

## Synergy Audits Collection of Best Practices

The following list is a summary of the most frequently addressed response during the collection of best practises in the Synergy Audit project (2019-2022)

The collection of practises took part within the project as a tool for trying to assess what a multidisciplinary set of organisations from Scandinavia to the Southern Mediterranean in Europe view as of key importance when implementing, performing and developing environmental management and internal environmental audits in organisations.

The results have influenced the Synergy Audit training methodology along with the created results in the project. They have further made it possible to elaborate on a training methodology that could speak for a multidisciplinary group set of organisations.

Further, we decided to also have a look on best practises within the field of energy audits and furthermore, to try to assess possible challenges in the environmental management, internal environmental audits and energy audits work. The reason for this was for a chance to try to elaborate further on tools of help for bridging challenges in the work in the Synergy Audit training methodology.

Finally, we took an extra look into present teachings in environmental management and environmental audits to try to assess both best practises and possible challenges when teaching within these areas.

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Type of audit: Environmental Audit

Type of organisations: Municipalities, Governmental agencies, SMEs, NGO:s and bigger industries in Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Italy and Sweden.

## Findings

## Energy Audits

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Type of audit: Energy Audit

Type of buildings: Office environment (1998), Private business, Hotel, SME industries in Greece.

Findings of best practices areas/methods by performed **energy audits**:

- ✓ Power usage
- ✓ Electricity rate selection
- ✓ Lowered consumption of reactive energy
- ✓ Lowered electrical energy consumption
- ✓ Decreased consumption of heavy oil
- ✓ Change to low-consumption lamps
- ✓ Decrease amount of lamps
- ✓ Improved thermal insulation in roof structure
- ✓ Change to double panes
- ✓ Control switch-off systems for air condition
- ✓ Regular maintenance of boilers and burners

Findings of **possible challenges** regarding organisational type:

- Most SMEs are understaffed and therefore day-to-day management is a priority 1 whilst energy efficiency changes have a lower priority.
- Routine maintenance is focused around crucial productive machinery
- The steam systems have an energy saving potential by help of low-cost measures
- Energy management systems e.g. EN ISO 50001 is rarely used by SME industries

**Learning, teaching and training activities (hereinafter referred to as LTTA)**

- ✓ Bring up possible incentives related to Energy Audits in different areas in the EU e.g., the Finland case etcetera ...

## Collection of practises within environmental management and internal environmental audits

Findings of best practice areas/methods by performed environmental audits in **NGOs**:

- ✓ Lower negative environmental impact by reaching out for knowledge input to get ideas of how to perform in the organisation.

- ✓ Want to be environmentally certified and tries to find ways that relate to the available resources in budget and time.

#### Findings of best practice areas/methods by performed environmental audits in **governmental agencies**:

- ✓ Try to build and perform the EMS work as if the organisation were already environmentally certified, by following guidelines of how to work from e.g. ISO and EMAS Standards.
- ✓ The employees who work with audits get the main knowledge input into the ability to perform audits, from taking parts in audits education e.g. courses.
- ✓ Internal audits help to improve the EMS work and thereby to improve the general objectives of the organisation.
- ✓ The relationship with service provider is increased by internal environmental audits

#### Findings of best practice areas/methods by performed environmental audits in **SME business**:

- ✓ EMS have created environmental awareness
- ✓ EMS have made the business competitive due to a green image
- ✓ EMS have created the chance to work more concrete toward environmental protection
- ✓ The audits help the organisation to identify procedures that are not yet implemented
- ✓ The audits help the organisation by working toward constant improvement
- ✓ For organisations who are environmentally certified it is of importance to spread out the EMS work over the year for ability to be able to handle it without stress.
- ✓ A great gain by having audits is the possibility to early identify failures and thereby be able to quickly correct them.
- ✓ Organisational improvement and the possibility to monitor the progress are possible by the establishment of audits.
- ✓ The best knowledge input for audits work is courses and texts on EMS Standards regulations
- ✓ It is of great help in the audits work to make an internal audits checklist which is based on the EMS Standards format and numbering.
- ✓ There is of great gain to use our internal staff for internal environmental audits due to their great knowledge about the organisation.
- ✓ There is of importance to have an internal procedure who deals with the audit's deviations in an immediate manner in the organisation.

- ✓ EMS helps in disseminating best practices within the organisation
- ✓ Internal audits are helpful in finding improvement capacity and progress in the organisation
- ✓ Internal environmental audits can lead to improvement that create investment gain for the organisation.
- ✓ Environmental audits help to optimize staff training before serious mistakes might happen in the organisation.
- ✓ Environmental reporting is a helpful tool in allowance to detect, organize, manage and communicate environmental data, by usage of easily performed internal audits, by usage of internal staff.

#### Findings of best practice areas/methods by performed environmental audits in **municipalities**:

- ✓ EMS activities gain support by politicians and decisionmakers in the organisation
- ✓ EMS gives possibility for reduced cost training activities, at regional level
- ✓ All sectors in an organisation have the chance to meet in EMS training
- ✓ EMS helps to clarify long term visions of an organisation and creates chances for collaboration in e.g. EU projects.
- ✓ The Covenant of Mayors are preferable to regular EMS Standards due to e.g., less obligations and cost for implementation and the commitment is based on a voluntary basis. (EMS LTTAs)

#### Findings of best practice areas/methods by performed environmental audits in **big industries/business**:

- ✓ EMS Standards help to perform careful monitoring of legislative compliance
- ✓ EMS Standards help to improve management regarding environmental issues and drive toward continuous improvement of the organisation.
- ✓ A varied set of views in the EMS work allow for growth and improvement of the organisation
- ✓ Ease in finding possible errors in the processes are increased by the work toward EMS Standards.
- ✓ The possibility to have a third-party view by e.g. external audits allow for legitimizing the efforts within the organisations EMS work and thereby increase the trust from stakeholders.

- ✓ Preferability to use external auditors for all EMS audits due to an increased objectivity and external input in the organisation.

#### Findings of best practice areas/methods by teaching on environmental audits in **higher education (university)**:

- ✓ The ability to teach the student how to think and interpret law and directives in the more practical performance of environmental audits is of key importance.
- ✓ Practical exercises where the students have the possibility to practice the theory are of great help for students in the ability to later perform audits.
- ✓ A challenge for the teacher in the teaching is to make thinking in legal matters easy for the student to grasp.
- ✓ Most important for the teacher is to manage to teach the bigger picture of why audit should be performed, due to environmental and climate consequences. Therefore, to teach the aim of the law and directives and not “only” the paragraphs.

#### Findings of **possible challenges** regarding organisational type and performance of environmental audits:

- ✓ Leadership of the organisation does not prioritise certification toward environmental standards e.g., ISO or EMAS (governmental agency). (EMS LTTAs)
- ✓ Main challenge in the overall EMS and audits work is lack of resources in time and budget for ability to carry on further work (governmental agency).
- ✓ We do not have resources in time and budget availability to have an EMS work and on-going audits (small and big NGO).
- ✓ If municipalities are choosing to work toward Covenant of Mayors instead of more usual EMS Standards the risk is that common procedures for EMS work goes missing (municipality).
- ✓ It can be a burden to host an external audit when the organisation is environmentally certified due to excessive workload before the audit takes place (SME business).
- ✓ The possibility of being biased can be a challenge in performance of internal environmental audits (SME business).
- ✓ A challenge in the EMS and audits work is uninterest for this area by employees within the organisation (SME business).
- ✓ Internal auditors can have a too heavy workload in that they need to get to know different areas in the organisation (SME business).
- ✓ Internal conflicts may arise when internal audits are performed due to that staff might feel pointed at when non-compliance appears (SME business).
- ✓ It can be difficult to plan internal audits (governmental agency).



- ✓ It can be hard to remain objective and non-biased when performing internal audits (SME business).



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