



DENR BECOMES THE FIRST **ISO 14001:2015** CERTIFIED PUBLIC AGENCY IN THE PHILIPPINES

CASE STUDY

BE THE BENCHMARK








ABOUT THE COMPANY

On February 10, 2016, the central office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Quezon City, Philippines was awarded with ISO 14001:2015 certification. This makes DENR Central the first public agency in the country to be certified under the new version of ISO's Environmental Management System standard.

DENR is the primary Philippine government agency responsible for the conservation, management, development, and proper use of the country's environment and natural resources. The agency is tasked to formulate and implement policies, guidelines, rules, and regulations relating to environmental management and pollution prevention and control.

SGS has been the partner of DENR in its resolve to implement an environmental management system that conforms to the requirements and standards of ISO 14001:2015. In 2015, after six months of implementation of the DENR-Central Office, SGS began leading the external audit of the DENR Central and recommended DENR to become ISO 14001:2015 certified.

Under the leadership of Secretary Ramon Paje, he has tasked the EMS Core Team, headed by then Administrative Services Director Rolando Castro, to lead the DENR to its ISO 14001:2015 certification with the following objectives:

-  To improve environmental performance
-  To ensure that the Office's processes, operations, and activities comply with good environmental practice and management
-  To prevent or lower environmental liability and risks
-  To prioritize environmental aspects and problems that DENR should address
-  To comply with the legal and policy requirements
-  To set clear objectives and operational controls
-  To gain strong commitment from the management



TRANSITIONING TO ISO 14001:2015

COMMUNICATING WITH INTERESTED PARTIES

To kick off the DENR's journey towards ISO 14001:2015, it conducted a one-day workshop attended by interested parties. It consisted of both groups and individuals, who regularly communicated with DENR mainly because they have particular needs from the office. Through the workshop, DENR was able to clearly identify the concerns and needs of interested parties.

In terms of internal communications, DENR devised an instrument to verify the knowledge of their stakeholders regarding EMS, their attitude towards the standard, and their current practice. Assessing these three variables provided DENR with a baseline on what their stakeholders need to improve.

Although the employees of DENR Central could encounter difficulty in explaining to others what EMS is, it should be noted that they are aware of the practices that they should observe in compliance with the new EMS standard.

Galo Martinez, DENR Chief of General Services Division, recalled an incident that showed an employee's commitment to implement actions that support the Office's EMS.

"THERE WAS AN EVENT IN THE WORKPLACE AND THE FOOD SUPPLIER USED STYROFOAM TO PACK THE MEALS. KNOWING THAT DENR COMPLIES WITH AN EMS, THE GUARD DID NOT ALLOW THE SUPPLIER TO ENTER THE OFFICE WITH SUCH CONTAINERS. INSTEAD, HE TRANSFERRED THE MEALS FROM STYROFOAM CONTAINERS TO ACTUAL PLATES,"

Galo Martinez,
DENR Chief of General Services
Division

For external communications, DENR used the same instrument to conduct orientations followed by the interviews.

Based on the interviews, DENR discovered that their external clients are already aware of DENR's existing ISO 14001:2015 certification but that they find it difficult to figure out how to comply with EMS in relation to their roles in their organization.

"They're still trying to obtain a solid understanding of what EMS is.

To address this, we tried to explain to them EMS using terms that are easy to understand even for non-technical employees. A lot of people know what EMS is but they have difficulty adjusting when it comes to implementation," said Martinez.

IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

When it comes to improving environmental performance, DENR Central implements the following strategies:

- Efficient consumption of electricity, where electric bill is divided per capita – no. of population), water, fuel
- Installation of electric sub meter per building to monitor consumption
- Installation of green wall in the workplace
- Continuous practice of reusing and recycling paper, with a target of going paperless in the future
- An improved and stringent waste segregation process
- Waste reduction (e.g. not allowing bringing of plastics in the building, composting of food waste)
- Monitoring of fuel consumption
- Use of wall-mounted thermometer

LOOKING AT THE FUTURE

The top management of DENR demonstrates leadership and commitment to ISO 14001:2015 by ensuring that the implementation of the new EMS can be sustained. Part of this commitment is the allocation of adequate funds for the continual improvement and effectiveness of the EMS. DENR is, in fact, enthusiastic about the rehabilitation their sewage system that has just started.

If possible, all DENR offices should ideally be ISO 14001:2015 certified. To do this, they are looking at rolling out a training program for all regional offices regarding EMS and to replicate the best practices that they have done in the Central Office. The Office also integrates EMS when conducting trainings for other DENR offices.

DENR makes sure that all its activities and services will continue to improve the quality of the environment for the Filipinos. Every commitment included in DENR's environmental policy statement is being applied in the DENR Central Office.

The Office utilizes a lifecycle-thinking that they are extending their environmental compliance policy beyond the internal stakeholders. The Terms of Reference (TOR's) that the Office will release in the future will require contractors to specify practices that will benefit the environment.

"We get to know how our service providers dispose waste. Do they recycle? Do they reuse? Where do they dump their waste? We require a certification from them as proof of how they dispose waste," explained Martinez.

To boost engagement of external stakeholders in the Office's EMS initiatives, DENR Central is looking at the possibility of launching the Best EMS Practice College Competition. The Office has also placed a specific EMS page on DENR's official website and has produced brochures on EMS that are distributed internally and externally.

NEW ADMINISTRATION

With the recent changes of the administration, the EMS Core Team is confident that the effective implementation of their Environmental Management System will still continue. "The new DENR Secretary, Secretary Gina Lopez, is known to be a staunch environmental advocate," Director Castro said. "Her advocacy ensures us that all DENR regulations will be strictly implemented, specifically those that addresses environmental impact mitigation as she have zero tolerance on the destruction environment."

ABOUT ISO 14001:2015

ISO 14001:2015 is the new version of ISO certification for environmental management system that proposes an increasingly strategic approach to environmental management. Among the key changes in the revision are requirements for strategic environmental management, leadership, protection of the environment, lifecycle thinking, communication, and documentation.

ABOUT SGS

SGS is the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company. SGS is recognised as the global benchmark for quality and integrity. With more than 97,000 employees, SGS operates a network of over 2,600 offices and laboratories around the world.

We provide competitive advantage, drive sustainability and deliver trust. At SGS, we are continually pushing ourselves to deliver innovative services and solutions that help our customers move their businesses forward.

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WHEN YOU NEED TO BE SURE

