

Environmental Management Briefing:

Driving Sustainable  
Resource Management  
through ISO 14001

---



---

## Acknowledgements

This briefing note was authored and edited by Josh Fothergill (IEMA), David Smith and Russell Payne (AECOM), with peer review from Martin Baxter (IEMA). IEMA's Sustainable Resource Management Network Steering Group provided the initial conceptualisation and defined the need for the briefing note.

---

## About IEMA

We are the worldwide alliance of environment and sustainability professionals, working to make our businesses and organisations future-proof.

Belonging gives us the knowledge, connections and authority to lead collective change, with IEMA's global sustainability standards as our benchmark.

By mobilising our expertise we will continue to challenge norms, drive new kinds of enterprise and make measurable progress towards our bold vision: transforming the world to sustainability.

Join us at [www.iema.net](http://www.iema.net)

# 1 Outline

---

In September 2015, ISO 14001 - the world's leading environmental management system (EMS) standard - was substantially updated. The changes aim to ensure the future use of the standard leads to management systems that are well suited to handling the environmental and wider sustainability challenges faced by organisations operating in today's globalised economy.

Sustainable resource management (SRM), at an organisational level, is the concept of businesses taking responsibility and action for the selection, sourcing, usage and re-use of the materials they use. This relates to both their direct operations and across their value-chain, including: suppliers; customers; and other interested parties.

In the 1990s and early 2000s business frequently focussed on waste management and disposal. Organisations now realise that there is much more to the sustainable management of the materials used than simply considering how to minimise potential pollution during disposal. In fact, the very concept of 'waste' requiring disposal is being challenged.

Increasingly, organisations are recognising the benefits of moving from a linear to a more circular economic model, through strategies such as intentionally designing to reduce material use, increasing the durability of products and ensuring re-use of materials at a high value, via redistribution, reuse, remanufacture and recycling. IEMA and its members have actively engaged in the development of a new standard, BS8001,<sup>1</sup> that provides guidance to enable organisations to make progress in this arena.

Global savings of a trillion dollars (US) a year by moving towards a circular economy are estimated to be achievable by 2025.<sup>2</sup> Improving material resource management is good for the environment and business, enhancing the bottom line, reducing supply-chain risk, delivering efficiencies and protecting corporate reputation.

---

## So how do we achieve this?

Progress towards a circular economy requires large numbers of organisations to engage in the transition to SRM, to view wastes and unused/end-of-life products as viable raw materials. To achieve this, organisations need improved awareness, knowledge and understanding of the risks and opportunities related to resource management, and how this translates into enhanced financial and sustainability performance.

Unfortunately, many organisations remain focussed on managing waste, rather than recognising it is the consequence of an ineffective system. To create a more circular and sustainable economy, organisations need to follow the leaders in this field and begin transitioning their corporate mind-set from viewing waste as an unavoidable outcome of business to recognising and realising the benefits of improved SRM. This involves aligning business systems, processes and actions with recognition that an organisation's operations are part of a much wider resource cycle, rather than simply considering the business to be part of a supply-chain whose responsibilities end with the consumer of their goods or services.

<sup>1</sup> BS8001: Framework for implementing the principles of the circular economy in organizations – Guide (BSI, forthcoming 2017)

<sup>2</sup> Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2014, Towards the circular economy – Volume 3: Accelerating the scale-up across global supply chains,

BS EN ISO 14001:2015 (ISO 14001:2015) provides a management framework for sustainability practitioners to help drive this transition, with the potential to deliver a wake-up call to business, and to recognise and realise the benefits of enhanced resource management. The standard incorporates substantive updates to the earlier 2004 version with changes designed to assist organisations to better understand and react to the challenges presented by an ever-changing environment.

The key areas of change in the revised standard are, context and risk; leadership and business strategy; lifecycle perspective; and stakeholders and communication. These create opportunities to improve resource management and thereby help manage risk, improve business resilience and performance. For example:

- Context and risk: Organisations are now required to demonstrate that they understand and are managing the interface between their organisation and environment, including planning how they will respond to changing environmental conditions such as resource scarcity / security and climate change.
- Leadership and business strategy: Environmental management must be integrated into core organisational processes and strategic decision making, in order to derive greater business value out of the management system and align it with business drivers. The 'senior management team', as opposed to the 'management representative', is now accountable for ensuring that the EMS delivers its objectives.

- Lifecycle perspective: Organisations are required to move beyond focussing on the environmental aspects of on-site activities. There is a requirement to take a lifecycle perspective to the consideration of the environmental aspects of activities, products and services.
- Stakeholders and Communication: Organisations are required to identify and consider the needs and expectations of external stakeholders such as regulators, consumers, local community groups and non-governmental organisations. All interested stakeholders should be identified through a stakeholder mapping exercise and an associated communication plan developed.

These changes to the standard also heighten the need to maintain and improve the competence and capability of the internal staff and auditors involved with an organisation's EMS. Further information on ISO 14001:2015 and transitioning to the 2015 standard are available to download from IEMA's Benefits Map [www.iema.net/membership-benefits-map](http://www.iema.net/membership-benefits-map) by selecting Resources and Environmental Management.

---

## The objective and structure of this Briefing Note

This Briefing Note provides information on how to understand, consider and integrate the sustainable management of material resources within an EMS that meets the requirements of ISO 14001:2015. Its intended audience is anyone working with, or considering developing, an EMS, in particular those individuals with managerial and operational influence over their organisation's EMS.

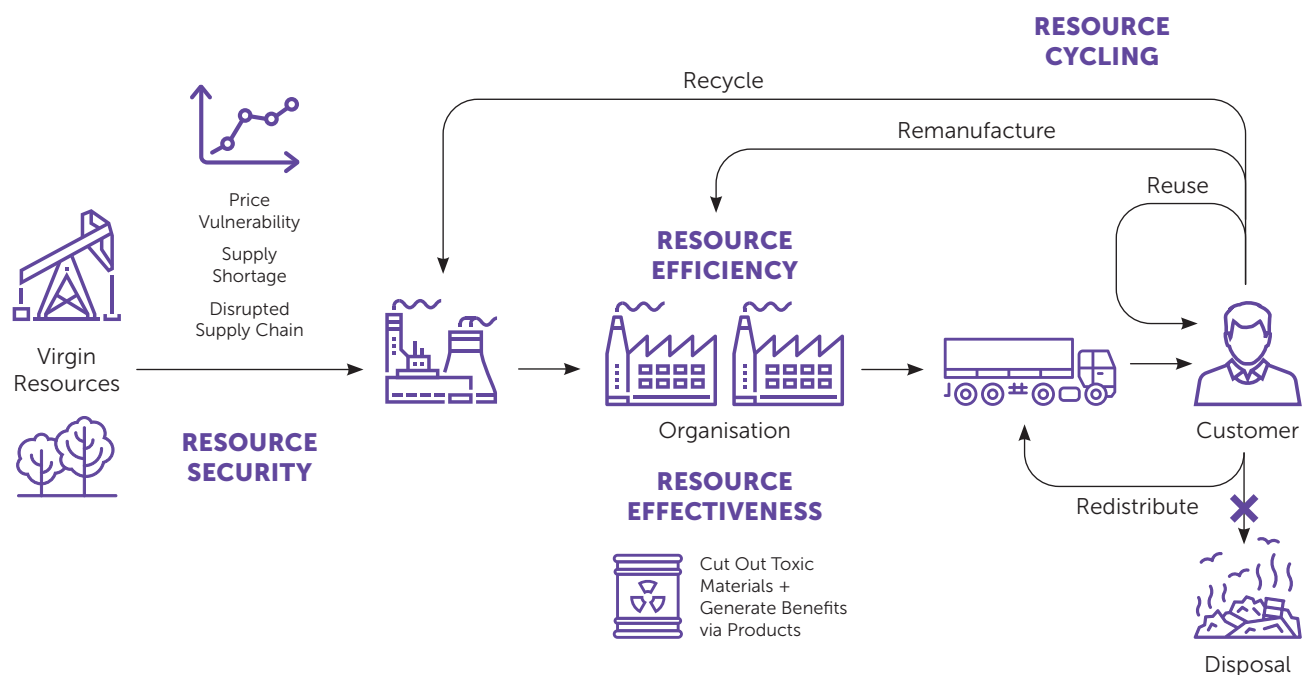
This note is designed to provide practical value to the user, allowing them to read the document as a whole, or dip into key areas that:

- Outline the key changes in the updated ISO 14001:2015 standard as they relate to SRM (Section 1);
- Provide an overview of SRM (e.g. resource: efficiency, effectiveness, security and cycling) and the circular economy (Section 2);
- Identify resource management opportunities in your EMS (Section 3);
- Provide guidance on taking action to improve SRM through your EMS (Section 4);
- Summarise the business benefits of SRM (Section 5);
- Help evaluate your organisation's transition to SRM (Section 6); and
- Summarise the Briefing Note's key messages (Section 7).

# 2 What is Sustainable Resource Management?

Environment and sustainability professionals have a key role in helping their organisations recognise and realise the benefits associated with SRM. This briefing is based upon four key terms (Figure 1 – see text in **bold**) that underpin the concept of a circular economy to make it accessible for the staff across your business. The terms are also useful to organisations currently focussed on waste management, demonstrating key action areas to help their business to take a more progressive and positive approach to the sustainable management of resources.

Figure 1: Resource management activity – working towards a Circular Economy



---

### **Resource Efficiency, entails making the most of material resources while minimising the production of waste**

Traditionally material resource efficiency focussed on an organisation's activities at its own sites; moving materials up the waste hierarchy. This placed an emphasis on minimising waste disposal by preventing its production, reusing and recycling by-products, with any residual waste material being sent for energy recovery, in preference to landfill. However, taking such a waste-centric approach to resource efficiency prevents organisations from seeing the 'bigger picture' and making the most efficient and effective use of resources.

Today, forward thinking organisations are rebalancing their actions with increasing focus on a more top-down approach to the management of material resources they rely on as a business. A resource-led approach is based on reducing the intensity of an organisation's resource use, optimising benefits associated with resource use and minimising any negative impacts associated with their use.

### **Resource Effectiveness, involves optimising resource efficiency to avoid environmental harm and drive social benefits**

Resource effectiveness is based on the need to avoid adverse environmental and social impacts that are related to the use of certain material resources (e.g. toxic materials in products can limit their potential for reuse and recycling). Organisations adopting resource effective practices aim to use resources as efficiently as possible, while avoiding negative environmental and wider sustainability effects.

The concepts have the same relationship as efficiency and effectiveness have in traditional business management models, with the optimal solution being achieved by organisations balancing resource efficiency benefits with resource effectiveness characteristics. Progressing resource management through an EMS should drive improved performance within the organisation, but importantly also contribute to improved resource efficiency and effectiveness of the system as a whole.

---

## **Resource Security, focusses on responsible sourcing of a reliable and affordable supply of materials**

The global economy has enabled raw materials, products and services to be easily traded internationally and has resulted in many organisations, including SMEs, having diverse global supply chains. All organisations are aware of the price they pay for the materials they use, feel the effect of changing prices and may struggle to source materials from their normal suppliers on occasions. However, until recently few organisations, except the very large and those using chemicals subject to authorisation under the REACH Regulations (2007 as amended), would have considered access to the key materials they rely on as a key business risk.

Since 2000, an increasing array of commodities has seen significant price volatility and constraints in short-term supply, from oil and steel to rare earth minerals (which are essential to modern communication, electronics and renewable technology). In parallel, there has been increasing focus on responsible sourcing of materials (e.g. palm oil, conflict materials and low-cost garments) to avoid businesses contributing to negative environmental and social effects associated with their extraction or production.

There is a clear need to raise awareness among businesses of the inherent risks posed by resource security through their supply chains. Where organisations identify themselves as being at risk, they need to recognise the actions they can take to prepare for and manage these risks. An organisation's specific resource risks, and the drivers behind these, will be unique to its circumstances. However, there are sufficient common factors of risk, both within and between sectors, to allow common features to be identified presenting the opportunity for all businesses to take steps to enhance their resource security resilience. The National Intelligence Council (2016) recently estimated that population growth will increase demand for food by 35%, water by 40% and energy by 50% by 2030 relative to 2016 levels.<sup>3</sup>

Organisations generally begin with an initial review to identify the key materials it relies upon, both internally and in its supply chain, to produce its goods or services; this action is then followed by an assessment as to whether any of these materials are considered to be at risk.



---

## Resource Cycling, is about ensuring unused and end-of-life materials are returned to productive use

Resource cycling is about moving business thinking beyond the current system of linear material use, within which virgin materials are extracted, used once and then considered 'waste' and disposed of. Essentially, organisations active in resource cycling seek opportunities to enable action in line with their recognition that virtually all the materials they utilise and dispose of, have the potential to be part of a broad market for commodities.

- Many organisations benefitted from participation in the National Industrial Symbiosis Programme (NISP): a government funded initiative that sought to identify and facilitate synergies and linkages between cooperating industries to improve resource efficiency and cycling and minimise waste.

On a large scale, this concept is commonly termed the circular economy - an approach to material use that aims to replace the wasteful linear model of resource use with a regenerative model that is intentionally designed to continuously cycle the materials already in use within the system. The circular economy sits alongside other concepts (e.g. eco-efficiency, cradle-to-cradle, industrial ecology, closed-loop, industrial symbiosis, etc.); while having an understanding of such concepts can be important, the abundance of terminology can add complexity and deter initiatives to improve resource management. As such, organisations should take a broad view of their activity to transition to SRM and not become bogged down in artificial 'turf wars' between different initiatives that are, ultimately, generating progress towards the same goal.

Through planning and implementing changes to improve material stewardship, organisations can increase the potential for the materials they use in their products or services to retain value for the wider economy at the end of their initial use phase. In this context, organisations must place greater emphasis where the production and delivery of their goods / services is reliant on the on-going use of finite resources and toxic / harmful compounds. Whilst reprocessing technologies have and will continue to improve, the potential presence of such compounds in secondary materials is already creating difficulties in enabling the efficient reuse of products and cycling of materials. As such, the traceability of such compounds is a short-term priority, with the ultimate goal being to phase out, where possible, such compounds in the delivery of the majority of products / services.

# 3 Resource Management Opportunities in your EMS

Organisations that want to compete in the globalised market need to ensure that resource-led thinking is part of their business strategy and provide support to deliver this. The revised ISO 14001 standard provides an effective mechanism to drive forward SRM by embedding a lifecycle perspective, engaging interested parties, and through consideration of the potential impacts of changing environmental conditions such as resource security and climate change on business strategy and operations.

The core themes arising from ISO 14001:2015 that can be used to promote and facilitate improved resource management performance across your EMS are presented in subsections 1-4.

## 1. Leadership and Business Strategy

Clauses 4.1, 'Understanding the organisation and its context' and 5.1, 'Leadership and commitment' address how the organisation interacts with the environment and links the EMS to business strategy.

From the perspective of resource management, potential key external environmental issues affected by, or with the potential to impact the organisation, include: resource efficiency, resource scarcity and security; price volatility and legislative restrictions on the use of certain substances; reputational issues; and opportunities associated with the circular economy.

Clause 5.1, 'Leadership and commitment', helps define top management's role in demonstrating commitment to the EMS. The clause also mandates that EMS requirements are integrated into the organisation's business strategy, context and processes. Potential requirements of supporting SRM include:

- Recognition of the business significance (risks and opportunities) associated with SRM;
- Integration of SRM issues and opportunities into the core business strategy;
- Identification and consideration for inclusion of voluntary commitments relating to SRM within the Environmental Policy (5.2);
- Top management 'leading from the front' and setting a good example; and
- Communications, ensuring colleagues and supply chains understand their role in SRM.

For an organisation to effectively manage resource security, it must identify and understand the resource risks it is exposed to and then develop an understanding of its ability to adapt to and mitigate these risks. Organisations can engage with their supply chains to improve understanding, and identify opportunities to use substitute materials and the potential to reduce reliance on 'at risk' materials.

When developing or reviewing an existing EMS check that your environmental policy includes how the organisation will address resource management, this may include a 'vision' or a specific commitment to sustainable use of resources. The revised policy should be reviewed and signed-off by top management, before being communicated internally and externally. Sustainability practitioners should also review the approach to the management review to check that it adequately addresses sustainable resource use. Those with significant involvement in SRM within the organisation should participate in the management review, where SRM should be a key agenda item.

For organisations that are already aware of and actively managing resource risks and use, the EMS provides an opportunity to review current practice with a view to continual improvement. This may involve refreshing your organisation's vision for SRM, re-engaging with the various departments that have an integral role in implementing and achieving SRM and incorporating circularity in business processes.

Leading organisations are taking practical actions to reduce supply chain resource security risks, embed sustainable resource management principles in to product design process and rethink business models etc.

## **2. Risk - Identifying sustainable resource management aspects and impacts across your value-chain**

To effectively manage resources, organisations need to develop an understanding of the impacts, risks and opportunities throughout the lifecycle of the materials that they rely upon. Strong relationships and communication across the value chain help in this regard.

Clause 6.1, 'Actions to address risks and opportunities', helps define the approach to how an organisation identifies and evaluates the risks and opportunities associated with SRM. Significantly, clause 6.1.2 introduces a requirement for considering a life cycle perspective in the identification of the environmental aspects of its activities, products and services.

Resource consumption is frequently identified as an environmental aspect of an organisation's activities. The application of a life cycle perspective will encourage the broader consideration of environmental aspects associated with the value chain, including resource security and price volatility. EMS development generally begins with an initial review to identify the key materials the organisation relies upon, both internally and through its supply chain, to produce its goods or services. This action is then followed by an assessment as to whether any of these materials are considered to be at risk.

An organisation's approach to purchasing materials has a key role to play in the move to more sustainable resource management. To effectively manage the risks and opportunities associated with resource use, many organisations will need to significantly improve their understanding of the resources they purchase and also where and how they purchase them; this would include consideration of the availability of these resources and the potential impact of loss of supply on the business in delivering its objectives. The lifecycle approach extends to consideration of environmental aspects associated with design, manufacture, distribution, consumption and end-of-life management of activities, products and services.

The potential impact of future environmental legislation and government intervention can be a significant consideration, impacting a product or service's lifecycle. Organisations need to be aware of and stay ahead of such changes to mitigate the potential impact of implementing revised legislation.

### **3. Resilience - Responding to sustainable resource management impacts in and beyond your organisation**

Clause 6.2, 'Environmental objectives and planning to achieve them', and 8.1, 'Operational planning and control', collectively address the organisation's response to SRM impacts in and beyond the organisation.

Clause 6.2.1 requires organisations to establish environmental objectives at relevant functions and levels, taking into account the organisation's significant environmental aspects and associated compliance obligations and considering its risks and opportunities. Clause 6.2.1 also includes the requirements that objectives be measurable, monitored and communicated.

Measurement of resource consumption is the essential first step in establishing a baseline from which future objectives can be set. Monitoring of resource consumption is essential to track performance against objectives and enable reporting to stakeholders. Analysis of resource consumption and consideration of lifecycle aspects will support identification of opportunities for performance improvement.

Clause 8.1 focuses on establishing, implementing and maintaining controls to manage and improve performance and achieve compliance obligations. SRM should be considered / planned / controlled at all lifecycle stages, from materials selection and sourcing, product/service design and manufacture, distribution, use through to options for end-of-life treatment and maintenance of material value. This includes the requirement for the organisation to 'ensure that outsourced processes are controlled or influenced'.

To effectively manage resources, organisations must understand the impacts, risks and opportunities throughout the lifecycle of the materials they rely upon. ISO 14001:2015 provides sustainability practitioners with the opportunity to act as change agents to increase knowledge of effective resource management and the circular economy within and beyond their organisations. They can achieve this through their purchasing decisions and engagement with their supply chains. The initial steps in an organisation's transition to resource management can often be driven by a small number of staff, or even a single individual. Strong working relationships between the Environment / Sustainability Team and the Procurement and Design Teams within an organisation are a key element of this transition.

SRM also presents opportunities for new markets and diversification. If these opportunities are not recognised and realised then the organisations risks falling behind the expectations of its clients, wider stakeholders and ultimately losing market share to competitors.

Further advice on taking action to improve SRM in your EMS can be found in Section 4.

#### **4. Improvement - Ensuring your systems and culture support SRM performance improvement**

Clause 7.4, 'Communication' and the elements of 8.1 'Operational planning and control' relate to communication.

Clause 7.4 sets the requirement to establish, implement and maintain the process(es) needed for internal and external communications relevant to the EMS. Communication means and information systems used to communicate internally and externally about SRM could include: regular and on-going communicating to employees about SRM requirements, initiatives and success in reducing resource consumption; a workshop to engage with suppliers on the organisation's environmental requirements or potential risks / opportunities; and communicating with external stakeholders about markets for resources at the end of their intended use.

Clause 8.1 includes provision for communication to stakeholders throughout a product or services life cycle, with specific reference to communication of relevant requirement(s) to external providers, including contractors. Further communications might for example, include: advising consumers about product repair and take-back schemes; opportunities for end of life reuse or recycling and providing reproducers with information about material content and disassembly / recycling of complex items. Provision of information through effective communication is key in driving SRM throughout a product's lifecycle – see Figure 1 in Section 2.

# 4 Taking Action to Improve Resource Management through your EMS

IEMA has identified six steps to drive progress towards SRM in your organisation via its environmental (and wider business) management system. These six steps to achieving SRM success through your EMS can be summarised as:

**1.** Provide the leadership required to create a positive culture around a clear vision.

Your environment and sustainability professionals, in collaboration with the Senior Management Team should create a positive and clear vision for SRM in your organisation. Once developed this should be communicated across the organisation potentially along with the action plan. This will enable internal and external stakeholders to be aware of and buy into to what you are trying to achieve with SRM.

**2.** Enable your Environment and Sustainability professionals to catalyse your progress on resource management by developing an action plan identifying departmental and individual responsibilities.

The identified actions should link to the environmental objectives set as part of your EMS and have the agreement of those individuals identified. Use 'indicators' to monitor progress in delivering the action plan and regularly review progress. Once actions are implemented success should be recorded and communicated. The plan can then be reviewed and refreshed to identify new actions to ensure continual improvement. The plan should be documented and retained within your EMS.

**3.** Involve your entire workforce in resource management initiatives, particularly those in research and development and the design of products and services.

The shared vision forms the platform for engaging with and enabling the entire workforce to be involved with and input to SRM actions and initiatives. This common purpose will assist in creating a culture within your organisation of being proactive with SRM.

**4.** Ensure your business maintains a clear understanding of its potential exposure to resource security risks, which are dynamic in their nature.

Establish regular reviews, potentially as part of the Management Review if appropriate, of the potential exposure to resource security risks. Risks could arise from a change in a customer's requirement, changes in the marketplace and supplier information on the availability of resources. The organisation should establish a mechanism by which resource security risks are flagged, reviewed and actioned accordingly. Actions arising from the review may be incorporated into your action plan (refer to item 2 above) and corporate risk register.

5. Align your systems to deliver effective performance improvements in the management of resources (resource data collection and analysis, procurement of materials and control activities across the value-chain).

Adjustments to resource data collection and analysis systems may be required as part of your journey to SRM. To evidence meeting objectives relating to SRM you will have to demonstrate that the results are:

- The frequency of measurement and monitoring is aligned to the requirement for assessing the results;
- Monitoring results are dependable and transparent; and
- Analysis of the results allowing your organisation to publish identified trends.

Review your current resource data collection system to check if it meets these requirements. If not, identify required changes (i.e. increased frequency of resource consumption data) and include these in your action plan (refer to item 2 above). Enhancements may require additional resources which should be identified and signed off where possible.

6. Embrace the circular economy within your long-term business strategy to identify ambitious targets and initiatives that actively seek to disrupt the traditional approach to resource management.

The British Standards Institute's Circular Economy Standard – BS8001 – provides a set of core organisational circular economy principles and a stage-gate framework to enable all organisations to enable them to explore how ambitious they wish to be in embracing circularity. IEMA and its members have played a key role in developing this standard, which is scheduled to launch in May 2017.

# 5 Business Benefits of Sustainable Resource Management

Significant global trends, including increasing constraints on production, resource extraction costs and competition for resources are reshaping the way organisations view resources.

Rather than simply managing 'waste', progressive businesses now recognise that waste is the consequence of an ineffective system and may represent an unrealised opportunity. The circular economy provides an opportunity to reduce future reliance on virgin material inputs and decouple economic growth from resource extraction.

In many organisations, SRM is insufficiently recognised as a business critical issue. However, companies are beginning to explore its potential and are realising the opportunities and business benefits such as increased competitiveness, improved management / mitigation of business risk and enabling future markets and economic growth.

---

## Driving Competitiveness

SRM can result in direct cost savings associated with reduced resource consumption/ procurement, purchase, processing costs and waste management costs. Further business benefits include improved sustainability performance; improved resilience to material and utility price volatility; and improved staff engagement.

## Managing Business Risk

Managing risk is an essential element of business and it is no different when it comes to the sustainable management of the materials and resources that an organisation relies upon. It is essential that businesses identify and understand supply risks in order to ensure a secure supply of materials at a reasonable and stable price. It is also important to recognise that materials can have hidden environmental (e.g. pollution) or ethical / social (e.g. conflict minerals or forced labour) 'footprint' that can also negatively impact upon your organisation's reputation, unless such risks are identified, well understood and managed.

Maintaining a reliable supply of key materials is crucial to any business. However, from global to local scale the past decade has seen significant price volatility and increasing constraints in short-term supply across a wide array of business critical materials. Green Alliance's policy insight brief 'Managing Resources for a Resilient Economy' (2015) noted that 'despite a recent fall in commodity prices...resource prices have risen substantially in the last 15 years and have become more volatile'.<sup>4</sup>

Businesses are increasingly recognising the reputational risks associated with materials they rely upon. The use of materials, in particular primary materials from virgin supplies (e.g. mining), can have significant and high profile adverse environmental and social consequences. Thus an organisation's ability to trace, understand and verify the importance of ethical and environmental sourcing of materials is becoming more widely recognised.



---

## Opportunities for New Business - Capitalising on the Circular Economy

Leading companies have embraced SRM and the circular economy within their long-term business strategies and have already benefitted from substantive support from senior figures across their business. As a result, they are identifying ambitious targets and initiatives that actively seek to make a step-change improvement to their organisation's previous approach to resource management. Frequently, businesses are identifying more sustainable alternatives to disposal and recycling of current waste streams. Many are turning these 'waste streams' into marketable and commercially viable products.

The numbers speak for themselves - globally, an estimated US \$1trillion saving per annum is achievable by 2025<sup>5</sup>. IEMA's research in 2014 found nearly two thirds of SMEs, employing skilled and qualified Environment and Sustainability professionals, were saving over £5,000 a year through resource efficiency, and a fifth (19%) of companies with over a 1,000 employees were achieving savings of over £1m per year.

Demonstrating such financial savings to the business, through effective recording and reporting, is essential. Our 2014 research found that providing evidence of savings acts as a strong contributory factor in organisations taking future actions. Further, sharing of information on savings achieved and improving knowledge across an organisation will often help identify further opportunities. This helps to obtain and retain management backing.

Organisations that are truly committed to taking action to improve resource management are ensuring they have their own objectives and internal commitments in place. The ultimate goal is to deliver products and services with the minimal use of resources, which are derived from systems that avoid generating negative environmental or societal consequences and also provide a net positive contribution to the wider value chain.

# 6 Evaluating your Organisation's Transition to Sustainable Resource Management

Few, if any, organisations can claim they have fully transitioned to SRM as the wider system they operate within is still a predominantly linear, rather than circular, economy. However, for organisations that choose to proactively progress SRM, their ambition should be to move to a point where they can confidently agree with all of the following statements from different perspectives across their business. The organisation is:

- confident it has a comprehensive understanding of the total amount of material required across the lifecycle to deliver a defined unit of product / service output; aware of the ratio of virgin and secondary (circular) materials used to deliver that unit of output;
- not reliant on key materials remaining available or affordable, to ensure its on-going success;
- aware of all relevant resource security risks and has effective systems in place to mitigate these risks ensuring key materials remain accessible and affordable;
- confident that all functional areas and key stakeholders (across its value-chain) understand how the concepts of the circular economy relate to its resource management goals and activities; and
- actively sharing its resource management experiences and learning to enable others to make substantive progress in improving the cycling of resources across the economy.

A great first step in this process is to share IEMA's Resource Action Maturity Planner (RAMP) with key colleagues / departments across your organisation and ask them to complete its simple five minute review of organisational resource management progress. By comparing the results from across your business you can begin to identify current knowledge and understanding of resource management and potentially identify improvement opportunities. The snapshot engagement process, delivered by undertaking a cross-departmental RAMP review, can also be used to provide the context to begin discussions on taking your organisation's next steps in using its EMS to better manage the aspects of its environmental performance related to resource management and ultimately derive additional benefits from the EMS and SRM. IEMA's RAMP tool can be accessed at [www.iema.net/mramp](http://www.iema.net/mramp)

# 7 Summary

Increasingly, organisations are recognising the benefits of viewing 'wastes' and unused/end-of-life products as viable raw materials. Improving material resource management can provide benefits for the environment and business, enhancing the bottom line, reducing supply-chain risk, delivering efficiencies and protecting corporate reputation. To use resources more sustainably and help create a circular economy, organisations need to follow the leaders in this field and begin transitioning their corporate mind-set from viewing waste as an unavoidable outcome of business to recognising and realising the benefits of SRM. ISO 14001:2015 provides a management framework to recognise and realise the benefits of enhanced resource management and help deliver SRM. The key areas of change in the revised standard create opportunities to improve resource management and thereby help manage risk, improve business resilience and performance.

Businesses embracing SRM now recognise that waste is the consequence of an ineffective system and represents an unrealised opportunity. Consequently, these businesses are taking actions to realise opportunities and business benefits such as increased competitiveness, improved management / mitigation of business risk and enabling future markets and economic growth. SRM / the circular economy also provide an opportunity to reduce future reliance on virgin material inputs and decouple economic growth from resource extraction. Leading organisations are aware of relevant resource security risks and have effective systems in place to mitigate associated risks. They have developed a comprehensive understanding of material resource consumption across their value chain and actively share resource management experiences and learning to enable others to make substantive progress in improving the cycling of resources across the economy.

**The following additional support is available for IEMA Members** on our web-based sustainable resource management hub (<https://www.iema.net/policy/srm/>):

- **From Waste to Resources: Implementing sustainable resource management in your business**  
A report written with you in mind as you work to improve your understanding of waste and resource management. The second half of the report sets out phased practical actions you can apply to directly improve your organisations resource management performance, as well as initiatives to ensure wider business processes support and enable successful delivery.
- **Business Briefing: Sustainable Resource Management**  
This briefing provides you useful information to enable you to make the case for your sustainable resource management initiatives to senior management and other colleagues.
- **RAMP Maturity Tool Review how your business is performing**  
Ask the Environment & Sustainability professionals in your business to conduct an initial review against our simple to use Resource Action Maturity Planner (RAMP).

Members can also engage with us and other members around sustainable resource management by **Joining our SRM Network**

[www.iema.net/networks](http://www.iema.net/networks)  
[resourcenetwork@iema.net](mailto:resourcenetwork@iema.net)

## Environmental Management Briefing:

### Driving Sustainable Resource Management through ISO 14001'

The need to reduce demand for and use of resources, such as materials, food, energy and water, is crucial to progressing towards a sustainable economy; however, organisations can find it difficult to achieve significant progress in this area. This briefing note will help organisations to address this issue by concentrating on how to use ISO 14001 to drive actions to manage material resources in a more sustainable way.

This briefing note is designed to improve a member's ability to:

- explain sustainable resource management to colleagues,
- make the business case for action, and
- links such actions to core requirements introduced in ISO 14001:2015.

Further information to support members in this area can be access here: [www.iema.net/policy/srm](http://www.iema.net/policy/srm)