

HOW DO **ISO** AND **ADCS** COMPARE?



ISO or ADCS?

When considering standards for AD operations there are two key recognised options that a site could be accredited to: The International Organization of Standardization (ISO) (45001, 9001 and 14001) and the Anaerobic Digestion Certification Scheme (ADCS). But how do they differ?

ISO 45001, for Occupational Health and Safety (OH+S), 14001, for Environmental Management Systems (EMS), and 9001 for Quality Management Systems (QMS) are international standards that prescribe a framework by which organisations can manage their OH+S, EMS, and management systems respectively. These standards are designed to apply to any type of organisation, in any industry, in any country in the world and therefore simply set a framework of the factors that need to be considered for a company to effectively manage OH+S risk, have an EMS or QMS. Due to the broad application of the standard, it cannot determine any specific measures, regulations or laws that must be met but instead checks that an organisation has a process in place whereby they can manage OH+S, EMS and QMS. This process includes having a leadership commitment, managing people and resources, and then measuring and evaluating performance.

In contrast to this, the ADCS was developed in the UK by key stakeholders exclusively for the UK AD sector. There are some small areas of overlap between the ISO standards and the ADCS criteria but almost all the ADCS criteria are not covered by the ISO Standards and audits. There are some criteria in the ADCS that are deemed to have been met if a valid ISO certificate can be shown; this will reduce the auditing requirement. For example, some health and safety procedures and emergency response planning are considered to be met if ISO 45001 has been achieved and Environmental Management Systems (EMS) requirements are met if ISO 14001 has been achieved. Where ISO complements the ADCS, it can help streamline the accreditation process and auditing requirements while still checking standards in other areas which aren't covered by ISOs.

The ADCS is the only standard specifically for the AD sector that sets out to promote and recognise operational excellence in the UK. It does this by assessing and supporting plants to achieve best practice, improved operational performance and compliance with H+S and environmental regulations. Whereas an ISO audit will check that a process or framework is in place, the ADCS will check specific procedures, documents and knowledge are present for that site to display best practice and compliance. In the event of a non-compliance, the auditor will support and guide the site to make the improvement and meet the criteria. As a result, the ADCS is not simply a standard that is either met or not met but rather a tool that sites can use to improve their performance, compliance and provides valuable external verification.

ISO 45001

The purpose of an Occupational Health + Safety management system is to provide a framework for managing OH+S risks and opportunities. An OH+S management system can assist an organisation to fulfil its legal requirements and other requirements. Demonstration of successful implementation of this document can be used by an organisation to give assurance to workers and other interested parties that an effective OH+S management system is in place.

Achieving ISO 45001 accreditation requires organisations to have the framework in place whereby they can manage their OH+S. The framework covers:

- Context of the organisation
- Planning
- Leadership commitments
- Operations
- Support and resources
- Improvement
- Performance evaluation

Auditing

There is an internal audit process in place with an annual external audit. ISO certification is recognised by ADCS and results in a reduced auditing requirements for H+S procedures, emergency response plans, site inductions and incident reporting.

Scope

- This Standard is applicable to any organisation that wishes to establish, implement and maintain an OH+S management system.
- This Standard is applicable to any organisation regardless of its size, type and activities.
- This Standard does not state specific criteria for OH+S performance.
- The success of the OH+S management system depends on leadership, commitment and participation from all levels and functions of the organisation.
- Adoption of this Standard will not in itself guarantee prevention of work-related injury and ill health to workers, provision of safe and healthy workplaces and improved OH+S performance.

ISO 14001

The purpose of this International Standard is to provide organisations with a framework to protect the environment. It specifies the requirements that enable an organisation to achieve the intended outcomes it sets for its environmental management system. Demonstration of successful implementation of this International Standard can be used to assure interested parties that an effective environmental management system is in place. The organisation shall establish, implement, maintain and continually improve an environmental management system.

Achieving ISO 14001 accreditation requires organisations to have the framework in place whereby they can manage their environmental impact. The framework covers:

- Context of the organisation
- Planning
- Leadership commitments
- Operations
- Support and resources
- Improvement
- Performance evaluation

Auditing

There is an internal audit process in place with an annual external audit. ISO certification is recognised by ADCS and results in a reduced auditing requirements for the EMS and environmental procedures.

Scope

- Application of this International Standard can differ from one organisation to another due to the context of the organisation. Two organisations can carry out similar activities but can have different compliance obligations, commitments in their environmental policy, environmental technologies and environmental performance goals, yet both can conform to the requirements of this International Standard.
- This International Standard is applicable to any organisation, regardless of size, type and nature.
- This International Standard does not state specific environmental performance criteria.
- The Standard is process driven and gives a framework on what to include in an EMS but is designed to be broad. In Europe alone this standard applies to any organisation, in any industry across 33 countries.

ADCS

The Anaerobic Digestion Certification Scheme (ADCS) is an industry-led Best Practice scheme that was designed by key stakeholders in the UK biogas sector. The purpose of the Standard is to define and promote best practice for the construction and operational excellence of AD plants. Through its best practice criteria and mechanism for undergoing independent auditing, the scheme's primary aim is to ensure sites are operated in the best possible way and at the lowest H+S, environmental and legal risk.

Unlike the ISO Standards the ADCS was created by UK AD experts across a number of key stakeholders such as the EA, SEPA, NRW, APHA, HSE, WRAP, insurers and industry leaders. The best practice criteria apply exclusively to UK AD plants covering all area of AD operations, from H+S to environmental compliance to staff training to process monitoring, and therefore would not be applicable to other industries.

While the ISO Standards will check the correct framework is in place, the ADCS will make sure that specific measures have been taken to ensure compliance and regulations are met. It will also check that best practice is being met such as with staff training and competency, and maintenance requirements.

Auditing

The Criteria are freely available online with internal checks against this required. A full external audit is carried out in year one with an annual review each following year.

Scope

- Auditing checks procedures, records and paperwork on an annual basis but actions must be taken each day to ensure best practice.



Site Information and Understanding (Design & Operation)

Managing Health and Safety Risks

ISO 45001 overlaps

Staff Training (Competence)

Process Monitoring

Maintenance

Procuring Services

Managing Environmental Risks

ISO 14001 overlaps

ABPR Compliance

PAS 110 (ADQP) overlaps

Digestate Management

PAS 110 (ADQP) overlaps



ADBA

Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association

THE ENERGY BEHIND THE AD REVOLUTION

adbioresources.org

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