

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND CERTIFICATION OF ORGANISATIONS

FIRMS 1

The reduction of environmental impacts linked to economic activity can be promoted through the implementation of structured approaches within organisations, such as environmental management systems (EMS) which can lead to certification or participation in an environmental label scheme.

Objectives pursued

The objective of implementing an EMS is to continuously improve the environmental performance of an organisation (all economic sectors combined). It allows production processes to be optimised (energy efficiency and/or use of materials, reduction of waste volumes, etc.), which can in particular lead to a reduction in the cost of repairing environmental damage. In addition, it contributes to improving the organisation's brand image and positioning vis-à-vis consumers and residents in particular.

197 ISO 14001 and/or EMAS organisations¹

The commitments made in terms of environmental management can be formalised by obtaining official recognition or certification. In Wallonia, ISO 14001 certification and/or EMAS registration concerned 197 organisations in 2016, a figure that almost doubled between 2003 and 2013, but which has developed more irregularly since then. Compared to ISO 14001 (international standard), the EMAS (European standard) regulation is more stringent, in particular because it guarantees compliance with environmental legislation from the first registration. The lower number of EMAS registrations (28) compared to ISO 14001 certification (180) is largely due to these additional

constraints but also to the fact that the EMAS regulation is less well known internationally.

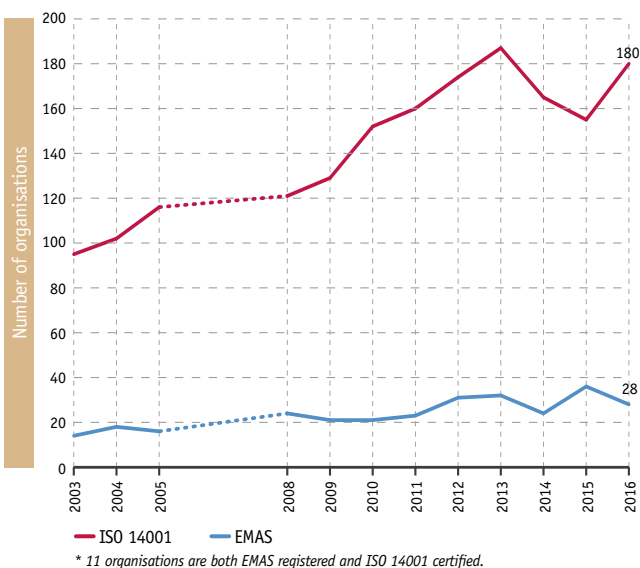
According to a recent study², in 2014, the share of ISO 14001 certified organisations was estimated at 0.7% of companies in Wallonia. Generally speaking, it is primarily medium-sized companies (50 to 199 staff) and large organisations (> 200 staff) as well as the industrial sector that are involved in the certification of their EMS.

Implementation of EMS without certification

The principles of an EMS can possibly be implemented without certification. Tools developed in Wallonia promote this type of approach, including environmental diagnoses carried out by the Environment Unit of the Walloon Union of Companies (*Cellule environnement de l'Union wallonne des entreprises*)³. It carries out about fifty diagnoses per year (more than 1,300 since 1994). In addition, several sectoral labels exist (hotels, events, tourism, etc.) that include environmental concerns, with specific levels of requirements and constraints.

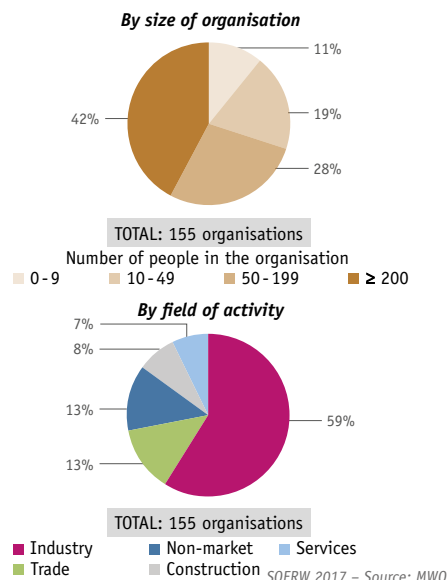
^[1] Non-exhaustive data, provided to the provided to the Walloon Movement for Quality (*Mouvement wallon pour la qualité - MWQ*) (www.mwq.be) by most of the certifying organisations which are BELAC-approved | ^[2] MWQ, 2015 | ^[3] www.environnement-entreprise.be

Fig. FIRMS 1-1 Number of organisations certified ISO 14001 and/or EMAS registered in Wallonia*



SOERW 2017 – Source: MWQ

Fig. FIRMS 1-2 Distribution of ISO 14001 certified organisations (situation in May 2015) in Wallonia



SOERW 2017 – Source: MWQ