

Climate Change Considerations to Management System Standards

On 22 February 2024, the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) IAF published a joint communiqué to highlight the addition of climate change considerations to a number of existing ISO management system standards (MSS).

Clauses 4.1 and 4.2 of the MSS are affected. This is to ensure that climate change issues are considered by the organization in the context of the effectiveness of the management system in addition to all other aspects.

The overall intent of the requirements for clauses 4.1 and 4.2 of all MSSs remain unchanged.

Amendments



4.1 Understanding the organization and its context

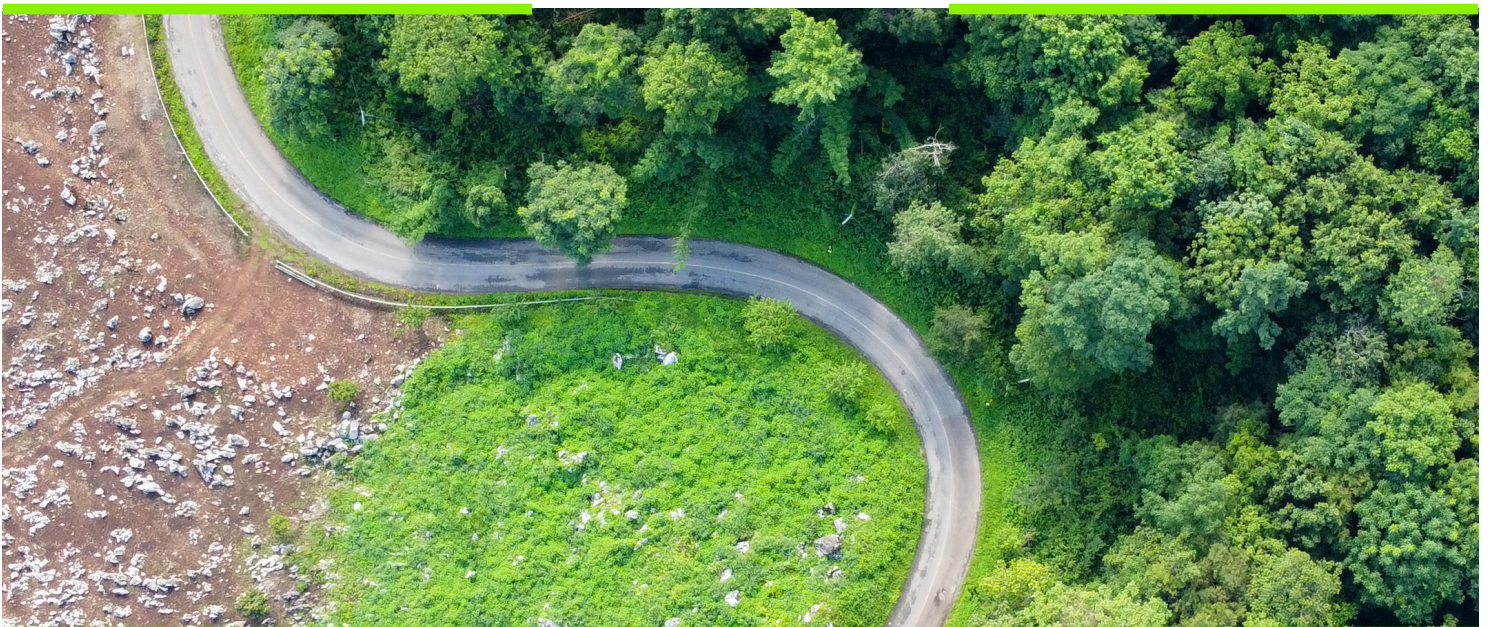
The organization shall determine external and internal issues that are relevant to its purpose and that affect its ability to achieve the intended result(s) of its ISO management system. **Added: The organization shall determine whether climate change is a relevant issue.**

4.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of interested parties

The organization shall determine:

- the interested parties that are relevant to the ISO management system;
- the relevant requirements of these interested parties;
- which of these requirements will be addressed through the ISO management system.

Note: Relevant interested parties can have requirements relating to climate change.



Expectations on Certified organizations

Certified organizations shall ensure that they have considered climate change aspects and risks within the development, maintenance and effectiveness of their own management system.

Climate change, along other issues, should be determined as relevant or not and if so, considered within an evaluation of risk, within the scope of the MSS.

Some climate change aspects and risks may be of a general nature, independent of the applicable management system scope or the industry (e.g. when related to regulatory compliance or operational adaptability and organizational resilience), while others will be specifically indexed to the requirements of the management system standards, to specific industries (e.g. energy production, agriculture and fisheries) and to characteristics of the organization (e.g. geographical location, nature of its supply-chain or workforce dynamics).

Expectations on Certification Bodies

With the new additions on Climate Change, Certification Bodies are expected to ensure that Climate Change has been considered and if determined to be a relevant issue for its management system, included in any objectives and mitigation activities by the organization, as required.

Timing

The amendments were published on 23 February 2024. As noted above, **issues related to Climate Change** affecting the context of an organization's management system(s) are typically **already being considered by organizations**.

Therefore, upon publication, certification bodies shall include the new text in their auditing of the organization and its context. As with normal practice, where a certified organization cannot demonstrate that all external and internal issues that have been determined as relevant, including Climate Change, have been considered, a nonconformity shall be raised.

Considerations during the audits:

- Verification of the new requirements in the audits conducted after publication.
- There is no significant impact on the effectiveness of the certified MS.
- There is no change in the scope of application for the certified MS.
- The publication year of each MSS will not change.
- A new certificate will not be issued.



What is expected of the organization?

The inclusion of the new text in 4.1 requires you as an organization to consider climate change to determine whether there are any relevant issues that need to be addressed. The note in 4.2 is a reminder that there may be current or potential future requirements related to climate change that may be requested by customers and other relevant interested parties.

Which areas of the company can the topic affect?

The topic of climate change can be relevant to various areas of the management system, e.g. environment, health and safety, energy, finance or other aspects of an organization's activities.

How could the topic be audited in the audit?

The auditors will ask whether you as an organization have checked whether climate change is a relevant issue for you. For example, they may look at whether the requirements for climate change meet the applicable legal and regulatory requirements for your products and/or services and whether contractual requirements are met.

What aspects do I need to consider within the context (4.1)?

The aspects that a company must consider in the valuation depend on the type of company as well as its size, complexity, etc.

The following aspects can be taken into account:

- Changes to legal or regulatory requirements, e.g. restrictions on the use of certain materials, product recycling, product life cycle, product origin, information, etc.
- Use of renewable materials.
- Availability or difficulties in the distribution of products and / or DL due to more frequent storms, floods, fires, droughts, etc.
- Assessment of the supply chain in climate change issues.
- Market development in relation to the sustainability of products and services.

What requirements could relevant interested parties have in relation to climate change?

The requirements can vary greatly depending on the type of company.

Here are some examples:

- Legal and regulatory requirements, environmental or climate protection requirements for the product or service offered, as well as requirements that affect the organization's ability to offer this product or service.
- customer requirements with regard to climate change, zero emissions or carbon neutrality of products.
- Requirements for product information on climate change aspects (sustainability of origin, reuse, recyclability, end

of life, embedded carbon, greenwashing labelling, etc.), including product claims, and related legal, statutory and other requirements.

- Changes in industry regulations and standards related to climate change.
- Permits, licenses or other forms of environmental authorizations.
- Climate change-related requirements for processes such as packaging, production, maintenance, logistics, etc.

Does this change the scope of my company?

The scope of application may change if a company's location changes as a result of the assessment, or if there are changes to the products or services offered.

Do the changes have any further impact on the management system?

There is no general answer to this question, as it depends on how relevant climate change is to the company.

Depending on the assessment and the resulting measures, changes may occur in areas such as risks and opportunities, resources, the operation of the organization, communication and information for customers, externally provided products and services, performance evaluation and improvement, management assessment and much more.



Contact

TÜV USA

Mr. Darcy Segin

T +1 603 422 3927

dsegin@tuv-nord.com

tuv-nord-cert.com