



# Outsourced processes in ISO 14001:2015

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Outsourced processes requirement is new to ISO 14001 in the 2015 edition. The requirements for outsourced processes are contained in Sub Clause 8.1:

*The organization shall ensure that outsourced processes are controlled or influenced. The type and extent of control or influence to be applied to the process(es) shall be defined within the environmental management system.*

To understand these requirements, one must first review both the definition of *outsource*, and the guidance on the term *outsourced process* found in **Annex A** of ISO14001:2015.

The definition of *outsource* is:

### 3.3.4

#### **outsource** (verb)

make an arrangement where an external *organization* (3.1.4) performs part of an organization's function or *process* (3.3.5)

Note 1 to entry: An external organization is outside the scope of the *management system* (3.1.1), although the outsourced function or process is within the scope.

The guidance in **Annex A** (A.8.1) states:

An outsourced process is one that fulfils all of the following:

- it is within the scope of the environmental management system;
- it is integral to the organization's functioning;
- it is needed for the environmental management system to achieve its intended outcome;
- liability for conforming to requirements is retained by the organization;
- the organization and the external provider have a relationship where the process is perceived by interested parties as being carried out by the organization.

Taken together, the definition and the guidance will assist the user in identifying its outsourced processes.

With regard to the requirement that the "*type and extent of control or influence to be applied to the process(es) shall be defined within the environmental management system*", **Annex A** (A.8.1) provides guidance on how to define the extent of control or influence, and describes the limitations that an organization may have in doing so:

*The organization decides the extent of control needed within its own business processes (e.g. procurement process) to control or influence (an) outsourced process(es)... Its decision should be based upon factors such as:*

- *knowledge, competence and resources, including:*
- *the competence of the external provider to meet the organization's environmental management system requirements;*
- *the technical competence of the organization to define appropriate controls or assess the adequacy of controls;*



- *the importance and potential effect the product and service will have on the organization's ability to achieve the intended outcome of its environmental management system;*
- *the extent to which control of the process is shared;*
- *the capability of achieving the necessary control through the application of its general procurement process;*
- *improvement opportunities available.*

*When a process is outsourced, ....the organization's ability to exert control or influence can vary from direct control to limited or no influence. In some cases, an outsourced process performed onsite might be under the direct control of an organization; in other cases, an organization's ability to influence an outsourced process .....might be limited.*