



Insight

The benefits of accredited certification ISO45001

By Judith Ward, Principal Consultant, Turner & Townsend

We have now heard that the long awaited issue of ISO45001 has been delayed due to participating members of the ISO committee who 'disapproved' its first draft with 71 percent voting in favour against a requirement of 75 percent. So what does that all mean in practical terms?

There were, according to an estimate by the International Labour Organization (ILO), 2.34 million deaths in 2013 as a result of work activities. The greatest majority (2 million) are associated with health issues, as opposed to injuries. The human and financial costs of workplace safety and health failures are a stark reminder of why we need to manage health and safety more effectively across the globe. Although BS OHSAS 18001:2007 is well used (over 90,000 certifications in 127 countries), it's not a truly international, consensus-based standard and isn't aligned with other ISO management system standards.

ISO45001 sets requirements for occupational health and management systems and is designed to help organisations worldwide protect the health and safety of people who work with them.

The UK Government charged the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) with discharging its legal obligations long before the Department for Business Innovation & Skills (BIS) published its policy "CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION POLICY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM" in April 2012.

UKAS defines accreditation as the formal recognition that an organisation is competent to

perform specific processes, activities, or tasks (which are detailed in a scope of accreditation) in a reliable credible and accurate manner. The provision of accreditation must:

- be objective, transparent and effective
- use highly professional competent assessors and technical experts in all relevant fields
- use assessors (and subcontractors) that are reliable, ethical and competent in both accreditation processes and the relevant technical fields.

Accreditation delivers confidence in certificates and conformity statements. It underpins the quality of results by ensuring their traceability, comparability, validity and commutability.

The increasing importance of accreditation

With the changes to the UK's position in the European Union, accreditation is becoming an ever increasing factor for supplier and subcontractor selection. As the link between standards and the market, conformity assessment is likely to assume greater importance as business becomes increasingly globalised and buyers, specifiers, regulators and consumers demand evidence from suppliers of compliance with standards or technical regulations.

The implementation of an occupational health and safety management system will be a strategic decision for an organisation that can be used to support its sustainability initiatives, ensuring people are safer and healthier and increase profitability at the same time. An organisation's occupational health and safety

management system can translate its intentions to prevent incidents into a systematic and ongoing set of processes (supported by the use of appropriate methods and tools) and can reinforce the organisation's commitment to proactively improving its occupational health and safety performance.

Benefits of accreditation:

- meeting minimum standards
- improving an organisation's reputation as a safe place to work
- improving an organisation's ability to respond to regulatory compliance issues
- reducing the overall costs of incidents
- reducing downtime and the costs of disruption to operations
- reducing the cost of insurance premiums
- reducing absenteeism and employee turnover rates
- recognition for having achieved an international benchmark (which may in turn influence customers who are concerned about their social responsibilities).

Outlook

So what does the future hold for sellers and buyers alike? There is an expanding market of non-accredited companies which may well offer a 'good service at attractive cost'. This is a consideration when considering where to place your order, especially as budgets are squeezed. It is also worth pondering that even with an accredited company service delivery may vary between assessors; this is minimised as much as possible by UKAS checks and complaints procedures but it is difficult to put a real added value on a good assessor.

While accreditation is a cost burden for the supplier it gives the buyer confidence that the product or service purchased is delivered to a recognised standard. The cost theory norms itself out in relation to competition though as if all suppliers meet the requirements then their cost burden is the same. In an ever-increasing marketplace confidence is everything – an accredited management system helps build this

confidence. After all would you buy a lifebelt from someone who wasn't accredited?

About Turner & Townsend

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With 97 offices in 41 countries, we draw on our extensive global and industry experience to manage risk while maximising value and performance during the construction and operation of our clients' assets.

For more information please contact

Judith Ward

Principal consultant

t: +44 (0)20 7544 4000

e: judith.ward@turnertownsend.com

For further information on any of our services visit our website
www.turnerandtowntsend.com

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