

## **Frequently asked question and ISO management systems**

When implementing an ISO standard such as ISO 9001/ ISO 45001/ISO 27001/ISO 14001 the manner in how an ISO system should be implemented can be done in a variety of ways. Just like every person is different so companies are different in size, type of business, the way they operate and the controls they have in place. These differences play a key role in how ISO will be implemented.

### What must be done to implement a ISO standard

Step 1; Decide which ISO standard you want to implement. Should you wish to implement more than one standard e.g ISO 9001 & ISO 45001, do you want to implement them together or first get one standard implemented and certified and then move on to the next standard.

Step 2: This step is the “big work” step. Based on the ISO standard selected you must now integrate and implement all the requirements of the ISO standards into your business. This usually results in procedures, forms, policies being written and systems implemented to formalize the way the company operates and to improve the business.

Step 3: Implement the management system. Writing policies and procedure and formalizing systems are all very nice but the real benefit comes when these are implemented in the company and everyone works according to the formalized system.

Step 4: Conduct internal audits. You need to audit your new management system to ensure it is in effectively in place and working. Remember the auditor can't audit his/her own work.

Step 5. Go for your certification audit. Select and appoint an external certification body to come an audit your system to confirm if your manamngnet system meets all the relevant ISO clauses and that it is entrenched and working effectively. Make sure you use an accredited certification body that are listed on the International Accreditation Forum website

<https://www.iafcertsearch.org>

### **What will it cost?**

The cost of each project varies since each company is different. The following are factors that play a role in determining what the ISO project will cost:

- The ISO standard to be implemented

- If there are already existing systems and procedures in place or not
- The size of the organisation
- The type of business e.g. a warehouse storing and dispatching goods versus a company that designs and manufacture a variety of heavy duty equipment
- Is it only one business/ office implementing ISO or will it cover offices throughout South Africa and internationally

EQS will provide you with a quotation to implement a project. The implementation is planned over the number of consulting days estimated to be required to complete the project. Our costs are then based on the number of "Consulting" days required to complete the project.

Benchmarking is done continuously to ensure our rates remain market related .

### **Will I need to appoint additional staff to manage the ISO system**

For most companies it is usually not required to appoint additional staff. During the implementation part of ISO more time will required from selected staff members, but once the organisation is ISO certified the time requirement is less due to the system now only having to be maintained.

In most companies the responsibilities to maintain the ISO system is shared with various employees in the orgnaisation.

There are several functions that do need to be performed on a regular basis in order to maintain the QMS and in large, organisations, these functions can become a full time job.

As an additional service, EQS can provide on ongoing maintenance service after implementation where a monthly rate is established which includes regular visits from a consultant who maintains your ISO management system, ensuring your ISO certification remains up to date and free's you up to focus on the operational aspects of your business.

### **Will an ISO management system create more paperwork?**

When EQS implements an ISO management system we aim to keep all processes as simple and user-friendly as possible. Paperwork is only generated where the need is identified to record or evaluate information or to prevent errors due to lack of information. The focus is

always on what records are really needed from a business perspective.

You should not hesitate to use software systems to minimize the “paper burden” provided your process can still be managed effectively. EQS also assists customer to use internet based platforms to automate their ISO system.

### **Can I implement ISO myself?**

Any person may implement a management system in their organisation but unless that person has a very good knowledge and understanding of ISO 9001, it can be a difficult and time-consuming process.

In the same way that we make use of accountants to manage our book-keeping functions or use people with construction experience to build our house the use of an experienced ISO consultant to assist you have definite benefits.

A consultant can simplify the ISO journey and can save you time, help avoid pitfalls, share best practices, create an ISO system that benefits the organisation and ensure that you successfully pass your certification audits.

### **How long will implementation take?**

Implementing an ISO is NOT something that is done within one week or one month. For an average sized company the implementation projects are usually spread out over 6-8 months. The time needed also depends on the degree of systems, process controls and the documentation that is already in place in the company before the start of the implementation.

For certification the certification bodies usually require at least three months of records to demonstrate the management system is effectively implemented and working.

### **Can I buy templates to assist in implementing ISO?**

There are here and there some templates that you can buy that might help you with some aspects of implementing an ISO system, but we all know there is not such a thing of “one size fits all” concept. The controls, procedures and forms used in a small startup business compared to what is used in a medium sized or large corporate company cannot all be the same. A factory, training company and IT Service provider all also have different work

methods and their procedures will be different. So, when spending your money on documentation promising it is all you need to obtain ISO certification remember “Buyer beware!”.

### **When do I get my ISO certificate?**

Once you have implemented all the requirements of the ISO standard you selected, conducted your awareness training, internal audits and management review meeting your next step will be the external certification audit.

Your selected certification body will audit your management system to verify the system is meeting the ISO requirements, is effectively implemented and working effectively. Should there be findings raised during the audit there would be a set period within which the audit findings must be resolved and cleared by the certification body. After the findings have been resolved, the certification body will follow their administrative process and issue a certificate certifying your organisation complies with the requirements of the selected ISO standards.