

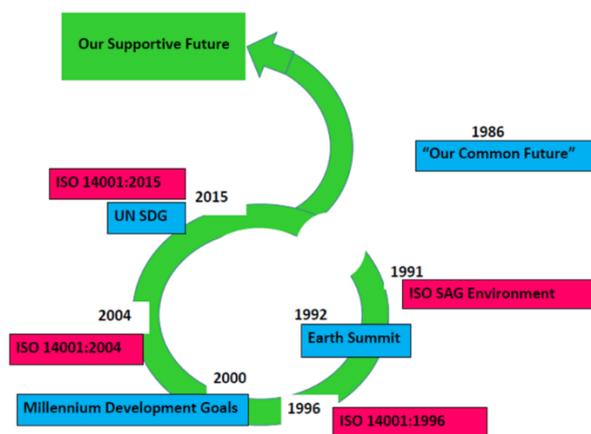
UN Sustainable Development Goals – can ISO 14001 help? - Yes!



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UN developments and ISO 14001 – 25 years of history

The following illustration outlines how, since the 1980's, UN developments have in many ways been followed by ISO and specifically ISO 14001.



In 1986 UN published 'Our Common Future' which defined sustainable development. ISO recognised the importance of this development by setting up SAG Environment (SAGE) in 1991. The first UN Earth Summit occurred in 1992 it adopted Agenda 21 based on 'Our Common Future'. ISO 14001 was published in 1996 as a direct outcome of ISO SAGE. In 2000 UN member states committed to Millennium Development Goals which yet again moved the environmental agenda forward. In 2004 ISO 14001 revision was published. In 2012 UN 2nd Earth Summit agreed 'The future we want' which resulted in UN developing its sustainable development goals in 2015 when ISO 14001:2015 was also published, both moving the environmental agenda forward

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

UN published the globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 and while they are addressed to governments and countries, the goals and their targets may also influence what an organization using ISO 14001 choses to do.

[UN SDGs and their targets](#) cover 17 topic areas.

Eight out of 17 UN SDGs directly link to the focus of ISO 14001, such as those related to clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure; responsible consumption and production; climate action; life below water; and life on land.

The UN SDGs cover both mitigation of environmental impacts and adaptation to changes in the environment – both topics are covered by ISO 14001.

Four out of 17 UN SDGs – while relating to human and social issues – are areas where ISO 14001 by, among others, reducing harmful emissions reduces the impact on human health as exemplified by the goal on zero hunger and no poverty.



Which UN SDGs and targets may be considered by an organization using ISO 14001 will depend on many and diverse factors such as what the organization does, its resources and its overall business aims.

How does ISO 14001:2015 support achievement of UN SDGs?

[ISO 14001](#) in relation to environmental matters cover issues such as:

- *Protecting the environment*
 - commit to proactive initiatives to protect the environment from harm and degradation
 - protect the environment can include prevention of pollution, sustainable resource use, climate change mitigation and adaptation, protection of biodiversity and ecosystems, etc.
- *Environmental performance*
 - continual improvement focus on improving environmental performance
- *Lifecycle perspective*
 - extend its control and influence to the environmental impacts associated with product use and end-of-life treatment or disposal
- *Strategic Environmental Management*
 - increased focus on environmental management within organization's strategic planning processes and understanding organization's context
 - focus:
 - needs and expectations of interested parties (including compliance obligations)
 - local, regional or global environmental conditions that can affect, or be affected by, the organization
 - actions to mitigate adverse risk or exploit beneficial opportunities are integrated in the EMS
- *Leadership*
 - promote environmental management within the organization

Using ISO 14001 as the guiding framework when considering UN SDGs, the following extracts from the UN SDG and their targets provide an indication of which UN SDGs and associated targets an organization using ISO 14001 may be supporting, dependent on the context of the organization. The *blue italic text* highlights possible compatibilities.

Note - A UN SDG target that in the first instance is not of relevance has been excluded but the target numbering remains as the numbering in the UN SDG and the language is that of the UN SDG and its targets.

Find out more at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1300>

UN SDGs and targets

1 – No poverty

1.5 - By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and *environmental shocks and disasters*.



2 – Zero hunger

2.4 - By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, *that help maintain ecosystems*, that *strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters* and that progressively improve land and soil quality.

3 – Good health and well-being

3.9 - By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and *air, water and soil pollution and contamination*.

4 – Quality Education

4.7 - By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the *knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development*, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

5 – Gender equality

6 – Clean water and sanitation

6.3 - By 2030, improve water quality by *reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally*.

6.4 - By 2030, *substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater* to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.

6.5 - By 2030, *implement integrated water resources management* at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.

6.6 - By 2020, *protect and restore water-related ecosystems*, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.

7 – Affordable and clean energy

7.2 - By 2030, *increase substantially the share of renewable energy* in the global energy mix.

7.3 - By 2030, *double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency*.

8 – Decent work and economic growth

8.4 - Improve progressively, through 2030, *global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation*, in accordance with



the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead.

9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure

9.1 - *Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure*, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.

9.4 - By 2030, *upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes*, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities.

10 – Reduce inequalities

11 – Sustainable cities and communities

12 – Responsible consumption and production

12.2 - By 2030, achieve the *sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources*.

12.3 - By 2030, *halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses*.

12.4 - By 2020, achieve the *environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle*, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, *and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment*.

12.5 - By 2030, *substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse*.

12.6 - Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to *adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle*.

13 - Climate action

13.1 - *Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters* in all countries.

14 – Life below water

14.1 - By 2025, *prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution*.

14.3 - *Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification*, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels.

14.4 -By 2020, *effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices* and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics.

15 – Life on land

15.1 - By 2020, ensure the *conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services*, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.



15.2 - By 2020, *promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation*, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.

15.3 - By 2030, *combat desertification*, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.

15.5 - Take urgent and significant action to *reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity* and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.

15.8 - By 2020, introduce measures *to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems* and control or eradicate the priority species.

15.9 - By 2020, *integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values* into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts.

16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions

17 – Partnerships for the goals