ISO 14001

ISO 14001:2015 → ISO 14001:2026 Clause Changes

Issued 2026

ISO 14001:2026 was published on 15 April 2026 and replaces ISO 14001:2015 and its 2024 climate-action amendment. ISO describes the revision as a technical revision focused on clearer requirements, improved usability and current environmental priorities.

Clause-by-clause comparison

Clause	ISO 14001:2015	ISO 14001:2026	Main change
1	Scope	Scope	Clarified and updated terminology; continued emphasis on environmental performance and life-cycle perspective.
2	Normative references	Normative references	Minor/structural updates.
3	Terms and definitions	Terms and definitions	Definitions updated and clarified to support the revised requirements.
4.1	Understanding the organisation and its context	Understanding the organisation and its context	**Expanded environmental context.** Organisations need to consider a broader range of environmental conditions, including climate change, pollution, biodiversity and natural-resource availability.
4.2	Needs and expectations of interested parties	Needs and expectations of interested parties	Greater clarity concerning relevant interested-party requirements and environmental expectations.
4.3	Scope of the EMS	Scope of the EMS	Clarifications to determining and maintaining the EMS scope, including environmental aspects and life-cycle considerations.
4.4	Environmental management system	Environmental management system	Greater emphasis on integration of the EMS into organisational processes and decision-making.
5.1	Leadership and commitment	Leadership and commitment	**Strengthened leadership and governance emphasis**, including integration of environmental management into strategy and organisational decision-making.
5.2	Environmental policy	Environmental policy	Policy requirements clarified and aligned with the revised environmental context.

Clause	ISO 14001:2015	ISO 14001:2026	Main change
5.3	Organisational roles, responsibilities and authorities	Organisational roles, responsibilities and authorities	Clarification of responsibilities and accountability.
6.1	Actions to address risks and opportunities	Actions to address risks and opportunities	**Significant restructuring and clarification of risk/opportunity requirements.**
6.1.2	Environmental aspects	Environmental aspects	**Stronger life-cycle perspective** and clearer treatment of environmental aspects and impacts.
6.1.3	Compliance obligations	Compliance obligations	Requirements clarified around identifying and maintaining applicable obligations.
6.1.4	Planning action	Planning action	Planning requirements reorganised/clarified in conjunction with risks, opportunities and environmental aspects.
6.2	Environmental objectives and planning to achieve them	Environmental objectives and planning to achieve them	Greater focus on measurable environmental performance and integration with organisational planning.
7.1	Resources	Resources	Clarified resource requirements.
7.2	Competence	Competence	Clarifications concerning competence and evidence.
7.3	Awareness	Awareness	Clarified environmental awareness requirements.
7.4	Communication	Communication	Communication requirements refined for greater clarity and consistency.
7.5	Documented information	Documented information	Improved alignment with the ISO Harmonized Structure and clarification of documented-information requirements.
8.1	Operational planning and control	Operational planning and control	**Important change:** scope of external controls extends beyond simply “outsourced processes” to **externally provided processes, products and services**.
8.2	Emergency preparedness and response	Emergency preparedness and response	Requirements clarified and aligned with the revised risk/environmental context.
9.1	Monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation	Monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation	Greater emphasis on meaningful environmental performance information and evaluation.
9.2	Internal audit	Internal audit	Clarifications and improved alignment with the common ISO management-system structure.

Clause	ISO 14001:2015	ISO 14001:2026	Main change
9.3	Management review	Management review	**Stronger emphasis on governance, performance, environmental change and strategic integration.**
10.1	General	Improvement	Clarified improvement requirements.
10.2	Nonconformity and corrective action	Nonconformity and corrective action	Requirements refined and clarified.
10.3	Continual improvement	Continual improvement	Continued requirement, with stronger emphasis on achieving improved environmental performance.

The biggest changes to focus on

For a **2015 → 2026 transition audit**, I would particularly review these areas:

1. Clause 4.1 – Context
The environmental context is broader. Climate change is no longer the only environmental issue requiring attention; the revised approach also highlights matters such as **pollution, biodiversity and natural-resource availability**.

2. Clause 4.2 – Interested parties
Review interested parties and their relevant environmental requirements, expectations and conditions.

3. Clause 5 – Leadership
There is a stronger emphasis on leadership, governance and integration of environmental considerations into strategy and decision-making.

4. Clause 6 – Planning
This is one of the key transition areas. Risk and opportunity requirements have been restructured and clarified, so organisations should reassess their EMS risk methodology. (

5. Clause 6.1.2 – Environmental aspects
The life-cycle perspective is strengthened, requiring organisations to look carefully at environmental aspects and impacts across relevant stages of activities, products and services.

6. Clause 8.1 – Operational control
The terminology expands from outsourced processes to externally provided processes, products and services, making the supply-chain/procurement interface particularly important.

7. Performance and environmental priorities
ISO highlights **climate change, biodiversity and resource efficiency** as important environmental priorities reflected in the new edition.

Transition consideration

The transition period is expected to be three years, with organisations certified to ISO 14001:2015 needing to transition before May 2029.

Practical transition checklist

For an organisation currently certified to ISO 14001:2015, I would structure the gap analysis around:

1. Context and environmental conditions – Clause 4.1
2. Interested parties – Clause 4.2
3. EMS scope – Clause 4.3
4. Leadership and governance – Clause 5
5. Environmental risks and opportunities – Clause 6.1
6. Environmental aspects and life-cycle perspective – Clause 6.1.2
7. Compliance obligations – Clause 6.1.3
8. Environmental objectives and KPIs – Clause 6.2
9. Externally provided processes/products/services – Clause 8.1
10. Environmental performance evaluation – Clause 9.1
11. Management review – Clause 9.3
12. Improvement and corrective action – Clause 10

Bottom line: ISO 14001:2026 does not completely redesign the ISO 14001 EMS. The core PDCA framework remains, but the revision provides clearer requirements and puts greater emphasis on environmental context, climate and wider environmental conditions, life cycle thinking, leadership/governance, risk and opportunity, external provision, and measurable environmental performance.