



Swiss Association
for Quality and Management
Systems (SQS)

SQS-Customer support

Addition of Climate Change to ISO Management System Standards

Rules for implementation

Table of contents

1. Introduction
2. Content of changes
3. Benefits for the organisation
4. Affected management system standards
5. Expectations of certified organisations
6. Expectations of the certification bodies
7. Implementation plan
8. Use of SQS customer support and other options



1. Introduction

On 22 February 2024, the IAF and the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) published a joint communiqué to highlight upcoming changes to new and existing ISO standards for management systems. This initiative was launched in response to the London ISO declaration on climate change ([ISO – ISO's climate commitment](#)).

2. Content of changes

Two new statements will be added to a number of existing management system standards and included in all new standards under development/revision. The aim is to recognise the need to consider the impact of climate change on the ability to achieve the intended outcomes of the management system.

The adaptation has been included in the new text of the «Harmonised Structure» (Appendix 2 of Annex SL in the ISO/IEC Guidelines, Part 1, Consolidated ISO Supplement) as follows:

4.1 Understanding the organisation and its context

The organisation shall determine external and internal issues that are relevant to its purpose and its strategic direction and that affect its ability to achieve the intended results of its *XXX management system*.

Added:

The organisation shall determine whether climate change is a relevant issue.

Remark SQS: Consideration must be given to the impact climate change can have on organisations and how organisations can influence climate change.

4.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of interested parties

The organisation shall determine:

- the interested parties that are relevant for the *XXX management system*,
- the relevant requirements of these interested parties,
- which of these requirements are met by the *XXX management system*.

Added:

Remark: Relevant interested parties may have requirements in relation to climate change.

These new provisions ensure that climate change is considered within the management system and that it is an external factor which is important enough to our society to require organisations to explicitly consider it now.

3. *Benefits for the organisation*

The impact of climate-related risks can be significant and have a strong influence on individual organisations. This clarification aims to cover an important aspect in the ESG-context and to highlight ways in which certified organisations can better integrate climate-related issues into their considerations.

The standardised procedure developed on this basis is intended to enable an integrated view of the effects of climate change and the associated risks and opportunities for organisations. This creates transparency about potential future scenarios that could have an impact on business activities. It also promotes awareness and knowledge of the effects of climate change as well as the financial resilience and resistance of organisations among standard users.

4. *Affected management system standards*

Affected by the change are the ISO Type A management system standards based on the harmonised structure, [ISO Management System Standards list](#).

SQS customers are required to take action if they operate one of the following management systems:

ISO 9001:2015	ISO 22000:2018	ISO/IEC 27001:2013
ISO 14001:2015	ISO 22301:2019	ISO/IEC 27001:2022
ISO 14298:2013	ISO 22163:2023	ISO 45001:2018
ISO 15378:2017	ISO 28000:2022	ISO 50001:2018
ISO/IEC 20000-1:2018	ISO 37001:2016	
ISO 21001:2018	ISO 39001:2012	

5. *Expectations of certified organisations*

In accordance with 4.1 and 4.2 of the harmonised structure, certified organisations must ensure that they have considered climate change aspects and risks in the development, maintenance and effectiveness of their management systems. Climate change must be categorised as relevant or not relevant together with other topics as part of the risk assessment.

If an organisation operates more than one management system, it must ensure that climate change, if deemed relevant, is considered within the scope of each management system standard.

It should be noted that some aspects and risks of climate change

- can be of a general nature, regardless of the scope of the management system or the sector (e.g. if they relate to regulatory compliance or operational adaptability and organisational resistance);
- can refer specifically to the requirements of the management system standards;
- can be related to specific sectors (e.g. energy production, agriculture and fisheries) or to characteristics of the organisation (e.g. geographical location, type of supply chain or workforce dynamics).

If a certified organisation cannot demonstrate that all external and internal issues, including climate change, deemed relevant have been adequately addressed, a corresponding finding (nonconformity) may be made.

However, it is not the intention, for example, to turn a health and safety management system audit or a quality management system audit into an audit that gives disproportionate attention to climate change.

6. *Expectations of the certification bodies*

The certification bodies already ensure that all internal and external aspects are classified as relevant or not relevant by the organisation and, if this is the case, have been considered in the development and effectiveness of the management system(s), as required in sections 4.1 and 4.2.

With the new additions on climate change, certification bodies are expected to ensure that climate change has been considered in the audit. If it is classified as a relevant topic for the organisation's management system, its aspects must be taken into account when setting targets and mitigation measures. If the organisation classifies this topic as not relevant to its management system, the certification body shall check the effectiveness of the organisation's procedure for establishing this fact.

7. *Implementation plan*

The changes entered into force without a transitional period at the time of publication by the IAF/ISO. SQS will review the implementation from 1 June 2024 as part of the regular audits.

The management system standards will go through the ISO change process step by step. An early adjustment of the certification documents due to the changes is not necessary.

- The publication year of the individual management system standards will not change.
- The scope of the certified management system does not change.
- There is no significant impact on the effectiveness of the certified management system.
- The methods and actions that certified organisations will take in response to the new requirement will be similar to those they already use for other contextual issues and address within the scope of the management system.

8. Use of SQS-customer support and other options

To support its customers, SQS has developed a wide range of services for the efficient implementation and utilisation of the new requirements and recommendations:

- SQS-information-live-webinars «Adaptation strategies to climate change» – Relevant reference standards, suitable methods and instruments.
Training offers under www.sqs.ch.
- The adjustment process can be coordinated with the relevant SQS auditors. They will be happy to provide specific information for the assessment.



Swiss Association for Quality and Management Systems (SQS)

Bernstrasse 103 | 3052 Zollikofen | Switzerland

+41 58 710 35 35 | www.sqs.ch