

# Environmental Management System (EMS) handbook



Green |||  
Element



## This guide will show you

- 1** What an EMS is
- 2** How they work
- 3** What they can do for your business
- 4** How to improve your environmental credentials



Since working with Will and the team, we have achieved savings of 500 tonnes of carbon emissions and 160, 000 kilowatt-hours of energy. The university has also, perhaps more noticeably, reduced our running costs by £24,000 a year.



Alan Donnachie,  
Head of Estates,  
Regents University  
London



## What is an EMS?

Environmental Management Systems or EMS are a tool that enables organisations to reduce their environmental impacts and increase operating efficiency.

It is a systematic framework that manages the immediate and long-term environmental impacts of an organisation. This could include the products, services and processes that occur at any point within the infrastructure of that business. Using an EMS system, a company can measure and evaluate its performance in a methodical and cost-effective manner.



## What can it do for you?

If used properly within your organisation, an EMS can help with the following:

- ◆ Give you a structure to measure and report on reductions
- ◆ Review the organization's environmental goals
- ◆ Analyse environmental impacts
- ◆ Helps you adhere to legal requirements
- ◆ Setting environmental objectives and targets to reduce environmental impacts
- ◆ Establishing programs to meet these objectives and targets
- ◆ Monitoring and measuring progress in achieving the objectives
- ◆ Ensuring employees' environmental awareness and competence
- ◆ Reviewing progress of the EMS and making improvements
- ◆ Give you a process on how to minimise your environmental impact



Green Element are equipped to investigate and monitor energy usage, as well as incorporating strategies in new buildings and tenancies... In the first year, savings of up to £250,000 were achieved by this method, equivalent to 15% per person.



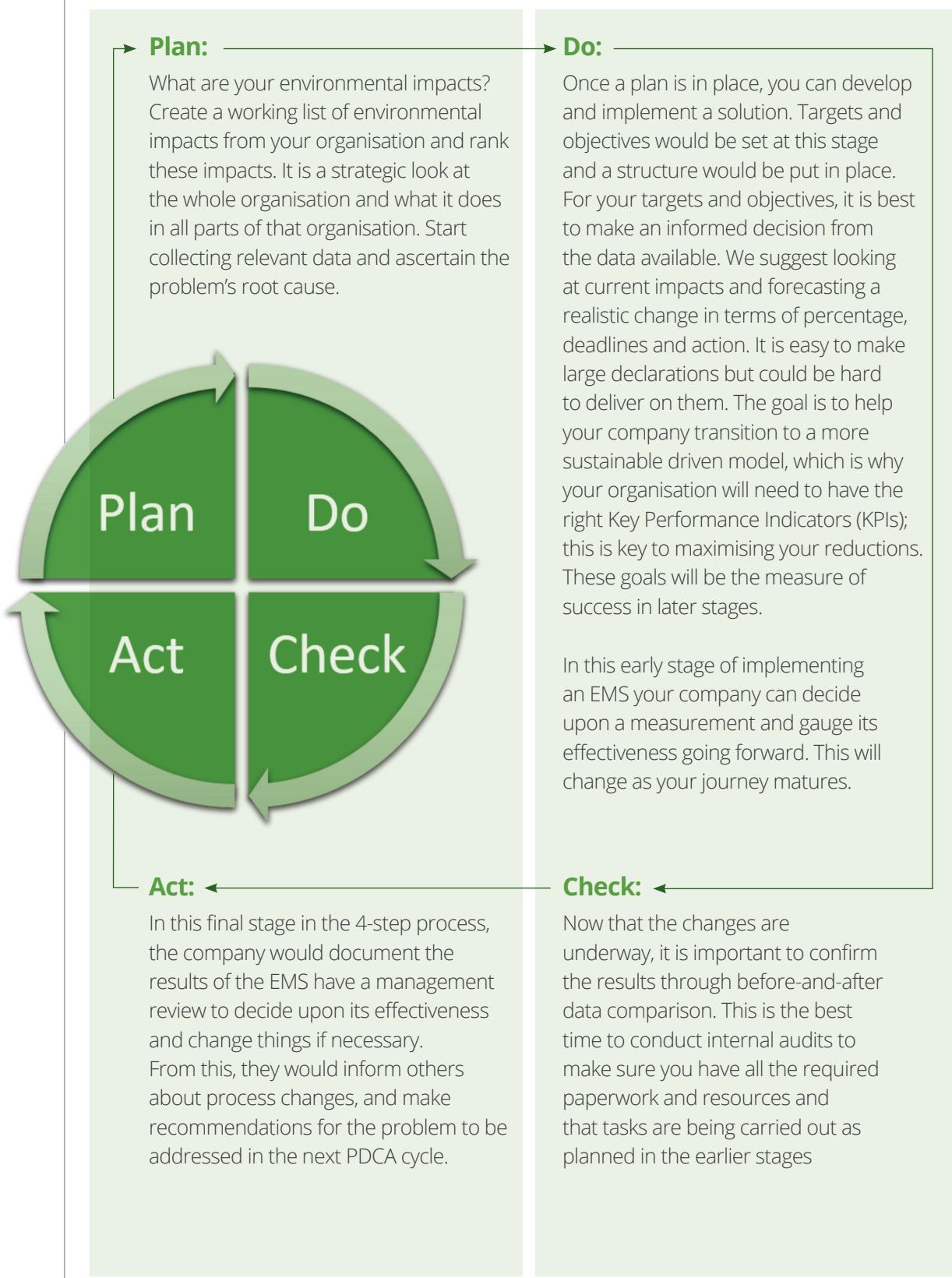
Karen Higgins,  
Internal Sustainability,  
Grant Thornton UK LLP

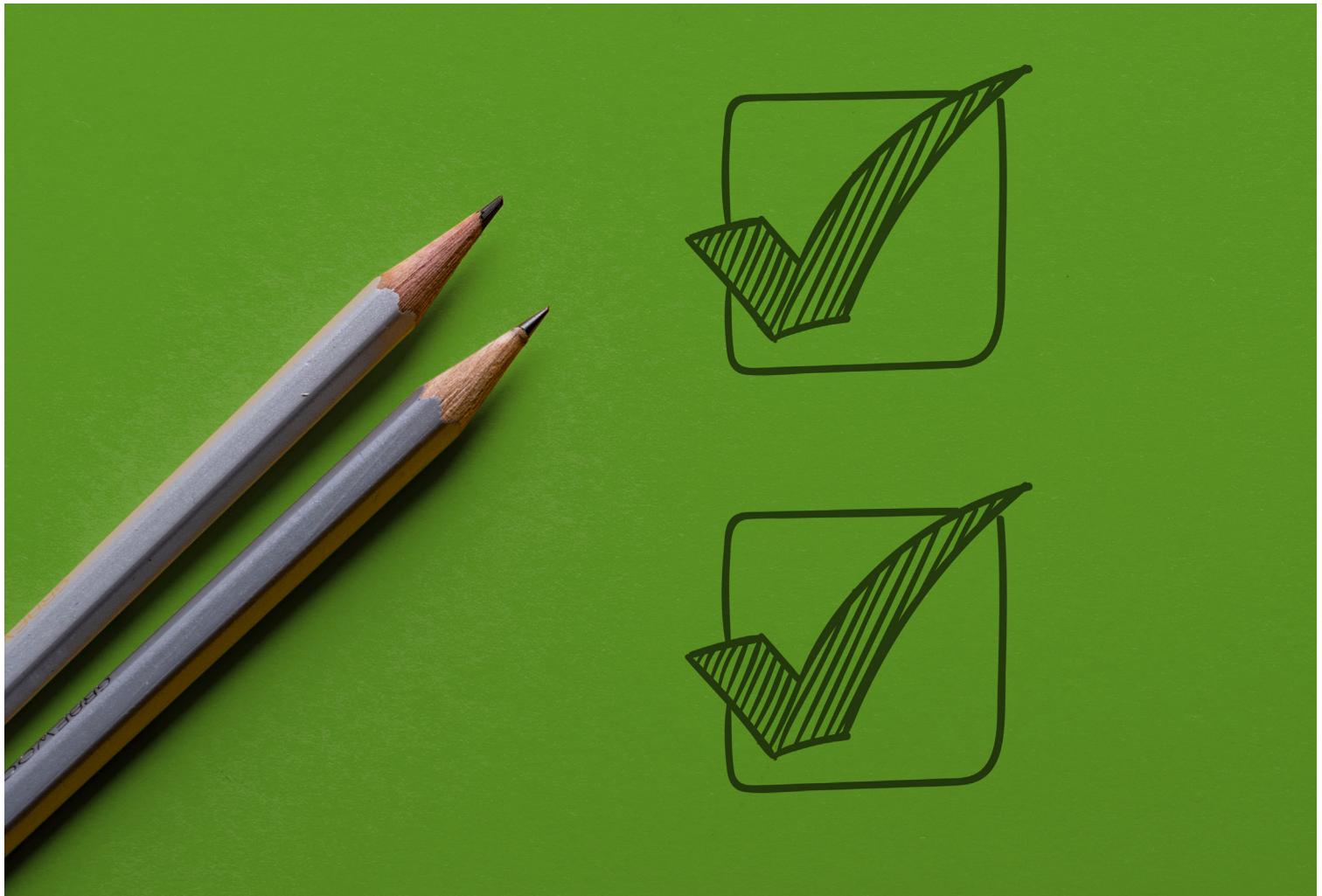
 Grant Thornton

## How does it do that?

An EMS uses the PDCA model in its application. This is a four-stage problem-solving model that enables organisations to continually improve processes, products and services.

Initially introduced as a business management tool, known as the Deming Cycle, it has evolved to be the main tool in environmental management systems. Allowing for a constant feedback loop of improvements.





Checking the effectiveness of the EMS is a very important part of the process which should take place every year at the end of the cycle. By reviewing the goals and objectives and having a detailed look at how they were addressed can be valuable to your organisation. If you have an ineffective EMS there will be a lot of corrective actions and documentation issues, this can render the whole process unsuccessful. No organisation will want to add extra layers of paper work that gives no positive results.

This can be as simple as a checklist to decide if objectives were met in an easy and cost-effective way.

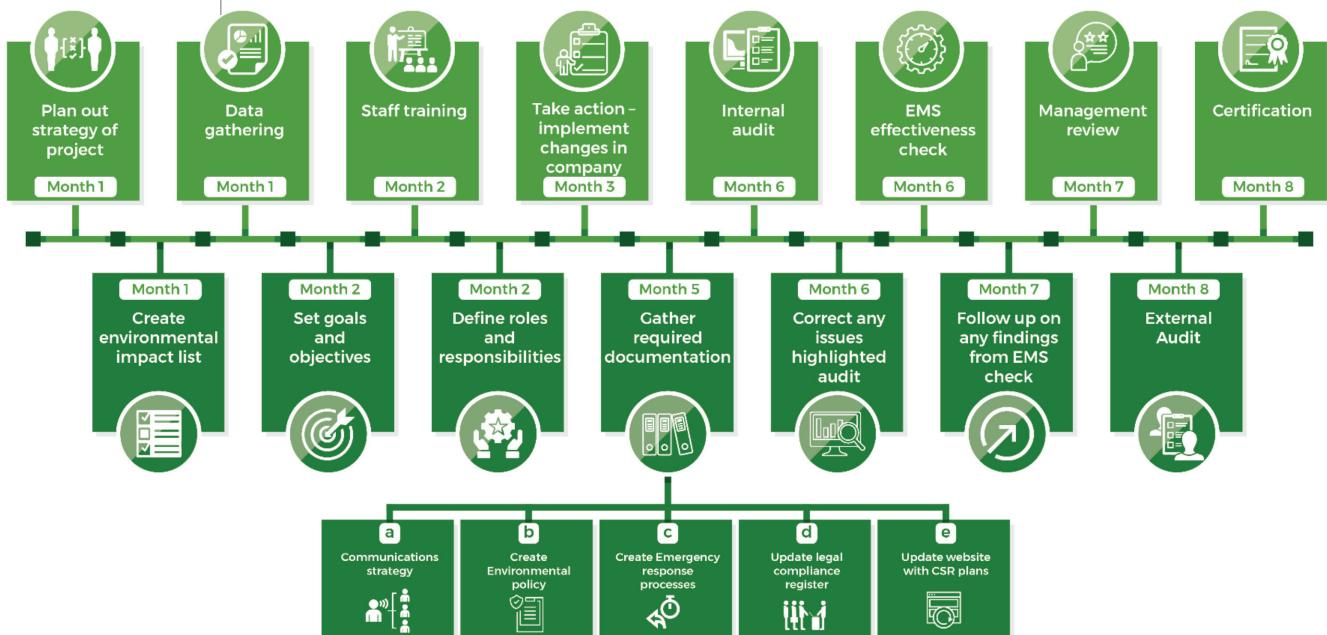
The cycle then begins again, and all information is then brought back a new version of the strategy is planned. You will look at **what worked well**, what **could be improved** and **what extra steps could be added**.



## Timeline of Process

The implementation of an effective EMS could take between six and eight months. It is then repeated and updated every year.

Through this process, there are multiple tasks that need to be completed. Below is a list of all action points that need to be carried out:



# ISO Certifications

The main measure of success when implementing an EMS system within your company is certification that showcases your green credentials. Gaining a certification shows the commitment of your company towards environmental issues, but also gives credibility to your efforts.

## Who are ISO?

The certifications favoured by Green Element are provided by the International Organisation for Standardisation or ISO, who are an internationally recognised, non-governmental organisation comprised of 168-member countries. They have been active since 1926 and provide more than 20,000 standards, all agreed upon by committee and measured by ISO and the incredibly high standards they adhere to.

## Why ISO?

As well as giving companies a goal to work to, the ISO standards help regulate the processes and measures in order to ensure best practices and to provide an accurate and a widely used system of measurement. This gives companies from around the world the opportunity to compare their findings in an easy and reliable way.

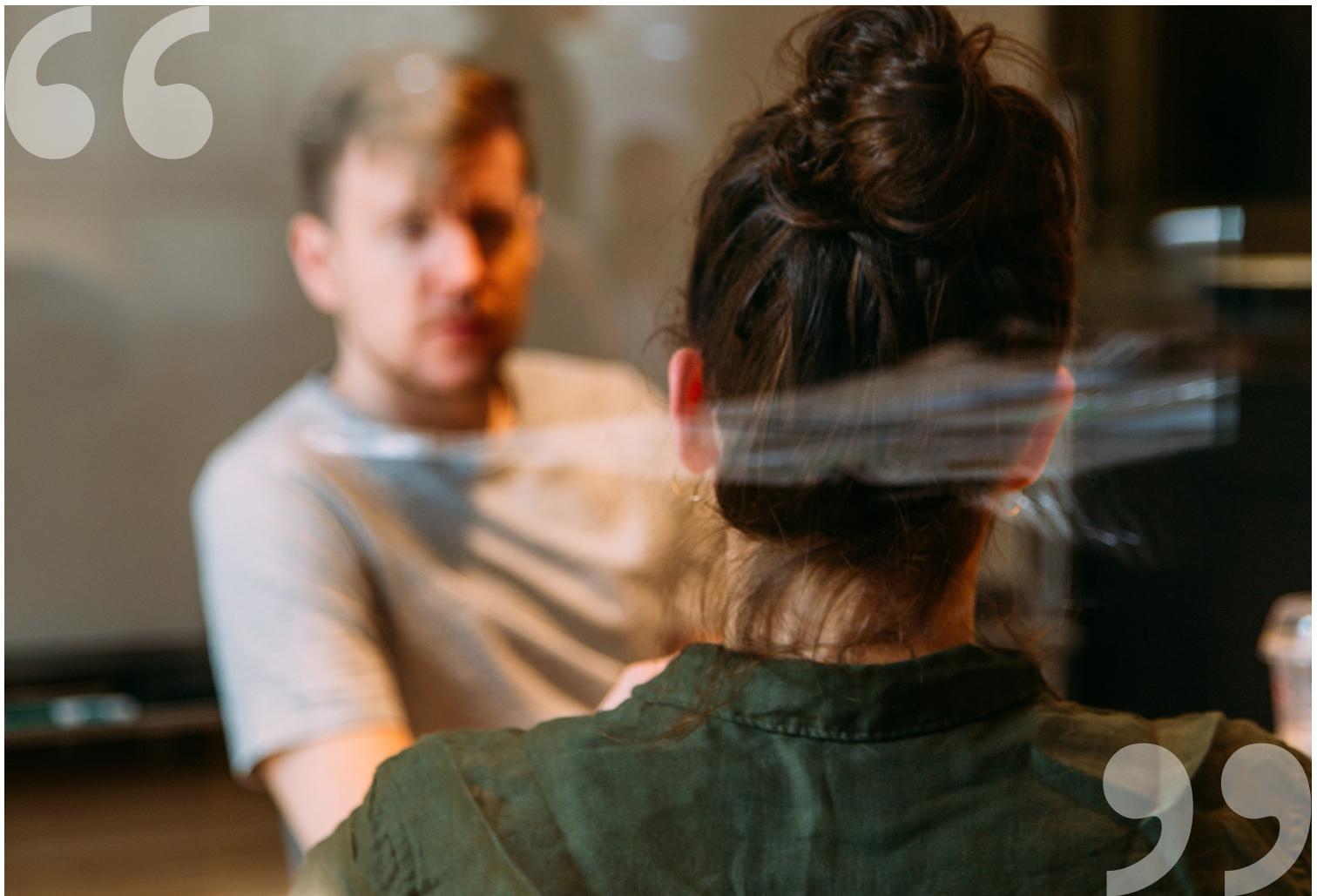


## ISO 14001:2015

ISO 14001: 2015 is the international standard that specifies requirements for an effective environmental management system(EMS). This standard sets out a framework for an EMS that your organisation can follow, rather than having to create your own.

It is divided into 10 sections. It provides a detailed policy for every size of company, so can be used any company ranging from nuclear power plants to local confectionery stands.

Environmental standards have been used and updated regularly since 1992. This particular standard was last agreed upon in 2015 and is the most up-to-date version.



## What our clients say:

Green Element has been working across multiple industries helping to implement EMS systems for over 14 years. In this time, we have been introducing and improving our own systems with clients and refining as we learn. We have seen many success stories and would like to highlight a few and give you some inspiration about what this could look like for your organisation.

### Arena Group



Being ethical and green is central to Arena Group's core ethos. Its aim was to install a group-wide environmental and event sustainability standard and achieve environmental and event sustainability accreditation. With an EMS that suited their organisation, Arena Group achieved annual cost savings of more than £25,000, alongside gaining the ISO 14001 and ISO 20121 certifications.

### C&K Meats



C&K Meats' long-term objective is to go off-grid, producing all its own energy on which to run the organisation. Not only would this allow the company to comply with future environmental legislation, it would also enhance its reputation for corporate sustainability. After implementing an EMS, C&K Meats generated 318,934 kWh of solar energy throughout 2016/17, saving £34,726 in total.



## Next steps.

This guide was made to help you understand what an EMS can do for you. Now you can take the information and apply it to your company. It can be used as a blueprint for what you need to do, and help you get the results you want, fast.

We hope this was helpful for you, and that it lets you avoid some of the common mistakes around the subjects of certifications and EMS systems. One of the biggest obstacles in setting up an EMS is a lack of clarity. We are here to help clear up any of that confusion and help you make positive changes within your company.

Do you have a question about how we can help you become a more green, responsible and sustainable business? Get in contact at [info@greenelement.co.uk](mailto:info@greenelement.co.uk), or call us on **0207 096 0054** and plan your free consultation today.

We look forward to hearing from you, and hearing about what you are up to.

Thanks,  
**The Green Element Team**

To equip  
organisations to  
work towards a  
sustainable future

For more information, please visit [www.greenelement.co.uk](http://www.greenelement.co.uk)  
or email [info@greenelement.co.uk](mailto:info@greenelement.co.uk)

