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## Environment

English 

EUROPA > European Commission > Environment > Emas

[Sitemap](#) | [Contact](#) | [Search on Europa](#)

### EMAS - The Eco-Management and Audit Scheme

Improving  
your  
environment  
and business  
performance



## Summary

### What is EMAS ?

- > Summary
- > What is environmental management?
- > How does Emas work?
- > Who can participate?
- > The history of EMAS

### EMAS Register

### How to register ?

### News and Events

### National, EU and Global Activities

### EMAS Documents

### SME Toolkit

### Logo Corner

### EMAS Contacts

### Help / FAQ

### Useful links

Local Authority  
Corner

EU Stock Market  
TOP 100

Environmental  
Statement Library

The EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is a management tool for companies and other organisations to evaluate, report and improve their environmental performance. The scheme has been available for participation by companies since 1995 (Council Regulation (EEC) No 1836/93 of 29 June 1993) and was originally restricted to companies in industrial sectors.

Since 2001 EMAS has been open to all economic sectors including public and private services (Regulation (EC) No 761/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2001). In addition, EMAS was strengthened by the integration of EN/ISO 14001 as the environmental management system required by EMAS; by adopting an attractive EMAS logo to signal EMAS registration to the outside world; and by considering more strongly indirect effects such as those related to financial services or administrative and planning decisions.

Participation is voluntary and extends to public or private organisations operating in the European Union and the European Economic Area (EEA) — Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway. An increasing number of candidate countries are also implementing the scheme in preparation for their accession to the EU.

[Go to the official documents section](#)

### The main stages of EMAS

To receive EMAS registration an organisation must comply with the following steps:

1. conduct an **environmental review** considering all environmental aspects of the organisation's activities, products and services, methods to assess these, its legal and regulatory framework and existing environmental management practices and procedures.
2. in the light of the results of the review, establish an effective **environmental management system** aimed at achieving the organisation's environmental policy defined by the top management. The management system needs to set responsibilities, objectives, means, operational procedures, training needs, monitoring and communication systems.
3. carry out an **environmental audit** assessing in particular the management system in place and conformity with the organisation's policy and programme as well as compliance with relevant environmental regulatory requirements.
4. provide a **statement** of its environmental performance which lays down the results achieved against the environmental objectives and the future steps to be undertaken in order to continuously improve the organisation's environmental performance.

The environmental review, EMS, audit procedure and the environmental statement must be approved by an accredited EMAS verifier and the validated statement needs to be sent to the EMAS Competent Body for registration and made publicly available before an organisation can use the EMAS logo.

[Read more on EMAS registration](#)

Revised EMAS

Article 20 of the "old" EMAS Regulation (Council Regulation (EEC) No 1836/93 of 29 June 1993) called upon the European Commission to review the EMAS scheme no more than five years after its entry into force. In the light of the experience gained during the operation of EMAS, the Commission was expected to propose to the Council the appropriate amendments, particularly concerning the scope of the scheme and the possible introduction of a logo.

In March 2001, the Council and the European Parliament adopted the revised EMAS Regulation which strengthens and extends the scope of the scheme. The revision included:

- the extension of the scope of EMAS to all sectors of economic activity including local authorities;
- the integration of ISO 14001, thus giving the principle guideline for the environmental management system EMAS, so that progressing from ISO 14001 to EMAS will be smoother and not entail duplication;
- the adoption of a visible and recognisable EMAS logo to allow registered organisations to publicise their participation in EMAS more effectively;
- the involvement of employees in the implementation of EMAS;
- the strengthening of the role of the environmental statement to improve the transparency of communication of environmental performance between registered organisations and their stakeholders and the public; and
- a more thorough consideration of indirect effects including capital investments, administrative and planning decisions, procurement procedures, choice and composition of services (eg catering)

### Benefits of EMAS

Environmental concerns, growing public pressure and regulatory measures are changing the way people do business around the world. Consumers and shareholders are increasingly demanding environmentally-friendly products and services that are delivered by socially responsible companies. It is becoming increasingly important for organisations to demonstrate that not only their philosophies but also their investment strategies and day-to-day operations are sustainable.

- quality environmental management due to the use of a highly developed scheme
- contribution to environmental risk management of the organisation
- resource savings and lower costs according to the organisation's needs
- reduction of financial burdens due to reactive management strategies such as remediation, cleanups and paying penalties for breach of legislation
- financial benefits through better control of operations
- incentive to eco-innovate production processes while environmental impacts are rising world-wide
- compliance check with environmental legislation by EMAS verifier
- learn from good examples of other companies and organisations
- new business opportunities in markets where green production processes are important
- added credibility and confidence with public authorities, other businesses and customers / citizens
- improved relations with the local community
- improved quality of workplaces, employee morale and incentive to team building
- marketplace advantage and improved company image by improving stakeholder relations

[Read more about cost and benefits of EMAS](#)

### EMAS in the Commission

On 7 September 2001, the European Commission adopted a Decision (C (2001)/2591) whereby the Commission politically engages in a process of applying the EMAS Regulation into its activities.

By adopting this Decision the Commission emerges as an exemplary driving force towards a better environmental management of its resources and processes in agreement with the principles of sustainability and sustainable development powerfully endorsed at the Earth Summit in Rio (1992). It is highly expected that this leading example of the European Commission will result in an important EMAS uptake in other public and private organisations established in the Member States.

A project entitled "EMAS in the European Commission" has been set up in order to fulfill the above

Commission's commitment. The final aim, which is to obtain EMAS registration for the European Commission, will be covered in two phases. In the first phase, referred to as "EMAS in the European Commission-First phase", the European Commission will apply EMAS to three of its services in Brussels. These services are: the Secretariat-General, DG Environment and DG Administration. Subsequently, on the basis of the results gathered in the first phase, the Commission will decide whether to extend the application of EMAS to all its departments and request EMAS registration.

[Find out more about this project](#)

