

1.4 Studiosus: Development of an Environmental Management System



Description of Good Practice

Studiosus, a German tour operator that specialises in educational tours, began to develop an Environmental Management System (EMS) in 1995, to comply with new German legislation on environmental audits. The company was certified in 1998 according to the European Union's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and ISO 14001. That same year, Germany introduced an additional law, requiring companies to also consider the environmental impacts of their products. Studiosus responded to this new law by analysing the impacts of its organised tours on a destination's environment. In 2001, the company's EMS was revised according to EMAS II, and a detailed environmental statement was published on the company's website.

The EMS Policy Statement includes two central elements: compliance with relevant environmental regulations and a commitment to continuous improvement. The policy's action plan addresses four main areas: management, processes, products and international co-operation.

During the initial development phase, Studiosus contracted FUTOUR, a German environmental consulting company, to develop an EMS based on EMAS I standards and the company's own sustainable development policy, and to advise the company on how the EMS would apply to daily business. Studiosus then set up its own environmental committee, the Eco-Audit Team.

Implementation

Whilst the EMS policy was developed by Studiosus management with FUTOUR, the strategy and operational targets for each year are defined in co-operation with Studiosus' environment committee and the committee for social responsibility. At least once a year, these committees report to management on the results of the EMS. The internal environmental committee works with management to review the system and suggest changes for the following year.

Actions to achieve operational targets, and the so-called "continuous improvement circle", also called the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA circle), which are core elements of the EMS system, are summarised into a matrix in the company's environmental handbook. To facilitate the implementation process and ensure efficient communication, responsibility for each of the targets is assigned and stated in the matrix. Department managers are responsible for circulating the matrix among their staff, working with them on the targets and auditing the results. Staff is also kept informed of EMS activities through Studiosus' intranet, and information is available to the public on the company's web site at http://www.studiosus.de/ueber/nachhaltiges_reisen/umwelt_management/index.php.



CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

Benefits

The main benefit for Studiosus of implementing an EMS has been that it provides a logical and systematic base to reach operational targets each year.

Comments

Initially, it was difficult to apply EMAS requirements to the service sector, as the requirements were originally conceived for the technical industry sector. However, with the help of FUTOUR and the support of the Federal Office of Environment (BfN) in Berlin, Studiosus managed to overcome this hurdle and shape the company's policies and goals. As of yet, the company hasn't encountered any major obstacles in implementing the EMS. Its next step will be to combine its environmental management and quality systems into an 'integrated' management system.