Business and Environmental Reporting

Environment matters are continually in the news and the level of public interest in the environment is growing. In the past it has been heavy industry, petrochemicals etc that were seen as having the most environmental impact and most are now regulated under environmental protection legislation. However, all organisations have some impact on the environment because they use energy, produce waste and produce products that may themselves impact the environment. Now all organisations are being encouraged to consider their impact on the environment and take action to reduce this impact. Environmental Reports are typically produced annually and are often included in the organisation's annual report. The majority of companies that produce environmental reports are large and use it as an effective marketing and communications tool. SMEs are less likely to produce an environmental report - they often have limited shareholders and do not see it as so essential. However, even smaller companies can benefit by reviewing their environmental impact and setting targets e.g. paper recycling.

Environmental Report Content

The British government suggests the following should be included in an environmental report.

- CEO Statement – this sets the tone, endorses the organisation's environmental policy, outlines the environmental issues the organisation faces and highlights major results.
- Environmental Policy - this should contain recognition of the environmental impacts, a commitment to measure key aspects of environmental performance, a statement of the plans to improve performance in the future and commitment to set targets and report on them, plans to consults and involve interested parties, and any other relevant issues.
- Profile of the Organisation - This should put the organisation's environmental performance in context. It would include the sites and functions included with details of the reporting period and an explanation of assumption and exclusions.
- Description of the Management System - The systems used to give effect to the environmental policy, the Board Member who heads the EMS and details of any external certification you may have achieved e.g. ISO14001.
- Key environmental Impacts - this will depend on the activity of the organisation but could include greenhouse gas emissions, wastes etc
- Environmental performance indicators - What are the organisation's KPI's for environmental impact?
- Targets for improving/progress against targets - If you have reported before then this would include progress against the earlier targets
- Legal Compliance e.g. ISO14001, EMAS - If the organisation has been prosecuted for any environmental offence then this should also be mentioned.

If you would like further help with environmental issues there are many sources of advice available e.g. www.defra.gov.uk/environment

DVD available on Graphical Symbols

The International Organisation for Standards (ISO) have released a DVD of ISO 7000 Graphical for use on Equipment and a CD-ROM of ISO 14617 Graphical

Symbols for Diagrams. The DVD has more than 2,400 symbols and they are available in a range of formats. The DVD is expected to appeal to end-users who require a symbol for a product. It contains ISO graphical symbols from the harmonised database released in 2004 by the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the ISO. The CD-ROM contains the 15 part ISO 14617 Standard with the rules for the presentation and application of the symbols and examples of their uses. For more information please visit www.iso.ch

ISO at DAVOS

The World Economic Forum (WEF) met at Davos at the end of January 2006. The ISO is an institutional member of the forum and the ISO Secretary General Alan Bryden emphasised how International Standards are 'tools for positive globalisation and sharing innovation'. The Forum identified three imperatives:

- Building trust in public and private institutions
- Effective leadership in managing global risks
- Innovation, creativity and conflicts

Alan Bryden highlighted how recent ISO developments relate to these imperatives. China and India are now participating more actively in the development and use of ISO Standards. The ISO 14000 series of environmental standards help organisations reduce their environmental impact. International Standards on food safety, information security management and security management in global supply chains all help organisations in reducing risks and increasing security. The development and launch of the ISO standard for social responsibility has involved 53 countries and 32 organisations. The ISO President, Masami Tanaka, writes "The WEF organisers have stated: 'It is imperative that we learn how to unleash our creative potential to tackle the world's problems'. We in ISO have something to contribute. Our speciality is developing standards that provide the link between 'creative potential' (great ideas) and 'tackling problems'

(practical implementation)." For further information please visit www.iso.ch

Power Cut Threat to London Olympics

According to a poll of energy experts, the London Olympics in 2012 face the threat of blackouts during the games. The survey was carried out on behalf of Mitsui Babcock, who provides clean coal technology. The survey was carried out on 140 experts from industry, government, academia and environmental groups on their attitudes towards energy issues. The majority of those questioned said power cuts are a genuine threat during the London Olympic Games and also UK would not meet its 2012 Kyoto treaty target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12%. Many of the UK's nuclear and coal-fired stations will be closed by 2012 and the demand for electricity is still rising. All 140 respondents to the survey said that the best way to ensure energy security for the future lay in a diversified mix of electricity generation, including renewables, coal, gas and nuclear. For more information please see BBC News.

ISO 22222:2005 Personal Financial Planning

International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) has recently published the first International Standard that will help people decide on the ethics and competency of the professionals advising on planning their personal finances. ISO 22222:2005, Personal financial planning, is aimed at increasing client confidence by providing an internationally agreed benchmark for a high global standard of service. Independent Financial Advisers or a financial institution providing personal finance services would find it useful to keep up-to-date with the latest best practice guidelines. The standard defines six steps of the personal financial planning process:

- Establishing and defining the client and planner relationship
- Determining goals and gathering client data

- Evaluating the client's financial status
- Developing and presenting the financial plan
- Implementing the recommendations
- Monitoring the financial plan recommendations.

There is a vast choice of investment schemes, legal frameworks vary from country to country, and investments can go wrong. With so many financial planners to choose from, how can they know who to trust and how should they compare the different schemes on offer? "An International Standard for financial planning will provide simplification for the client by setting forth requirements to assure that the client is well served by financial planners who have met the highest ethical and educational standards", said Stuart Kessler, Chair of ISO/TC 222.

The standard additionally specifies the requirements, content, and length of experience a personal financial planner must have and is applicable to all personal financial planners regardless of their employment status. For more information please visit www.iso.org

ISO/IEC 19796-1:2005

ISO/IEC 19796-1:2005, Information technology – Learning, education and training – Quality management, assurance and metrics – Part 1: General approach, should help all providers and users of e-learning to improve their approach to quality. Bruce Peoples, the Chair of the ISO/IEC group that developed the standard, said "The standard represents the harmonised international know-how on quality for e-learning. By having comparable and commonly understood requirements and criteria, there will be a better match between the needs of users, purchasers and providers".

ISO/IEC 19796-1 is the first part of an overall framework which is due to be developed over the next two years and that will include the following documents:

- Part 2: *Quality model*, will harmonize the aspects of quality systems and their relations and will provide orientation for all stakeholders.

- Part 3: *Reference methods and metrics*, will harmonize formats for describing methods and metrics for quality management and assurance. It will provide a collection of reference methods that can be used to manage and ensure quality in different contexts.

- Part 4: *Best practice and implementation guide*, will provide harmonized criteria for the identification of best practice, guidelines for the adaptation, implementation, and usage of this multi-part standard.

ISO/IEC 19796-1 has been developed by ISO/IEC Joint technical committee JTC 1, *Information technology*, subcommittee SC 36, *Information technology for learning, education and training*. For more information please visit www.iso.org

Failing Care Homes

According to a recent report, nearly half of England's nursing and care homes fail to meet the minimum medication standards. The Commission for Social Care Inspection found cases of people given the wrong medication, drugs in the wrong dose or no medication at all. The report which was carried out on 19500 homes, said, staff were often poorly trained and records were not kept properly. The Department of Health said more were meeting the minimum drug standards, but acknowledged there was more work to be done. For more information please see BBC News.