

## SustainCheck

# Indicator analysis: ISO 14001:2015

## For the SustainScore

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Indicator: ISO 14001:2015

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## How to read this document

ISO 14001:2015 is an indicator for the SustainScore. An indicator is a label, certificate, standard, commitment, rating or similar instrument that says something about a company's sustainability.

The analysis sets out to determine two things:

- Which ESG subcategories of the SustainScore does ISO 14001:2015 affect? (chapter 3)
- Which score applies to each possible outcome, per subcategory affected? That follows from the requirements (chapter 3) and the assurance (chapter 4), and is set out in chapter 5.

ISO 14001 is an environmental management system. It proves a system for controlling environmental effects, not a fixed performance (no emissions cap, no deforestation ban). The successor ISO 14001:2026 is a separate indicator; see the ISO 14001:2026 file.

## 1. Identity

This chapter says what ISO 14001:2015 is, what does and does not fall under that name, and which outcomes a company can have.

### 1.1 Official name

Official name: ISO 14001:2015, Environmental management systems. Requirements with guidance for use (source 1). This file does not reproduce ISO's mark. ISO does not certify and does not allow the ISO logo on certification claims (source 2, source 3).

### 1.2 Short name and aliases

- Short name: ISO 14001:2015
- Also in data or texts: ISO 14001, EMS, ISO 14001:2015/Amd 1:2024
- Confusion: ISO 14001 without a year (can be 2026), EMAS, ISO 14064, ISO 50001

### 1.3 Owner / scheme owner

| Role                     | Organisation                                                                  | Country                     |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Who writes the standard? | ISO (ISO/TC 207)                                                              | Switzerland (international) |
| Who certifies?           | Independent certification bodies, not ISO itself                              | worldwide                   |
| Who accredits?           | National accreditation bodies under ISO/IEC 17021-1, in the IAF MLA framework | per country                 |

1.4 Type of instrument

Possible types:

- label
- certificate
- management system standard
- commitment
- rating
- statutory register
- membership
- charter
- award
- hybrid

Main type: management system standard. SustainCheck uses the certificate against that standard.

1.5 Version

- This analysis covers ISO 14001:2015 only, including Amd 1:2024. That amendment does not receive an E1 score (3.4).
- ISO 14001:2026 was published on 15 April 2026 (source 4). That is a separate indicator: see Indicator analysis ISO 14001:2026. This file does not score 2026 certificates.

1.6 What this analysis treats as one indicator

One indicator: an active ISO 14001:2015 certificate on the certified entity. SustainCheck uses, among other sources, IAF CertSearch to see which companies hold this ISO standard (source 5).

1.7 What we do not include under this name

- ISO 14001:2026 and any other edition or year. A different year = a different ISO standard = a different analysis (ISO 14001:2026 file).
- Implementation without a certificate.
- EMAS, ISO 14064, ISO 50001, EPDs, SBTi, FSC.
- Non-accredited certificates and 'certified by ISO'.
- Suspended, withdrawn, expired, cancelled or inactive status.
- Sister or subsidiary companies without their own certificate on their certified entity name.

1.8 Possible outcomes for a company

Boolean: present or not.

| Outcome                           | What it is                                                                                           | Score in chapter 5 |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Active ISO 14001:2015 certificate | Status Active, standard ISO 14001:2015, on the certified entity                                      | Yes: E2, E6, G3    |
| Not present                       | No active 2015 certificate on that entity (including 2026-only, another status, implementation only) | None               |

During the transition a company can hold both 2015 and 2026. Then two separate indicators apply. How SustainCheck combines overlaps sits in the SustainScore methodology, not in this file.

## 2. Scope

### 2.1 What is assessed

- Object: the environmental management system, limited to the scope on the certificate (source 1, source 5).
- Own operations; lifecycle thinking is present in 2015 but thinner than in 2026.
- Score always on the certified entity name, never on a loose site as a separate company.

#### Site versus the whole entity: what we can and cannot see

The scope is free text. There is no closed field for 'whole entity / one site'. Extra sites may be listed; the total number of sites or the company's share is not (source 5). SustainCheck therefore cannot systematically see whether one plant or the whole legal entity is covered.

One rule, as with Fairtrade: every active 2015 certificate on the certified entity gets the same score. That score already accounts for unknown coverage. We do not read the free text as a second step.

### 2.2 What the standard does and does not cover

Covered:

- Determining environmental aspects and impacts, compliance obligations, objectives, operational control, monitoring, internal audit, management review (source 1).
- Pollution and materials/waste where those are controlled as significant aspects.

Not covered:

- A cap on emissions, water or waste. A high-impact installation can still hold 14001:2015.
- E1, E3, E4 as separate SustainScore coverage in this file (3.2).
- ISO 14001:2026, product labels, SBTi.

### 2.3 Validity and version transitions

- Three-year cycle with surveillance, ISO/IEC 17021-1 (source 6).
- ISO 14001:2026 has existed since 15 April 2026 (source 4). Transition expected until around April 2029: 2015 certificates remain valid in that period until the IAF deadline. This file stays on 2015; 2026 sits in the other file.
- Amd 1:2024: climate in the context; not a separate indicator (source 7).

## 3. Requirements

### 3.1 Material requirements

- Clauses 4 to 10 (Annex SL).
- Identify and control significant environmental effects; meet legal and other obligations.
- The organisation sets its own environmental objectives. No absolute performance threshold in the standard (source 1).

### 3.2 Mapping to SustainScore subcategories

Scale: strong / moderate / weak.

| Requirement                                               | Subcategory | Coupling | Evidence in the standard                          | Source |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Environmental aspects, operational control (pollution)    | E2          | moderate | Control of aspects, no discharge cap              | 1      |
| Materials, waste, resource use as aspects                 | E6          | moderate | Aspects and objectives; not a circularity label   | 1      |
| Compliance obligations, internal audit, management review | G3          | moderate | System oversight, not an anti-corruption standard | 1      |

E1, E3 and E4 get no row. Water, climate and biodiversity can appear as aspects, but 2015 does not require that as separate, testable coverage. Amd 1:2024 (climate in clause 4.1/4.2) is too thin for E1 (3.4).

### 3.3 Primary versus secondary

Primary: E2. Secondary: E6, G3.

### 3.4 Limits of coverage

- E2 is a management system, not proof of performance. Lower than a dedicated pollution or discharge label would sit.
- E6 does not cover a materials chain such as FSC or an EPD.
- Amd 1:2024: determine whether climate is relevant. No E1 score: too little concrete information, impact of the amendment too small (source 7).
- Unknown scope coverage of the entity (2.1) is built into the scores.

## 4. Assurance

### 4.1 Assurance level

Possible levels:

- 1. Self-declared: the company claims it itself, with no independent check.
- 2. Second party: a check by a customer, a trade body or another interested party.
- 3. Third-party audit: an independent auditor, without accreditation against an international standard.
- 4. Accredited third party: independent certification under accreditation. Typically ISO/IEC 17021-1 for management systems.

Level for this indicator: 4, for an active accredited certificate.

### 4.2 Audit practice

- Initial certification, annual surveillance, recertification every three years (source 6).

### 4.3 Accreditation

ISO/IEC 17021-1, accreditation body in the IAF MLA framework (source 6).

### 4.4 Verifiability

SustainCheck uses, among other sources, IAF CertSearch to see which companies hold this ISO standard (source 5). Relevant fields: certified entity name, standard name (ISO 14001:2015), status Active.

### 4.5 Overclaim risks

- Presenting 14001 as proof that emissions are falling or that the whole group is green.
- Mixing up 2015 and 2026.
- Equating EMAS or an EPD with 14001:2015.
- Amd 1:2024 as a climate certificate.
- Reading a site scope as the whole company.

## 5. Conclusion: impact on the SustainScore

Boolean. Scores below 100: partial coverage of the subcategory, unknown share of the entity, no performance threshold.

### 5.1 Score per outcome and subcategory

| Outcome                           | Subcategory | Score | Note                                                          |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Active ISO 14001:2015 certificate | E2          | 79    | Core of the EMS; no performance cap; unknown scope coverage   |
| Active ISO 14001:2015 certificate | E6          | 60    | Waste and materials as aspects, not a circularity certificate |
| Active ISO 14001:2015 certificate | G3          | 56    | Compliance and audit in the EMS                               |
| Not present                       | all         | none  | Including 2026 only, another status, implementation only      |

ISO 14001:2026 has its own, slightly higher scores in that file. 2015 does not beat FSC on E4 or SBTi on E1: those categories are not here.

### 5.2 What this indicator does not do

- No score on E1, E3, E4, E5, S1 to S8, G1, G2, G4.
- No E1 via Amd 1:2024.
- No score for ISO 14001:2026 (separate file).
- No score on sites as separate companies.
- No proof of falling emissions or of coverage of all activities.

## 6. Sources

Every statement in this document that is later used in the SustainScore points to a source below.

### 6.1 Sources used

Numbering:

1. ISO. ISO 14001:2015, Environmental management systems. Requirements with guidance for use. <https://www.iso.org/standard/60857.html> Accessed: 30/08/2026.
2. ISO. Management system standards. <https://www.iso.org/management-system-standards.html> Accessed: 30/08/2026.
3. ISO. Certification. <https://www.iso.org/certification.html> Accessed: 30/08/2026.
4. ISO (15/04/2026). ISO 14001:2026 published. <https://www.iso.org/news/2026/04/iso-14001-2026-published> Accessed: 30/08/2026.
5. IAF. IAF CertSearch. <https://www.iafcertsearch.org/> Accessed: 30/08/2026.
6. ISO. ISO/IEC 17021-1. <https://www.iso.org/standard/61651.html> Accessed: 30/08/2026.
7. ISO. ISO 14001:2015/Amd 1:2024, Climate action changes. <https://www.iso.org/standard/88209.html> Accessed: 30/08/2026.

### 6.2 Looked for but not found

- A standardised field for 'whole entity versus part of the entity'.
- The share of revenue or sites under a 14001 scope.
- An ISO-guaranteed mapping of 2015 aspects onto E1/E3/E4.