS requirements, employees integrate to achieve a common goal, e.g. improving the environment and sustainable development. Their involvement in the implementation of environmental policy creates a positive atmosphere and motivates us to take on ambitious challenges.

6. Credibility and trust EMAS helps create positive relationships between the organization and its stakeholders, thus increasing its credibility. An important requirement of the system is an open dialogue with the public and other interested parties, including the local community and customers. Transparency and periodic presentation of environmental information in the form of environmental declarations are the basic elements that distinguish EMAS from other environmental management standards.

Under EMAS, organizations are obliged to scrupulously comply with environmental legal requirements, which includes analyzing and adapting procedures to meet these requirements. EMAS requirements help organizations manage resources effectively, meet the challenges of climate change and increase their competitive advantage by caring for the environment.

Registration in EMAS not only confirms compliance with rigorous standards, but also contributes to sustainable resource management, compliance with legal regulations, meeting climate challenges, gaining a competitive advantage, employee engagement and building credibility and trust.

To sum up, environmental management is a key element of the strategies of organizations that strive to harmoniously combine business activities with environmental protection. Standards such as ISO 14001 and EMAS provide tools and frameworks to enable effective and sustainable environmental management. Managers play a key role in this process, shaping environmental policy, implementing innovations and building an organizational culture consistent with the principles of sustainable development. Contemporary ecological challenges require the involvement of organizations in introducing innovative solutions, promoting ecological awareness and cooperation with stakeholders to achieve sustainable development goals. Environmental management in the context of enterprises requires coordinated management action, using both diagnostic and implementation tools. It is not only a matter of meeting legal requirements, but also striving to create a responsible and sustainable business model.

Thank you for listening, and see you in future episodes on environmental management!

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