

DOE eGuide Frequently Asked Questions

What is an energy management system (EnMS)?

An energy management system is an interacting series of processes that enables an organization to systematically achieve and sustain energy management actions and energy performance improvements. The EnMS is based on the PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT model for continual improvement. It provides the processes and systems needed to incorporate energy considerations and energy management into daily operations as part of an organizational strategy for improved energy performance.

What are the benefits of an energy management system?

Benefits that organizations have realized from implementing this systematic approach to energy management include:

- Improved operational efficiencies
- Decreased energy intensity
- Energy data for fact-based decisions
- Support for organizational and cultural change
- Drivers for organizational integration
- Reduced environmental impacts
- Competitive advantages over firms that neglect resource management
- Visible demonstration of social responsibility
- Positioning for carbon accounting

What is ISO 50001?

ISO 50001 is an International Standard that specifies requirements for an energy management system. The requirements are used to establish and implement a [PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT](#) continual improvement system for managing energy and achieving energy performance improvements. ISO 50001 can be implemented, regardless of the types of energy used. Based on the common elements of ISO management system standards, ISO 50001 has a high level of compatibility with ISO 9001 quality management systems and ISO 14001 environmental management systems. The ISO 50001 standard can be purchased from the ANSI website at <http://webstore.ansi.org> or directly from ISO at <http://www.iso.org/iso/store.htm>.

Who should use the eGuide?

The eGuide is designed for use by organizations that desire to establish a systematic approach to energy management and energy performance improvement, including energy efficiency, use and consumption. In its examples, the eGuide is particularly relevant for manufacturing plants and industrial firms.

What is the relationship between the eGuide and ISO 50001?

The eGuide is a comprehensive resource for implementation of an EnMS based on a continual improvement framework. The step by step approach of the eGuide is based on the [PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT](#) requirements of ISO 50001. The tasks and other actions within each step are intended to result in implementation of the specific ISO 50001 requirements for that part of the EnMS. The eGuide is not, however, a substitute for purchasing the ISO 50001 standard. (See section “Where can ISO 50001 be purchased?”) Users should utilize the eGuide in conjunction with the ISO 50001 standard. This enables the user to review the ISO 50001 requirements from the source document, and then use the eGuide for explanatory information and step by step guidance on implementation strategies and resources.

Note: Within the eGuide, ISO 50001 may be referred to as “energy management system,” “EnMS,” “ISO 50001 EnMS,” or simply “ISO 50001.”

Does use of the eGuide guarantee ISO 50001 certification?

Use of the eGuide does not itself guarantee that the implementing organization will attain third-party ISO 50001 certification. Certification requires not only that the system is fully implemented, but that it is effective. Effectiveness depends on proper implementation and operation of the EnMS so that it achieves the intended results of improved energy management and energy performance. This is under the control and responsibility of the implementing organization as it proceeds through the Steps of the eGuide.

What is needed to use the eGuide?

Using the eGuide requires access to the Internet, the ability to use and download MS Office and Adobe files, and allocation of the necessary personnel time for its use. To be successful with the eGuide, it is strongly recommended that users purchase a copy of the ISO 50001 standard. This is particularly important for users intending to pursue ISO 50001 certification or self-declaration.

Where can the ISO 50001 standard be purchased?

The ISO 50001 standard can be purchased from the ANSI website at <http://webstore.ansi.org> or directly from ISO at <http://www.iso.org/iso/store.htm> .

How long does it take to work through the eGuide?

The eGuide is designed in Steps to allow you to progress at a self-directed pace. Typically, the timeframe for working through the eGuide will coincide with the timeframe established for the overall EnMS implementation initiative or project. This is a decision made by the organization based on organizational priorities and available resources.

For some organizations, EnMS implementation may be a customer or supply chain mandate with a specified timeframe. In other cases, the organization may already have management systems in place that can be leveraged to shorten the time needed for EnMS implementation. This would include, for example organizations with existing management systems for quality (ISO 9001), environmental (ISO 14001), safety and health (OHSAS 18001), food safety (ISO 22000), or the like.

Generally speaking, private sector firms achieve management system implementation within 12 to 18 months, while public sector organizations generally take 18 to 24 months. Firms with existing management systems typically implement the new management system within 9 to 12 months.

What are the features of the eGuide?

Introductions to Each Step (1-digit): The web pages for each of the seven major Steps in the eGuide introduce the topics addressed in that major Step, and provide direct links to each of the Sub-steps in that section.

Step by Step Guidance Text (2-digit and 3-digit): At this level, each of the Steps presents an overview of the topic and what is needed, a set of actions to take to complete the Step, and implementation guidance and resources to help ensure success with the Step.

Implementation Resources: Implementation resources such as forms, checklists, worksheets, templates, supplementary information and examples are linked to the guidance text throughout the eGuide. In general, these resources are designed to help you understand and take action on the relevant Step. They can be used to help with such tasks as collecting data, generating information, communicating expectations, determining roles and responsibilities, developing procedures, establishing processes, recording evidence of activities, and taking other actions needed for EnMS implementation.

Most of the implementation resources can be used in different ways. How these resources are utilized is up to the user. Many of these resources are intended to be used to establish a part of the EnMS. Others could be helpful for simply work through the development of a needed process or procedure, capturing relevant information that later may be maintained or communicated in a different format, consistent with the organization's current practices. The resources that are examples illustrate different types of information and different ways in which information can be recorded or maintained. Some resources can be used to help the organization kick-start their own ideas for how they want their EnMS to look and manage the necessary information.

In addition to the guidance text and implementation resources, the eGuide has several other features designed to help users:

Evaluate your current EnMS: Accessible on the eGuide's Home Page, this brief evaluation is intended as a quick gauge of the extent to which an organization has existing processes for energy planning, energy opportunities, operations and maintenance and management involvement. The results indicate whether or not there are existing systems that can be leveraged.

"Where are we heading?" Questions: A  icon near the top of a webpage indicates that "Where are we heading?" questions are available to introduce the user to the concepts or items addressed in that particular Step. The questions are intended to help the user start thinking about those concepts, consider what information they may need about their own organization, and to identify existing systems or processes that can be leveraged for EnMS implementation.

Definitions: Key terminology within the guidance text is hyperlinked to pop-ups that provide definitions. Just click on the hyperlinked terms to view those definitions.

Pop-Ups and Learn More Links:

Also scattered within the eGuide are pop-ups and “Learn more” links designed to provide additional examples or other useful information to promote further understanding of the linked topic.

Where do you start?

To begin using the eGuide, all users should start with reviewing the information presented in “Navigating the eGuide.”

For users who are new to continual improvement-based energy management systems or who do not have similar management systems already in place, such as those for quality, environmental, safety and health, food safety, and others, first review the Home Page items that provide information on:

“What is an EnMS?”

“What are the benefits of an EnMS?”

“Energy Innovation: A Real World Example” (video)

If your organization has not yet made a decision on whether to implement an EnMS, it will be important to build and present to management your organization’s business case for such an effort. In this case, start with Step 1.1. Once the decision to move forward has been made, you can then follow the eGuide step-by-step to secure top management commitment, plan your implementation effort, and develop and implement the EnMS.

If your organization has already made the decision to implement an EnMS, then you will want to start with Step 1.2 and secure the necessary commitments and resources needed for EnMS implementation.

Users who already have management systems in place will also want to start with Step 1.2. However, if the organization has decided to integrate the EnMS with an existing management system, then there may be sections of the eGuide (particularly specific elements of Steps 5, 6 and 7) that may need to only be reviewed to the extent that the organization has enough information to make decisions on how existing management system processes will need to be modified to accommodate the EnMS .

It is recommended that the Energy Champion and the Energy Team work through the eGuide in a coordinated fashion so that the appropriate team members have reviewed the relevant information and are prepared to take action to complete the tasks using the guidance and implementation resources within the eGuide.