

ISO 14001 Case Study

Taylor Wessing ISO 14001 Implementation

Taylor Wessing is a leading international law firm with its head office situated in the City of London. Here over 600 lawyers and support staff provide a full legal service to many corporate and international clients in real estate, mergers and acquisitions, environment and other aspects.

In 2006 the partnership decided that they should take their treatment of the environment seriously. The first step in this process was to become carbon-neutral which involved purchasing carbon offsets. In 2007 they decided to take the next logical step on the environmental programme to become certified to ISO 14001 the international environmental standard. As part of this process they engaged the services of Blackmores to assist them with the implementation of their environmental management system (EMS).

Initial discussions with Blackmores led to the formulation of an outline plan for defining, installing and establishing the EMS. The first step was to conduct a gap analysis to determine which areas of the ISO 14001 standards requirements were already in places, which needed additions and which were missing. From this an action plan was developed defining what was to happen and when it would occur.

One of the first actions was to identify the firm's environmental aspects, impacts and objectives. Under the guidance of a Blackmores consultant, a team was formed within the partnership to lead the environmental initiative. This team also through a process of study defined the key environmental aspects and their impact. From this with Blackmores help, the organisation defined some clear environmental objectives which, when the planned targets are achieved, will lead to significant cost savings in energy usage, travel costs and stationary expenditure.

Documentation was developed in conjunction with Taylor-Wessing to meet the requirements of the ISO 14001 standard following the gap analysis study. This covered areas such as legal and other requirements, identification of environmental aspects, impacts, objectives and targets and emergency preparedness and response. The existing systems for document control, record control and communication were supplemented and enhanced.

In all cases, the documentation was created and implemented specifically to the client's needs and wishes. The client was consulted at every step and any changes or amendments to suit their particular modus operandi were included.

Once the documentation was ready an EMS launch was prepared. This is a crucial stage of an implementation project as it is essential that the EMS is effectively communicated and embedded within the firms culture. In order to achieve this, a series of short presentations were made to all employees both in person and using e-mail. This informed the employees of the benefits of ISO 14001, employee responsibilities within the EMS and Taylor Wessing's environmental policy and objectives.

Simultaneously, systems for recycling of waste material were implemented as well as programmes for reduction of electricity use and travel reduction. Once these steps were started, a series of internal audits to check the compliance to ISO 14001 began. This followed a planned audit programme and was conducted by Blackmores highly qualified auditors with co-operation with the Taylor Wessing's employees. The audits raised some opportunities for improvement as well as some points that required addressing.

Once the EMS was effectively communicated, understood by all and firmly established, the external certification body became involved to conduct their assessment. This was a three stage process each stage being a few weeks apart.

Due to the successful establishment of the EMS, the certification body assessed Taylor Wessing, and was successfully awarded ISO 14001 certification.

The project timescale from initial go-ahead to the final assessment stage was completed five and a half months. The programme from inception to final certification has taken under six months. As the client says 'without your help we could not have achieved so much in so short a time- we are very happy with the service and assistance we have received'.